

Gunder J. Moen and Elie Helgesdatter, Charter Members West Norway Lake Church

Gunder Jonsen was born 24 Jan 1841 to John Gunbjornsen Moen [1810-1876] and Ingeborg Gundersdatter [1810-1851] in Sigdal Parish, Eggedal local parish, Buskerud, Norway. He was one of 5 children.

Gunder was signed out of the parish for America 30 April 1861 as Gunder Jonsen Moen. Nothing is known of his journey to America. He probably spent time in Winneshiek County, Iowa since several members of the Skare family, members of the same parish in Norway had settled there in the 1850's.

He married Elie Helgesdatter Skare 24 Dec 1869 at Decorah Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Decorah, Iowa. He is listed as Gunder Moen and from Minnesota. Eli is listed as Eli Helgeson from Madison Township, Winneshiek County, Iowa.

Elie was born 15 Sept 1842 and baptized 25 Sept in the same parish as Gunder. Her parents were Helge Gunderson Skare [1803-1884] and Eli Andersdatter [1801-1858]. The 1865 Norway census places Eli on the Skare farm in Sigdal. She is living with her brothers Gunder and Helge Helgeson and Helge's family, occupation maidservant.

Elie signs out of the parish 14 April 1866 as Elie Helgesdatter Skare. She boarded the Bark Askur April 24th in Drammen and reached Quebec May 12th. Five of her siblings had preceded her to America. She joined them in Winneshiek County and stayed with her sister Mari and her husband Elling Wold in Madison Township.

Elie and Gunder returned to Minnesota shortly after their marriage and settled on land Gunder had purchased from John Evenson Jellum in 1869. The land was located in Arctander Township, Section 8 and by the 1886 plat map Gunder owned 198.91 acres, 120 in the S 1/2 of NE 1/4 and 78.91 in the W 1/2 of SE 1/4th.

Gunder and Elie have 5 children, all but Helge were baptized at Norway Lake.

1. Ingeborg: born 18 Jan 1871, died 15 June 1949 Kandiyohi, married Olaf Negaard, 3 children
2. John: born 2 Oct 1873, died 20 Oct 1873.
3. Elise Jonette: born 13 Oct 1874, died 15 Sept 1947 Portland Oregon, married Haavel K. Jorde, 3 children
4. Helge; born 26 Mar 1877, died 25 June 1902, Kandiyohi, single
5. Anne Caroline: born 14 Sept 1880, died 17 April 1947 San Fransico, married Ernest Marek, 4 children
6. John Gilbert: born 29 June 1883, died 12 Oct 1947 Minneapolis, single

Gunder and Elie returned to Madison Township In Winneshiek County for a few years between 1875 and 1880. Helge was born there in March of 1877 and baptized at the Madison Lutheran Church. They are back in Arctander Township by the 1880 census and have returned to farming.

Elie died 11 Sept 1910 of stomach cancer after an illness of about 6 months. She is buried in the West Norway Lake Cemetery. Gunder returns to Norway sometime after the death of his wife to visit family. He had been in America about 50 years. He died 14 Dec 1912 during his visit at the Skare farm and is buried on 23 Dec in the same parish where he was baptized.

Elie's brother Anders Skare and her sister Ingeborg Helgesdatter and her husband Ole Evenson Jellum are also charter members of the West Norway Lake Church and have a separate biographies.

Sources

- Digital Arkviet- birth, death and emigration records
- My Heritage family tree
- Norway Heritage
- Skare Family Letters published by the Sigdalslag in 1988
- Ancestry.com
- Public member trees on Ancestry
- Kandiyohi County Historical Association
- Evangelical Lutheran Church records

Written by Carole Heimdahl