

# Wald Family Histories

Collected by Allen H Wald

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## Abstract

The first known history of our family was written in 1939 titled: "The Wald History" by Cleve Darling. I am aware of several errors in Cleve's work. I hope that I have been able to bring out the truth where evidence was available. Nevertheless, I am

not so proud as to suggest that any of my work will be found perfect in the end. The stories here are based upon the documents I have found, and where possible I have tried to include copies of the originals or at least a credible reference. Please feel free to contact me and let me know what you think.

The earliest Norwegian immigrants in our family came to the Fox River Settlement in Illinois during the mid 1850's. During the 1860's they moved to Iowa and were among the first to homestead near the towns of Cambridge and Slater in Story county. The original family farm was actually on the northern most boarder of Polk county close to Cambridge. Our grandfather, Ferdinand Oliver Wald, was born 27 July, 1896 in Fertile Iowa (a cousin to Cleve Darling). Ferdinand married Velma Howe on 31 December, 1925. On his birth records from Fertile Iowa his last name was originally written "Wold". This name was later crossed out and changed to "Wald" in the county court records. Ferdinand's father was named Ole Olson Wold, and signed his name "O. O. Wold". He was a Lutheran minister who served in Moreland Illinois for two years, and then in Fertile Iowa and surrounding towns for fifteen years. He died of pneumonia in 1908 and left behind his wife Augusta and eight children. The youngest, Oletta, was born after he died. Pastor Wold's parents came to America with the great Norwegian immigration of the 19th century. His father, Ole J. Olsen Wold (Vold), came from the township of Årdal in Rogaland county, Norway. His mother, Udbjörg Bertine Andersdatter Gaard (Bertha Gaard), came from the island of Talgje, also in Rogaland county. On 7 July, in the year 1891, O. O. Wold married Augusta Simerson from Belmond Iowa, daughter of Frederick Simerson (Simonsen) Molstad and Pernille Larsdatter Bratten. Both of Augusta's parents were born within the Veldre parish, in Hedmark county, Norway. In the church book from Veldre it states that Pernille and Frederick left for America in 1867, just four days after being married. The records of their family can be found in the Norwegian bygdebok for Veldre where there is a rich family history. There you will read of Pernille's family lines which can be followed back to King Håkon V Magnussen who was king of Norway from 1299 to 1319. We have also discovered another royal lineage in the Gaard family lines. This family can be traced back to Gard Tøresen, b. 1373, who was Lagmann (literally: 'law man', modern equivalent: high court judge) for that entire region. His family history includes many royal lines including the 'Holy Birgitta' of Sweden.



<sup>1</sup>Our Wald family name comes from the beautiful valleys of Ryfylke fjord and the ancient farms of rural Årdal, Norway. Today you will still find a farm there called Vadla, which in earlier times was spelled Walde or Valle. Many of our ancestors lived on Vadla as well as a neighboring farm called Valheim or Wallem. At one time Valheim was part of Vadla, but today they are separate farms. There are several individual farms and dwellings that were given variants of these names, and many similar spellings were used through the centuries. The letters 'V' and 'W' were often used interchangeably in ancient Norwegian documents and would sound the same when spoken.

We know from Årdal histories that our great great grandfather, Ole J. Olsen, b. 1831, was raised in a dwelling called Vold or Volden. This is the specific origin of our name. Ole came to America in 1854, and the surnames Vold, Wold and Wald are all found in documents that originated here. His birth was recorded in the Årdal kirkbok where his father was called Ole Iversen Volden. The place, Volden, was not part of the larger Vadla group, but it was close in location. The family at that time was poor. Folklore from Årdal tells of one individual they called 'Spel-Ola' who was notorious for

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1 This calligraphy was penned in the year 1680 where it represents the actual place of our Wald heritage. There are many examples of such artful writing in the various land and tax records of these early times. Often these are the only records we have of the people who lived then.

his ability to 'spelle' which means 'to play', and his skill was with the fiddle. Spel-Ola also loved to drink and was not above thievery to make his livelihood. After a questionable career he was sent to prison for stealing several items from the local people including three copper cheese kettles and a bull. Ole was sentenced to five years hard labor. In 1860 he died of tuberculosis while still in prison, and he left behind eight children and a wife. We know from the record of the prison priest at Kristiansand that Spel-Ola was indeed the same person as Ole Iversen Volden, b. 1808. Also in that folklore it describes their home as "an old smoke-house with a turfed-roof on the meadow between the oldest school-house and Lonn". The Norwegian word 'vold' means 'a meadow or a field'. The story tells that the dwelling they called Volden was torn down when the property was sold in 1861. Therefore, the place of our family's origin no longer exists.

Nevertheless, the Wald name also follows from the greater history of these farms of Årdal, and many of those places do still exist. Spel-Ola's father was called Iver Olsen Lillemoe, b. 1773, because he lived at Lillemoe which means 'little mountain'. The farm records tell us that Lillemoe was part of Valheim and also part of Vadla. Iver's birth record tells that his father was called Ole Wallem, b.~1754. There is a confirmation record for Ole Iversen Valde, age 16 in 1770. This was likely the same individual. The church records before 1760 were lost, so there is very little known of the earlier generations. A probate record from 1778 lists Ole Wallem as the son of Iver Olsen and Lisbet Halvorsdatter Valle. In 1762 the same place was called Valheim. This Iver would have been born about 1730. There is evidence that he owned part of the land that he farmed even though he and later generations were all called 'huusmand' which means they were tenant farmers. Census and tax records from 1701 and earlier list men with similar names at these same places, but there is little to tie the generations together and nothing about the women. In 1701 we find Olle Olssen age 25 on Walde and Ifwdr Olssen age 54 on Wallem. In 1663 we find another Olle with a son named Olle on Valle, no ages given, and two men named Iffuer on Vallim. In 1665 we again find Ole Olsen on Valle, no age given, and Iffuer on Vallin age 60. This Iffuer (b.~1605) is the earliest known ancestor of the Wald paternal line given the assumption that the family lines from this place are in some way contiguous. With these early generations evidence is sparse.

For those interested, you can look on a map or view these places using satellite photos. Just look north and east of Stavanger for Årdal, Hjelmeland and Finnøy. The Gaard farm on the island of Talgje, part of Finnøy, was another place where many of our ancestors lived. Most of these farms are kept today just as they were hundreds of years ago. Even the original church building at Årdal still stands.



## The Wald History by Cleva Darling

Written in 1939

Norway, the most democratic kingdom, occupies the western part of Europe. It is a little larger than New Mexico. There are no privileged classes and no order of nobility;<sup>2</sup> and in no country are there so many great statesmen, professional men, and scientists of peasant birth.

It was here, in the middle of the eighteenth century, in the little town of Ordahl<sup>3</sup> that Iver Lillemo was born and lived all his life. He married and had one child named Ole Peter Vold, our direct ancestor. Ole married Siri--and they had eight children: Ole J.; Sarah; Torkel; Gurina; Peter; Martha; Oley; and Andrew.

Of these children not all is known. Oley chose the name Dahl because of coming from Ordahl. He came to the United States and bought a bakery in Indianola, Iowa. He married a Louder girl of Indianola and they had two children, Ella and Charles. Ella married a Mr. Gilbert. After his death she married Mr. Mathis and they had one child, Virginia. Virginia had stage ambitions and little is known of her.

Sarah and Gurina also came to the United States and both settled in Illinois. Sarah married a man from Esmond, Illinois and had one girl who married Ludwig Burg. She has six children. Gurina married Mr. Olson. They had two children: Regina, who married Hulver Warren of Eagle Grove, Iowa, and had three children; and Andrew K. who lived at Cambridge, Iowa, married and had four children-- Ella, Mary, James, and Ollie.

Torkel (or Tom as was his nickname), married a Swede girl from Boone, Iowa. They moved to Omaha, Nebraska and there three children were born. His wife never gave up her ambition to be an actress and began training the children for the stage when they

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2 In earlier times there were the poorer class called huusmand or cottagers who usually did not own the land and held no family rights to the land where they lived and worked. There were also various royalty and nobleman classes as well as military classes.

3 Årdal, pronounced: [ Or-dahl ].

were very young. One day Tom said he was going up town for a couple of hours. He never returned, nor did the family ever hear from him again. The family moved to the Western Coast where the children went on the stage.

Little of Peter and Andrew is known except they left Norway and went to Germany to seek their fortune.

Martha--ah, Martha loved not wisely but too well. One of the children, Ole Miller came to America and served in the Spanish American War. He never married and the last heard of him, he was in the Old Soldiers Home in Crookston, Minnesota.

The children of Iver Lillemo's families learned to work at an early age. There was always much sewing, weaving, and knitting by the girls; and the boys went out on the fiord with their father to fish. The waters of the fiord are too deep to freeze so that work went on the year around. Most of the fish were sold; but some was salted and dried to be used at home. Farming was the principal occupation of the family.

But there were good times too. Occasionally they met at homes of their friends; and their weddings were always a big occasion.

The Scandinavians are a religious people and Norway has the reputation of being the most Christian and the most Protestant country in the world. Every Sunday they would all don their best attire and go to church. The women and girls wearing their dark, full skirted dresses and shawls made a beautiful picture as they walked along the road.

Christmas was always a gala occasion. There was extra feed of all kinds for the stock and the birds. Carols were sung and the story of the Christ child told over and over again. The gifts were distributed. These were usually practical, such as clothing, but none the less appreciated.

Then there were the big dinners. Lutefisk<sup>4</sup> being the main dish with potato cakes, lefsa, kringla and probably komla. Of course, the Helliga Yule rice was never forgotten. They also had preserves from the berries that had been found in the woods.

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4 Lutefisk: Cod fish, treated in a lye solution and served boiled. Literal translation: "Lye (boiled) fish". Lefsa: (lefse) A thin pancake from rolled dough served buttered and folded, and sometimes sugared. Kringla: (kringle) A rolled, round, or twisted--pretzel shaped pastry. Komla: A type of candy. Helliga Yule rice: "Sacred Christmas rice".



The children were sent to school as soon as they were permitted. Every hamlet had it's parochial school, as public schools weren't so common. Here the minister taught them to read and write, and they studied the Bible around the fireplace at night. Legends of the skalds or early bards were told and many other songs and poems.

Taking up our ancestors on the Gaard side, which is our great grandmother's side, we have Andrew Olson Gaard, who was married twice. His first wife was Margreta Gaard and there were three children: Ole, who married Christena Meling; Elsie who died quite young; and Olous who drowned as a young boy after he slipped while walking on a cliff by a fiord. Before help could come, he fell into the ocean and drowned.

