

Lars Iverson and Ragnhild Olsdatter, Charter Members of West Norway Lake Lutheran Church

This piece by an anonymous author¹ is a good starting place:

When Lars Axelson Iverson was born on November 21, 1830, in Sogn, Oppland, Norway, his father, Axel, was 28 and his mother, Ingeborg, was 22. He married Ragnhild Olsdatter Kjersonlien in 1853 in Green County, Wisconsin. They had 11 children in 20 years. He died on June 30, 1878, in Kandiyohi County, Minnesota, at the age of 47

In the section on Squatters and Early Settlers, a county history book² adds this:

IVERSON, LARS-Born Sogndal, Norway; wife Ragnhild; came to settlement in 1862; lived temporarily with Even Glesne at time of Indian troubles; later returned to settlement and acquired land in sec. 17. Died June 30, 1878, 49 years old; ... widow died April 17, 1903, 69 years old.

The preceding page of the county history book tells of Lars' actions during the first days of the US-Dakota war. It is mentioned that Lars had 6 children in his care.

In the 1970 census³ of Norway Lake township, we find Lars, age 44 and Ragnhild, age 40, and 8 children. The children's names are mostly unreadable. The two eldest, ages 16 and 14, were born in Wisconsin and the 6 youngest, ages 12 or younger, were born in Minnesota. This indicates a move from WI to MN in about 1857

In the 1880 census of the same place, Ragnhild Iverson, age 47, is a widow. Living with her are sons Axel, Johannes, Oen, Peder, Albert, Edvart, Andrias, Luis, and Gustav, ages 26, 22, 20, 18, 16, 14, 10, 8 and 6, respectively, and daughters Isabelle, age 12 and Inger, age 3.

In the 1900 census of the same place, we have R.....d Iverson, head of house, b. Jul 1833 in Norway, widow. Imm. 1850. In the same household: sons Andrew, Lewis, Gustav. (Son Albert and his family are on the neighboring farm.)

Starting with the anonymously written piece above, an appeal to the genealogist from Sogndalag⁴ yielded a trove of information, which we summarize here.

- Lars Akselsen was baptised 21 Nov 1830 at Vik I Sogn, Sogn og Fjordane County, Norway. His parents were Aksel Iversen and Ingeborg Hermundsatter.
- The rather cryptic passenger list for the of the bark *Kong Sverre* sailing from Bergen, Norway June 1, 1844 has
 - A. Iversen, age 42. That entry is followed by 6 others identified only by the initial of their first names, namely I, L, I, M, I, T. The ages of the 6 are given: 38, 13, 11, 7, 3, 9. The first initial fits Lars' mother, and second fits Lars, so we can be quite certain that this is the family and that Lars left Norway at age 13. The ship arrived in New York on August 2, 1844, a very early date for immigration from Norway.
- A renowned history book⁵, in a section entitled *Kong Sverre 1844*, there are thumbnail biographies of this family.
 - The family settled in Jordan Township, Green County, WI.
 - About Lars: "Lars Axelsen Undi,...., born November 21, 1830, died at Sundberg, MN, June 30, 1878 or 1879. Used the name Lars Axelson Iverson. Married, Ragnhild Olson Kjersonlien, born February 11, 1834, died in Kandiyohi Co., MN April 17, 1903. Family also lived in Forest Township, Rice Count, MN....."
 - A list of 12 children follows. The significance of the name "Undi" is not known.

Information⁶ on Ragnhild Olsdatter Kjersonlien:

- Kjersundlien is a farm in Hol Parish, Buskerud County, Norway.
- Ragnhild Olsdatter was born in 1833 to parents Ola Gudbrandsen Kjersundlien-Dokken and Birgit Ivarsdatter Ølmsdokken.
- The parents and six children emigrated to America in 1846. [Note: date disagrees with that in the 1900 census.]
- In America, Ola married a second time; he fathered, all together, 22 children.

The dates of death of Lars and Ragnhild were given in the county history book, cited above. Both have tombstones in the cemetery of the First Lutheran Church of Norway Lake.

Report prepared March 2020 by Earl O. Knutson, with gracious assistance from genealogist Jean Marthaler.

1 This was found on the site Findagrave.com. There are extensive postings about Lars on Ancestry.com, so the anonymous author is probably a descendant.

2 *Illustrated History of Kandiyohi County, 1905*. <http://cdm16022.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15160coll5/id/944> Image umn184057

3 Census records located and viewed via Ancestry.com

4 This is Jean Marthaler, who is also a genealogist for Vossalag. She pointed out that, although occasionally misstated, Sogn is not in Oppland County. It is in Sogn and Fjordane County.

5 *Norwegian Immigrants to the United States, a Biographical Directory, 1835-1850, Volume Two, 1844-1846*. by Naeseth and Hedberg. Information provided by Jean Marthaler.

6 From *Folk og Fortid i Hol, III, Ætte og Eige*, by Sigurd and Lars Reinton. Pages 249 and 250 in the section on Solheimsslåtte-Dokken. This resource was uncovered and shared by genealogist Jean Marthaler, who apparently picked up on the name Kjersonlien in the anonymous-authored Findagrave piece.