

My Research Journal

Allen H Wald

Note:

I have sometimes been accused that I only wanted to dig up old skeletons from the Wald family closets. For the record I want to say that I really just wanted to see what was in that closet, no matter what it was. Furthermore, I have a great desire to find whatever else there is, good or bad, as long as it helps to tell the story of our family and preserve that history for future generations.

Along with archery, this research has become my other favorite pass time, and as my bow arm grows less steady I find my desire to learn about our family grows stronger. Therefore, I continue to write about what I find, and I hope those whom I write about will forgive me if there are mistakes that result. Nevertheless, even as our arrows don't always hit the center, at the end of the tournament we usually find that the majority of hits leave a well punctured mark around the middle of the target. So it will be, I hope, with this work.

Allen H Wald

My Discovery of Our Family in the Palestine Lutheran Congregation

In the summer of the year 2001 I traveled to Iowa for the third time in as many years. Previously I had met a woman named Florence Wheeler who lives in Cambridge (near Slater) who had been collecting genealogy about every single person who ever lived in Cambridge, and she had been doing this for many years. She is not a member of the LDS church, but she is every bit the expert genealogist that you'll find anywhere in Utah. She had one entire wall of her large living room filled with books and genealogies, indexes and files. The year before this she and I had looked through many of her materials for information about the Wald / Wold / Olson family with almost no success.

It was a sunny day and the Iowa summer was warm and humid. The corn in the fields was well over your shoulders, and traffic on I-35 was light. Cambridge is only a few miles off the freeway--right in the middle of the state. When you turn off the main highway into town you can see that main street is all of one block long. I knocked on Mrs Wheeler's door and after several minutes she answered. (I don't think they get too many out of town visitors). She lives in an old novelty / gift shop, and her home is filled with all kinds of trinkets and nick-knacks that seem to be left over from former days before she retired. She invited me in and we sat down and talked for a while. I reviewed some of my research through that year, things I had learned since the time that I visited the year before. I told her that I was just there to see what new information I could find. We discussed the land deeds that I had found concerning Ole J. Olson, my great great grandfather. He lived with his family just a few miles south of Cambridge on the south side of the Polk county line, and a few of their children had been born in Cambridge, or at least we know that their names were entered in the Story county records as having been born there. At some point in our lengthy conversation she told me that I should go over and visit with the pastor at the Palestine Lutheran church which is just south of the freeway on the main highway between Cambridge and Slater. She also sold me a small book containing the history of the Palestine congregation. I had looked at this book the previous year, but it was not completely indexed, and I didn't find what I was looking for. This time I looked a little more carefully and discovered that several of Ole J.'s children were listed as members of the congregational choir, and in one place the book states that Ole O. Wold had been a member and gone on to become a priest in the Fertile Iowa

congregation. At that point I knew I was on a hot new lead, and I had to pry myself away from this terribly talkative (wonderful) lady so I could pursue this new information.

It was now late in the afternoon when I got to the church, and I felt that old feeling of anxiety once again as I approached the building—the voice in my mind went something like: ‘what the heck am I doing’, ‘this is stupid’, ‘they’re going to think you’re such an idiot’. I brushed those thoughts aside, knocked on the door, and the pastor came out to meet me. I told him who I was and why I was there, and he took me into his clerk’s office and showed me the oldest record book of their congregation which began around the year 1865. We looked briefly through the book and found definite records of our family. I was thrilled to have actually held that original old book in my hands. He copied a couple of pages for me, and then he said that he needed to get back to his work, but that if I would come back the next day at 9:00 a.m. his secretary would be there and she could help me look through the book more thoroughly and copy anything that I wanted. So I thanked him and left. The next day I returned and copied several more pages from the old church book along with many other pages from a 100-year anniversary book that they had. As you will see, the church book was written in the Norwegian language, and there is one page in that book that I consider to be one of the three most important documents that I have found in all of my research regarding the Wald family. I have included a copy of this page below.

Naar opgave	Stemme- berettiget	Født	Konfir. opgav.	Fami- lie- Navn	Naar opgave	Stemme- berettiget	Naar opgave	Født	Konfir. opgav.	Fami- lie- Navn	Naar opgave	Stemme- berettiget	
								No.	Medlemmernes fulde Navn	Naar	Hvor.		
146								129	Ole & Olsen Wold	48	65		
Am	1868.							130	Ulfvin Berthini Olsen Wold	Årdal	Kup. St. Am.	1871	Kjøp. St. Am. 1871
Am	1868.							131	Jonas T. Larson Ørenverad	Talsj	Kup.	1871	
Am	1869.							132	Lina Larson Ørenverad	Høyland	Kup. St. Am.	1872	
Am	1869.							133	Kristian Kristiansen Hobø	Kridjord	Kup.	1872	
Am	1870.							134	Agneska Hønge Hobø	St. Kjøp.	Kup. St. Am.	1872	
Am	1870.							135	Lars Olsen Rabø	Lisbon	Kup.	1872	
Am	1870.							136	Kornelius Petersen Haland	Øtn	Kup.	Am.	1872
Am	1870.	Se Side 109.						137	Lars Reinertsen Rødn	Sjøeld	Kup.	Am.	død 1894
Am	1870.							138	Anna Røan	Fjellborg	Kup. St.	Am.	død 1878
Am	1870.							139	Elling Halvorsen	Fjellborg	Kup.	Am.	
Am	1870.							140	Ramse. Halvorsen	Fjellborg	Kup. St.	Am.	
Am	1870.							141	Ramse. Halvorsen				

The document is a listing of individuals and families as they join the congregation. At the top of the page, #129 and #130 are our great great grand parents “Ole J. Olsen Wold and Udbjør Berthine Olsen Wold”. It also states that Ole was born in Årdal and Bertine, (a.k.a Bertha Gaard) was born in Talgø (also spelled: Talgje). They both formally joined the congregation in 1871, and this coincides with land records that show that Ole bought land shortly before that time. In fact, after I left the Palestine church I drove back over toward the land that Ole J. owned, and I discovered that his land was precisely one mile south and one mile east from the church. I had not noticed this the year before when I first met the current land owners because their farm house is on the other side of the raised freeway. The land that Ole J. owned is actually now bisected by the newly constructed freeway, and you can no longer see the church from the east side of the farm.

