

Johan and Anne Gjelhaug¹, Charter Members of East Norway Lake Church

In the section on those who emigrated in 1865 from Land County, Norway, a Norwegian history book² has this brief information:

Johan Christian Gjelhaug, born 1843 in Nordsinni, went first to Zumbrota, Minnesota, but after 1870 lived at Norway Lake, Minnesota, where he was a farmer and a teacher. He married Anne Imsdalen from Ringeby. His brother Martin emigrated in 1867.

A local church history book³ has further information about Johan and Anna's movements:

John Gjelhaug, from N.Land. Married with Anna B. Imsdalen, born in Gudbrandsdalen. Came to Goodhue County 1866; to Norway Lake 1870.

The following statement is attributed to Johan's sister, Kjirsten⁴. It probably applies to Johan, among others:

"When my siblings and I left Norway we first came to Kandiyohi County where our brother Martin Gjelhaug had already settled. There we lived in a sod house for five years until we made the move to Marshall County about 1880. The men went first, walking with the cattle, and about two weeks later the women came by train to Argyle." Ole moved to North Dakota. Several of them moved to northern Minnesota."

The following paragraph is from an Ancestry.com posting by TamiLewisCBSRR:

John and Anne came to Goodhue County in 1866 and then moved to Kandiyohi County, Minnesota in the fall of 1869 and spent their first winter with Anne's sister Magrethe Grinden and her husband Engebret, on the Grinden's farm near Willmar, until Anne and John could establish a home of their own. John farmed and taught school. By 1880 they had moved to Marshall County and homesteaded in Big Woods. John had a small hotel and a butcher shop in Argyle. In 1897 the family moved to Lake of the Woods County and homesteaded east of Baudette along the Rainy River, near Silver Creek. They are believed to be from Lands Parish.

Johan's birth date, April 4, 1843⁵, is found in church records from Land Parish in Land County. The parents are Christian Madssen and Inger Marthea Johansdatter Gjelhaug. Records also show that he left that church on May 13, 1865⁶, destination "Amerika." There is a John Christiansen, age 22, on the Hibernian⁷ that crossed from Liverpool to Quebec, June 8 to June 19, 1865. Evidently, Hibernian was an early steamship, as it crossed the ocean in 11 days.

Anne was born⁸ 30 July 1844 in Ringeby parish, Oppland, Norway. Her parents were Brynjulf Jensen Imsdalen and Maren Hansdatter. She signed out⁹ of her church, bound for America, on 19 April 1865.

Confirmation that Johan Chr. and Anne B. Gjelhaug lived for a time in the Norway Lake area is found in baptism records¹⁰ of the Norway Lake congregation. There are entries for Gustav Adolph, born 3 July 1874 and Helmine Maria, born 6 May 1877.

In the 1880 census¹¹, Anne Gjelhaug (age 35) and her daughter M. Helmine (3) live in Mandt Township, Chippewa County, MN, in the household of Anne's brother (or perhaps brother-in-law) Engebret Grinden.

In the 1910 census, John (age 67) and Anne (65) live in Gudrid Township, Beltrami County, MN. The note that they have been married for 9 years is obviously incorrect.. Anne is the mother of 9 children, 6 of whom are living. Bernard Gjelhaug and his family live in the neighboring house.

Johan and Anne lie at rest¹² in the Silver Creek Cemetery, north of Thief River Falls, Lake of the Woods County. The markers read: Johan Christian Gjelhaug, 4 Apr 1843 -17 Dec 1914; Anne B.Gjelhaug, 30 Jul 1844 – 17 Jan 1940. This web site also lists their 9 children, along with dates of birth and death, and burial sites.

Report prepared by Earl O. Knutson, September, 2018

- 1 US records are scarce for this couple. They apparently eluded many census takers. The date and place of their marriage was not found.
- 2 *Boka Om Land, IV. The Immigration to America from Nordre and Søndre Land, 1839-1915* by Arvid Sandaker, Translation by Sandra Hendrickson (2010). Page 166
- 3 Festskrift:En fremstilling af det kirkelege arbeide I Norway Lake fra 1962-1916. Partial translation accessed via <http://www.debbiesgenealogy.com>
- 4 See biography of charter member Martin Gjelhaug.
- 5 SAH Land Prestekantor, Nordsinni Parish, baptisms section, 1843. Viewed at <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/en/view/9359/45267/96>
- 6 From the Udflyttede section of the Nordsinni Church, Nordre Land Parish. Lines 45 dated May 13, 1865. viewed at <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/en/view/8981/43852/5>
- 7 Norwayheritage.com
- 8 <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/view/8925/45>
- 9 <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/view/8947/287>
- 10 ELCA Records, viewed on Ancestry.com.
- 11 US census records were viewed on Ancestry.com.
- 12 Findagrave.com.