

## Iver Knudsen Syse and Anna Iversdatter<sup>1</sup>, Charter Members of West Norway Lake Lutheran Church

(On the modern map of Norway, there is just one farm named Syse<sup>2</sup>. It is in Ulvik Parish, Hordland.)

Iver and Anna were charter members of the above-named church and well as the later-formed First West Norway Lake Church. The centennial history book<sup>3</sup> of the latter church has this:

Iver K.Syse (1830-1904) from Ulvig, Hardanger, Norway. Came to Dane County, Wisconsin in 1854, to Beaver Creek, Wisconsin in 1857, He married Ann Iverson Torblaa (1837-1905), sister of Urjans Iverson; they came to Norway Lake in 1869. Iver served in the Civil War. He was the first president of 1<sup>st</sup> West Norway Lake Church. Iver and Anna opened their home to many meetings and worship services were held in their granary before the church was built in 1892. They had 13 children: Knut, Inga, Guri, Iver, Syvert, Betsy, Martha, Alfred, Emma, Albert, Ellen, Cora, and Emma. Iver drowned in Norway Lake while fishing, at the age of 74. Iver and Anna Syse are buried in the Monson Lake Cemetery.

A magnificent, and modern, grave marker at the Monson Lake Lutheran Church reads:

IVER K SYSE FÖDT 26 APRIL 1830 DÖDE 5 MAI 1904	ANNA SYSE FÖDT 22 MARTS 1838 DÖDE 21 DECBR 1905
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The birth/baptism records from the Ulvik church have entry<sup>4</sup> for Iver. The birth date is shown as 20 April 1830, differing from that on the grave marker. The listed parents are Knut Ørjanson Syse and Guro Ivarsdr. Byrse.

Iver and Anna both left<sup>5</sup> Ulvik Church in Hordaland on 25 April 1854. He was 24 years old and listed on a separate line. She was 16 and listed along with her parents, Iver Ørjansen and Inga Mikkelsdatter, and four siblings. Almost certainly, Iver and Anna were acquaintances from childhood and were shipmates on the ocean crossing.

The following three paragraphs<sup>6</sup> give a concise account of Iver and Anna's life:

Iver Knutson Syse was born at Hardanger, Norway, April 26, 1830. His parents were Knut and Goro Urjanson, born at the same place. At the age of twenty-four, Mr. Syse immigrated to America, taking passage on the sailing vessel "Condor" to Quebec. He settled the same year, 1854, in Dane County, Wisconsin. On Sept. 21, 1864 he was enrolled as a private in Co. G, 12<sup>th</sup> Wis. Vet. Inf. He participated in Gen. Sherman's famous march to the sea; contracted malaria fever in Georgia, from the effects of which he never fully recovered; discharged May 31, 1865. Mr. Syse has held township offices, chairman supervisors and assessors, and was at one time county commissioner of Swift County.

On Sept. 27, 1857, Mr. Syse was married to Miss Anna Iverson. She was born Mar. 22, 1837, also in Hardanger. Thirteen children blessed this union. Four of these are dead and their remains rest at West Norway Lake cemetery. The oldest living son, Ivar, resides in northern Minnesota; Sivert lives in Farmington, Mont.; Ellen, a teacher in Willmar Seminary; Albert, Emma (also a teacher), and Cora, living at home.

Mr. Syse met his death by accidental drowning in the waters of Norway Lake about two o'clock p.m., May 5, while on a fishing trip. The body was found about four o'clock p.m, May 12.

The name Iver K. Syse appears at least two dozen times in a 1905 county history book<sup>7</sup>, attesting to Iver's heavy involvement in the community.

Iver's death by drowning and the week-long search for his body gave rise to several front-page newspaper articles<sup>8</sup>.

Report prepared by Earl O. Knutson, March 2020, leaning heavily on a longer article by Pat Lindgren, Curt Ellingboe, and Nancy Granata.

1 Family history researcher Patricia Lindgren has established that Iver and Anna were first cousins. (These relationships were independently verified by Hardangerlag genealogist Stephanie Benoit.) Two of Anna's brothers, Urjans Iverson and Syver Iverson, as well as her sister Gjertrud (Mrs. Anders Monson) were also charter members and are written up separately.

2 [www.norwayparishes.org](http://www.norwayparishes.org).

3 *Monson Lake Lutheran Church, Sunburg, Minnesota. 1886-1886*. Edited by Leonora Lindquist, Nora Gjerde, Cora Lesteburg, Rev. Jerry Lamb. Page 28

4 <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/view/11748/48553/21> This record was located and read by Hardangerlag genealogist Stephanie Benoit. The birth date appears to be 20 April 1830.

5 <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/view/8315/41033/4>; Thanks to Hardangerlag genealogist Stephanie Benoit for finding and reading this entry.

6 *Civil War Veterans of Kandiyohi County*, Kandiyohi County Historical Society, Willmar, MN. 2011, page 169.

7 *Illustrated History of Kandiyohi County, Minnesota, 1905*. Victor E. Lawson, Matin E. Tew, J. Emil

8 Willmar Republican Gazette, 5/12/1904; New London Times, 5/12/1904; Willmar Republican Gazette, 5/19/1904; New London Times, 5/19/1904