Why is this document so important? This is the only primary source documentation that I have ever found that lists the full names “Ole J. Olsen Wold”, including the farm name Wold, at the same time with his wife, giving her birth name “Udbjør Berthine”, also with his two surnames “Olsen Wold”. Perhaps even more important, the names of the parishes where they were each born are also given. When I saw this document I knew immediately that I had found the most telling proof that I have yet to this day—proof which validates all of the other documents and histories—so many of which were incomplete, uncertain, and ambiguous, and most of which came from secondary sources that could not be trusted completely. Furthermore, a history of this congregation has been kept over the years. Although Ole J. was not mentioned directly, his children were active and managed to appear in that history several times. It is also well documented that his son, our great grandfather, Ole Olson Wold was raised in this congregation, and this fact has been confirmed to me personally by Mrs Maylo Nervig who still lives in Slater and who is a cousin to our grandfather Ferdinand O. Wald.

My Visit to the Dungeons of Des Moines, Iowa, and What I Found There

On my way home from Cambridge and Slater that same year (2001), I stopped in Des Moines and spent a couple of hours in their historical library. I didn't find much there, so I went to my final stop, the Polk county court house which is right in the middle of down town. Des Moines is a reasonably large city, about the same size as Salt Lake. The court house is a large four story building which covers about half a city block, adjoined by several other buildings including the police station on the west side. When I entered the building, I was immediately struck by the gloominess of the large main floor room. This place was not designed to make people feel welcome. There were several people bustling about, and quite a few individuals sitting near the walls on benches and folding chairs. As I went past the guards through the metal detector, I noticed that most of the people were rather ruff looking. These people were having trouble with the law in one form or another.

I made my way to the clerk's office. Inside that room it was slightly brighter but also large and imposing. As I entered I again saw several people who were sitting on a long bench, each waiting for their turn, separated from the clerks by a long tall counter. I noticed that, while there were a great number of clerks and others milling about among the desks on the other side of the counter, there were seemingly no clerks at all who were actually there at the counter helping people. So, like the others, I took a number, and after about 30 minutes my turn finally came up. I told the clerk that I was looking for documents regarding a divorce case from about 1890. I didn't know the exact date, but I did know from our family history* that Ole J. and Bertha had been divorced, and shortly afterwards Bertha had died in 1899. I also knew that the family farm was in Polk county, situated on the northern most edge of the Polk county line, very near Slater and Cambridge. After Ole J. and Bertha died, most of the family had ended up in Story county. This fact explained why my grandma and grandpa Wald had had so much trouble researching this family—because they didn't really look for records in Polk county. Nevertheless, I had discovered the location of their farm through land deeds signed by Ole J. himself, and today I was looking for some real meat—something that would tell me more about how this family had fallen apart over 100 years ago.

As you might imagine, the first clerk that I talked to didn't have a clue how to help me, and she didn't even seem to understand what it was that I was asking for. So she went and got another clerk, and after making the same request to at least four different clerks (each time gaining more and more of an audience among the various people who were behind me), finally a slightly older lady came to the counter. After I explained my request yet again, she very kindly escorted me past the counter, around several desks to the back of the room, through two sets of tall oak doors, and down a long narrow set of stairs that led into the basement of the courthouse. There were no windows in that basement, and there didn't seem to be any real rooms either. The entire space was filled with a maze of masonry pillars and archways with various odd spaces between them—all built in the distant past by some long forgotten mad brick mason. As I reached the bottom of the stairway I saw hallways protruding off in all directions, some long and dark at the end, some short and halting abruptly. Every brick appeared to have been painted at least a dozen times—most recently with thick, glossy gray paint. The smooth texture and dark gray brick gave that basement the appearance of a damp and gloomy dungeon. At this point I was again asking myself: "what am I doing here", and "I wonder if there is any chance in Beelzebub's castle that I will find what I want down here." I felt like leaving immediately.

Nevertheless, I was there, down in that strange basement. Tucked away in every conceivable nook and cranny were dozens of file cabinets of all sizes and shapes, carefully fitted underneath a strange entanglement of large ventilation tubes, pipes, conduits, and computer cables. Down in that dungeon I was introduced to a very friendly young records clerk named Tina Lee. I explained to her what I was looking for, and she very kindly and expertly helped me find several index films where she thought we might find reference to the documents I was seeking. I then spent the better part of two hours looking for any reference to Ole J. Olsen / Olson / Olesen / Oleson / Vold / Wold / Wald etc. etc., and had absolutely no luck at all. Although she was working on other things, Tina had come over to help me several times during those two hours, and when it came time to leave I'm sure she could see that I was very disappointed. I thanked her for allowing me to search through their records and for helping so much, and I then prepared to leave thinking that I would just blow off that whole day as a complete failure, having not found anything at all. Before I left, Tina insisted that I write my name and address on a card with the names of the family and the information that I was looking for. She then told me that she would let me know if she finds something in the future. She had been really nice in helping me, but while standing underneath that huge labyrinth of bureaucracy I wasn't holding out much hope as I left.

I had heard that small town court houses sometimes keep old boxes full of case documents, and that the case of a family divorce could produce many documents that would be filled with details about the family. That day there was no such luck for me. The next year in the fall, however, well over a year later, after I had nearly forgotten about that whole sorry day in Des Moines, here in the mail came a letter from the Polk county clerk's office. Sure enough it was from my friend Tina. In the letter she explained that she had been looking for something else, and by accident she had run across an old index for equity cases. Somehow she remembered that I had been there and had been looking for this case type. She found the card that I left the year before, and although she wasn't able to locate the actual case file, she found a copy of the docket for the case which led her to find a copy of the final divorce decree given by a Judge Holmes. We didn't get any documents from the original court case, but we did get the final decree which describes several details about the divorce—the end of which must have been a very difficult struggle for the family. I have included that document below.

The docket shows that the case proceeded from August 31, 1893 until this final decree of November 4, 1895. The fees sheet also shows that the case was not finalized until 1898, just one year before Bertha died. The document begins at the bottom of page 522 through to the end of page 523, with "Bertha Oleson, Plaintiff, and Ole J. Olseson, Defendant...case #4459".

