

Lasse and Mari Njos¹, Charter members of West Norway Lake Church.

Let us start with this transcription of a handwritten note from Adeline Skogstoe:

Njos Family History. I, Adeline (Njos) Skogstoe, the daughter of Johannes (AKA John) and Tillie (Ellingson) Njos, was born on the farm five miles SW of Sunburg homesteaded by my grandfather Lasse Njos who emigrated to America from Leikanger Parish, Hermansverk, Sogn Norway to Rice County in which the city of Northfield is located, in 1862. Coming to Kandiyohi County in 1866. He sent for my grandmother Mari J. Henjum who was from the same area in Norway. Lasse Njos was born 7/14/1840 and died 8/19/1891. Mari J. Njos was born 10/19/1840 and died 9/25/1939. They were the first couple to be married in the log church on 10/24/1869 by Reverend L.J. Markhus. My great grandparents: Ole Ellendson Njos was born 12-14-1818 and died 3-26-1898; Anna O. Njos born 9-?-1816 died 8-30-1891. Compiled by Adeline Skogstoe. 1-17-2016. [Note: Adeline passed on July 20, 2016, at age 89.]

Confirming birth and death dates, the Njos tombstone at the West Norway Lake cemetery² reads: father Lasse, July 14,1840 – Aug. 13,1891 and mother Mari, Oct. 19, 1840 – Sept 25, 1939. Two church history books^{3,4} give substantially the same information as in Adeline’s compilation.

A burial record for Lasse⁵ agrees with the names and dates cited Adeline Skogstoe, with the minor exception that Lasse’s mother is listed as Anna Lassesdatter. The church where the funeral service was conducted was South Lake Johanna, although the burial (as noted above) was at the West Norway Lake church.

In the 1870 census of Norway Lake Township, Monongalia County has Lasse Njös, age 30, and Marie Njös, age 29; both born in Norway.

In the 1875 census of we have Lasse O. Njös (age 34), Mary (34), Christine (4), Olaus (3), Johannes (1) and Andreas (0), residing in household 74 of New London Township, Kandiyohi County.

The 1880 census of Arctander Township, Kandiyohi County, has a “Larse” O. Njos and Mari Njos, both age 39 and born in Norway, in a household with children Christine (9), Olaus (8), Johannes (6), Andreas (5), Syvert (3) and Albert (1). All the children were born in Minnesota.

In the 1885 Minnesota census of Arctander Township, Kandiyohi County we have L. O. Njos (44), Mari O. Njos (44) and 8 children, all with middle initial O.

In the 1900 census of Arctander Township, Kandiyohi County Mari Njos is listed as the head of household. She is a 50 year old widow, mother of 8 children of whom 7 are living. Her birth month and year are October 1841. The year of immigration was 1869. Living with her were sons Olaus (age 28), Johannes (26), Syver (23), Albert (21), Edward (18), daughter Marie (15), daughter-in-law Marthe (24) and boarder Jacob H. Hauge (52).

There is some disagreement about Mari’s father’s name. In the baptism record⁶ for the eldest child, Christine, the parents are Lasse Olsen and Mari Johannesdatter Njös; for the baptism of Anna Marie the listed parents were Lasse O. Njös and Mari Olsdatter Njös. As noted for Lasse’s funeral, the name Lassesdatter has also appeared. In other records, her father’s name is not listed.

Lasse Njös was listed 3 times⁷ as an officer of the log church and the West Church in Arctander Township, once with the middle initial A. The same book lists Lasse O. Njös among the early settlers of Arctander Township, and echos his date of death.

Attempts to find information about Lasse and Mari in records from Norway were unsuccessful, with one possible exception: in the 1865 census of Norway⁸, on a farm named Skår about 60 miles north of Njös, there is a Lasse Olsen, a 26 year old carpenter, and the woman in the household could be his aunt.

Report prepared by Earl O. Knutson.

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- 1 Middle names are in dispute. Lasse’s middle name is Ellendson in the charter member list and Olsen in the eldest child’s baptism record. The initial “O” is used in many census records. As for Mari, middle names Johannesdatter and Olsdatter and initials I, J, and O have appeared.
 - 2 Viewed at findagrave.com.
 - 3 Festskrift,
 - 4 Monson Lake
 - 5 U.S., Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Records, 1875-1940; accessed through Ancestry.com
 - 6 Ibid
 - 7 *The Illustrated History of Kandiyohi County, Minnesota*, viewed at reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15160coll5/id/94
 - 8 Arkivverket.no/digitalarkivet. Sogn og Fjordane County.