Margreta died, and Andrew married again. We find that our grandmother is a child of this marriage. His second wife, Sarah Haanda, and Andrew had eight children, all of whom married. Margreta married Nels Jorstad. Sarah married Lars Larson and they had no children. Olous had four children, Andrew had two, and Theodore had two. Bertha Hubert married Ole J. Wald and they had nine children. Malein married John Hanson and had six children. Helena married Jorgen Gangness and they had six children also. Andrew's second children and their descendants still reside in Norway.

We find things were easier for Andrew Gaard's family than for the Iver Lillemo family. He had inherited some money and with perseverance had accumulated enough money and land to be considered well-to-do. He gave the children the best education within his means. The girls were sent to sewing school, which is the same as college in our day; and the boys were taught the rudiments of farming for he intended to start them out when they desired to make homes of their own.

Andrew Gaard build and furnished a nice home. One of the nicest things about this home was a parlor. A parlor was a luxury in those days. Only the wealthy could afford them so this family was the envy and admiration of the country.

After Margreta had been married for a while, they heard of the many opportunities in America, and as times were harder, decided to come to this country. But Margreta was loathe to go to this strange land without some of the immediate family so she prevailed upon her parents, and Helana and Bertha were permitted to accompany her. So in the year of about 1850 they started for America.

It was a long, tiresome journey, but they finally reached the United States, and then went to Morris, Illinois, where there was a large Scandinavian community. Here Margreta and her husband moved on a farm. But Margreta was not to enjoy this new land for long. She became sick and after a long illness, died.

Ole J. Wald with two brothers, Torkel and Oley, also decided to try their luck in America. They were tired of the sea and so many of their friends had written back to tell of the rich black soil that grew crops in abundance, that being of an adventurous nature, they made their plans to come. They also came to Morris, Illinois.

These boys and girls were never to see their native land again. Here Bertha and Ole J. met and after a short courtship were married in Ottawa, Illinois, in 1854 and moved to a farm between Ottawa and Morris. It was here they had four of their children; Sarah in 1857; Susie in 1860; Oley in 1861; and Andrew in 1863.

This farm was small and stories were coming in of the rich land at low prices in Iowa. But it was far away; still it would be wonderful to have a place of their own. So by hard work and diligent saving, after a few years, they had almost enough for a farm.

One day a stranger came through the country. He had been in Iowa and bought a farm. He told of it's location, the nearness to market and neighbors. Ole listened and knew that this was what he wanted. He found the man was willing to sell and soon the deal was completed. The hard earned money of the Wald family had been exchanged for a deed to land they knew nothing about.

Ole began to have misgivings about the deal and decided to see the farm. He made the trip and was far from disappointed. Hurrying home, he began to prepare for the westward journey. They loaded their possessions into a covered wagon; and hitching their two horses, their only livestock, they set out for their new home in the early spring of 1865. Towns were far apart, but Ole hunted for wild game so there was always plenty of fresh meat. The roads were poor and at places practically impassable, but they seldom lacked a house in which to sleep, or assistance when needed. Many of the families along the way were only too glad to exchange a night's lodging to the weary travelers for news of "back East".

Finally, after several weeks of tedious traveling, they reached Story County. Here they stayed with friends until a log house could be built. Then the long, hard work of clearing the fields began.

The first year, just small fields of corn and small grain were seeded. Since there were few pieces of machinery, the work was done by hand. The fields were marked off in rows in both directions for the corn and then holes were dug at these intersections and the corn planted. In the fall the small grain was cut by hand, then a flail was used for threshing it. Many a hot afternoon, the younger boys stood in the field with a sling shot to keep the cranes and crows away from the fresh young shoots.

The men and boys were not the only ones who were busy. The girls got up just as early. Their days were spent in sewing, knitting and preserving or drying fruits for the long, cold winter months. The fruits could easily be found in the woods, and the wool for knitting had to be cleaned and carded in the home.

More children were also added to the family: Severen on December 10, 1865; Martin on October 11, 1869; Bessie on November 9, 1872; Burton on December 25, 1875; and Marie on January 10, 1879.

When Burton was a baby, a new frame house was built. Before this, there had been just a two room log house with the children sleeping in the loft, so the new house was something to be proud of.

In the evenings and on rainy days, Ole repaired harnesses and sharpened the tools or made wooden shoes; these were more practical and cheaper for the fast growing children. Bertha sat near, sewing or knitting, telling the children stories of the childhood in Norway.

Although Ole Sr. had always been a follower of Bacchus in a mild form, in later years he grew worse. As in all cases like this, he became abusive, insisting on bringing his crowd in the home. This was too much for the children, who wanted to keep their good social position in the community. Finally these Bacchanalian revels would last several weeks at a time, so the children had Bertha get a divorce.

Bertha and the children stayed on the farm and Ole went to Humboldt County where he stayed most of the time, the rest of his life. He died in May of 1906 <sup>5</sup>.

When the children began to grow up, it was Sarah (the oldest in the family) who went ahead with the sewing and management of the home. She also gave sewing lessons, which was her work until all the children were grown. Then she married Hector Auestad in July 1899, and they lived in Slater, Iowa, where she died in January, 1929.

With Sarah to help her mother, Susie, the next child could work out. She worked in Minneapolis for many years, then went to Omaha, Nebraska. Here she met Charley Anderson and they were married in Omaha. They made their home in Omaha, Des Moines, and finally moved to Slater, where she lived until her death in 1930.

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5 Ole J.'s actual death date is June 1908; (from Humboldt county records).

Bertha managed the farm to the best of her ability, with the children to help her, which must have been plenty good, for they all had plenty. She never acquired an extensive use of the American language, so most of the conversation at home was in her native tongue. In later years she seldom talked of Norway, but one wonders if she didn't sometimes wish she could visit the land of her youth. Of course, she would not wish to stay since all her children were here. She died August 19, 1899.

Andrew and Oley helped on the farm. They helped with the field work in the spring, summer, and fall, but in the winter they hunted to supply fresh meat for the table. There was always plenty of beef and pork. To keep the meat, the beef was dried and the pork salted.

When Severen was old enough to help with the work, Oley (the oldest boy), decided to study for the ministry. He went to Minneapolis. After he had graduated, he married Augusta Simerson on July 8, 1891. Then they went to Fertile, Iowa to preach. He stayed there until his death on January 18, 1908.

Oley and Augusta had eight children. Bertilla was born March 29, 1892. Alvah was born April 4, 1894. Both graduated from high school and taught for several years, then went to Business College. After the family moved to Minneapolis, they got stenographic positions and resided at home.

Ferdinand, born July 27, 1896, married Velma Howe on December 31, 1925. They had five children: Fred, born September 20, 1927; Oletta, born May 19, 1930; Leonard, born December 15, 1933; Gordon born August 17, 1935 and died March 13, 1938; and Lorna, born February 14, 1941. They reside in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Joseph, born September 30, 1898, graduated from high school and attended Minnesota University. He then went to New York City to work but returned to St. Paul. He married Ruth Gibson on June 24, 1934. They had five children: Leon, born September 13, 1935; Kenneth, born March 18, 1939; Karen, born March 25, 1943; Janet, born April 1, 1944; and James, born January 8, 1949.

Burton, born February 8, 1901, also graduated from Minnesota University. He married Evelyn Gulden in January of 1939. He works for the Toastmaster Co. in Elgin, Illinois, where they reside.

Ina was born July 18, 1903, and graduated from Minnesota University. She taught a number of years, then left for California where she furthered her work in Home Economics, taking up tearoom management.

Reuben, born September 25, 1905, also graduated from Minnesota University. He married and has three daughters: Kay Larae, born March 7, 1939; DeEtta Bea, born May 15, 1942; and Rona Lee, born August 25, 1945. They live in Portland, Oregon.

Oletta was born August 22, 1908. She graduated from a Minneapolis high school and attended Augsburg College in Minneapolis. She has taught in Minnesota high schools and is very outstanding in her work in art.

Andrew, the fourth child of Ole J. and Bertha's family, married Clara Hansen. He moved to another farm. There, they had four children: Archibald, Meranda, Cora, and Charlotte. Then leaving Charlotte with some relatives at Eagle Grove who raised her, the family moved to Calamette, Oregon, where he did truck farming. There five more children were born: Theodore; Burton; Harold; Raymond; and Barbara. Archibald now lives in Santa Clara, California. Meranda married a Mr. Bower and lives in West Linn, Oregon. Theodore and Cora both live in Portland, Oregon. Charlotte married Orville Boughton of Eagle Grove, Iowa, and had one child, Patricia. Charlotte died in 1938. Barbara died when a child, and Raymond was killed by a train in December of 1933. Andrew died in 1905 and his wife and most of the children reside in Oregon.

Severin was born in December 1865, and was the third boy. He also helped with the farm work, but early in life decided he wanted to study law. Not having all the money necessary, he took and passed an examination to teach. He taught school in the winter months and worked in the harvest fields of Minnesota during the summer. After several years he had acquired enough to go to college.

He entered Iowa Business College in 1895 and then entered Drake University and finished in 1897. He then married Minnie Johnson and they moved to Slater where he began the practice of law. They had seven children: Curtis, born April 13, 1900, is married to Elinore Sydness. They live in Des Moines and have three children: Mary Louise, Kenneth, and Jeanne. Curtis works for Central Life Insurance Co.

Lowell was born on September 9, 1902. He was in the army for a while and is now at home.

Roscoe was born March 20, 1904. He attended Iowa State College where he graduated. He married Lillian Berggren and they have three children: Bonita, Joan, and Robert. Roscoe taught for several years at Neola, Iowa, and is now Superintendent at Defiance, Iowa.

Bonnie was born May 12, 1906, and married Jack Reinertson. She lives in Slater and has one boy, Jimmie.

Doris Minnie was born August 25, 1908 and only stayed with the family three weeks.

Melba was born January 27, 1910. She married A.A. Olson and has one boy, Lee.

Laura, born August 11, 1912, married Merle Horn and has one daughter, Sharon Kay. She lives in Rockford, Illinois.

All of Severin's children attended high school in Slater, Iowa and all finished there.

Next in order comes Martin, who was born October 11, 1869. He helped at home, too, but when he was about seventeen, he went to Omaha and worked and then went to Humboldt County. He married Myrta Fowler in 1896 and then he went to Oklahoma, then back to Iowa where he lived nineteen years. Deciding that Minnesota was where he next wanted to live, he stayed there six years but returned to Runnels, Iowa, where he lived just two years before his death on March 22, 1939.