THURSDAY MARCH ELEVENTH, 1897. CONTINUED.

plaintiff have judgment against the defendants, E.D.Janes & Company, E.D.Janes, and Frank Janes and each of them, in the sum of \$279.75 with 7% thereon from this date until fully paid and for the costs of this action taxed at \$-----, including an attorneys fee of \$23.98, and that execution issue therefor.

Abbie A.Thompson)

-vs-) No 7097 Eq.Holmes J.

R.W.Marquis, et al)

On hearing the report of the referee herein it is ordered that his fee bill as reported be and the same is hereby allowed as follows: For the purpose of making a sale and posting notices \$10.00; Receiving bids and making report \$15.00; Bill of Sale \$10.00; Notary fees \$30.25; 121 assignments \$30.25, Total \$100.50.

Ella M.Millor)

-vs-) No 8902 Law Holmes J.

A.H.Leonard)

It is hereby ordered by the court in said cause, that J.B.Puckett be, and he is hereby appointed and duly authorized to serve the writ of Habeas Corpus, this day issued, in said cause, with like effect in all respects as if done by the Sheriff.

Mrs.S.L.Hellyer)

-vs-) No 7187 Eq.Holmes J.

D.Hellyer)

Be it remembered that now on this 11th day of March, 1897, the same being the 58th day of the January Term, 1897, of the District Court of Iowa, in and for Polk County, the case of S.L. Hellyer, plaintiff vs. D.Hellyer, defendant came on in regular order in open and regular session before the court for trial, the plaintiff appearing thereto with her attorney, C.L.Wilson. The defendant failing to appear the court after having duly examined the pleadings in the case, and being satisfied of the residence of the parties as required by the statutes of Iowa, and finding that all jurisdictional requisites are present and that this court has jurisdiction over the parties in this suit and after having heard the testimony adduced on the trial, and being fully advised in the premises, finds that all the allegations of plaintiff's petition are true, and finds that the slanderous charges made by the defendant against the plaintiff and alleged in his answer in this cause are untrue and the court finds that upon the allegations of plaintiff's petition she is entitled to be divorced from the defendant.

Therefore it is hereby ordered, adjudged and decreed by the Court that the plaintiff, S.L.Hellyer, be, and is hereby forever divorced from the said defendant, D.Hellyer; the bonds of matrimony heretofore existing between them being hereby and forever dissolved, and all of the right or interest that the said D.Hellyer may have had or been entitled to in the property of the plaintiff by reason of his marriage to her, is hereby cut off and forever barred.

Bertha Oleson, Plaintiff)

-vs-) No 4459 Eq.Holmes J.

Ole J.Oleson, Defendant &
Peoples Bank of Humboldt,
Intervenor.)

This cause coming on this 4th day of November, 1895, before the Hon.C.P.

Holmes, one of the Judges of said Court, the Court after hearing the evidence, and argument of counsel and being fully advised in the premises finds:

That the allegations and statements in the petition are true, and that the plaintiff and defendant separated more than ten years since and that said plaintiff and defendant have not lived together during said period of more than ten years last past; The court further finds that plaintiff and defendant entered into an agreement of separation and division of the property, at the time of their separation, and that the East one half(½) of the North-east quarter(¼) of section six(6) Township eighty-one(81), Range twenty-three(23), being the fractional half of the half section, amounting to about seventy(70) acres of land, is the homestead of the plaintiff and has been for more than twenty (20) years last past.

The Court further finds, that the mortgage given by Ole J. Oleson to the People's Bank of Humboldt, Iowa, was given without the knowledge and consent of the plaintiff, upon the homestead of the plaintiff.

It is therefore ordered and considered by the court that the marriage contract between the plaintiff and the defendant be, and the same is hereby set aside, annulled and cancelled and held for naught, and that plaintiff and defendant be perpetually divorced from each other, and that the bonds of matrimony heretofore existing between the plaintiff and the defendant be and they are hereby dissolved, set aside and held for naught.

That the mortgage given by the defendant Ole J. Oleson to the Peoples' Bank of Humboldt, is null and void and that the same be and is hereby set aside, cancelled and held for naught.

It is further ordered and decreed that the title to the East one half(½) of the North-east quarter(¼) section six(6) township eighty-one(81) range twenty-three(23), being the fractional half of said half(½) section, amounting to about seventy(70) acres more or less, be and the same is hereby decreed to belong in fee simple to Bertha Oleson, and that all interest in and to said land and every part thereof of the said Ole J. Oleson be and the same is hereby cut off, cancelled, and held for naught and that the plaintiff Bertha Oleson is hereby decreed to be the owner in fee simple of said land and every part thereof, free from all liabilities and incumbrances, created and to be created by the said Ole J. Oleson, and particularly, free from the mortgage given by the said Ole J. Oleson to the Peoples' Bank of Humboldt, Iowa.

It is further ordered and decreed that the costs in this case made by the Peoples' Bank of Humboldt, shall be paid by the said Peoples' Bank of Humboldt and a judgment is hereby entered thereon in favor of the plaintiff in the sum of Dollars, and that an execution be issued thereon in default of payment.

It is further ordered that each party shall pay their own costs in the main case.

ORDERED THAT COURT ADJOURN UNTIL NINE O'CLOCK A.M. TO-MORROW.

Thomas F. Stevens

JUDGES.

Although it is well documented in the Wald Family History²⁶ that Ole J. and Bertha divorced, the document above is very important for several reasons. First, we see that their names were given as: "Ole J. Oleson and Bertha Oleson". This helps prove their identity which has been difficult given that other family histories and documents have used many different names and forms of their names with an astonishing variety. Furthermore, the land in question, as described within the divorce decree, is in fact the same land that has been previously attributed to this family within land deeds and other documents. That is: "The East one half (1/2) of the North-east quarter (1/4) of section six (6) Township eighty-one (81), Range twenty-three (23),...,amounting to about seventy (70) acres of land". This describes section 6 of Elkhart township which is very nearly at the center of Iowa. The actual town of Elkhart is a few miles south of the farm, but in earlier times there was no bridge over the Skunk river, so settlers on the north end of the township could travel much more easily to Cambridge or Slater. This quarter section of land can be easily found situated on the northern most edge of Polk county, Iowa, immediately east of the I-35 freeway and one mile south of state highway 210.

