The Stornæve farm history - Hølonda, Trøndelag, Norway

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Per O. Rød wrote the history of the Stornæve farm and its inhabitants back in 1968. Decades before, several children of Stornæve had emigrated to the United States. This is the tale of their home soil and their people.

The barren land was the beginning
Picture the beginning: during the last ice-age, Norway was a vast and empty land. As the ice subsided, fjords, mountains and valleys started to appear. Gradually, the land was inhabited by plants, animals and people.

The first people were hunters and gatherers. Later they also became farmers. Hunting, fishing - and generally harvesting also the uncultivated part of the land - would still be an important side to life in this country all up to modern times. In many parts of the country, these age-old traditions still survive today.

The long and cold winters required that every storeroom was filled to the brink when the growing season was over: all available resources had to be utilised. There had to be enough food to keep both man and domestic animal fed until the spring and the summer returned once again.

Breaking new land
As the population grew, men and women would break out from their groups to settle on new land. People would always be on the look-out for places where they could raise and feed their families. It is in this setting that the history of Stornæve – or Næve – begins.

Once upon a time there was that very first day when a single person - or a group of people - came walking through the landscape here. This is a rich and lush part of the country, with forest clad valleys, highlands, rivers and lakes. Today’s name of the surrounding area is Hølonda – or Høylandet – the high land.

The people who arrived here would have been looking for the ultimate spot to settle down and build their dwellings. If we could have put ourselves in their place we would have felt excitement - but also the responsibility. Food and shelter were the vital ingredients of survival.

Næve is situated at 350 metres above sea level. No other farm south of Skolda is located at a higher altitude than this. The people settling here may have been motivated by the great possibilities for fishing and hunting. There are several lakes and rivers in the immediate vicinity.

The age of the farm
Næve is an old farm name, potentially given by the surrounding landscape. It could stem from words indicating a nose or a beak. It is likely that the farm has been here since the Viking era or before.

Local folklore says that the farm got its name from the man who first settled here, Nefer.

A farm somewhat out of the ordinary for the region
At the very beginning, Næve was a settlement out of the ordinary for this region: it was quite isolated and far away from the neighbouring communities. It would have taken many, many hours to walk to the nearest settlement - with no roads, just paths leading through the wild landscape. This relative isolation may have lasted for several hundred years.

In the surrounding areas – in Orkdal, Meldal, Gauldal and around the lakes in the north-eastern part of Hølonda and in Skaun - the farms would have been situated quite close to one another in clusters - or gränder.

There are also other isolated farms in the region but they would have been cleared much later, in times when the available land was scarce.
Situated on the borders between Hølonda and Meldal
Næve is situated on the borders between the communities of Hølonda and Meldal, and there would be contact in both directions. Today, Hølonda is part of the municipality of Melhus.

In the olden times, there would be people moving along the old paths crossing the area - in particular when there was still activity connected to the smelting furnace in Sæterdalen. This smelting furnace was connected to the Løkken Verk in Meldal (a copper and pyrites mine). People travelling between the two mines would often have passed through Næve.

There was once a church built in connection with the smelting furnace in Sæterdalen, the Grutsæter church. The last bride to get married there was Randi Stornæve, in 1798 - when she got married to Erik Orvatnet.

Stornæve, Litlnæve and the cotter’s holdings
Næve was the name of the original farm and is used generally as the name for the surrounding area. Later, as the farm would be sectioned out, the main farm would be known as Stornæve (big Næve). A smaller part of the farm would be known as Litlnæve (small Næve). Stornæve would later also be sectioned into Utigarden Stornæve, Framigarden Stornæve (west - also named Lia) and Framigarden Stornæve (east).

Today, Stornæve is within the borders of the municipality of Melhus - and Litlnæve within the borders of the municipality of Meldal.

Two cotter’s holdings are known to have been connected to the farm: Baklihaugen and Nævsbakkan (see more information below). In the fields, just up from the farm, there was also a small holding called Berghåggån where remains after old building foundations and ploughed fields could still be seen as per 1968.

How many people lived here?
In 1645 there were 8 people listed as living at Næve – and in 1665 4 people. These early headcounts only included men and boys over the age of 12 - as they were mainly conducted to get an overview of the number of men available for military service in case of a war.

In the mid-1800s, there were 25 people living at Næve, the people at Litlnæve not included.

Good crops and prosperity
Despite the higher altitude, the farm would provide good yields from its grain and other
crops. In earlier times, it was in fact one of the most productive farms in the community.