Martin and Myrta had seven daughters, the oldest dying in infancy.

Cleva Bevine was born September 25, 1898. She taught school seventeen years, which certainly is a wonderful record. She married Homer Darling in 1935 and lives on a farm near Runnels, Iowa.

Marjorie Opal, born March 10, 1901, taught school five years. She married Arthur Kabrick in 1926. She has two children, Ordean and Sharon Lee. They live on a farm near Cylinder, Iowa.

LaVona Jeraldine was born May 25, 1903, taught school nine years, and married Ray Lees. She has a daughter, Margaret and lives in Des Moines, Iowa.

Frances Melva was born October 25, 1905. She taught eleven years, then married Dgbert Helland in 1935 and they have one son. She now lives in Rodman, Iowa, where her husband is a teacher in the high school. These four girls graduated from Harley High School and attended Iowa colleges.

Lilith Esther, born April 19, 1908, graduated from Patterson High School. She attended Iowa State Teacher's College for three and a half years and then began teaching.

She has taught nine years and a half and now teaches in Elkhart, Iowa. She married Fred Brown.

Urcela Delores, born April 17, 1919, graduated from high school at Lakefield, Minnesota, and attended Simpson College and Iowa State College. She married a Mr. Coventry.

Bessie, the next child after Martin, was born November 9, 1872. She attended Highland Park College in Des Moines and Iowa State Teacher's College at Cedar Falls. She taught school until her marriage to Andrew Maland in 1900. They moved to Slater where Andrew was editor of the Slater News. They had two children, Ella and Obert.

Ella was born August 22, 1901. She graduated from Slater High School and attended Drake University. After her graduation she taught several years but because of ill health had to give it up. She entered Sunnyslope Sanatorium and spent several years there. After her recovery, she entered the Deaconess Home in Omaha and is now located in Denver.

Obert, born March 27, 1904, also graduated from Slater High School. He attended Iowa State Teacher's College. He worked with his father for awhile, then went to Minneapolis where he has since lived. He married Tena Larson and they have two children, Betty and Marie.

Burton, the youngest boy, was born November 20, 1875. He attended Iowa State Teacher's College at Cedar Falls and taught for several years. He then decided to study for the ministry and entered Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis. It was while there that he became ill with typhoid fever and passed away on December 13, 1900.

Marie, born January 10, 1879,<sup>6</sup> the youngest daughter, was full of vitality. She loved to be with people and have fun. She worked in Des Moines for a few years and then with her mother moved to Slater, where she and her older sister, Sarah, established a dressmaking shop. She married Clarence Clark, who was manager of the creamery at Slater. They had eight children, one dying in infancy. All of the children attended and graduated from grade school and all but Marium graduated from high school. Marium will graduate in the spring of 1940.

Ralph, born March 19, 1904, attended Iowa State College at Ames, Iowa, then went to work in the creamery. In 1929 he married Hazel Hoop. They make their home in Slater where Ralph is now manager of the creamery since his father's death.

Bessie, born December 22, 1905, was destined to brighten the home for only a short time, and died September 18, 1906.

Maylo was born August 7, 1907. She attended Capital City Commercial College in Des Moines and then worked for three years in the offices at Iowa State College. She married Morrill Nervig in 1928 and they have two boys, Paul and Clark. They now live in Slater, Iowa.

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6 The birth of this child was found in the churchbook for the Palistine congregation of Story county Iowa, pg. 5-6, born 10 January, 1879, named Anna Maria, mother Sofia J. Olsen (unmarried), witnesses: Bertha Nyhru, Bertha Olsen, Serine Olsen, O.O. Olsen, A.O. Olsen

Maylo Nervig, daughter of Anna Maria, stated to me personally that Anna Maria was not the daughter of Charles Andersen. Maylo told me that her mother had confided this to her before she died and that she was the only one who knew that this was true. Maylo told me that Anna Maria's mother, Sophia Olson Wold went to Des Moines to work as a seamstress, and it was there that she "got in trouble" with a Swede man. The name of Anna Maria's true father is not known. The family of Ole J. and Bertha took the child in and raised her as their own. All of the children accepted Anna Maria as one of their siblings, and that is the way it always was. When Cleve Darling wrote the family history in 1839 Anna Maria was then listed as the youngest child of Ole J. and Bertha. Maylo asked me to make it known that Anna Maria wanted to always be considered a Wald, and so she always will be.



Oriett, born March 20, 1909, attended University of Commerce in Des Moines where she affiliated with Gamma Delta Chi sorority. She also worked at Iowa State College for six years, then became dental assistant for Dr. Buck at Ames where she still works.

Marshall was born September 9, 1910. After graduation from high school he went to work in the creamery where he still works. He is interested in music and sings with a quartet over different radio stations.

Robert was born April 23, 1912. He also worked in the creamery during the summer months and then full time after graduating from high school. He married Edwinna Ramsey and has one son, John.

Jessie Mae was born August 17, 1915. She finished high school and attended Simpson College where she affiliated with Delta Delta Delta sorority. After finishing college, she began teaching school at Ralston, Iowa, where she has been the past two years.

Marium was born April 3, 1921. She attends Slater High School where she will be a senior next fall. She is drum major in the Slater band and also plays basketball.

This concludes our line of the family history. Probably none of us will be long remembered nor considered great, but we make up the average American family, with our small successes and failures. It is hoped that each one in his own way has made the way a little bit smoother for someone else.



Ferdinand Oliver Wald

## I Remember My Childhood By Ferdinand Oliver Wald

I was born in the little town of Fertile, Iowa, July 27, 1896, the third of eight children. My earliest recollection of my childhood was when I was about three years old and was sitting in the high chair in the kitchen when the cat came running in with her kittens. Mother made a dash for the cat, knocked the high chair over and I fell against the table, cutting the top rim of my ear, which gave me the scar I have today.

The three children had a picture taken when I was a baby in dresses. I was holding my mother's watch, the one given to her by her father when she was a girl. Mother gave it to me to keep me quiet while the picture was being taken and I dropped it. It stopped, and Mother never had it repaired. It was since given to Oletta, the oldest granddaughter, and it runs beautifully today, some seventy-six years later. The first home I remember was a small house near the old mill. Mother was always worried about the mill pond and her little children falling in. One day, my sister, Alvah, caught a fish and we all screamed with delight and Mother came running out to see who had fallen in the pond.

We soon moved from that house to a larger one across from the school house and near Father's parish house where he was a pastor for several years. As children, we knew what it meant to attend church and keep quiet.

As young boys, we had few store bought toys, and got used to making our own. We learned to be resourceful and used anything at hand to make our own toys. Mother's sewing spools made good materials for trains and many other things. We experimented a lot. My cousin, Harold, and I once made a steam engine. It blew up and we both got badly burned and so I switched my interests to electricity and became an Electrical Engineer.

We were like all other boys, we played pranks, such as putting a cat in a bucket and winding it around as it went up to the hay loft and letting it whirl around as it came down so when the cat got out, it would stagger like it was drunk. We would also put a corn cob under the horse's tail and watch his antics as he tried to get rid of it.

There was a fat man in our town who owned a horse and pony cart. One day we watched him go into a dip in the road and he was a little too heavy for the situation,

which found him in the cart at the bottom of the dip and the horse in the air pawing with his front legs to reach the ground.

I remember the time Burton, my little brother, was sitting in the seat of our wagon, when the team of horses became frightened and bolted. They ran wildly for some time and when they were stopped, Burton sat up in the back of the wagon and feeling his head said, "Where's my hat? I want to go to Hanlan Town." This was certainly a relief to Mother who was standing motionless and frightened. We must have been reluctant to leave our little house by the mill where we had such fun fishing and going swimming. Even when I was very small I swam in the shallow stream up above the mill. I remember once Dad was helping me undress and he said, "You've been swimming haven't you?" My undershirt gave me away--I had it on backwards.

The new house was set back from the street, and so was the school house across the street, which accounts for the concern Mother had for me when as a young boy I had to make the fire in the school building. We would sometimes have such high snowdrifts that she feared I couldn't find my way home, so she tied a rope to the door knob for me to take to the school so I could follow it home. I remember once I lost the key to the school, and was very upset, but I went over to the school anyway, not knowing really why, because I knew I couldn't get in. When I got almost to the door, I looked down and there laid the key. The wind had swept the snow off the path and it was in plain sight.

I have often thought, especially since the terrible blizzard of January 11, 12, and 13, 1975 which was considered the worst of the century, that we were well off in some ways when we were children. We had a storm cellar which served, not only as protection but as food storage. We always had potatoes, carrots, beets, apples and some cured meat. Mother also preserved some cooked meatballs and sausage in tallow. We always had a wood burning stove with plenty of wood we boys had to cut up in stove lengths. Most important of all, we had water from the well and a cistern of rain water collected during the summer months which had a capacity of 500 gallons. These things might have saved a lot of people some suffering from cold and hunger had they had them in this last bad storm.

While we were living in the new house, tragedy struck and our Father became very ill with pneumonia and passed away. Father was called to serve as Pastor of the Village of Fertile Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran congregation in 1892, after it had joined with the Clear Lake congregation to form one parish. The church edifice was built in 1895. At this time the congregation was affiliated with the United Lutheran Church. In 1893 the so called Augsburg strife caused a division in the Village of Fertile Congregation. This eventually caused a division in the congregation and in 1899 about half the

members, together with my Father, withdrew to organize the Elim Lutheran Free Church. They chose a building site west of Fertile where he served as Pastor until his death in 1908.

Life was not easy for our family after Father died. My youngest sister was born 8 months after Father died. Mother inherited a farm which was her share of Grandfather's estate. We had some income from this besides what Mother earned from her dressmaking. My Uncle Ludwig, Mother's brother, who had no family, was very good to Mother. He always treated us like his own family.

After my two older sisters graduated, they became teachers, but were not happy in that profession, and so one at a time, they went to business college and became secretaries. I worked for Uncle Simon, Mother's other brother, on the farm in the summertime and graduated from Ames Engineering School. We all helped each other until we all graduated from college.

In 1918, after graduation, I joined the Navy and was in the service for the remainder of the war. I never saw actual battles, but I saw some countries I otherwise would not have seen. While I was on ship, I fell from the ship's mast--landing on my side and the side of my head, making a long gash in my head. The scar is still visible. The ship's doctor told me if I had landed on my back it would have killed me. I must have had a destiny to fulfill. While in the hospital aboard ship, I tutored a young man in mathematics, who was studying to become an Ensign.

