

## Reier Olsen and Sigrid Taraldsdatter Stai, Charter Members of East Norway Lake Church

Reier Olsen Stai was born to Ole Pedersen (1801-?) and Enke Ragnild Riersdatter (1804-1885) on May 14, 1844 in Bjørnaasenset, Stor-Elvdal, Hedmark, Norway. On 6 (16?) Nov 1868 Reier married Sigrid Taraldsdatter daughter of Tarald Knutson (1791-1866) and Gjoran Simensdatter (1794-1884). Sigrid was born 19 September 1836 on the Negaard farm, Stor-Elvdal, Hedmark, Norway. The family migrated to America in 1872 along with Reier's mother whose husband had died. Their third son, Robert was born on 28 Nov 1872 in Arctander Township.

Per Reier's obituary, he and Sigrid had eight children including a girl who died in infancy. Most of the surviving children did not remain in the Norway Lake community:

1. Guren was born in Norway in 1868. He moved to Beltrami County where he died in 1890 at the age of twenty two and is buried in the East Norway Lake Lutheran Cemetery.
2. Tharald was born on 13 May 1870 and baptized 3 July 1870 in the Stor-Elvdal parish. By 1910, he had moved to Liberty in Beltrami County, Minnesota where he farmed and was married to Mary Hanson. They raised three children. Tharald died on 6 Feb 1955 and is buried in Bemidji, Minnesota.
3. Robert R. Stai was born 28 Nov 1872 in Kandiyohi County and was baptized at East Norway Lake Lutheran on 6 April 1873. He married Oline C. Hagen in 1901 in Kerkhoven. They moved to a farm in Beltrami County and raised eight children. Oline died on 9 April 1944 and Robert died on 31 March 1945. They are both buried in Bemidji, Beltrami County, MN.
4. Richard O. Stai was born about 1875. Apparently he remained in the area and died at Solomon Lake near Willmar, MN on 7 Nov 1891. He was only age sixteen.
5. Peter Sam Stai was born on 8 March 1878 in Arctander Township, Kandiyohi County. On 23 March 1910 he married Minda Belinda Anderson (1889-1924). They raised six children most of whom remained in the area: Rosella (Martin Grove), Arnold (Gladys Thompson) and Perry (Alice Lien). Sons Gehard died at age 19 and Orin died in infancy. Daughter Mabel moved from the area.
6. Mina Olson Stai was born 4 May 1880 and baptized at East Norway Lake on 27 June 1880. On 18 Aug 1902 she married Adolph C. Hagen at Norway Lake. They lived briefly in South Dakota and then moved to Cashel Township, near Murdock in Swift County, MN where they raised four sons. Eventually they moved to Minneapolis where Adolph died 29 Dec 1932. Mina died 15 Feb 1953 in Carlton County, MN Burial sites remain undetermined.
7. Ottine Olsen Stai was born 6 Oct 1881 in Arctander Township. She was baptized on 26 March 1882 at East Norway Lake Lutheran. Ottine's mother died prior to her second birthday. She was single and living with her father on 1 June 1900. Her father's will indicates that Ottine was adopted by Ole Negaard following the death of her mother. It appears Ottine was counted twice in the 1885 state census, once with her father in Arctander on May 4 and again in St. Paul on May 19 living with the Ole Negaard family.

Reier's mother Ragnild who was living with them died in January, 1885 which may have been a factor in Ottine's moving in with the Ole Negaards. The obituary for her father in 1934 states that Ottine, who attended the funeral, was living in Los Angeles, California at time. No other details have been found to this point.

Sigrid Stai died 1 Sept 1883 and she was buried at the East Norway Lake Cemetery on 6 Sept 1883. She left seven children behind, the oldest fifteen and the youngest not yet age two. Her husband Reier Stai lived to age 89 dying on 12 Feb 1934. He is buried with his wife in the East Norway Lake Lutheran Cemetery. Interestingly, his funeral was held at West Lake Lutheran which likely means he had left East Norway Lake Lutheran. The Stais farmed in Section 29 and 30 of Arctander Township and were charters members of East Norway Lake.

Prepared by Marlin Henjum

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