There was a grain mill at Næve as early as in 1621. The mill was located on the Litlnævsbekken (creek) (Kvernbekk). The arable land - cleared over the course of several centuries - wasn’t just surrounding the farm buildings. A bit further out in the landscape you would find the field Åkerhåggårn. At Bjønnlivatnet (lake) there were two haybarns, even in more recent times.

These are the animals listed in connection with taxation records:

- In 1628 there were 13 cattle.
- In 1657 there were 20 cattle, 15 goats and 16 sheep.
- In 1802 it was estimated that the farm could feed 2 horses, 14 cattle and 16 sheep.
- In 1835 there were 2 horses, 17 cattle, 26 sheep and 1 pig.
- In 1875, Ola Gunnarson had 2 horses, 14 cattle, 21 sheep, 12 goats and 2 pigs. Around this time, the keeping of goats was more or less abandoned in these whereabouts.
- When the estate after Ola Stornæve was settled in 1768 there were listed 14 cattle, 16 sheep, 6 goats, 2 pigs and a red mare (horse).

From timber coming from the Næve forests they would make charcoal and they would have extracted tar.

**No summer dairy in the mountains or the outfields**

In more recent history, there has been no seter (summer dairy) related to the Næve farm(s). However, old names like Nævsætermyra and Vollmosætertjønna indicate that both Næve and the neighbouring Vollmo would have had a seter in earlier times.

**Old tales**

It is said in an old tale that Stornæve originally was part of Meldal. However, the farmer at Stornæve once killed a poacher from Granhaugen stealing fish from Kvernbekk and Litlnævsbekken (creeks). The killer was expelled from Meldal by the local priest but he didn’t have to go far. The expulsion was simply executed by moving the borders so that Stornæve from then on belonged to the neighbouring Hølonda. Whether this is a true story or not is not clear.

**Historic information about large landowners owning Næve**
According to the land registry of Olav Engelbrektson from around 1530, Næve belonged to the crown. The same applies at around the year 1600. Later - between 1680 and 1693 - it belonged to Henrich Müller. After that the farm was passed on to Peder Kaasbøll. Jacob With became the owner in 1697.

During all this time, the farmers running the farm would be leaseholders paying rent to the owner - in addition to different kinds of taxes.

In 1734, Ivar Stornæve and Ola Gaustad purchased the farm from Torsten With for 210 rigsdaler, thus becoming the first owners also living here and cultivating the land.

THE FAMILIES LIVING HERE

Below, you will find a list of the families and generations who have lived on the Stornæve farm. Details related to the Litlnæve farm has not been included in this saga-chapter. Information about the cotter's holding Nævsbakkan has also been included as Ingebrigt Evenson - who was born in 1875 and who emigrated to America - came from the family living there.

Explanation of the reference code being used:

- **The initial year** indicates when the farm was handed over to the next owner or generation - or when the registration of this data took place.
- **SN1** stands for Stornæve 1, being the main and original farm. **SN2** indicates the instance when the original farm would have been split into two sections etc. - **SN2** being the second section at that time.
- **The letter following SN1** etc. indicates the individual family living there, so for example SN1-A would be the first family living on the original farm, SN1-B the next family etc.
- **The last digit** indicates the generation of that family - so for example SN1-C-1 means the first generation of the third family living on the original farm.

The earliest records

The first proper census that was conducted in Norway took place in 1769. Records prior to that time were not always complete. The oldest listings below will therefore mainly contain the men of the household.

- **Year 1557** SN1-A-1 Gollek.
- **Year 1590** SN1-B-1 Ingeborg.
The third known family - residing at Stornæve between 1606 and 1745

Year 1606 SN1-C-1 Erik (1) / wife's name unknown.
1. Ola Erikson b. 1595 (took first over half the farm - then later the whole farm).
2. Randi.
3. Jon.
4. Ellev.
5. Vetl-Ellev (Wellelluff).
6. Helge

Year 1630 SN1-C-1 Erik (1) (gave away half the farm to his son Ola).

Year 1630 SN2-C-2 Ola Erikson b. 1595 / Randi (Ola took over half the farm from his father, Erik (1)).
1. Erik (2) b. 1630 - took over the farm.
2. Jøsten b. 1635 - went to Bjørkjønnsåsen.

Year 1650 SN1-D-1 Erik (3) Olsen (this third Erik took over the half of the farm kept by Erik (1) - may have been his son-in-law).
1. Karl b. 1653.

Year not known SN1-C-3 Erik (2) Olsen b. 1630 d. 1698 / married to Siri Mathiasdotter (this generation took over both halves of the farm and it was once again one entity).
1. Even b. 1662 - took over the farm.
2. Ola b. 1665 -> Storfuglåsen.
3. Per b. 1668 d. 1737 - bell-ringer in Meldal.
5. Beret - married to Jon Jonson Kulbrandstad, Megarden.

