

## Alexander and Randi Petterson, Charter Members of West Norway Lake Lutheran Church

Alexander Petterson, son of Petter Person and Carolina Holm, was born 4 June 1841 in the village of Kallebraten in Uddevalla, Lane-Ryr Parish, Goteborg and Bohus County, Sweden. It has been said that Alexander ran away from his home in Sweden at age 13 due to family conflicts. According to Swedish Church Records he is recorded as leaving Sweden 9 October 1868 destination Norway. He arrived in Vang, Oppland County, Norway in 1869, a Swedish worker, as noted in the church records for Vang.

Randi Eriksdatter Kvale was born 31 October 1838 to Erich Christophersen Kvale and Kjersti Endresdatter Kattenvold in Vang. Randi gave birth to a daughter, Berit Jacobsdatter, 1 December 1861, whose father was Jacob Olson Hamre.

Alexander and Randi were married 9 June 1870 in Vang. Because Alexander was not born in Norway he was considered an alien. It was necessary, therefore, to have the sheriff sign and vouch for his character so he and Randi could marry. Their daughter, Kirsti Alexandersdatter, was born 16 September 1870. In April of 1871, Alexander Petterson Kvale from Sweden, his wife Randi, and children Berit and Kirsti left Vang Parish bound for America. They sailed on the ship *Frigate Bird* from Bergen 23 April 1871, arriving in Quebec the 4<sup>th</sup> of June.

Their first stop in America was Goodhue County, Minnesota where their son Erik Gustav was born 22 November 1872. The Petterson family followed Randi's brother, Christopher Kvale, who emigrated in 1866, first to Goodhue County and later to Swift County, Minnesota. Alexander and Randi settled on 160 acres in section 13, the Southeast one fourth, in Kerkhoven Township, Swift County, land that is still in the family. Their land was purchased from the railroad in 40 acre parcels between 1875 and 1880. Randi's brother had settled nearby in sections 14 and 23.

Daughter Caroline was born 31 December 1874, son Carl Johan 22 December 1876, son Anton 5 January 1879, son Kristoffer 13 August 1880 and daughter Emma Randine 5 April 1883. They were born on the farm in Kerkhoven Township and each was baptized in West Norway Lake Church.

**Berit** married Christopher Evenson Hollen in 1880. They were parents of 16 children, many of whom were buried in West Norway Lake Cemetery, as were Berit who died in 1910 and Christopher who died in 1916. **Kirsti** married Peter Solberg in 1895, settling in Brooten and Belgrade, Minnesota. Kirsti and Peter had seven children, including twins. Kirsti died in 1944, Peter in 1921, both buried in Trinity Lutheran Cemetery in Brooten. **Erik Gustav**, known as Gust, died in 1959 and sister **Caroline** died in 1927. Both never married and both were buried in West Norway Lake Cemetery. Caroline's name, birth and death dates were engraved on the reverse of Alexander and Randi's gravestone. **Carl John** married Geneva Soine in 1899. They were parents of 10 children. Carl died in 1958, Geneva in 1952. They had left Minnesota to settle in Ray, North Dakota. **Anton** married Clara Mortenson in 1904. They were parents of 7 children. Anton died in 1952, Clara in 1980, both buried in West Lake Johanna Church Cemetery, rural Brooten, Minnesota. **Christopher** married Nellie Sandvig in 1907. Christopher died in 1912, age 31, leaving his widow with two young sons and expecting a third child. Nellie died in 1984 at age 97. They were both buried in West Norway Lake Cemetery. **Emma**, the youngest child, did not marry but had a son whose father was Oliver Berg. She died in 1912, age 29, also buried in West Norway Lake Cemetery.

The Petterson's first appearance in a census was in 1875, the Minnesota State Census for Kerkhoven Township, Swift County, Minnesota: Alexander, 39, wife Randi, 36, daughters Beret, 13, and Kirsti, 5, son Erik Gustav, 3 and daughter Karolyn, age 0. Alexander and Randi continued to live on the farm in Kerkhoven Township until their deaths and were recorded there through the years in both State and Federal Censuses.

There were many Peterson families in the area, so to avoid confusion, the children decided to use Sanders as a surname since the boys were already known locally as "Sander's Boy's".

Alexander died 3 April 1935, age 93, funeral 8 April, Pastor Baalsen officiating. Randi died 10 February 1905, funeral 16 February. Their funerals were held at West Norway Lake Church with burial in the church cemetery..

### Sources:

- Swedish Church Records
- Vang, Oppland County, Norway Church Records
- Birth Records, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Kenyon, MN
- Birth and Death Records, West Norway Lake Church
- Sanders Family History, author Hannah Sanders
- State and Federal Census Records
- Land records Swift County, Minnesota
- Swift County Historical Society

Report co-written by Carole Heimdahl and Donna Kulenkamp. Donna is the Pettersons' Great Granddaughter.