

The Ellingbø Farms of Vang I Valdres

[Most of the following information is translated from Anders Frøholm's Valdres Bygdebok I, Del A, Gardar og slekter I Vang]

The Ellingbø farms lie in the middle of the Vang parish, just above the Vange parsonage. In the past, the Ellingbø lands went down to lake Vangsmjøsa on both sides of the church and parsonage. The mid-point of these lands rose from 600 to 700 meters above the Vangsmjøsa, in the east 250 to 270 meters; and in the west 150 to 200 meters. In the lower part, the land is flat or gently sloped, but in the upper part it is steeper, 25-35 degrees. Probably the entire area, including the parish lands, was one large farm in ancient times. Because most of the clusters of buildings are about the same elevation above the lake, it is likely that the oldest farmyard was up in the area of Nigarden and Sygarden. Prehistoric artifacts, mostly from the Viking times, have been found on Vange, Klokkarhaugen, Grindaheim and Skøre, at a lower level, closer to the lake.

The old name of the parish farm was Vange, coming from the word *vang* or *vangen* (Old Norse *vangr*), which means meadow, often used for the grassy field around a churchyard, but must have its origin before the introduction of Christianity. It could have been a gathering place, probably for worship, in pre-Christian times.

Ellingbø is mentioned only once before the 1500s, on 2 Feb 1489 (*Diplomatarium Novegicum* Vol. 2, p. 701). A photocopy of the original document and an English translation are included among documents on this website. There are only a few known ancient artifacts from Ellingbø. The most important is undoubtedly a burial mound next to the road on farm number 34/1, Skøre.

In old Norse times, the farm was divided into two registered farms, *Nørre* (North) and *Sørre* (South) Ellingbø. (The old use of *North* and *South* in Vang is actually the *West* and *East* compass directions, respectively, along the axis of the lake.) Cultivated land became divided into parcels and strips that were intermingled between the two Ellingbø farms, and to some degree between *Nørre* Ellingbø and Vange (the parsonage farm), until the time of the reassignment of property lines (*jordskiftet*) in 1864. (A map of Ellingbø, showing the farms just before *jordskiftet* is included among the documents on this site.)

By the middle of the 1600s, *Nørre* Ellingbø was divided into three farms – Nigarden (farm number 33/1), Bøkkadn (on Bøkkø)(numbers 31 and 33/3 - 33/4), and Nordigarden (33/5). From *Nørre* Ellingbø, a smaller part, Haugadn, was split off to become farm number 31 Haugo in the 1860s. In the 1860s, Bøkkadn was divided into farm number 3 Bøkkadn (half of the earlier farm), number 4 (a fourth part) which later became part of number 5 Nordigarden, and Haugadn (on Haugo), which became farm number 31, with a farmyard down near the lake and Lundsplassene. Nigarden was not divided, but a smaller part, number 6 Ellingbøhaugen, was split off in 1904 and included the earlier crofter's places.

Also, in the 1600s, *Søre* Ellingbø was divided into two farms. After *jordskiftet* in 1864, the houses in *Søre* Ellingbø Uppigarden were moved about 450 meters down towards the northeast, to the east side of the Gullringen fields, about 150 meters up from Vangsmjøsa,

where the cultivated lands for this farm were brought together. After 1864 the name of this farm became Skøre, and since 1935-1940 this has been used as the family name.

Cultivated land at Vange and below the Ellingbø farmyards is tilled easily, consisting of black slate-bearing topsoil in the lower areas and more gravel-containing soil above the houses. At Skøre it is sand and sandy soil.

The grazing land above the fenced-in lands was common land for the whole Vang Parish, but the woodland were apparently divided into parcels allocated to the farms since about 1700, or long before. Between the small farms (on each of the larger farms), the woodlands were surely common land somewhat longer – on Ellingbø until 1739.

The outlying pastures and land that was mowed at summer farms in the mountains, was used by everyone. Crofters went here and there in the mountains, wherever they wanted to go, among other places under Grindo (Grindafjell), but by around 1910 to 1935, public use of outlying pastures had ended. After the Heimlijordskiftet, each farm had strips of land that extended up to 2 km from the old farmstead, to about 800 meters above sea level, which they could fence in, while there was common grazing above.

The farmers all had a right to fish in Mjøsen (Vangsmjøsa), East and West of the Vange parish. On Helin and other waters in Vang, the farms were allotted specific evenings for fishing. These rights were sometimes sold and the farmer who owned the fishing rights were allowed a fourth of the fish caught by the person who purchased the rights. For many years the fishing at Helin was at the stream at Grøvestøla until St. Lawrence's Day (August 10th). Later, the fishing time was extended until the Saturday that was closest to August 24th. The rules for fishing rights changed through the years and were complicated. One evening around 1908, the farmers Ivar from Bøkkø, Helge Ellingbø, and Endre Syltevik Ellingbø were fishing at Helin where they caught 72 fish. The same evening they also fished at Strø, where they caught 48 fish, from ½ to 1 kg each. They still had four evenings left and they shared the fish they caught.

From ancient times there has been an Ellingbø summer farm at Ellevstøle on the Southwest side of Helin. Marit and Helge T. Ellingbø built a hytte called "Helgebu" by the road at Ellevstøle. This is now owned by Leif and Siri-Gro Solemsli. Helge T. Ellingbø's uncle, Anders Helgesen Ellingbø, built a hytte down the hillside, closer to the lake at Ellevstøle. Anders' hytte was inherited by his daughter Magdelene, then by other family members until it was leased and then sold to a German family.

Around 1830 the summer farm of Sygarden was moved to Nørre Smådalen. Bøkkadn, Nigarden and Nordigarden had summer farms in Brattsete, Northwest of Ellevstølan, until 1850. Nordigarden and Sygarden had autumn farms at Skåldungo, Nigarden at Strønden, Skøre (Uppigarden) at Hødnstad, Bøkkadn at Syrpesæte until 1927, then at Grøvsstøle, and Sygarden had a spring farm at Tango until about 1900. Uppi-Haugen or Ellingbøhaugen, 33/6, took over the old summer farm of Nigarden on Skåldungo in 1904.