

Nils Olson and Gjertrude Johannesdatter Hystad, Charter Members of West Norway Lake Lutheran Church

Nils Olson Hystad was born on July 26, 1841 in Stord, Hordaland, Norway, the son of Ole Kolbenson Hystad (1803-1858) and Brita Nilsdatter (1811-1905). Nils had two younger brothers who would also immigrate to America. Nils was married on 26 Nov 1863 to Gjertrude Johannesdatter in Den Norske Kirke, Stord, Norway. Gjertrude was born 23 June 1830 in Stue, Stord, Hordaland to Johannes Gudmunsen and Marithe Tollacksdatter. A few years after the death of Nil's father, the entire family decided to migrate to America. Arriving at Montreal, Canada in June, 1866 aboard the vessel Martha were Nils and Gjertrude, Nils' widowed mother, Brita, and his two single brothers, Ole (1844-1926) and Andreas (1848-1923).

It appears the entire family moved to northern Kandiyohi County where the three brothers applied for homesteads. Nils' was issued on May 20, 1873 for 160 acres in Section 20 of Norway Lake Township. Ole settled in Section 11 of Norway Lake and Andreas in Section 18 of Colfax Township. As was common, the brothers homestead patents were in the Olson name, not Hystad. Nils and Gjertrude Hystad had two children both born at Norway Lake:

1. Olina Marie Hystad born 24 April 1868 and baptized 31 May 1868 at Norway Lake. She was confirmed 22 July 1883 at West Norway Lake Lutheran. Oline (Lena) married Anton Palmeson (1867-1946). Oline died in 1950 and she and her husband are buried at West Norway Lake Lutheran Cemetery.
2. John Nils Hystad was born 14 Dec 1869 and baptized at Norway Lake on 17 April, 1870. He married Betsy Hande on 5 May 1901. She was the daughter of pioneer Ole Halvorson and Dorthea Hande. John died on 11 November 1944 and is buried with Betsy (1872-1952) at West Norway Lake Lutheran Cemetery.

Gjertrude Hystad died 17 July 1904. Nils Hystad died 14 June 1909. They are both buried at the West Norway Lake Lutheran Cemetery where they were charter members.

Ole's two brothers remained in the community their entire lives. Ole married Gunhild Sorenson and they had six children. Ole and Gunhild are buried at West Norway Lake Lutheran Cemetery. Andreas (Andrew) O. Hystad was married twice. His first wife was Berta Aletta and his second wife was Malena Westvig Hystad. Andreas fathered a total of thirteen children. Living in Colfax Township, Andreas and his family were members of Crow River Lutheran. At some point they must have changed their membership to South Lake Johanna Lutheran where Ole and his first wife Berta are both buried. Brita Hystad, the mother of Nils, Ole, and Andreas lived most of her days in America with Nils and family. She died on 9 January 1905 and is buried at West Norway Lake Cemetery.

Prepared by Marlin Henjum, November 2019

Sources Consulted

- Ancestry.com
- Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935
- Minnesota Death Index, 1908-2017
- Minnesota Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905
- Norway, Select Baptisms, 1634-1927
- Norway Marriages, 1600s-1800s
- U. S., City Directories, 1822-1955
- U. S., Evangelical Church in America Church Records, 1781-1969
- U. S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current
- U. S., General Land Office, 1776-2015
- U. S., Social Security Application and Claims, 1936-2007
- U. S., United States Census, 1870-1930