

Eric Evendsen Kvennerud and Kari Reiersdatter. Charter Members of East Norway lake Church

This line from a local church-history book¹ provides a starting place:

Eric Evendsen Kvennerud, from Sigdal. Married with Kari Reiersdatter. Came to Rice County, Minnesota 1861, and to Norway Lake 1865.

A farm-history book from Norway² adds this (translation by E.O. Knutson):

Erik Evensen Kopsengeie (born 1819) married the widow Kari Reiersdatter in 1855. They had children Even (born 1857) and Reier (born 1860). They went to America in 1861.

Kopseng is a farm within Sigdal Parish, Buskerud, Norway. Indeed, Norwegian church records³ show that Erick Evensen was born 26 Dec 1819 to Even Ericksen and Berit Jour...sdatter Kopsengeie. Attempts to find Kari's birth/baptism record were unsuccessful.

Church records also confirm⁴ that Erik and Kari were married on 6 July 1855. Their ages were 35½ and 28½, respectively. The fathers names were Even Eriksen and Reier Bjørnsen, respectively. Erik's place of residence was listed as Engereie, which, presumably is in the vicinity of Skår and Kopseng. A picture of Erik emerges in which he moved around as a laborer or tenant farmer.

The citation in the above farm history book indicates that, before emigrating, Erik and Kari resided at a place called Kvernud on the Skår farm. (Skår is about 5 miles north of Kopseng.) Apparently, over the years, the name Kvernud was modified to Kvennerud, which name the family used in America, alternating with Evenson.

In census records⁵ for Lake Andrew Township, Kandiyohi County, the family name is Evenson. In 1875, the household consisted of Erick Evenson (age 55), Karen (47), Even (17), Reier (15, and Erick (11). The last-named was born in Minnesota, the other in Norway. The family also appeared in the 1880, 1895, and 1900 censuses.

The 1900 census gives more information than the others, namely: Erick Evenson, born Dec 1819; Cary, born Sep 1826; Reier, born Mar 1860. All born in Norway. They immigrated 1861. At census time, Erick and Kari were married 50 years and had 3 children, of whom 2 were living.

An informative piece about Kari, shown at right, appeared in the March 24, 1909 issue of the Willmar Tribune⁶. (The date of her death would have been March 20.)

Erick and Kari are both buried⁷ at the cemetery of the First Lutheran Church of Norway Lake. Their gravestones are annotated (note the misspelling Evinson):

Erik Evinson	Kari Evenson
27 Dec 1819	1826
2 Jan 1903	1909

Mrs. Kari E. Kvennerud, one of the first settlers of Lake Andrew, died last Saturday morning at the home of her son, Even Erickson, at New London. Her husband, Erick E. Kvennerud, died about four years ago. She leaves two sons, Even at New London, and Reier on the old homestead, and one brother, B. Reieron of New London. The immediate cause of death was old age, deceased having reached the ripe age of 92 years.

Report prepared by Earl O. Knutson, April 2019

1 *Festskrift. En Fremstilling af irkelige Arbeide I Norway Lake fra 1862-1916*. The line cited is from a partial translation by Debbie Boe. (Another translation, that of Edna Rude, renders the name as Erik Svendsen Kvennerud.)

2 *Sigdal og Eggedal – Gard og Slekt*. By Andreas Mørch, 1954. Page 948

3 <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/view/15925/12>

4 <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/view/1130/232>

5 All census data cited here were located via Ancestry.com.

6 <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn89081022/1909-03-24/ed-1/seq-8/>

[#date1=1862&index=0&rows=20&words=Kvennerud&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=Minnesota&date2=1910&proxtext=Kvennerud&y=9&x=9&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn89081022/1909-03-24/ed-1/seq-8/#date1=1862&index=0&rows=20&words=Kvennerud&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=Minnesota&date2=1910&proxtext=Kvennerud&y=9&x=9&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1)

7 Findagrave.com; Erick's tombstone, with the oddly spelled last name, was located with help from Amcestry.com.