According to the land deeds, Ole J. Oleson at one time also owned land to the west of this section which was not described here. Finally, we see in the decree that Ole J. and Bertha had been separated for at least 10 years previous to 1895, and that Ole J. had apparently sold the property and left the family without fulfilling an earlier obligation to give half of the proceedings to Bertha. Ole J. then moved to Humboldt county where his death is recorded in 1908. No doubt that this must have been a terrible hardship for Bertha and the children, and just one year after finalizing the decree and obtaining ownership of the land again in 1898, Bertha died in 1899. Bertha's grave stone can be found in the Slater cemetery which is about two miles south of the east end of Slater. The stone reads "WALD, _____, Bertha Olson, b. 1835, d. 1899". There is a space on the stone for her husband, but the family never had his name inscribed there. After his death, Ole J. was brought to Slater and buried in the family plot, but he was not placed next to Bertha under the stone. At present his grave is still unmarked. On the stone, under

26 from "The Wald History" by Cleva Darling: "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."

Bertha's name, there is a small inscription which is nearly illegible due to weathering. It reads: "Her end was peace".

My Initial Research

This all began in November of 1985 when I returned home from an LDS mission in Montana. December of that year I visited my grandma and grandpa Wald in their home in Sandy Utah. I talked with grandpa about genealogy and he told me a little about his grandmother's family in Talgje Norway. They had visited there when their son, uncle Leonard finished his mission in Norway. I remember grandpa showing me pictures from that trip, and I also remember him explaining that his grandfather's family was from Aardal—pronounced 'Or-dahl'. (Grandpa made a point of the correct pronunciation—also spelled 'Årdal').

After that visit I had borrowed all of grandma Wald's genealogy sheets and made copies of everything she had. There wasn't a lot of documentation, but she did have a lot of family group sheets. I then spent several weeks inputting all of the information from those sheets into the computer. (Remember that computers were limited in 1985. 'Windows' didn't exist yet, and printers still used typing ribbons and tractor feed paper). I also gathered everything I could find from my mother's Huffaker genealogy and entered that data as well. I then printed 11 copies of everything and sent a copy to everyone in my family. I received zero responses.

One year later I got married, and after a few more years I remember sending another letter to all of my brothers and sisters with the brilliant suggestion that we write a history of our own family. The idea was that we could send around a revolving letter that each of us could contribute to with our own experiences, and then after several revolutions we would publish all the letters in a book. I received exactly three responses; one remembrance from my mother, one short story from Susan, and one letter from my brother Steven who basically said that he thought it was a dumb idea. Given the level of response, perhaps he was right.

Several years later still, after I had made many great discoveries about the Wald family from Aardal, I sent everyone in my family, including the Wald aunts and uncles, a collection of family histories that I had worked on, some of which I had written. I included several items I had found in Norwegian histories and Aardal parish records. Much of that information had not been known to our family, and there were some very

exciting documents that I had collected. I had spent a lot of time on this and quite a few dollars printing all the copies and mailing them out as Christmas presents. I remember thinking that surely this would create some excitement in the family. I once again received zero responses.

Nevertheless, something deep inside compelled me to further the research, and I continued to work on the genealogy in grandpa Wald's line from Norway which is where

3 Possibilities for
Ole J. Vold -
b. 8/1/1831 in Aardal Parish Rogaland co
to Ole ~~Olson~~ ^{Iverson} Volden i Østgaard ← ?
+ Snn Pedersdatter. Born in 1809.
emigrated 1854 to America

Aardal bygdebok p. 194 in Vol 2 948.31/A1
pp 399-400 in Vol 1 H2e

much work still needed to be done. Grandpa Wald's grandfather, named "Ole J. Vold", was born in

1831 and immigrated from Norway in 1854. Although we had a brief history of his family written in 1939 by Cleva Darling, there were several inconsistencies in the pedigree that Grandma Wald had put together, and there was no real documentation of original records for the family. I worked for several months on those problems without real success until I finally came upon the following note that I had copied with grandma's genealogy:

This note turned out to be the key that unlocked all of the genealogy on the Wald paternal line. The book listed in the note is the 'bygdebok' or 'farm book' for Aardal parish in Rogaland county, Norway. It is written in the Norwegian language which was a

difficulty. I'm sure that this is the main reason why grandma Wald didn't get much out of it. Nevertheless, with a lot of help, and several more months of persistence, I was able to piece together good documentation of the family. There were many records from the Aardal and Hjelmeland parish registers, and there is information about several related families in the Aardal book. (Hjelmeland is the parent parish to Aardal). Even more importantly, the Aardal bygdebok also contains a history of my great great great grandfather who was named Ole Iversen Volden—also known as ‘Spel-Ola’. We couldn't read the story at first, but I knew that there was a good possibility that this individual was our direct ancestor. The bygdebok states that Iver Lillemo was Spel-Ola's father, and Cleva Darling states that Iver Lillemo was definitely our direct ancestor. (Note that Cleva Darling didn't mention Spel-Ola). See the story of Spel-Ola on page 50.

The importance of the Spel-Ola story was that it inspired me with a desire to know whether or not this was truly about our ancestors. There were several clues that seemed to show that it was true, but there were inconsistencies as well. When we got a translation of the story, I sent a copy to my uncle Leonard and asked him if he knew anything about Spel-Ola or his family, and whether or not they were in fact part of our family. He said that they had looked at this family years ago, but that “it was all so muddled”, and that “they were not able to make the connection”. He also told me that I needed evidence if I was going to make that claim, and they had not been able to find the evidence when they had looked into it years ago. After all, Ole Iversen's oldest son was named “Ole Olsen”, and this is probably the number one most common name in all of Norway! Undaunted and being the good scientist that I am, I went looking for evidence. Over the next five years through hundreds of hours at the Family History Library, and with three trips to Iowa and Illinois, I can now state that I have found the evidence that proves these people are indeed our ancestors. Even still, with all the hundreds of documents, and with all the histories that I have found written from both Norway and the United States, I knew from the day that I laid hands on that book that this was our family. I knew it. My heart told me that it was true, and I knew that the evidence would be found. I also knew that it would be worth the effort, and I now consider this history with all of the associated documents and histories among my most prized possessions. There are not many things in my home, other than my wife and children, that I would sooner take with me if I were forced to leave—as the pioneers in 1847 when they left Nauvoo. (Incidentally, Spel-Ola's son, Ole J. Olsen, and his family were members of the American Lutheran church in northern Illinois at very nearly the same time that the pioneers were migrating west—before the railroad was completed. The history of Iowa and Illinois of this period clearly shows that many Lutheran ministers spoke strongly against the

Mormons, and there is no doubt that my grandfather's parents and grand parents were taught from a young age that the Mormon religion was born of evil).