After my stint in the Navy where I progressed to a commission as Ensign, I came west, ending up in Cheyenne, working for the Union Pacific R.R. I didn't care for Cheyenne as a community in which to make my home, so I went west to Ogden, Utah, where I applied for work at the Utah Power and Light Co. They put me on as a meter tester. Here I met David Isakson and his wife Ruth. We became very good friends and remained so until their deaths. Ruth's mother once told me I should meet a Mormon girl. I smiled at this, never dreaming I would do just that.

After being transferred to Logan as Power meter man, I met Velma Howe, who was going to the Utah A.C. College summer school. After three years and my transfer to Salt Lake as assistant to the Meter Superintendent, we were married on Dec. 31, 1925, the same year she graduated from the B.Y.U. in Provo. It was not until the 28th of October, 1952 that I was baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We were married in the Salt Lake Temple June 30, 1954 and sealed together with all our children on July 1, 1954, the same day Oletta, our oldest daughter was married. Kay Cummings was proxy for our little 2½ year old boy, Gordon, whom we had lost in death.

We have had a wonderful life together and several fine trips. One to Europe in 1959 where we met Leonard who was released from his Norwegian Mission at that time. We stayed in Norway for one week visiting many of my relatives on both sides of my family, collecting many names for our temple record. We also had a nice trip to Hawaii in Oct. 1963 when the Cultural Center was dedicated. We have just returned from a trip to Minneapolis where we accompanied my sisters, Oletta and Alvah, to Iowa where my Father's little Lutheran Church was holding it's 100th anniversary. Oletta, who is a teacher of teachers in the Lutheran Bible Institute, was the principle speaker at the banquet. She gave an outstanding talk. One woman there asked Velma what Church we attended, and she told her she had made a Mormon out of me, which wasn't too difficult after he understood our principles and philosophy.

It was wonderful to see the old school house, the home where we lived by the mill, and the big house where we lived so long and where my Father died. The old pump just outside the door still stands, and believe it or not, still pumps water. We have just had a trip to Washington D.C. to see our beautiful Mormon temple and other high lights, such as the Capitol, the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, the White House, the Kennedy Center and Mt. Vernon. We now have a mobile home in Sandy, Utah, and one in Mesa, Arizona where we spend five winter months of the year. This delights our youngest daughter, Lorna, who lives in Tempe, about 15 miles from our little house. We are just about 10 miles from the Mesa temple where we go often.

We are very proud of our family. Fred with his 9 children, the oldest of which is now on a mission in California; Oletta, with her 7, the oldest of which is now on a mission in Canada; Leonard with his two daughters; and Lorna with her 4 little ones. We hope to enjoy them all for some time to come.

1975 or '76

#### A Tribute to Ferd (on his ninetieth birthday)

90 years! Not everyone is privileged to live ninety years, especially when most of the years have been in good health. These have been years of ups and downs, successes and disappointments, joys and sorrows, mountains and valleys. But through them all has been the gracious and loving Spirit of God, blessing, providing and sustaining. Like a diamond, Ferd has many facets which have made him a man who has been loved and respected and admired by his family and friends. Ferd, the engineer whose expertise was recognized and appreciated by his co-workers at the Utah Power and Light Company.

Ferd, the watch-fixer who could somehow take all the little watch parts and put them together in working order. Ferd, the photographer who loves to record in pictures the many happy events and people in his life. Ferd, the encyclopedia who seems to know something about most everything. Ferd, the problem-solver who has been able to figure out solutions to many of the problems given him. Ferd, the handy man who can fix most things that break down. Ferd, the husband who has been privileged to live some 60 years with his loving wife, Velma. Together they have supported, sustained and encouraged each other in love. Ferd, the father who has never been too busy to give a listening ear or a helping hand to his children. Ferd, the grandfather whose 23 grand children and the coming “greats” bring him much pride and joy. Ferd, the man of faith whose trust and reliance on our Lord and Savior has sustained him through the years.

## A Paraphrase of Psalm 128

Blessed have you been because  
The Lord bless you from his heavens.  
you have feared the Lord;  
May you see the prosperity of your offspring  
you have walked in his ways.  
all the days of your life.  
You have eaten the fruit of the labor  
May you see your children's children.  
of your hands;  
You know the secret of happiness  
Peace be unto you and your family.  
and it has been well with you.  
Your wife has been like a fruitful vine  
within your house.  
Your children have been like olive shoots  
around your table.  
Lo, you have been blessed  
because you have feared the Lord.

by Ferd's sister, Oletta





## Personal History of Velma Howe Wald

Written in 1962

I was born in the little town of Provo, Utah Co., Utah, on January 22, 1898. I was my Mother's last living child. The second of eight children, Orvil Hill Howe, died of pneumonia at age 2 ½ years. The last three, Fordis, Martha, and Olive died within 10 days after birth. Doctors were not able to handle the R.H. factor in the early 1900's.

I was very fond of my two older brothers, John William Jr. and Leonard Jackson. It seemed that the more they teased me and played tricks on me, the more I loved them. Will would tease me until I would cry and then hold his hat and tell me to cry a hatful. Len once had me put my tongue on the frozen pump handle and Mother had to put warm water on it to keep from pulling the skin off. I wanted to shoot Len's gun once and when I did it kicked back and knocked me across the room.

My older sister, Ada, was very protective. I felt at times she was almost too protective. I was offered a ride to school in one of the first automobiles to come to our town, and Ada wouldn't let me go. She was afraid. I don't think I have ever forgiven her for that.

I have had the usual childhood diseases--measles, mumps, (I had mumps again along with my youngest child) and chicken pox. The older children tried to get me to look at myself in the mirror when I had measles, and they had laughed so at me that I wouldn't. I have wished since that I had taken one little peek.

I was very impressed with my first grade teacher, Ida Coombs. She had a way with little ones that made me love her. In fact, Mother thought I loved Ida as much as I did her. My seventh grade teacher, Nat Wilson was wonderful. I also remember James Clove, J. Morrel George, and Bess Bars in High School. The one who left the most wonderful impression was Amos N. Merrill, School of Education, B.Y.U. He was a great inspiration to me.

For the most part, my childhood was happy, although we had very little of the material things. Our house was small but very clean and neat. We had a small farm not far from our house, where Father raised fruits, grains, and chickens. This did not support

us entirely. Father was a carpenter by trade. In the summer, work was plentiful, but often in the fall, he left for Salt Lake City, Tooele or surrounding mining towns where carpenters were needed.

There was always a great deal of work for us to do because we raised most of our food. We hoed weeds, rode the horse for the cultivator and the hay, milked cows, fed and cared for them and some horses, fed chickens, churned butter in an old dasher churn. We also made soap. It was often my task to clean lamp chimneys and fill the lamps, so you can imagine how happy I was to see the house being wired for electricity. This also eliminated the tiresome task of turning the washer.

Being the youngest, it was often my responsibility to do many things usually delegated to boys, such as: Take the cows to pasture and bring them back at night, bring in the coal and wood and fill the reservoir for warm water. Mother and I often planted and cared for a garden--just the two of us. We picked the fruit and prepared it for canning. If Ada was not working, she helped with this. In the fall there was always a fat hog to butcher and the meat was cured and prepared for winter. After this event, I was often sent to many poor families or old people with some of the goodies Mother knew how to make from the meat. In fact, no one near us ever went hungry if my mother knew about it. There was always something to share with those who needed help. I was also sent many times to the Bishop's Store House with butter and eggs and other produce. We paid tithing with what we had.

Mother made all our clothes except stockings and under shirts. We always had a new dress for the 4th of July and one for Christmas. We wore very simple gingham dresses to school and in cold weather we wore last years wool dresses with aprons to keep them clean. Mother was about the most thrifty person I ever knew. She could make us look nice with so little money. She sold milk and butter to buy the material for my graduation dress and then made it herself and I looked lovely. Another time, I remember, I wanted to go to the class dance at the Y. and I had no dress. So Mother took my summer dress, washed and dyed it, and I went to the dance and had a wonderful time.

Even though there was lots of work to do, my wonderful Mother always arranged for me to have an hour or two each day to myself in the summertime. This was usually spent spinning tops, playing marbles, guinea or playing in the hay loft. It was such a thrill to find a nest of eggs, for often a hen would choose the hay loft instead of the nest made for her. And then there were the pleasant evenings when we would sit on Father's knee and sing, "High On The Mountain Tops", "God Moves In A Mysterious Way" and many other favorites. I have often thought this gave me my first love of music, for in later years I studied vocal and sang many solos in and around Provo. We had many other

pleasant evenings with our friends, pulling candy and playing games. I think the most pleasant times of all were our picnics in the canyon and our trips to Grandfather's in Heber. We would hitch old Brownie to the surrey with the fringe on top and take our lunch to the canyon or take the whole day and go to Heber to see Grandfather and Aunt Margaret as we called Grandfather's second wife.

We picked and packed fruit to earn money to help defray school expenses. After the 8th grade in the old Parker School, I attended Provo High School for two years and then was able to go to the B.Y.U. for three years. This gave me one year of college, or what was called then a Normal Certificate. I taught school, continuing my studies with extension courses and summer school. After five years, I was able to enter the A.C.U. at Logan as a Junior. I was not happy at Logan and so I came back to the B.Y.U. to graduate.

It was while I was at Logan that I met the man I was destined to marry. I liked this clean, fine looking, intelligent young man very much, and I shall never forget the sinking feeling I had when he told me he was not a Latter Day Saint. After three years we decided to get married.

It was a great worry to me to take this step knowing that I may never realize my girlhood dream of a Temple marriage; and knowing too that my parents were unhappy about it. However, my Father said he would never say "No" to me, and after I made my decision, he said I was not to worry about it--that Ferd was too clean and fine to reject the Gospel indefinitely. I received other excellent advise. The principal of the High School where I was teaching was in the Bear River Stake Presidency. He could see that I was worried and he called me into his office to talk to me. After telling him why I was troubled, he advised me to marry this man because he felt that he was a fine young man and would eventually be a Latter Day Saint. Never had advise from a good religious man been so timely and welcome.

This proved to be good advise, for I now have four fine children and ten grandchildren, twin boys among them. Leonard has served a foreign mission, Fred a states mission and Oletta along with her Mother has served a stake mission. My husband and I have been married in the temple and our children are sealed to us along with the little boy, Gordon, whom we lost with leukemia when he was 2 ½ years old.

