

Andreas Olson [Pikhaugen] and Helene Hansdatter Bjerkengen, Charter Members of East Norway Lake Lutheran Church

Andreas Olson was born in Norway in December 1828. His death record identifies his parents as Ole Anderson and Dorothea Pikhaugen. According to Oluf Rygh, there are two farms named Pikhaugen in Norway; one in Nordsinni in Nordre Land, Oppland (Gard #3) and one in Aamot parish in Vest Torpa, Nordre Land, Oppland (Gard #70).

Helene was born in April 1828 on Bjørkeengen farm (Gard #74) in Vest Torpa, Nordre Land, Oppland, Norway. Bjørkeengen was a hussmanplass (Bruk #9) farmed by Hans Hansen (1796-1863) and Olava Hovelsdatter (1797-1859). Of 7 siblings, Helene and 4 others ended up eventually in Kandiyohi County, Minnesota.

Andreas Olson and Helene Hansdatter were married in 1855 in Aamot parish in Torpa, Nordre Land, Norway. They had two children who were born and baptized in Aamot church – Ole, born in 1855, and Olava, born in 1856. According to *Boka om Land*, the family of four emigrated to America in 1857. They first stopped in Allamakee County, Iowa before eventually settling in Kandiyohi County, Minnesota.

Andrew and Helene Olson farmed a 280 acre farm in Sections 10 and 15 in Lake Andrew Township. He is listed as owning 120 acres in the south half of Section 10 and 160 acres in the north half of Section 15 in the 1886 Lake Andrew Township plat map.

The 1880 census of Lake Andrew Township in Kandiyohi County shows Andrew Olson (age 50), Helene Olson (age 51), Olava Olson (age 21), Ole Olson (age 13), Anna Olson (age 7), and the hired man Bernt Hanson (age 26) all living on the farm. It should be noted that the original Ole Olson was born in 1855 in Norway and would be 25 years old in 1880. Because there is no record of two Ole Olsons as children of Andrew and Helene in Minnesota, the first Ole Olson must have died before the second Ole was born.

The children of Andrew and Helene Olson were: (1) Ole Olson, born 1855 in Norway; deceased some time before 1866; (2) Olava Olson Skaalerud, born 1856 in Norway, died 1935; Hannah Olson Reese, born 1860 in Iowa, died 1916; Ole Olson, born 1866 in Minnesota, died of rheumatic fever in 1901 leaving behind a wife and four small children who were taken in by the Gjelle family; Hans Anderson Pikhaugen, born 1867, died 1870 (buried at East Norway Lake cemetery); and Anna Helene Olson Norstedt, born 1873 in Minnesota, died 1940.

Andreas was the subject of several of Gabriel Stene's Reminiscences Columns in the newspaper. Gabriel always spelled Andreas last name as "Peekhaugen," which gives us a clue of the pronunciation.

The November 19, 1869 minutes of the annual meeting of the East Norway Lake Lutheran Church show that it was "decided that Andreas Olson continue as trustee..." It was further decided that each of the trustees was responsible for gathering money to fix up the Assembly House (which must have been the Old Log Church) and for the Pastor's salary, plus bringing the Pastor two bushels of oats or barley. Andreas' brother-in-law Kristoffer Engen was elected at that same meeting to the building committee for what was to eventually become the present day East Norway Lake Lutheran Church.

At the annual meeting on November 24 1870 a subscription to cover the congregation's debt was collected and 20 men, including Andreas Olson, each gave one dollar to pay the debt. Andreas O. Pighaugen (sic) is listed as one of the Østre Norway Lake Menighed in 1875, along with his brothers-in-law Christopher, Martin, and Johannes Engen. Pastor L.J. Markhus had just taken over as Pastor for the flock at East Norway Lake Evangelical Lutheran Church that year and the congregation moved into their new white church with a steeple.

According to Kandiyohi County Death Records (Book B, page 2), Andrew Olson died in Lake Andrew Township on June 23, 1893 from "paralysis of the brain," which I believe is a stroke or an aneurism. He was 64 years, and 6 months old. His birthplace is recorded Norway. His occupation is listed as farmer.

The *Willmar Republican Gazette* published an obituary for Andrew on June 29, 1893, page 1. "*Andrew Olson of Lake Andrew, whose serious illness was noted in our last issue, died on Friday morning. Deceased was one of the early settlers in the county and a highly respected citizen of his town. He leaves a wife and four children: Ole A. Olson, Mrs. O.E. Reese, Mrs. Carl Johnson, and Mrs. Alb. Norstedt. Funeral services were held Monday in the new church at Norway Lake.*" Andrew is buried at First Lutheran Church of Norway Lake; the Synod church. His funeral took place June 26, 1893 according to *Keeping the Faith, Sharing the Faith* (1992).

Helene Olson (sic) died on February 24, 1898 (Kandiyohi County Death Records, Book B, page 40) from "lung fever" which I believe is pneumonia. Dr. Chr. Johnson signed her death certificate. She was 69 years, and 10 months old. Her birthplace was also recorded as Norway, and her parents are listed as Hans and Olava Bjorkengen. Her funeral took place at First Lutheran Church of Norway Lake on March 1, 1898 and she is buried in the church cemetery according to *Keeping the Faith, Sharing the Faith*.

Report prepared by Pat Lindgren, shortened slightly by Earl Knutson.