Finally, of all the many documents that I have found that link our family to the family from Aardal Norway, the one document that I consider the absolute most significant the death record of Spel-Ola which was recorded in the prison parish register in Kristiansand Norway.²⁷ This document not only proves that the story is true, but it also gives the date and tells the circumstances of the story's ending...

He was many miles from his home, in a cold and dark prison. It was February of the year 1860. No doubt there were few comforts available to him that night. This is how Ole Iversen Volden spent his last night on Earth while the prison priest offered what solace he could. Ole was terminally sick with pneumonia, and coughing up large amounts of blood. He knew that his time was near, and his misery must have been great that night. Nevertheless, he was humbled and repentant, and with the attendance of the priest, he confessed his sins for the last time. Later that night he died, alone. A few days afterward his body was buried in the prison graveyard.

27 See the next page; Kristiansand tukthus (penitentiary) parish register, FHL film 1406338 item 3, b. A1, 1840-1875, 1860 #1

D. Begravede og

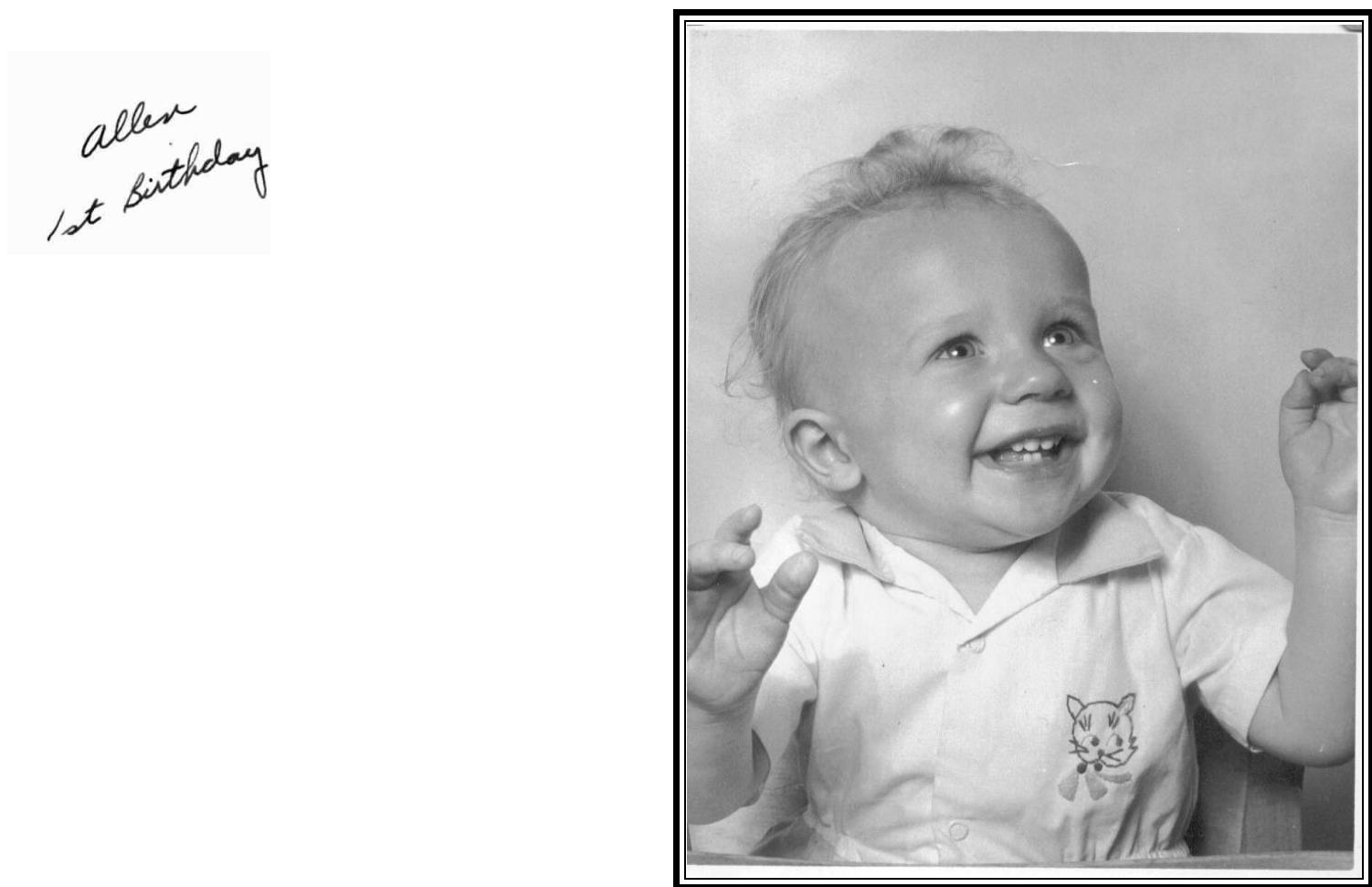
Dødfødte.

Nr.	Den opgivne Døds- dag.	Bgra- velses- Datum.	Den Begravedes fulde Navn og Stand.	Ålder.	Opholdsted.	
1.	9. Jun.	19. Jun.	Augkarl Ole Andreas Johansen Børge	55.	Vestre Næland	18
						58.
						Afslippe.
						59.
1.	17. Jan.	19. Jan.	Augkarl Ole Tønnesen Lieftil	23.	Søndre Røgen	
						Hennelab.
2.	16. Sept.	21. Sept.	Jørgen Mathias Ole brothes Samuelen, Augkarl.	38.	Akristiansand	
						Siensfor.
3.	2. Marts.		Augkarl Andreas Halvorson (Augkarl)	28.	Sigard Læraugen.	
						Kryppig.
						60.
1.	25. Feb.	1. Mar.	Gitt Maud Ole Iversen Volden.	51.	Hjelmeland Rogen	
						Blodstyrning.