Year 1697 SN1-C-4 Even Erikson b. 1662 / married to Marit d. 1758 80 years old as a poor woman.
1. Siri - married to Ivar Erikson.

Year 1725 SN1-C-5 Siri Evensdotter d. 1754 / married to Ivar Erikson Skjegstad b. 1702 d. 1745 - bell-ringer.
1. Siri b. 1723 - married to Kristen Henrikson Skjegstad.
3. Even b. 1730 - moved to Trondheim.
4. Erik - moved to Ila in Trondheim.
5. Guru - married to Jens Johnson, lived in Ila in Trondheim.
6. Gunhild - lived with her sister in Ila in 1761.
7. Rasmus b. 1741 - died as an infant.
8. Rasmus b. 1743 - died prior to 1761.
9. Ingebrigt b. 1744 d. 1746.

In 1734, SN1-C-5 Ivar Erikson Skjegstad - together eith Ola Ingebrigtsen Gaustad (see below) - purchased the farm from last large landowner, Torsten With. However, Ivar had problems keeping up with his financial obligations and his family left Stornæve after his death in 1745. Ola Ingebrigtsen Gaustad then took over the whole original farm and a new family reigned here.

The fourth known family came here in 1734 - and is still on part of the original farm even today in 2016

*Year 1734 SN2-E-1 Ola Ingebrigtsen Gaustad b. 1705 d. 1768.*

married 1. to Ingeborg Ivarsdotter Kjøsen b. 1707 d. 1752
1. Ingebrigt b. 1736 - married to Marit Brønjølsdotter Kulbrandstad Nergard, went to Røen.
2. Beret - married to Even Fredrikson Lillenæve, Nordgard.
5. Ivar b. 1748 - died prior to 1768.
6. Ola b. 1749 d. 1751.

married 2. 1753 to Ingeborg Persdotter Almås b. 1728 d. 1820.
1. Ingeborg b. 1754 - married 1. in 1786 to Pål Jonson Storkvikne - and 2. in 1803 to Jon Olson Fuglås, Orkdal.
2. Ingeborg b. 1756 - died as an infant.
3. Ingeborg b. 1759 - married 1793 to Tore Jonson Storkvikne.
4. Randi b. 1765 - married 1798 to Erik Mikkelsen Orvatnet, Meldal.
5. Per b. 1767 - took over the farm.

After Ola Ingebrigtsen Gaustad's death in 1768, his widow Ingeborg Persdotter Almås remarried Ola Jonson Konstad and they ran the farm until Ingeborg and Ola's youngest son, Per, took over.

*Year 1769 SN1-E-1b Ingeborg Persdotter Almås / Ola Jonson Konstad b.1742 d. 1827 -*
schoolmaster and deputy sheriff.

1. Beret b. 1769 - married 1796 to Ola Ellevson Mellingseter, Skaun.
2. Ola b. 1771 d. 1790.

Year 1815 SN1-E-2 Per Olson b. 1767 d. 1832 / married 1800 to Ragnhild Olsdotter Trotland born at Herrem in Rennebu 1770 - died 1853.
1. Ingeborg b. 1801 - married 1829 to Tore Lornsson Blomli, Meldal.
2. Ola b. 1802 d. 1804.
3. Ola b. 1805 - took over the farm.
4. Kari b. 1810 - married 1. in 1831 to Ola Knutson Storbuan, Meldal. She returned home after 7 months as a widow. She later married 2. Sivert Erikson Konstad in Vassbygda.

Year 1825 SN1-E-3 Ola Person b. 1805 d. 1896. / married 1830 to Siri Ingebrigtsdotter Storfuglås b. 1794 d. 1868 from cholerine fever.
1. Ragnhild b. 1833 d. 1927 - married to Ola Gunnarson Klefstadgjerdet.

Year 1855 SN1-E-4 Ragnhild Olsdotter / married to Ola Gunnarson Klefstadgjerdet b. 1818 d. 1882.
1. Ola b. 1853 - left for America.
2. Gunnar b. 1855 - had Nordstu Løberg in Horg but left for America in 1880.
3. Per b. 1858 - left for America.
4. Sven b. 1859 d. 1930 - shop assistant with Jakob Hammerås, later shopmanager at Gåsbakken.
5. Ingebrigt b. 1861 - married 1. to Marianna Johnsdotter Simz, Sjølian and lived there / married 2. to Johanna Arnsdotter Øverøyen, Meldal.
7. Arn b. 1866 - died from meningitis in 1882. Died the day before his father. They were buried together on the 14th of May.
8. Ingeborg b. 1868 - married to Johannes Svenson Kulbrandstad, Teigen.
9. Ivar b. 1871 - married to Anna Marie Johnsdotter Simz, Sjølian (Gåsbakken, Heggdalen).
10. Sigrid b. 1874 d. 1942 (Nyheim, Gåsbakkan).

