

Anton Helgesen and Anna Larsdatter Bergum Stai, Charter members of East Norway Lake Lutheran Church

Anton Severin Helgesen Stai was born 5 Dec 1832 in Stor-Elvdal, Hedmark, Norway to Helge Halvorsson Stai and Berte Torgalsdatter Mykleby. Anton was baptized on 30 Dec 1832 at Stor Elvdal. In 1863, Anton married Anna Larsdatter Bergum born in Gudbrandsdalen, Norway in November of 1836. Her parent's names and place of birth have not been determined. Anton and Anna had three daughters born prior to leaving Norway in 1870. They arrived in Norway Lake the same year. Their fourth child, a son, was born after arriving in Minnesota. Their four children were:

1. Beata Antonsdatter Stai was born in Norway on 14 December 1864 and confirmed at East Norway Lake Lutheran on 6 April 1879. She remained single and lived with her parents in Hays Township until her death at age thirty on 26 July 1895. She is buried next to her father in the Hillcrest Cemetery in Hays Township.
2. Anne Serine Antonsdatter Stai was born in Norway on 12 June 1865 and confirmed at East Norway Lake on 14 November 1880. Anne was no longer living at home at the time of the 1885 census and no further evidence was found of her existence or death.
3. Helga Antonsdatter Stai was also born in Norway on 11 February 1868 and confirmed at East Norway Lake on 26 Nov 1882. She married Jacob W. Oyen in Minneapolis on 14 July 1889. They lived in Minneapolis until sometime after the turn of the century when they moved to Everett, Washington where Jacob worked for the Department of the Interior. They had six children and are buried in Seattle, Washington. Helga died 18 July 1937 and Jacob died 8 January 1935.
4. Ludvig Herman Stai was born in Hays Township, Swift County, Minnesota on 30 March 1872 and was baptized at East Norway Lake on 19 May 1872. He was confirmed at East Norway in 1887. He married Anna Sophia Samuelson 27 May 1893 in Hennepin County. The family spent some time in South Dakota and Minnesota, eventually settling in Montana. They had nine children. Anna died in 1961 and is buried in Highland Cemetery, Great Falls, Montana along with other family members. No record was found of Ludvig's death or burial.

Anton died on 15 September 1906 and is buried at Hillcrest Cemetery (aka West Lake Covenant Cemetery) in Hays Township, Swift County, Minnesota not far from the land he settled. His last name on his grave marker is spelled Staie. Sometime after the death of her husband, Anna Stai moved to the state of Washington to live with her daughter Helga and family. In the 1930 census she is living in a nursing home in Spokane where she died on 16 July 1930. Anton's burial site raises the question of his church membership at the time of his death. None the less, the Stai children were raised in the East Norway Lake Lutheran Church where Anton and Anna were charter members.

Prepared by Marlin Henjum

Sources Consulted

- Ancestry.com
- East Norway Lake Lutheran Church, To God be the Glory, 1875-1975, Centennial History
- Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905
- Montana County Marriages, 1865-1986
- Norway, Select Baptisms, 1634-1927
- U. S. Federal Censuses, 1870-1930
- U. S., Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Church Records, 1781-1969
- U. S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current
- Washington, Select Death Certificates, 1907-1960