This all took about 25 years and there were times when I despaired ever getting to the temple, but I kept on hoping and praying and we are now a united happy family and have done some temple work for my husband's people as well as others we do not know.

We have had some wonderful trips together. We have been east as far as Boston and up the coast of Maine; many trips to Minneapolis where Ferd's sisters live, west to California and up the coast to Seattle and Portland, north to Canada, and into the beautiful Canadian Rockies. The highlight of our trips together was our tour of the continent of Europe and our week in Norway with our missionary son, where we made contact with some of Ferd's people and secured many names for our temple record.

We hope to do some more traveling in a year or two when we both retire, me from teaching, which I have done since the family grew up, and Ferd from his position as Electrical Engineer for the Utah Power and Light Co. Of course we expect to see our daughter, Lorna, through school, who is a Junior in the University of Utah now.

We, like our fathers before us, will probably never leave much in a material way to our children, but we hope they will gain from their parents, home life and church experiences a profound testimony of the Gospel and a desire to live the Gospel always, for indeed this is the only way to true happiness.

## The Life of Reverend O. O. Wold

written in 1904

The picture of Rev. O. O. Wold shows you that he is a man of purpose. Rev. Wold is a minister of the Gospel. He is also interested in agriculture, owning a fine farm a few miles west of Fertile.

He has a pleasant village home just south of the school house where he and his good wife live happily with their three sons and three daughters. Rev. and Mrs. Wold are among those who can claim our worthy president's commendation on their fine family.

Rev. O. O. Wold was born the eleventh day of February 1861 in La Salle Co., Illinois. Five years later he with his parents moved to Polk County where young Wold spent his childhood days on a farm. At the age of 18 he was converted to God and at once began to take part in active church work.

At the age of 21 he felt a Divine call to study for the ministry and a year later entered the Augsburg Seminary at Minneapolis where he studied seven years in preparation for his life work. In 1891 he was graduated from the theological department of said institution.

July 7, 1891 Rev. Wold was united in marriage to Augusta Simerson of Belmond, Iowa. She has proved herself to be a most capable and competent help to her good husband.

Soon after graduation he received a call from the village of Fertile congregation, but owing to the pressure from the United Church, he was sent to Chicago where during a stay of one year he worked with a society which was very religious and consecrated to their Master. But owing to poor health, Rev. Wold felt a change of climate would be advisable, though leaving his first charge was a hard thing to do. The relation of this first church and its pastor can be summed up in the words of one of the members who said, "We will never get a pastor that will take Rev. Wold's place and he will never get a church where he will take as well with the people."

About this time Rev. Wold received a second call from the Fertile and Clear Lake churches which he accepted and took charge of in 1892. He served the congregation for several years and won the esteem of not only his church members but the community as well.

Late in the nineties a division arose in the village church and as a result a Free Lutheran Church was organized and a neat commodious house of worship was built in 1899 about two miles west of Fertile with Rev. Wold as their faithful and beloved pastor.

Rev. Wold believes that the church work of Jesus Christ is broader than denominations or creed, in fact the Divine truth subject to personal approval and made known through the life.

Those who know the reverend gentleman, even though they may differ with him on theological points, admire the man and hope he may live long to exert his strong influence for good in our midst.

#### Obituary for Reverend O. O. Wold, Fertile, Iowa

Rev. O. O. Wold passed away at 9 p.m., January 18, 1908, aged 46 years, 11 months, and 7 days.

In the death of Rev. O. O. Wold the community loses an honored citizen, the wife a devoted husband and the children a loving father.

Mourning is not confined to relatives alone but the community is in sorrow, for a friend has gone. For several years he has been in failing health. About two weeks ago he was stricken with his last fatal sickness, heart trouble and lingered between life and death until Saturday at 9 p.m. he passed on to his reward.

The deceased was a man of decided opinions. He spoke plainly, was quick of discernment and when his mind was fixed he never wavered in doing his duty. He stood for high ideals in life. He had a deep abiding conviction and a faith that clung with wonderful tenacity on the life's beautiful beyond. He not only lived it himself, but all with whom he came in contact could continually see in him the finger pointing to the higher life, the life lost in self but found in the man of Galilee.

Brother Wold came to Fertile and took charge of the struggling congregation here something like 15 years ago, then without a church edifice, and it was through his tireless efforts that the church in this village and the one where the funeral was held, three miles west of town, was built.

Beside his work here, he for many years preached to his people at Clear Lake, Mason City and other points. The roads were never too bad. However inclement the weather, he never neglected his work for the Master whom he so faithfully served.

The subject of this sketch was born in La Salle Co., Illinois, on February 11, 1861 and died at his home in this village at 9 o'clock p.m., January 18, 1908. He moved to Story Co., Iowa with his parents in the spring of 1865 where he grew to manhood.

He was educated at Augsburg Seminary, Minneapolis. He was ordained as minister of the gospel by the clergy of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America at Kenyon, Minnesota on June 22, 1891 and has continued in the ministry since. One year was spent in missionary work in the city of Chicago.

He was united in marriage July 7, 1891, with Miss Augusta Simerson. He is survived by a heartbroken wife and seven children, 3 girls and 4 boys besides his aged father, 3 brothers and 4 sisters, all of whom were present at the funeral.

The funeral services were held Wednesday forenoon at the church west of town and interment made at his old home at Slater, Iowa. Owing to the high esteem in which Brother Wold was held by all the people, Americans as well as Norwegians, a point service was held. Rev. Hampton of Mason City speaking in English and Prof. Nydahl of Augsburg Seminary, a classmate and life long friend of the deceased, spoke in the Norwegian language. The large concourse of people of all nationalities who gathered at the funeral to pay their last sad tribute of respect to the deceased, speaks more eloquently of the respect in which he was held than any words that we can say.

#### Obituary for Reverend O. O. Wold, Slater, Iowa

Word reached Slater last Friday telling of the serious illness of Rev. O. O. Wold at Fertile, Iowa, and that he could not possibly survive very long. His brother, Attorney Wald, departed immediately for Fertile, reaching the bedside of his sick brother on Saturday and before life had become extinct. He passed away in the evening.



Funeral services were held from the pastor's church at Fertile on Tuesday and the remains brought to Slater last night to be buried in the family lot in the local cemetery, the services to take place at the Norwegian church this Thursday afternoon at two o'clock.

The illness which cut the life of the pastor short while in the prime of life and in the midst of much work dated back two weeks when he contracted a cold which ultimately developed into pneumonia and resulted in his death on Saturday.

Deceased reached an age of forty six years, the greater part of which had been spent in active church work. For fifteen years he had been working at Fertile where he built up a strong congregation and was engaged in work when the last summons came. He was an energetic, enthusiastic worker, a thorough Christian and dearly loved by his congregation which is in deep sorrow over his sudden demise.

Aside from a father, three brothers and four sisters, he is mourned by a faithful wife and a family of seven children.

#### “History of the Moreland Lutheran Church in Chicago” (an excerpt)

At the congregation's meeting on April 25, 1891, it was decided to ask the United Lutheran Church's Mission committee to call a pastor to Moreland (previous to this there had been several temporary Pastors). This committee then sent a call to O. O. Wold, who had been graduated from Augsburg Seminary and was ordained at the United Church annual meeting in 1891.

With the help of Pastor N. J. Lockrem, the congregation rented an empty store on Lake Street at 51st Court. Some chairs were purchased and the first service was held on Ascension Day evening the 7th of May. It was the first time the congregation had held a service in its own place of worship. Previously services had been held in a vacant room in the public school and occasionally in private homes, and just before this the congregation had rented the Presbyterian church.

That Lockrem's work was a blessing to the congregation manifested itself Sunday, June 7; a new foundation stone was laid then, in that six families were admitted to the congregation at the meeting on June 2. On June 7 was held the first confirmation service, with the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Pastor Ellestad officiating.

Pastor Wold came to Moreland August 1, 1891 and was installed by Pastor Ellestad on Sunday, August 5. Despite his poor health, he took energetic hold of the work both spiritually and temporally. Besides Moreland, he served the Emmaus church, with great blessings for both congregations. Not a few members were added to the church during this one year.

Already at the congregational meeting of September 18 a committee was selected to find a suitable site on which to build a church, and this committee found the site on which the church now stands. At the meeting on the 22nd it was unanimously decided to elect a new committee of five with full power to close the deal for the same. Johs. Olsen, John B. Jansen, Nils Möller, Pastor Wold and John Hevly were elected.

This committee gathered on September 24 at the real estate office to negotiate the purchase of the aforementioned lots. It was then and there agreed to pay \$1,250 for the two lots, on the following terms: \$200 within two months and thereafter \$200 each year, interest to be 6%. The Ladies' Aid sponsored an auction in Fishers Hall resulting in income of better than \$200, by which the first \$200 was paid on the lots. At the meeting on January 4 an Ingathering Committee was elected. Some subscription lists were sent out and a committee to prepare plans for a church was elected.

At the congregational meeting on February 1, 1892, it was voted nearly unanimously to build the church, and a Building Committee of three was selected to begin work as soon as possible. The Ingathering Committee reported that \$475 has been pledged to date. Pastor Wold was elected as treasurer of the Building Committee. But how were building materials to be gotten to the site? It was not possible to get a load to Moreland from any lumber yard in Chicago. There was then no other way than to haul it by railroad to Moreland. But lumber was ordered and paid in good promises at the Central Lumber Company (O.B.Jacobs) for something over \$850.

On March 3rd the work on the church began; and it was completed outside, windows and doors put in, the school room finished, so that the first service was held in the church May 7, 1892.

Pastor Wold resigned at the business meeting on May 3rd. He had received a call from Fertile, Iowa, but promised to remain until August 1st, if his health permitted it. It was with regret that the congregation accepted his resignation, but he declared definitely that he could not continue in Chicago longer.

## “History of the Fertile Lutheran Congregation” (an excerpt)

In 1892 the Village of Fertile Congregation united with the Clear Lake Congregation to form one parish. The Rev. O. O. Wold was called to serve as pastor. The parsonage, which was located in Fertile, was almost completed by this time. The church edifice was built in 1895 and dedicated the following year. At this time the congregation was affiliated with the United Lutheran Church.

