

Carl K. Finstad¹ and Marith Olsdatter, Charter Members of West Norway Lake Lutheran Church

There are 50 places in Norway named Finstad. Persons sharing the name are not necessarily related. There were two Carl Finstads in the area; the other one was born in 1880 or 1881, too young to be a charter member.

The oldest record² found for Carl is of his December 8, 1861 confirmation at Holden Church in Goodhue County. His birthdate is listed as March 12, 1845. His named parents are Christian Johannesen Finstad and Nikoline Andersdatter Gulbrandsen.

Carl's birthplace in Norway is not known, but an educated guess is one of the two Finstad farms in Østfold County. This is based on a note in the church record of his father's funeral³, which, by the way, also gave Carl's mother's name as Nikoline Amundsatter (rather than Anderdatter).

As for Marith, the 1865 census of Norway⁴ has a Mari, born in 1849, daughter of Ole Tollefsen and Margit Halvorsdatter. The family resides on the Klokkestuen farm in Bø, Telemark. Church records⁵ have Mari's birth as 20 July, 1849 and appends "Klokkestuen" to her mother's name. The passenger list⁶ of the *Peruvian* includes a Marit Olsdatter, age 17. The *Peruvian* steamed from Liverpool (June 7, 1866) to Quebec (June 18)

Carl Christensen Finstad and Mari Olsdatter Bø were married⁷ June 8, 1870 in the Holden Church, Goodhue Township, MN. One of the witnesses was Christen J. Finstad, obviously Carl's father.

By 1873, the couple had moved to the Norway Lake area. This is shown in a baptism record⁸, that of their son Christian, born 21 June 1873. Another baptism record⁹ is that of daughter Caroline Augusta, born 22 June 1875

In the 1875 census¹⁰ for Kerkhoven Township, Swift County, there is Carl J. Finstad (age 30, b. Norway), Marith (25, b. Norway) and Christian (2, b. MN).

In the 1880 census of Hayes Township, Swift County there are: V.J. Finstad, Marit, Christian, Caroline, Gustav and Oline. Their ages are 30, 30, 7, 5, 2, and 9/12, respectively. Although Carl's initials and age are incorrectly recorded, this is clearly the Finstad family. There are several others in the household.

In the 1885 census for Kerkhoven Township, Swift County there is Karl Finstad (age 40, b. Norway), Marit (35, b. Norway), Christian (11), Karoline (9), Gustav (6), Oline (5), Karen (2), Alfred (7/12). All children born in MN.

In the 1900 census, there is a Carl J? Finstad (age 55, b. March 1845 in Norway) in Kerkhoven Township, Swift County. With him: wife Marith (49, b. Jun 1850 in Norway) and children Gustaf (21), Olive (20), Caren(17), Alfred (15), Eunice (13), Ida (9). All children born in MN. Carl immigrated in 1853, Marith in 1866. She is the mother of 12, 8 living. They are married 29 years.

With 8 living children as of 1900, there must be a great many descendants.

In the 1905 census, there is a Carl Finstad (age 60, b. Norway) in Kerkhoven. With him are Caren (22) and Alfred (20), both born in MN.

In the 1910 census, Carl J? Finstad (age 65, widower, b. Norway) is in Kerkhoven Township, in the household of his son Christian C., his wife and 4 grandchildren. Carl immigrated in 1853 and was a naturalized citizen.

There is a tombstone¹¹ for a C. J. Finstad in the West Norway Lake cemetery, dates: Mar 12, 1845 – Nov 16, 1928. As for Marit, no record of her death/burial were found. Based on the 1900 and 1905 censuses, she probably died in that time frame.

Report prepared by Earl O. Knutson, October, 2018.

1 The middle name/initial is uncertain. It is K in the charter member listing. The tombstone and most census entries have a middle initial J. A pair of church records have a middle name Christensen; an earlier church record has Carl Anthon as the given name.

2 ELCA Records, Holden Lutheran Church, Goodhue County, MN; Image 71; viewed using Ancestry.com

3 ELCA Records, Vang Lutheran Church, Dennison, MN; image 745; located and viewed via Ancestry.com

4 Accessed by searching in http://www.rhd.uit.no/folketelling/folketelling_avansert_e.aspx

5 <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/view/1351/10>

6 Norwayheritage.com.

7 ELCA Records, Holden Lutheran Church, Goodhue County, MN, Image 93; viewed via Ancestry.com.

8 ELCA Records, First Lutheran Church of Norway Lake, Image 52; accessed via Ancestry.com.

9 ELCA Records, First Lutheran Church of Norway Lake, Image 58; accessed via Ancestry.com.

10 The 1875, 1895 and 1905 censuses were accessed using www.mnhs.org; the other censuses were accessed via Ancestry.com.

11 Findagrave.com