

## **Brita Monsdatter (Torsnes) and Urjans Iverson (Torblao/Sysae), Charter Members of the East Norway Lake Lutheran Church<sup>1</sup>**

Brita was born to Mons and Unni Torsnes at Torsnes farm in Balestrand, Sogn in December of 1834. Brita was 13 years old when the whole family left in April of 1847. They settled in Leeds Township in Columbia County, Wisconsin and farmed.

Urjans was born to Iver and Inga Sysae at Torblao farm in Ulvik, Hardanger in March of 1834. Urjans left Ulvik, Hardanger at the age of 22 with his parents, siblings and several cousins in the spring of 1854. They sailed from Bergen into Quebec, also settling in Leeds Township.

We can speculate that Brita and Urjans had met in church, as both appear to be members of Spring Prairie Church<sup>2</sup>. They were married by Pastor Preus at 6:00 am September 22, 1857.

In the 1860 census. Brita and Urjans are in Jackson County, WI. Urjans and Brita had 5 children in Jackson County [Uni (1858), Iver (1860), Inga (1862), Monsina (1864) and Lewis (1865)]. The 1860 census shows Brita's father Mons Lassesson living in their household, as does every census until his death.

Brita's brother Anders had married Urjans' sister Gjertu in 1866 and they settled in Swift County in Minnesota on land left vacant when its owners were killed in the Sioux Uprising. Urjans moved his family to Lake Johanna in Pope County in 1866. He farmed and served as the tax assessor. Urjans used logs from the recently deserted Lake Johanna fort to build a log cabin for his family there. This log cabin still stands and is a Pope County historic site since it served as the first school in the county when Urjans left it. Another son Martin (1867) was born in this log cabin.

In 1868 they moved to Kandiyohi County. Here Urjans bought school trust fund lands in Sections 16 and 17 in Arctander Township. Urjans farmed on Section 16, speculated with real estate in Sections 16 and 17, cleared real estate titles for the railroad, served as Justice of the Peace and ran the West Lake post office. He received his postal appointment on Valentine's Day 1871. Two more children were born to Urjans and Brita here in West Lake: Syvertina (1869) and Michalena (1871). They were baptized at East Norway Lake Church, but confirmed at Nannestad Lutheran Church.

Brita died in March of 1893. Urjans died a few months later in October of 1894. They are buried at Nannestad.

To summarize, Urjans and Brita had 8 children, born at three locations:

- Uni (1858),
- Iver (1860),
- Inga (1862),
- Monsina (1864)
- Lewis (1865)
- Martin (1867)
- Syvertina (1869)
- Michalena (1871).

*This report was condensed by Earl O. Knutson from a longer piece<sup>3</sup> written by Patricia Lindgren. Unless otherwise indicated by footnotes, all facts and figures were taken from the longer article.*

1 This is a condensation of a fuller piece provided by Patricia Lindgren. Those interested in the full article may contact Patricia directly at [lindgrpa@gmail.com](mailto:lindgrpa@gmail.com)

2 The Spring Valley Church, currently located in DeForest, WI, was formed in 1847. [www.springprairie.org/](http://www.springprairie.org/)

3 Sources: Kandiyohi & Swift County Vital Statistics, Historical Societies, H.R. Halland, [De Norske Settementers](#), Kandiyohi County Land Records, Jackson, Columbia, and Trempeleau County land and tax records, Marion Ivers Freeman Biography, "For the Sake of the Children" by Ellen Hilleboe (193\_\_), Norway Lake Church records, Spring Prairie Church records, Obituaries, Iver Syse "Minder" by Syver Iverson (1905), [Willmar Republican Gazette](#), family records and correspondence