"#1 (bottom), died 25 February, 1860, buried 1 March, married man Ole Iversen Volden, age 51, birthplace Hjelmeland Sogn, cause of death blodstyrning" (hemorrhage due to excessive coughing, most likely caused by pneumonia or tuberculosis).

A Trek on The Paper Trial, part I

I've spent years looking through thousands of books and films at the Family History Library. Among all those ancient documents I had never expected to find a picture of myself. Nevertheless, one day I decided to read the news on the day that I was born. I looked it up in the Salt Lake City Deseret News, and while browsing through that paper, I noticed that all of the children who had their first birthdays on that date were listed with their pictures. Immediately I went and got the news paper of the following year. Sure enough, there was a picture of me right there with my smiling face and my curly blond hair, one year old. This document is significant not only for the fact that I found it there in the historical library, but it also tells me who my parents were, it gives our home address, and it confirms my birth date, the same birthday I have been using all my life. I probably could have found the same information in the county birth records, or I could have ordered a duplicate birth certificate from the county health department (I actually



have my original), but this particular document was even better because it had my picture. This is a picture I am very familiar with having seen it many times in my own picture album with my mother's hand writing next to it:

Most people probably wouldn't believe this, but I actually remember the day that we went downtown to take this picture. I also remember how fun it was to be one year old, and I remember being able to understand what everyone else was saying but unable to express words to make myself understood. I also remember my father laughing at me while I was trying to babble on about something that I couldn't make the words for.

This story brings up some important points about family history research. First, historical facts must be documented if at all possible. If documents can't be found, then any assumptions that are made must be continually questioned and subject to the results of further research. Frankly, why should I assume that I was not covertly adopted into my family? If that assumption is false then I could spend my entire life researching the ancestors of a family that is not my own! Even the document referred to above does not prove unequivocally my parentage. Nevertheless, I have many other lines of evidence to support it and none which do not. Second, historical research should never be limited by goals that are too specific such as 'gathering names for the temple' or 'researching just my direct line ancestors'. The Family History Library is filled to overflowing with books and records produced and gathered by people who have all had a much larger vision in mind. That vision, in part, is to gather and preserve all of the information available, usually within a specific field of interest, and then to organize and publish it in such a way that others can use it as well. Finally, this picture of myself, found in the film archives of the library, is certainly a reflection of the fact that ours is the first generation which has produced huge amounts of visual materials that can be passed on to future generations. With that in mind, I have often wondered just what pictures and videos will still exist and will be in possession of my own great great grand children that will document my own life and the life of my family. I believe we should not only work toward the discovery of the past, but we must continually prepare the present for the archives of the future using all forms of media that are available.

Back to my original research. My principal goal has been to collect everything I can find regarding the Wald family line, focusing primarily on the Norwegian ancestry of my grandfather, Ferdinand Oliver Wald. With that goal, I decided to take a trip through Iowa and see what I could find in the town of Fertile which was Ferdi's boyhood home (gramma called him this). My journey began in the summer of 1997. Our daughter Julianne had spent a few weeks with her grandmother in Kansas. Since I was driving there to bring her home, I decided that this would be a good time to take a detour through

Iowa. The night that I reached Iowa it rained hard with lots of lightening. While I was sleeping in my car the rain made it nice and cool, but it was warm and humid the next morning. I woke up about 5 am and drove the last 100 miles to Fertile during the very early hours of the morning. I knew that I might make it there in time for church, but I didn't know what time that would be. I didn't even know where the church was. When I drove into town I noticed a large Christian church at the edge of town. Fertile is still a very small mid-western town just a few miles off the freeway in north central Iowa. Main street follows parallel to the river that flows through town. As I drove, I stopped briefly at the old Fertile river mill which is now a state historical site. There was no one there that morning, but I remembered the story that my grandfather told about going to swim in the river by the mill when he wasn't supposed to. When he arrived home his mother immediately knew what he had done because he had put his tee shirt on backwards after the swim. I continued down to the end of main street, then I followed the road as it turned north through a neighborhood of typical middle class homes and up to the top of the hill. There at the north western corner of town sat another church which looked similar but not exactly like the church that I was looking for. (It has been restored with several additions since the original building was built). I got out some pictures of the Fertile Lutheran church that I had brought with me, and as I sat in the car people began arriving for the Sunday services. I rolled down my window and asked an old lady if this was the Lutheran church. She politely said: "ah, yes" while shrugging her shoulders as if to say: "what other church would it be?" I had already changed my clothes at a gas station on the way, so I combed my hair and put on my good shoes and walked inside. When I entered the church at about 8:50 am, the pastor was there greeting people and I introduced myself as Allen Wald. Immediately he said: "Well, we know who you are! Welcome." He then told me that the lady had come in and said that "some strange man is parked outside and is asking questions about the church". It turns out that I had written letters to the 'Fertile Lutheran Church' earlier that year, and the pastor had received those letters but he had not yet responded. So he definitely knew who I was, and he also knew very well who my great grandfather was, pastor Ole Olson Wold, one of the very first pastors of their congregation. O. O. Wold (as he called himself) was my grandfather's father. This fact was told to me personally by my grandfather, and it has been well documented in our family history. Ferdinand's father had died when Ferdi was only ten years old, and his family was forced to move back to Slater Iowa because the church could not support them and they had no other family near Fertile. That was in 1908, over ninety years ago.