In 1893 the so-called Augsburg strife caused a division in the Village of Fertile Congregation. This eventually caused a division in the congregation and in 1899 about half the members together with Pastor Wold withdrew to organize the Elim Lutheran Free Church. This group chose a building site west of Fertile and gave their synodical allegiance to the Augsburg Free Church. This congregation has since been dissolved and the building dismantled. The Elim Cemetery remains and is maintained as a burial site. The Fertile Lutheran Church continued as a member of the United Church (Forende).

### Congregations Served by O. O. Wold:

The Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Moreland, Chicago, Illinois.  
1890-1891 Norwegian Fertile Congregation, Fertile, Iowa. 1892 Fertile Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, Fertile Iowa. 1892-1895 Twin Lakes Congregation  
1892-1895 Village of Fertile Lutheran Congregation, Fertile Iowa. 1892-1900 Trinity Lutheran Church, Mason City, Iowa. 1896-1898 United Lutheran Church, Clear Lake, Iowa. 1892-1900 Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, Thompson, Iowa.  
1902-1908 Elim Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, Fertile, Iowa (3 miles west). 1898-1908 (also called the Elim Lutheran Free Church)



Ole Olsen Wold and August Simerson

I Remember Mother Wald by Oletta Wald

Mother has been dead for some 28 years, so that is a long enough time to forget many things about mother, but not too long to remember some of the outstanding things. I will share with you what I remember about Mother.

## Her Early Years

Augusta Simerson Wald was born in Belmond, Iowa in 1872. She lived on a farm there until she was married at the age of 18 years. She had about an 8th grade education, but was self-educated. Even so, she was self-conscious about her lack of formal education. She seldom wrote letters, even to her children. She would always ask one of them to write the letter for her. On the occasions that she did write a letter, she could write a good one, so she was better at it than she thought she was. She met her future husband when he came to her community as a seminary student to teach Bible school. They were married when he finished Augsburg Seminary. The wedding was on a hot July day, but Mother was dressed in a stylish high collared, long sleeved brown dress, according to the styles of that day. They moved to Chicago where he had his first call. They lived there less than three years because the climate did not agree with him. Their second call was to Fertile, Iowa. Those were turbulent years in the Lutheran Church with struggles concerning doctrines and loyalty to Augsburg College where father had attended. Father got caught in the struggle and had to leave the church in the town of Fertile and started another one in the country. Father contracted the flu and died from it on January 18, 1908, leaving Mother a widow with seven children and one on the way. I was born seven months after his death. She was a widow at the young age of 36 years old. These were very discouraging days for her. She owned the home in Fertile, so could continue to live there.

But in 1912, she moved her family to Belmond, Iowa, to live with her father. By now, her mother had died and Grandpa was alone. This might seem to have been the ideal arrangement for both of them, but it lasted about two years. Grandpa was a cantankerous old Norwegian who did not like children. Mother struggled to keep peace between grandpa and the children, but the last straw was the time when one of the boys came in crying that Grandpa had chopped to pieces the wooden track and train the boys had made. Mother decided that her children were more important than free housing, so she moved to Slater, Iowa where the Wald relatives lived. We lived there until 1923 when we moved to Minneapolis because of better opportunities for college for the children. Because Mother had so little education herself, she was determined that her children have an education.

## Her Health

On the whole, Mother had good health. Until the last year of her life, when she developed cancer, she did not have any of the common ailments of old people. She had good eyes, ears, no arthritis or high blood pressure. But she was plagued with migraine headaches. In her early years, there was little medication, so she had to endure the headaches. But she found that certain pressures increased the headaches. She made up her mind that she would not do what she could not physically do, no matter what people thought of her. This was true of all her attitudes toward life. Mother learned how to live with her body and refused to allow the opinions of others to deter her from doing what she thought was best for herself. Mother learned how to live with herself and be at peace with the world.

## Her Personal Appearance

Mother was a slightly built person, medium height and on the slim side. As long as I remember her, she had gray hair rolled in a pug on the top of her head. There was a slight wave to it so it looked soft and becoming. Never did she have it cut or curled. You would not call her pretty, but she had a very interesting face, reflecting the serene spirit of her soul. She had regular features and a bone structure that was so well formed that I longed to make a sculpture of her face. She dressed neatly and always wore a hat when she went out, even for a ride in the car!

## Her Temperament

Mother was a very calm, composed and peaceful kind of person. In all the years I knew her, I seldom saw her angry or upset. No doubt she had her times of frustration and upsetting experiences, but she did not show her feelings. She accepted the problems of life with remarkable tranquility. Only one person really upset her and that was her sister-in-law who had done many mean things to her, among them was the refusal to let her know that her mother was dying, until after she was dead.

## As a Parent

While Mother was a quiet and calm person, she was firm in her dealing with us children. She had deep convictions as to what was right and wrong. She never yelled or scolded you, but you always knew what she believed and how she wanted you to behave. You did not go against her wishes because you respected her convictions. Mother was really a very reserved and private person. She did not reveal her feelings very much. She was not a demonstrative woman, did not hug her children or say she loved them. But we found our security in her by what she did. I was a grown woman and teaching before I realized that not everyone loved or respected their mothers. I guess I thought they were all like my own. I was really shocked to hear a fellow teacher criticize her mother and indicate she neither loved or respected her. Mother showed her trust in us by the way she treated us as we grew up. She never sat up waiting for her children to come home from an evening affair. I believe she trusted us in doing the right thing. If she lay awake until we got in, she never indicated it to us. She did not have many close friends. Her life was her children, but she was highly respected by all who knew her.

### Her Family

Mother had eight children: Bertilla, Alvah, Ferdinand, Joseph, Burton, Ina, Reuben, and Oletta. One of her foremost desires was that they might get an education. Bertilla and Alvah attended business college and were stenographers most of their lives, Bertilla spending her last years with the Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance Company in Minneapolis, and Alvah with an accounting firm. Ferd, Joe, and Reuben earned electrical engineering degrees and worked in that line of industry. Burton got a degree in business and was mainly with the Toastmaster Company. Ina got a degree in home economics, taught for a few years, and then served as lunchroom manager in Minneapolis public schools. Oletta got a BA degree from Augsburg College and a Master's Degree in Christian Education from Biblical Seminary in New York. After some years teaching in the public schools, she became an instructor on the staff of the Lutheran Bible Institute and in the department of Christian Education of the American Lutheran Church. Her work entailed both writing and teaching, writing courses of instruction for Sunday Schools, Bible Studies and many articles. Out of her teaching experiences came two books which are still selling: *The Joy of Discovery*, a book on how to study the Bible, and *The Joy of Teaching Discovery Bible Study*.

### Her Abilities

Mother was a very gifted person. Seldom did she face a problem that she could not figure out some kind of an answer. Life never stumped her. She could be the artist, carpenter, seamstress, engineer, plumber--whatever the need, she used her abilities to solve it. She would draw her own pictures for embroidering and hooking rugs. Give her a hammer, some nails and a few boards and she would soon have a cupboard built in the basement. We still are using some of the cupboards she built. Always she was busy with her hands, crocheting, knitting, embroidering, even in her last years. When she was no longer strong enough to garden, she still would sit on her haunches in the yard and dig dandelions and crabgrass.

As a seamstress she was a master. She had to support herself sewing for others in a day when a person got five dollars for sewing a dress. If you made over a dress for someone, the person thought she should pay only three dollars! Mother was a very patient seamstress. Because she was so good, none of her daughters became very proficient in sewing clothes. (But Ina does very well in sewing quilts!) The daughters would do the cooking while she sewed. Her patience was most in evidence when she sewed for her daughters. We were all very fussy and many was the time that she would patiently rip a dress because we did not quite like the way it was made or fit. Never do I remember her making a fuss--which she should have done! Nor was any pattern too difficult for her to make, even though it took much time if it were an unusual one. As children we had many made-over dresses, but she could make them look like new. One of the nicest coats I ever had was made from the trousers of Ferd who had been in the Navy.

She was not a leader. I doubt she ever held an office or gave a public speech in her life. She did not like the spotlight, but was a loyal member in any group to which she belonged.

### Her Faith

Mother had a deep abiding faith in Jesus Christ as her personal Savior. But she was not one to talk glibly about her faith. Yet she had definite convictions about what she believed and would defend her convictions if anyone tried to teach what she considered wrong doctrine. Her faith was reflected in her actions. Often she read her Bible. She truly demonstrated the reality of the fruit of the spirit as is revealed in Galatians 5:22. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.



## Her Husband

Our father was a pastor, a very evangelistic preacher whose main emphasis was focused on the importance of a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. After several years in Chicago, he moved to Fertile, Iowa where he served two congregations. First in the town of Fertile, but due to disagreements with some of the members on doctrinal issues, he was asked to leave. Then he started a church in the country which flourished under his energetic leadership. He was greatly loved by his parishioners. Down through the years when we met members of his congregation, they always spoke of him in loving terms. He was a social man, loved people and loved to entertain them. He also loved children, especially his own. His practice was to take some of them with him when he went on his calls, even to special services in other congregations. Our older sisters remember many times when they rode along with Father to his meetings. On the way as he drove his horse, he would sing the many hymns he knew. He was a man who loved music. While he was a good husband, kind and thoughtful, he was not too good mechanically. Mother had more skill than he did to fix things. Physically, he was not a rugged man and had his struggles with health. He died January 18, 1908 after a two-week bout with the flu. I believe his heart gave out. His death was a great shock to that small community. He had helped many to come to a personal faith in Jesus Christ and they mourned the passing of their pastor. He was buried in Slater, his boyhood home, at the age of 47 years.

## Her Final Illness

At the age of 76 years, she developed a cancerous growth in her intestines. I remember how desperately ill she became one day. When we called the doctor, he sent an ambulance to take her immediately to the hospital. We really did not realize how very ill she was. The doctor performed surgery that night to release the pressure that the growth had built up in the abdomen. She was so ill that the doctor did not expect her to live through the night, but we went home and slept peacefully, believing all was going to be okay. A week later she had an operation removing the growth. That was a time when we became aware of the grace of God. Had the doctor not operated that night, she would have died. God in his mercy spared her life. She recovered and lived five more years.

One cold March day in 1953, we took her to the doctor for a checkup. Getting out of the car, she had to climb over a pile of snow, slipped and fell right in front of the doctor's office. She was rushed to the hospital where they found she had broken a hip. Chest X-rays revealed that she had also developed cancer of the lungs. She lingered in the hospital nine weeks, until she died on May 3, 1953 at the age of 81 years. She too was buried in the family plot in Slater, Iowa, along side her husband.