Ola Gunnarson Klefstadgjerdet sold off half the farm to Sivert and Erik Dombu from Meldal in 1878. He kept what today is known as Utigarden Stornæve which is the only part of the farm that is continued in this saga-chapter as there are no recorded emigrants coming from the later families living on the two other and later entities.

Year 1884 SN1-E-5 Even Olson b. 1864 d. 1934
married 1. to Eli Eriksdotter Dombu, Tøfte, Meldal b. 1868 d. 1895 from tuberculosis.
1. Ola b. 1893 - left for America.
2. Erik b. 1895 d. 1965 - married to Johanna Eriksdotter Lund, Meldal.

married 2. to Ingeborg Olsdotter Syrstadmo from Meldal b. 1883 d. 1961.
1. Even b. 1904 d. 1920.
2. Ragnhild b. 1906 - died as an infant.
3. Ola b. 1909 - died as an infant.
5. Olav b. 1912 - took over the farm.
7. Ingebjørg b. 1916 - died as an infant.
8. Ingeborg Alfrida b. 1917 - married to Ole Arntson Stenseth, Eidssaga.

Year 1942 SN1-E-6 Olav Evenson b. 1912 / married to Agnes Persdotter Buset b. 1922, Orkdal.
1. Even b. 1942 - married to Sigfrid Olsdotter Nergård, Orkdal b. 1944.
2. Ingrid Kristine b. 1944 - married to Ola Haugen, Orkdal.
3. Astrid b. 1950 - married to Asbjørn Gunnarson Solberg, Meldal.
4. Ola b. 1950. - took over the farm

Year not known SN1-E-7 Ola Olavsen b. 1950

Year 2002 SN1-E-8 John Olav Olson b. 1980

The cotter's holding Nævsbakkan
The cotter's holding Nævsbakkan was located close to the lake Bjønnlivatnet, on the border towards Vollmoen in Meldal. This holding was abandoned around 1910.

In 1875, the cotter Even Bakkom had 3 cattle and 8 sheep here.

Tor Benjaminson b. 1803 d. 1846 had been working as a farmhand at Stornæve and he cleared land here when he got married in 1832. Tor died fairly young and his wife was left to fend for herself in a very poor existence.

Tor - known as Tor Nævsbakkom - was from Semsåsen in Skaun and his parents were Benjamin Skjølberg from Orkdal and Ingeborg Johansdotter Blokkum (Oppistua Blokkan).
The first generation here:
Year 1832 Tor Benjaminson b. 1803 d. 1846 / married to Kirsti Andersdotter Klefstadhaugen b 1810 d. 1900.
1. Anders b. 1832 - moved to Haugen, Meldal in 1851.
2. Ingeborg b. 1834 - died 1844.
5. Even b. 1841 - took over the holding.
7. Ingeborg b. 1847 d. 1938 - married 1877 to Arn Arnson Eidsmotrøen, Melhus. Ingeborg was the mother of Ivar born 1874 son of Anton Ivarson who was the sheriff (lensmann) of Melhus.

The second generation here: 
Even Torson took over the holding from his mother and he lived here with is family until 1910 when he purchased Konstadsaga and moved there.

1. Sigrid b. 1870 d. 1938 - married to Ola Erikson Branemsflotten, Melhus.
2. Tomas b. 1872 - married to Lina Johannesdotter Romundset, Aure (Jølandsvollen).
3. Ingebrigt b. 1875 - left for America.
4. Kirsti b. 1877 - served at Branem, Melhus.
7. Anne b. 1885 - married to widower Per Andersson Melby, Skaun.

This is a non-professional text written in English by Lars Dahlmann Anstensen. In the main, the content is based on the local history book for Hølonda, Sør-Trøndelag, Norway – written by Per O. Rød in 1968 – published by Melhus kommune. However, it is not a direct or in any way a complete translation of the original text and is mainly focussed on information relevant for descendants of the people emigrating from Næve to America. We should be in awe of the enormous amount of time and effort that Per O. Rød and his helpers put into writing the local farm history. The reader should be aware of the fact that
this is a second hand source and that it may contain unintentional errors.

The Næve farms seen from above - screengrab | Copyright: Google maps.

Landscape close to the Næve farms - screengrab | Copyright: Google maps.