

PETER WALDEMAR PETERSON AND MARTI ELENVOLD MATHIASDATTER JOHNSON, charter members of West Norway Lake Lutheran Church

Peter Waldemar Peterson was born on the Grindheim farm, Finnås/Moster Parish, Hordaland, Norway on September 7, 1841, the third son of Petter Nielsen Grindheim and Wilhelmina Katharine Metzel. His older brother Hans left for America in 1856 and his oldest brother Nels followed in 1857. In 1859 Peter and his younger brother Sophius Christian left Norway to join their brothers in Minnesota. In 1860 Peter and Christian are working on farms and living with the Gulbrand Anderson family in Carrolton Township located in Fillmore County, Minnesota. At some point the brothers left Fillmore County to join Nels and Hans at Norway Lake

In August of 1862 Dakota Indians attacked the settlement at West Lake killing thirteen people. Word reached the Norway Lake settlement which was a short distance east and the settlers took refuge on an island in Norway Lake. Peter and his brothers all enlisted in Company D of the First Minnesota Rangers and joined General Henry Sibley's campaign to punish the Dakota Indians. They patrolled the area from Sauk Center to Fort Abercombie on the Red River and into North Dakota. On the return from the Missouri River, younger brother Kristian became ill and died. The brothers constructed a coffin out of rough lumber and he was buried near Hannaford, North Dakota. The remaining brothers returned to Minnesota where they were mustered out of the army on November 4, 1863.

Peter must have ventured to St. Francis in Anoka County where his brother Nels and the Mathias Johnson family resided while much of Minnesota was closed to settlers. It was likely there that he married Anne Elenvold Mathiasdatter Johnson 1865. Anne was the daughter of Mathias Fjeldhaugen Johnson and Valgjerd Estabovold Amesdatter, neighbors to Hans and Nels at Norway Lake. Anne was born March 11, 1847 in Stord, Hordaland, Norway. Peter and Anne returned to Norway Lake where

1. daughter Wilhelmina was born in 1866,
2. followed by Peder M. in 1868
3. and Vine Josephine in 1870.

While church records indicate that Peder and Vine Josephine were baptized at Norway Lake, little other information has been found on these three children at this time. Peter's wife Anne died October 19, 1872 at the age of twenty-three.

On May 30, 1872, Peter married his first wife's sister Marti Elenvold Mathiasdatter Johnson. Marti was also a sister of Nels Peterson's wife Marthea. Marti was born on December 25, 1854 in Stord, Norway. Peter and Marti had twelve children some of whom took the last name Grindheim:

1. Andreas Peterson Grindheim (1873-1942);
2. Christian Peterson (1875-1943);
3. Peter Marius Grindheim (1877-1891);
4. Johann Peterson Grindheim (1878-1963);
5. Wilhelm Andreas Peterson (1880-1944);
6. Matthew Peterson Grindheim (1883-1961);
7. Nicoli Waldemar Peterson (1885-1964);
8. Arne Peterson (1888-1952);
9. Henry Peterson (1891-1968);
10. Clara Sophia Peterson (1893-1974);
11. Alfred Peterson (1896-1975)
12. and Palmer Peterson (1900-1992).

Only Christian who married Corina Hamborg remained in the Norway Lake/Sunburg area. Of the other children three settled in North Dakota, one in California and six in the state of Washington. Probably because so many of their children lived on the west coast, Peter and Marti left their farm in Sections 11 and 15 of Norway Lake Township and moved to Silverdale, Washington prior to 1910. Marti died on February 26, 1913 and Peter on October 2, 1923. They are buried in Mt. View Cemetery in Silverdale, Washington.

Prepared by Marlin Henjum

Sources Consulted

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Norway, Select Baptisms, 1634-1927

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