Fertile home: Burton, Reuben, Augusta, Ina, Oletta (in front) - 1910

## The Simerson's by Oletta Wald, granddaughter

Frederick Molstad Simerson was born January 8, 1839 on the Molstad Gaard where his parents, Simon Hanson Faråsen and Alis Fredriksdaughter Erickson from Jentland had moved on October 12, 1833. He was baptized in the Veldre Church. When he was 27 years old, he married Pernille Larsdaughter Bratten who was born May 18, 1836. She was 30 years old. They were married in 1866 and in 1867 they left for the USA.

They boarded a sailing vessel. After 12 stormy weeks at sea, they landed on the east coast of America. They came on west as far as Trempealeau County, Wisconsin. They stayed here for two years and it was here that their first son was born, Simon, on August 15, 1868. In the early spring of 1869, in crudely built covered wagons, drawn by oxen, they and three other families from Norway (the C.B. Johnsons, Hans Hansons and C.M. Johnson) left that county. They traveled to La Crosse, crossed the Mississippi River and after eight long hard days of travel, arrived at their newly purchased land in the Belmond, Iowa township.

These four families lived in their covered wagons on the C.B. Johnson farm all summer while they hurriedly dug wells and built sheds and houses before winter set in. The Simerson's first home was a cave-like dug-out on a corner of their land. According to Grandfather Frederick, it was so comfortable that they lived in it for 8 years. After they had five of their six children, Grandmother Pernille moved into her first frame house in 1877, where her sixth child was born. They were farmers but Frederick preferred carpenter work, building many houses in Belmond and on the many farms in that area.

During the terrible diphtheria epidemic little Ole Simerson, age 2 years, died suddenly of the dread disease. According to the articles of the local newspaper, The Belmond Harold, they lost two more. The following are the articles:

April 13, 1881 -- Diphtheria again! Mr. and Mrs. Simerson, living west of Hickory Grove, lost a seven year old son Friday night from diphtheria. Little Johannes was sick only a short time. On Wednesday he had attended school. On Thursday he was taken sick and Friday night he died. The disease worked so rapidly that nothing could be done for him. Dr. Galer was summoned, but he could not help him. The afflicted parents have the sympathy of all.

April 27, 1881 -- Sad indeed! Again death has entered the home of Mr. and Mrs. Simerson of Belmond Township. Another of their children, a little girl, Ida, age 5 years, died of diphtheria. This is the third child that has been taken. Two others are very sick and may not live. The children are buried in the corner of the Simerson farm under a tall stately evergreen tree.

Of the marriage three children survived: Simon, who married Anna Johnson. They had four children: Ruth, Florence, Harold and Alvin. Ludvig who married Gena Schonhood. They were married only about three years when she died of cancer. Augusta who married Ole Wold. They had eight children.





Pernille Larsdatter Bratten and Frederick Simonsen Molstad

## Simon Simerson

“Men who plant civilization in the wilderness, who organize back-woodsmen into communities, and throw around them the protection of the law, should not be forgotten. They render mankind a priceless service, and those who come after them and enjoy the fruits of their labor and their sacrifices should never tire in honoring their memory.” The parents of Simon Simerson were among the first to fell the trees of this county in order to make room for their crude dwellings, and since that time they and their children and grandchildren, have had much to do with the material prosperity of the county of which Simon Simerson is a large landowner. Simon Simerson was born on August 15, 1868, in Galesville, Wisconsin. His parents, who were natives of Norway, being Fred and Parnelia (Bratten) Simerson.

Coming from the farming district of Hamar,<sup>7</sup> Norway, to this country 1867,<sup>8</sup> these thrifty citizens of the north country located first in Wisconsin, but in the spring of 1869 they joined the first group of Norwegians coming to Wright county to establish homes of their own. They drove in rudely constructed wagons from La Crosse, Wisconsin, to a settlement five miles northwest of Belmond. In true pioneer fashion they proceeded to make themselves comfortable, converting their wagons into dwelling places, and thus did they live during the first summer. In the fall of 1869 they hauled logs which they cut from Burr Oak Grove, and of these, with such tools as they had, constructed a half dug-out house intended for temporary use. However, it proved so satisfactory for their simple, primitive life, that there they lived for eight years, until 1877, when they built a larger and more modern home. There the parents lived until 1893, when they decided to move to Belmond, which was their home until the mother's death in June, 1912, and the father returned to the farm with his son, Simon.

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7 The Molsadt and Bratten farms, where Frederick and Pernille Simonsen were raised, were actually located in the Veldre parish which is located in Hedmark county. There are several local parishes that are closely associated in this locality, including: Veldre, Ringsaker, Brøttum, Vang, Furnes and Hamar.

8 Frederick and Pernille were married 23 April, 1867 in Veldre, Norway. Four days later on 27 April, 1867, they left their home and came to America.

Simon Simerson was one of six children, three of whom died in 1881, during an epidemic of diphtheria. Those who escaped this illness are Simon, Ludwig F., of Belmond, and Mrs. Augusta Wald, of Slater, Iowa. With the exception of two years when he lived in Texas, Simon Simerson has spent his entire life on the farm in section 4, adding to this in 1910, two hundred and forty acres in section 9, where he now lives. He is also the owner of the old home farm of three hundred and sixty acres in section 4, as well as of one hundred and sixty acres in section 3. This entire property, all in one body, is well improved, and on it he raises dairy stock and feeds cattle and hogs. The fine home, which was built in 1915 and has all modern conveniences, is situated in a beautiful grove of trees and is one of a group of well-painted, well-kept buildings.

The marriage of Simon Simerson and Anna N. Johnson took place on April 20, 1893, in Wright county, the bride being a daughter of Nels N. and Rachel (Dahlen) Johnson, natives of Norway, who came to the United States when children and settled in Minnesota, where Mrs. Simerson was born on March, 1867. A family of two boys and two girls have been born in the Simerson home. Ruth, the eldest, born on April 15, 1894, is a graduate of the Belmond high school and a teacher in the local schools. Florence, who was born on August 26, 1896, is also a high school graduate and has taught in the school in the vicinity of her home: she is a student at St. Olaf's College, Northfield, Minnesota. Harold, born on September 23, 1900, is a high school student, and Alvin, the youngest, was born on May 17, 1908, in Kingsville county, Texas.

Mr. and Mrs. Simerson and their family are devout members of the Norwegian Lutheran church, and have given liberally both of time and means toward its support, welfare and success.

It may be said with truth that the career of Simon Simerson is of the type that commands respect and admiration. Mr. Simerson is a man of good judgement, of practical intelligence, and of strong personality. He stands high in the community which his family helped to build up, and where he has lived long enough for his worth to be tried and his good qualities to be appreciated.<sup>9</sup>

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9 History of Wright County, Iowa : its people, industries and institutions with biographical sketches of representative citizens and genealogical records of many of the old families; edited by B. P. Birdsall; FHL film # 989443 Item 3.



## The Wald Name, From Norway to America

### Valheim

Our earliest known paternal grandfather was called Ole Valheimsvatne which means: “Ole at the lake on Valheim”. His father's name is not known for sure, but there is a confirmation record for “Ole Iversen age 16” in 1771, and this tells us that his father, like his son was named Iver. It states in the Årdal farm book: “Valheim er truleg ein av dei eldste gardane i Årdal”. Translation: “Valheim is probably one of the oldest farms in Årdal”. From the same book: “Earlier written forms of the name include: Volle, Vallem 1563, 1606, Walem, Wallem 1610, Øvre and Nedre Wallimb 1661, and Øvre and Nedre Wallem 1723.” The place called Valheimsvatne is listed under “Øvre” Valheim which means the “upper” or “higher” part of the farm. Ole's oldest son, Iver, was listed in the parish records as: “Iver Olsen, born at Wallem, christened 23 May, 1773”.

### Lillemoe

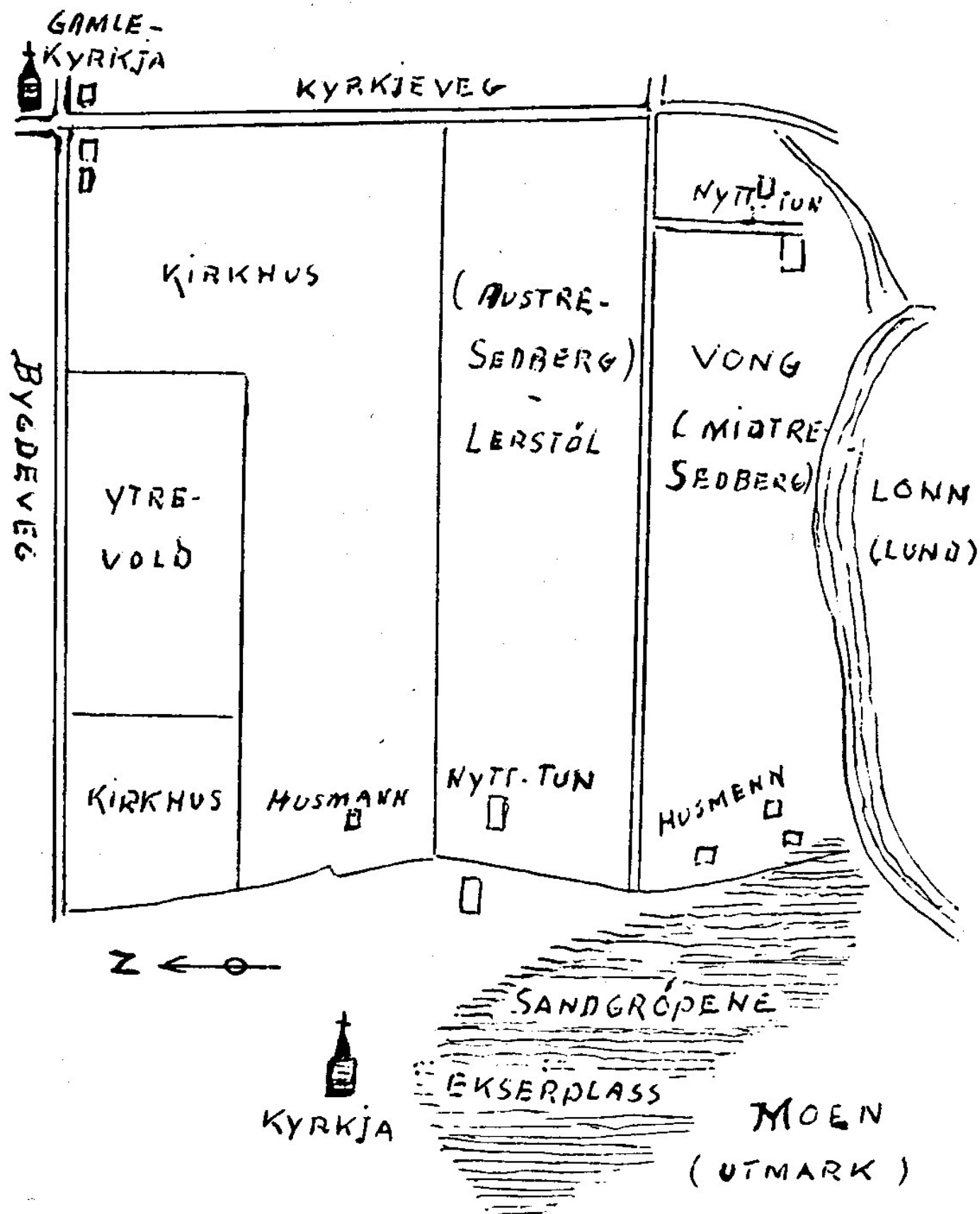
The name “Lillemoe” means “little mountain”. After 1803, when Iver Olsen was married, he lived at Lillemoe which was part of the Vadla farm in rural Årdal. Also from the Årdal farm book: “Earlier written forms of the name Vadla include: Vald, Vold, Vall, Vadle Woldt 1602, Wold, Walde 1610, 1617, and Walde 1723.” These farm names from Vadla are the earliest origin of our Wald family name. Iver's oldest son, Ole Iversen (Spel-Ola), was also raised on Valda, and lived with his mother at the place called “Lille-Vadla”.