I went into the chapel and sat down near the back (with the hope of some anonymity), but as he began the service, the pastor asked me to stand up and introduced me as the great grandson of Pastor Wold. Although I hated this embarrassment, it was

later worth the trouble. After the meeting I was invited downstairs for coffee and cake (orange juice was optional). There I met several members of the congregation. One old gentleman told me that he didn't know pastor Wold, but that his father had known him. He said that pastor Wold's teachings and his work for the congregation were well respected for many years after his death. He also said that his father had taught him many things using pastor Wold as his example. Later I was able to talk more with the current pastor. He showed me the original church register for their congregation. The book was very old, bound with leather, and was entirely written in the Norwegian language. In that book we found the original record of the christening of my grandfather, "Ferdinand Oliver" as performed and recorded by his father who was "O. O. Wold", the current pastor at that time. (See the next page.) There were other records in that book of known family members, but Ferdinand's was very important to me because I knew my grandfather personally when I was younger. This original record of his birth and christening are now an essential link in the paper trail left by the family, and help to prove our lineage beyond any reasonable doubt. Unfortunately, such documents from the U. S. Lutheran church are not available at the Salt Lake Family History Library, and one must either travel to the place of origin to examine the records or purchase them directly from the Lutheran church archives. The same is true for other family documents I later found at the Palestine Lutheran church near Slater, Iowa. Those documents (mentioned in previous letters) link pastor O. O. Wold and the family in Fertile to his parents, Ole J. Olson Wold and his wife Bertha who both immigrated from Norway during the mid 1850's.²⁸

28 Next page: Birth record from the original church book of the Lutheran congregation of Fertile, Iowa. In possession of the pastor. See entry #15 on page 100 / 101, from the year 1896: "Ferdinand Oliver, born 27 July '96, christened 30 August '96, parents: O. O. Wold and wife Augusta, witnesses: Augusta Wold, Hans Hovland, Maria Hovland, K. Steffenson, Marie Daley and Burthan Wold"

This brings up another important point about family history: You can find a lot of information in historical libraries, but you can never find all the information about your family in one single place. Often the best place to look is right where they lived. I have found many of the most important documents regarding this family during my travels through Iowa and Illinois.

After my visit to the church in Fertile, I drove south, back to Slater where the family moved after pastor Wold had died. I knew that several family members were buried there, but I didn't know exactly where the cemetery was. I stopped at a gas station as I entered the town, and I asked the clerk if she knew. She said that she didn't but the Lutheran church was just around the corner and about four blocks north. I drove to the church but it was empty, so I just kept driving north through that neighborhood hoping I would figure something out. A few blocks later I saw an old man and a woman out in their yard and it struck me that they might know where the cemetery was. I stopped and asked them, and they seemed confused at first. The old man asked me who I was looking for, and I told him I was looking for my great grandparents who were named Wald or Wold. Suddenly his eyes lit up and he said: "Oh! You mean judge Wald...yes, his name was Severin Wald (he pronounced it Sēē-ver-inn)." I told him that I thought that might be a brother whom I knew had been an attorney in Slater. He told me that he had been well acquainted with "Judge Wald" as a young man because he had had several problems with the law in those days. He was a very nice old Norwegian, and he told me that he was 92 years old. We sat and talked for a while and he told me that he had come to America with his father when he was just a boy. Before I left he not only told me how to find the cemetery, but he also told me exactly where in the cemetery I would find the Wald family plots.

Just for anyone else who might want to find the place, the 'Slater Cemetery' is about two miles south of the south east corner of town. Just turn west off I-35 toward Slater on highway 210 and turn south at the Conoco station as you enter town from the east . You can't miss it out in the middle of the corn fields. The Wald family plots are east of the path at the north west corner of the cemetery. There is a sexton's list posted at the south east corner if you need to look it up. One of my goals in visiting this cemetery was to find evidence linking Ole O. Wold with his father Ole J. Olson (also known as Vold, Wold and Wald). Clearly this is the site of our family burials with "Ole O. Wald" (was Wold) buried next to his wife "Augusta Wald". Next to them is the site of Severin Wald and his wife, and on the other side is a large stone with the name "Bertha Olson WALD". On this large stone there is a place for the husband's name, but Ole J.'s name was never inscribed there. In fact, there was never a stone placed over Ole J.'s grave, and the first time I went to this cemetery I didn't realize that he was in fact buried there. It is

recorded in our family history by Cleva Darling that Ole J. lived alone in Humboldt county after he and his wife divorced, and that his body was brought back to Slater for burial after his death. I was disappointed that I didn't find a stone there with his name on it, but the second time I came to Iowa I stopped at this cemetery again and I discovered that the sexton's list has two individuals listed, both named 'Ole O. Wald'. (There is also a list kept by the Daughters of the American Revolution, but their list only gives the one name). You might think that this was a typo on the sexton's list, but separate plot numbers are given for both. My investigation revealed that one of the plots is marked with the grave stone of our great grandfather, while the other--where his father is buried--is yet unmarked but placed within the other family plots. It might also be noted that he was not buried next to his wife, Bertha. On the larger stone over Bertha's grave there is only her name inscribed. There is also a very worn inscription under her name that was difficult to read. As I have previously mentioned, Bertha had come to considerable grief over her husband in the later years of their marriage. After he left the family she was not well off, and she and the children had many difficulties making ends meet. She lived only a few years after the divorce became final, and she had also suffered a long illness at the end of her life. If you look carefully at her stone you will see that the inscription there shows the faith that she had taught her children. It simply states: "Her end was peace".

Original Documentation

When a person enters the Family History Library (FHL) in Salt Lake City for the first time, one generally doesn't know just exactly where to start. If this were a normal library there would be a large empty entrance hall with a list on the wall which would indicate where to find the various collections in the building. But in this library the entrance foyer always has at least three or four elderly missionaries just waiting there, watching for just such an unwary traveler, lost and confused, and when they wander in they are immediately descended upon as if to become the next victim of this gang of thugs who are continually laying in wait. I remember clearly the first time I went there. Although I wasn't really mugged or thugged, I was rushed into the adjoining room where I was promptly given the standard introduction to the library and shown a short video. After that, one of the missionaries took me into the main floor and sat me down at one of the computers. This (I have come to realize) is standard procedure for all newbies who enter. After a few minutes at the computer, we were able to bring up several records of the Wald family. While inspecting these records and after considering several other records in the FHL collection, I eventually came to realize that there were many inconsistencies and some obvious errors, and there was certainly not a lot of correlation between the records from the FHL and the records that I had received from my grandparents.

