

Christian Evensen and Bolethe (Bertha) Hansdatter Lien, Charter members of East Norway Lake Lutheran

Christian Evensen Lien was born on 12 June 1834 on the Lien farm Ål municipality, Buskerud, Norway to Even Larsen (1789-1865) and Ambjør Haakensdatter (1793-1842). He was baptized 30 June 1834 in Torpe Parish in Ål. He was the tenth of eleven children born to his parents. His mother died when Christian was only eight years old. Christian left Norway for the United States in 1857 and at some time, likely in Meeker County, met Bolethe Hansdatter and married her in 1868. Bolethe, who later changed her name to Bertha, was the daughter of Hans Evensen (1815-1905) and Christine Fredrike Andersdatter (1821-1887). Bolethe was born on 22 September 1842 and baptized 26 December 1842 in Modum, Buskerud, Norway. Bolethe was the oldest of five siblings, one of whom died in infancy. She immigrated to America with her parents and three brothers in 1857 settling in Greenleaf Township, Meeker County, Minnesota.

On 27 June 1870, Census taker Andrew Railson records Christian E. Lien living with his new bride in Norway Lake Township, Monongalia County, Minnesota. Christian's occupation is listed as Register of Deeds. An 1886 atlas of Kandiyohi County shows an eighty acre site in Section 12 of Arctander Township owned by C. E. Lien which was likely where they lived in 1870. There is evidence that Christian was at Norway Lake earlier than the 1870 census. At a congregational meeting in mid-October of 1865 which established the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Norway Lake, Christian was elected one of the first trustees. This writer's great grandfather purchased a fifteen acre wood lot on Games Lake which was jointly owned by Christian E. and Bertha E. Lien and John and Britha Ingemorson (later Foshager). The Warranty Deed was signed on 10 October 1868. (Incidentally, this is where the writer lives today.) Also, In June of 1870, Lien was elected as the first treasurer of the new congregation. He served as secretary of the Norway Log Church for most of the years of its existence.

An 1878 directory of Willmar businesses lists Christian Lien as a Judge of Probate. In 1880 Christian and Bertha are living in Willmar and his occupation is Judge. They apparently continued to live in Willmar and in 1900 his occupation is real estate agent. In 1910 they are living on 9th Street in Willmar and retired. It's interesting to note that Mrs. Lien lists her name as Bolethe, her birth name, rather than Bertha which she had used for many years. They also have a servant living with them. The Liens then moved to Grove City, Minnesota likely due to several of Bolethe's family living in the area. Bolethe Lien died 22 December 1916. Christian Lien died 29 December 1920. They are both buried at Immanuel Lutheran Cemetery in Grove City, Minnesota. Among the guests attending the funeral were Gov. A. E. Rice, Judge G. E. Quale and Sheriff Peter Bonde. Rev. Arnt Vaaler brought a wreath from the Vinje congregation of which the deceased was a former member. His obituary states that he was the first town clerk of Norway Lake Township and served as treasurer of Monongalia County. He was also the local land agent for the railroad and served as vice president of the Bank of Willmar. Not having any children allowed Christian and Bolethe to leave a substantial estate which was divided among relatives as well as a number of missions of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America. The Liens were instrumental in the establishment of the Lutheran church at Norway Lake.

Prepared by Marlin Henjum

Sources Consulted

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- Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905
- Minnesota, Wills and Probate Records, 1801-1925
- Norway, Select Baptisms, 1634-1927
- Norway, Births and Christenings, 1648-1927
- "Judge C. E. Lien," Willmar Tribune, 5 Jan 1921, p. 1.
- U. S. City Directories, 1822-1995
- U. S. Federal Censuses, 1870-1920
- U. S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current
- U. S. General Land Office Records, 1776-2015