### Volden

Ole Iversen raised his own family on the Sedberg farm (later called Østigaard) at a place called “Volden”. Ole was therefore called “Ole Volden”, or “Ole Iversen Volden”. In “The Wald History” by Cleve Darling he was called “Ole Peter Vold”. No Norwegian documents have been discovered that list him with this middle name. However, their was

some apparent confusion by the author of the “Spel-Ola” story where he was at one time mistakenly called “Ola Person” (Per is equivalent to the name Peder). Thus, Peder was very possibly a nick name. Nevertheless, in the Spel-Ole story

“Volden” is described as



Ekserplassen på Sedberg. (Skisse av R.A.)

“an old converted smoke house with a turfed roof, on the meadow between the oldest school house and Lonn”. The Norwegian words “voll” or “vollen” mean “a grassy field or a meadow”. Thus, the name “Volden” literally describes the location of his home just as “Lillemoe” and “Valheimsvatne” describe a location. It means: “the place in the meadow”. In the map above, from the Årdal bygdebok, Volden would have been one of the Huusmand places in the lower right corner.

## Olsen

Ole Iversen's oldest son was also named Ole. When this son emigrated to America his departure was recorded in the parish records with his name: “Ole Olsen from Vollen, Østigaard, Årdal, son to Ole Iversen Vollen and Siri Pedersdtr.” (1854). In “The Wald History” by Cleve Darling, he is listed both as “Ole J. Vold” and “Ole J. Wald”. Cleve writes that “Father's name was Vold in Norway but was changed to Wald in America in order to not mix up the mails”. In the parish records of the Palestine Lutheran Congregation of Story county, Iowa, his name is written: “Ole J. Olsen Wold” and wife “Udbjor Berthine Olsen Wold”. Ole J. almost never used the name Wold or Wald except where it is found in the church book mentioned above. Instead, he used the name “Ole J. Olesen / Olsen / Olson” (all three spelling are found in the records). When the vital records from Illinois and Iowa were searched for Vold, Wold, and Wald, none of Ole J.'s could be found. Ole J.'s wife, Bertha Gaard, was born in Talgje, Rogaland County, Norway, and is listed in the parish records with the name: “Udbjørg Bertine Andersdatter Gaard”. When the two were married in Ottawa, La Salle County, Illinois, they used the names “Ole Olson” and “Betsey Anderson”, married 15 September, 1855. This may seem odd, but the changing of Bertha's name to an American version was not unusual at that time. Evidence that this couple was in fact Ole J. Olsen Volden and Bertha Andersdatter Gaard comes from the 1860 Illinois state census and the 1880 Iowa federal census. In 1860 this same family was listed as Ole Olson and wife Betsey, both born in Norway, and their two daughters, Serine (Sarah) and Sophia (Susie), born in Illinois. In 1880 the family is listed again, now living in Iowa, but this time as Ole J. Olson and wife Betsey. In this census all nine of their children are listed, the oldest four having been born in Illinois and the youngest five born in Iowa. Since the names and ages of all of these children correlate with those listed by Cleve Darling in “The Wald History”, it appears very likely that “Ole Olson and Betsey Anderson”, married in 1855, were indeed our great great grandparents. The records show that Ole J. continued to use the surname Olson for much of his life in America. Their grave stone near Slater Iowa has the inscription: “Bertha Olson Wald” which confirms this. (Note: Ole J.'s name was never

inscribed on the stone even though there was a place on the stone for the husband. He was buried in the family plot in an unmarked grave near Bertha).

## Wold

Our great grand father, Ole Olson Wold, was the third child and the oldest son of Ole J. Olson. He used the surname "Wold" from a young age as is clearly shown in the Palestine church book. In his official capacity as a minister in the Lutheran Church, and on his own letter head he called himself O. O. Wold. In the county records which list the birth of his children, he and the children are listed with the surname "Wold". However, in all of the records of the children who were born in Fertile (Worth county), the surname "Wold" was later crossed out. Then, written above the original "Wold" is the name "Wald". An explanatory note is also written in the margin of the records thus: "Corrected by affidavit on July 3, 1942...Ole O. Bakker, clerk, and Edith Hanson (secretary)". The late date of this name change is interesting, and leads one to wonder why this was done. The death record of Ole J. lists him as "Wald, Ole J. O.", died 1 June, 1908 in Thor, Humboldt County, Iowa. This record tells us that the spelling "Wald" was used in the family at least as early as 1908, but this does not necessarily prove that Ole J. himself chose to use this spelling. Bertha died in 1899 and, remember, her grave stone also bears the name Wald.

## Wald

A few years after Pastor O. O. Wold died at the age of 47, his wife Augusta came to Slater Iowa to live near the family of the Pastor's brother Severin O. Wald. Our grand father, Ferdinand Oliver Wald (also the oldest son), used the surname Wold for at least part of his own life as a young man. So the question remains: why was the name changed from Vold to Wold and then to Wald? One possible explanation is that the names Vold and Wold were actually identical to the Norwegians. There is little doubt that they would have pronounced these two names the same, both with the "V" sound, because there is no "W" sound in their native language. Also, the capital "V" when written in Norwegian records often looks like "W" because of the elaborate way it is written. Also, the "W" spelling may have seemed more American at the time. Then, why was the name changed to Wald? Should we just accept that it was "in order to not mix up the mails"? A different explanation, and perhaps a better one, is that Augusta Simerson (wife of O. O. Wold) wanted to keep her family name the same as that used by the rest of

the family. We know from a 1908 obituary for O. O. Wold that Severin O. (younger brother of O. O. Wold) had chosen to spell the name "Wald". In fact, since Severin O. was the informant for Ole J.'s death, this probably explains why Wald ("Wald, Ole J. O.") was given as the surname on Ole J.'s death record.

So, we have the mails, the pronunciation, and the choice of the extended family. There were possibly other reasons for the change, and we may never know them all. When one looks at the family plot in the Slater Cemetery in Iowa, one can certainly see that "WALD" was their final decision.

## Slater Cemetery - Center Section

(located 2 miles south of the east end of Slater Iowa)

### Row 13

1. WALD, Bertha Olson WALD Jul 10 1835-Aug 19 1899
2. Burton O. WALD Nov 20 1875-Dec 13 1900
3. Ole O. WALD 1861-1908
- \* Ole O. WALD (This is known to be the grave site of Ole J. Olsen, but no marker exists)
4. Augusta WALD 1872-1953
5. Lowell M. WALD 1901-1975
6. Melba F. OLSON 1910-1964
7. WALD Minnie E. 1875-1961; Severin O. 1865-1941



## Ole J. Olson

Our grandfather's grandfather, Ole J. Olson, was born January 8, 1831\* and was christened January 23, 1831. He has been named Ole J. Vold and Ole J. Olson Wold / Wald in other family histories, but there are very few original documents where he is called anything other than Ole Olesen, Ole J. Olesen, or Ole J. Olson. (see Palestine church record). He was born the oldest son of Ole Iverson Volden, and christened at the Lutheran church in Årdal, Norway, a church which still stands today. According to the Norwegian parish record, Ole emigrated from Årdal on 14 April, 1854. Once in America, Ole J. settled in the growing Mission township, Fox River settlement, in north central Illinois. Here he met and married Bertha Andersdatter from Gaard, Talgje, Norway. There is a marriage certificate from La Salle county, Illinois, with the names "Ole Olson and Betsey Anderson", married Sept. 15, 1855. Although our family history always records Ole's wife's name as Bertha, several other documents list her as Betsey including the census records from 1860 and 1870, and the land deed records from Polk county Iowa. Of these records the census records are the most important because they also list the early children of the family. These records correspond to the list of children known through the written family history. Land deeds show that Ole J. did in fact own land on the northern border of Polk county Iowa near the Norwegian settlements of Slater and Cambridge. In fact, the land that Ole J. owned can be easily located because it is now bisected by the I-35 freeway, on the northern most edge of Polk county, 1 mile south of highway 210. All of the original buildings are now gone and a modern farm house and barn occupies the site.

While living and farming in Polk county, Ole J. and family probably did most of their business in the town of Cambridge in Story Co. which was slightly closer and more accessible than Elkhart at the time. They were active members of the 1st Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Palestine township. This congregation is still there, west of I-35 on highway 210. (The original building burned in about 1950). The land that Ole J. Olson owned was exactly 1 mile south and 1 mile east of the church.

Ole J. Olson Wald died June 1, 1908 in the town of Thor, Humboldt Co., Iowa. His death record is listed in the Humboldt county records of 1908 under the name: Wald, Ole J. O., born Jan. 7, 1830\*, divorced, farmer; Father: Peter Vold, Brith place: Norway, place of burial: Slater, IA, cause of death: Apoplexy.

There can be little doubt that this is the actual death record of our great great grandfather, Ole J. Olson. The death date given in Cleva Darling's history, 1906, is incorrect. The informant listed is Ole J.'s son, Severin Wald who was a well known lawyer for many years in Slater.