

FOSHAGER, JOHN I. & BRITA J., CHARTER MEMBERS OF EAST NORWAY LAKE LUTHERAN CHURCH

John Ingemorson Foshager was born on February 24, 1835 to Ingemor Jacobson Fosshagen (1794-1869) and Lussie Hansdatter Njos (1806-1898). He lived with his parents on the Fosshagen Farm in Leikanger, Sogn, Norway. On April 7, 1856, at the age of 21, John left Leikanger to go to America where he ended up in Norway Grove, Wisconsin. He was likely responsible for friends and neighbors from Leikanger deciding to leave Norway and go to America because arriving in 1861 were the widow Karie Erikson, her children Hans, Britha and Gjertrude Henjum, Lars Henjum and his new bride Barbro Njos, as well as John's sister Marie and her new husband Iver Erikson. Except for Iver and Marie and Karie's daughter, Gjertrude, all would eventually become neighbors on Clear Lake (Henjum Lake today) in Arctander Township and all would become members of the Norway Lake Church.

There is some speculation that John made a trip to the Norway Lake Settlement prior to the outbreak of the U. S.-Dakota War in 1862 which may explain why they eventually settled here. Following the attack at Norway Lake, the entire area was closed to settlers. On August 2, 1865, John married Britha Johannesdatter Henjum (1844-1883) at the Spring Prairie Lutheran Church near present day DeForest, WI. Presiding was Pastor H. A. Preus who served both the Spring Prairie and Norway Grove Congregations. Britha's mother Karie served as one of the witnesses. The next spring John, Britha and Karie left for the Norway Lake Settlement arriving in June of 1866. It must have been an interesting trip for Britha as she gave birth to their first son, Johan I. Foshager on July 27, 1866. John and Britha established a homestead on the east side of Clear (Henjum) Lake where they would be neighbors to Britha's brothers, Hans and Lars Henjum. They had the following children: Johan I. 1866-1950, Iver J. 1867-1942, Lucinda 1869-1947, Jacob 1871- 1945, Caroline 1872-1935, Ellen J 1874-1937, Henry T. 1881-1946. Britha died on June 8, 1883 at the age of 39. John died March 22, 1898 at age 63. Both funerals were held at the East Norway Lake Lutheran Church and they are buried in the church cemetery. John served on the Building Committee for the East Norway Lake Church built in 1875.

Prepared by Dorothy Freese and Marlin Henjum

Sources Consulted:

"Festskrift" by Sotendahl and Njus

Leikanger Bygdebok, Vols 1-2.

Digitalarkivet

U. S. Census

Records Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, 1875-1940

Find A Grave Index, 1600s to Current

U. S. National Archives

Church Records of Spring Prairie Lutheran Church, NAGC, Madison, WI