

Anders Monson and Gjertru Iversdatter, Charter Members of West Norway Lake Lutheran Church

A modern grave marker¹ at West Norway Lake church has:

Andrew Monson, June 22, 1842 – Aug 7, 1885; Gjertrud Monson, Mar 31, 1845 – May 6, 1908

A venerable church history book² has:

Anders Monson, from Sogn. Came to Spring Prairie, Wisconsin 1847; to Norway Lake 1866. Married with Gjertrud Iverson, from Hardanger. Came to Spring Prairie 1854, and to Norway Lake 1866.

The above clues led to an exit record³ from Balestrand Parish, Sogn og Fjordane County, Norway, destination America:

28 April 1847: Mons Lassesen Torsnes, born 6 May 1807, and six children. The youngest child was Anders, born 22 June 1842.

So Anders was not quite 5 years old when emigrating. Anders' mother had apparently passed before the emigration. Another source⁴ gave her name as Unni Nilsdatter Huke. She had married Mons after the death of her first husband, who was Mons' older brother Markus.

Turning to Gjertrud⁵, a church baptism record⁶ shows she was born 31 March 1845 in Ulvik Parish, Hardanger (in present day Hordaland), Norway. The handwritten record is hard to read, but her parent's names appear to be Iver Ørjanssen and Inger M.... Another record⁷ shows that her family exited that church on 25 April 1854. Oddly, Gjertrud's name was not on the exit list.

Anders Monsen and Gjertrud Iversdatter were married⁸ on March 1, 1866 at the Beaver Creek Church in Trempealeau County WI. The record includes their parents' names, showing that Gjertrud's mother was Inga Mikkesdatter. The couple's ages and origins were listed, confirming the information above. Gjertrud's obituary⁹ states that, shortly after their marriage, the couple moved to Hayes Township, Swift County, MN.

The couple is listed in the 1875 census of Swift County and in the 1880 census of Hayes Township of Swift County¹⁰. In the 1900 census, Gjertrud is listed as a widow, a mother of nine children.

Anders life ended in tragedy¹¹. He passed away on August 7, 1885 from a head injury suffered in a brawl that took place in Kerkhoven some 10 days earlier. The other party was charged with manslaughter.

As noted in the 1900 census and in Gjertrud's obituary, Anders and Gjertrud had 9 offspring. From censuses, grave markers, and baptism records, we have uncovered the names of seven. (Spellings vary; for the eldest, the spelling below is from the grave marker; for the others, from baptism records¹²):

1. Iver M. Monson, 1867-1950
2. Anne Louise, 23May1869
3. Inga Serina, 27Sep1871
4. Martin Olaus, 7Aug1874
5. Nilje Bertine, 16Feb1876
6. Anne Gjertine, 21Mar1879
7. Albert Louis, 18April1884

Ancestry.com has a very substantial, but private, family tree for Anders and Gjertrud. This indicates a large and devoted flock of descendants.

Report prepared by Earl O. Knutson, March 2020.

1 Findgrave.com

2 *Festskrift - En Fremstilling at det Kirkelige Arbeide Norway Lake fra 1862-1916*. Ved Pastorerne Mons Sotendahl og N.J. Njus. Translation by Edna Rude, Gary MN

3 <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/view/8378/181>

4 Bygdebok *Balestrand II*, page 716. Information located and shared by Sognalag Genealogist Jean Marthaler.

5 Family historian Pat Lindgren has learned that Gjertru was the 2nd sibling to be a charter member of WNL, the other being Anna (Mrs. Iver Syse). Two other siblings, Urjans Iverson and Syver Iverson, were charter members of ENL.

6 <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/view/8314/45>

7 <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/view/8315/41033/4>

8 Located and viewed via Ancestry.com

9 *Kerkhoven Banner*, May 15, 1908. Located and shared by the Swift County Historical Society.

10 <https://www.mnhs.org/people/statecensus/3590308>

11 *Benson Times*, August 4, 1815 and August 11, 1885. Thanks to the Swift County Historical Society for locating and sharing these reports.

12 ELCA records, located and viewed via Ancestry.com.