

Sondre Auverson Norheim

1825 – 1897

Sondre Norheim was born in Morgedal in Telemark county, Norway, June 10, 1825. He immigrated to the United States in 1884 with his wife and five of their six children. After a brief stay at Oslo, Minnesota he came to what is now McHenry County and filed on a homestead near Villard Post Office. The land description from the Register of Deeds Office in McHenry County, Towner, North Dakota is S½SW¼ and W½ SE¼ of Section 35 - Township 155 - Range 77.

He left Norway with a dream of finding a better living in America. Sondre was a modest man, so even his neighbors in North Dakota did not know that his name was a legend in Norway.

Sondre Norheim, recognized as the Father of Modern Skiing, invented a new ski binding and introduced the Telemark and Christiania turns. In order to take full advantage of his skis, Norheim decided they had to be firmly attached to his feet, so he took thin shoots from birch roots, soaked them in hot water, and twisted them together so they would fit around his heel. Now he could twist and turn on his skis and fly through the air like a bird. Thus was the humble beginning of ski bindings.

Norheim died in 1897. He went to his grave a virtual unknown. Although his place of burial is recorded in the Norway Lutheran Cemetery records, his grave went unmarked for many years. A granite boulder and a plaque were dedicated and placed on his grave in a memorial ceremony June 12, 1966. Norway Lutheran Cemetery is only five miles west of where he homesteaded in North Dakota.

Rannei Aamundsdatter

1824 – 1913

By Hermod Monsen

Until recently the age of Sondre Norheim's wife Rannei Aamundsdatter has not been known. We knew that she was born in Bergestig, Øyfjell in Telemark and that she passed away in Oregon, USA, but we did not know the year of her death.

Through Hadeland Lag of America we have been informed that Rannei passed away on 1 November 1913 in the State Hospital in Salem, Oregon. It was David Gunderson, Lag genealogist at Hadeland Lag in Fergus Falls, MN, who supplied the death certificate for Rannei Aamundsdatter Norheim. Rannei was Dave's great-great aunt, so Dave has his roots from Telemark too, in addition to Hadeland. He coordinated the purchase of a memorial marker for Sondre Norheim's wife Rannei, and the Telelaget of America's Board of Directors has been a major contributor for the marker. Dave and American relatives have contributed funds, too, and the marker is now placed on Sondre's grave in Denbigh, North Dakota.

Sondre Auverson Norheim married Rannei Aamundsdatter on 15 January 1854 in Brunkeberg Church in Kviteseid parish in Telemark. Rannei was the daughter of Åmund Olavson Bergestig and Hæge Olsdatter in Øyfjell.

Sondre and Rannei had 8 children: Ingerid, Hæge (died at 1 year), Ole, Hæge, Anne, Auver. Amund and Talleiv.

The Annual Sondre Norheim Wreathlaying Ceremony and Dedication of the Rannei Aamundsdatter Memorial Plaque

NORSK HØSTFEST 2008

Master of Ceremonies, *Rev. Luther Hanson*

PROGRAM AT SONDRE NORHEIM GRAVESITE

Call to Assembly *Joan Haaland Paddock & Bob Gustafson*
Antiphonal Viking Lur Horns

Welcome and Opening Prayer *Rev. Luther Hanson*
Chaplain, Trinity Homes

Floral Dedication of the
Rannei Aamundsdatter Memorial Plaque *David Gunderson*
Great Great Nephew of Rannei Aamundsdatter, wife of Sondre Norheim

Laying of the Wreath* on Sondre Norheim's Grave *Eilev Omland*
President, Norsk Skieventyr, Morgedal, Norway

PROGRAM IN NORWAY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Welcome *Lila Espeseth Heskin*
Former member, Norway Lutheran Church

Greetings from Skien *Geir Arild Tønnesen*
Vice Mayor, Skien, Norway, Minot's Sister City

Greetings *John Haugo*
President, Telelaget of America

"En Hilsen På Norsk" *Elaine Nordlie*
Kin of Rannei Aamundsdatter and Vice President, Telelaget of America

Remarks *David Gunderson*
Great Great Nephew of Rannei Aamundsdatter

Remarks *Tarjei Gjelstad*
Executive Director, Norsk Skieventyr, Morgedal, Norway

"Built on a Rock the Church Doth Stand" *Nicolai F.S. Grundvig, 1783-1872*
Joan Haaland Paddock & Kai Robert Johansen, Trumpets

Closing Prayer *Rev. Luther Hanson*

*You are cordially invited to the Norway Lutheran Church Fellowship Room
for a reception hosted by the Espeseth Family, annual hosts
since the visit of Princess Astrid of Norway in 1984.*

**Wreath Courtesy of Lowe's Floral*

Our thanks to George Officer, Transportation Chairman