And so this is how I came to begin my research—with the realization that there were way too many mistakes already within the records. I determined to uncover the truth of the matter if it was possible. As I continued to visit the library during the next several months, I was continually frustrated by the computerized records kept by the church. It turns out that several different individuals had contributed to those records over the years. In fact, many deceased individuals had been represented two or three or even four times, all with different birth dates and different birth places etc. Although this is not at all unusual, it is confusing to someone who is just beginning their research. Since then I have learned that computers, although great tools that they are, contain only information that has been put there by some person. In the case of the FHL databases, that information unfortunately contains absolutely no supporting documentation of the original sources that could help a researcher sort through all of the problems.

It is the search for the original documents that I then determined to pursue. I recall the first truly original document that I found. My father, Fred Wald, was there with me that day. We had found a mention of a marriage record in grandma Wald's notes, and we went down to the international floor of the library to look up this record. The record, which is shown below, is the marriage record of our great great great grandparents Ole Iversen and Siri Pedersdatter. I recall clearly that we suffered quite a difficulty actually finding the document. The record we were seeking was originally recorded in the church book of the Aardal Lutheran parish of Rogaland county in south Parish records from Årdal, Rogaland, Norway: "# 7: young man Ole Iversen Volden age 22 years, maiden Siri Pedersdatter Hagen, age 22 years, sponsors: Daniel and Ole Kirkhuus, date: November 20th, 1830, married in the church."

western Norway. These books contained several hundred pages of records, and they are kept at the FHL on 35 mm films. Not only did we not even know how to put the film in the viewing machine, but we didn't have a clue how to find the actual pages containing this specific marriage among the hundreds of other records on the film. To top it off, that entire set of records was written by hand in the Norwegian language as are nearly all of the church records from the 17th century. Never before had I felt so completely unable. These records seemed so unfathomably lost to antiquity, and the task of deciphering such documents seemed utterly confusing and hopeless. Nevertheless, the library has people who helped us, and eventually we found the correct pages and managed to make copies and got help with the translation.

Borgerlig	Matrikkel	Oppgjør				
And, Inga	And					
4. Inga. Lars.	Sofia	Andrea	360	i Rist	357 og	
and Oluf	and	and				
christal, 27	christal, 19					
And	And					
5. Inga. Hans	Inga. Christo	Ell og En	360	i Rist	349 og	
and	and	and				
christal	christal	christal				
And, 28 And	christal, 28 And	christal				
6. Inga. Hans	Inga. Hans	And	360	i Rist	357 og	
and	and	and				
christal	christal	christal				
christal, 30 And	christal, 30 And	christal				
7. Inga. Ole	Inga. Siri	Andrea	100	i Rist	349 og	
Franse	Franse	and	20	i Rist	345.	
Holmnes	Holmnes	and				
22 And	22 And	and	1830			
Birkeland var fra Stavanger 1830 til 1831 i Rist						
1. 1. 1831 ble han døpt ved matrikkelen i Rist						

There is little doubt now as to the identity of this couple, but when we first found this document there was nothing but doubt. With a lot of help and several more hours of searching I began to find more documents regarding this same family. In fact, there are literally hundreds of original documents that exist in the Norwegian and FHL archives that pertain to this family. As I began to find these documents I found the task to be extremely compelling and exciting. Although I could not read any of them, there are always people at the library who can, and I was insistent that they would teach me the words while they translated.

Eventually I began to learn a few words, and I purchased a Norwegian translators dictionary. After a few weeks of struggling to understand a variety of Norwegian documents, something amazing happened. I had been studying several different items,

and I was relying heavily on the help at the library. Then there was one day when I looked at a certain document and I realized that I understood the translation—and I knew that my interpretation was correct! This was like a moment of awakening for me because I had previously been so confused by the new language. Many ancient Norwegian words are not even the same words or spelled the same as the words that they use today. It's like reading Shakespear's English, only this time it's not in English and it's also hand written in an ancient and antiquated script. But almost as if a light just came on I realized that I could understand what was written and that I would not always be confused by this new research. I have never learned to speak another language, and even now, ten years later, I can hardly speak or even understand a word of Norwegian when spoken.

Nevertheless, I am able to understand the written language to a great degree. This is not to say that I haven't had to study and continue to learn new words, but I believe that it was on that day that I was blessed with the gift of the interpretation of tongues as spoken of by the prophet Moroni (see Moroni 10:8-18). It turns out that many Norwegian words are identical to English words, but they are just spelled differently. Thus many words can be translated directly by reading them phonetically. However, to speak those same words is a whole different problem. Norwegian is also somewhat more simple without a lot of the extraneous words that we love to use in English to help a sentence 'sound' right. So, with a vocabulary of two or three hundred words I began a serious study of our Norwegian family history. And what an amazing history we have found as it continues to unfold.

Below is a copy of the birth record for Siri Pedersdatter Hagen, # 62.²⁹ Hagen is the place where her family lived. It means: a hill or a knoll or mound. See if you can pick out the names of her parents which are given in the record.

29 FHL film # 0126128, Aardal parish records, Aardal, Rogaland, Norway.

• A. Johnson Jan 2nd 1861

Guro Olsdatter Strand - Julia Anderson Illinois

Our 4th great grandfather, Iver Olsen Lillemo, was married in 1803 with Siri Rasmusdatter Hia. In 1804 she bore him a girl whom they named Anna Iversdatter. Siri never had any more children, and she was said to be sickly in census record of 1815. In 1809 Iver Lillemo had a son with Guro Olsdatter of Strand, with whom he was not married. His son was named Ole Iversen, and as we know, he was the same individual who was latter called ‘Spel-Ola’ because of his great skill with the fiddle. Guro and her son Ole lived at Lille Vadla which was a nearby farm, and we can assume that young Ole knew his father well and also his half sister Anna. In 1814 Guro married with Torgier Halvorsen and had another child named Kari Torgiersdatter. (For more details on Guro’s family please see the Wald family gedcom files). It is possible that this Torgier Halvorsen was the person who taught young Ole to play. The spellmenn are known to have kept records, like genealogies, of those who were renowned, and who had taught later generations to play. I have often wondered if it might be possible that some record of the spellmenn in this area still exists. If it does we might be able to learn more about this family from such a record.

Guro’s first husband, Torgier, died in 1822, and she was married twice more (although we don’t know who her second husband was). In 1853 Guro was about 74 years old, a widow after her third husband, and during that year she immigrated to America with her daughter, Kari. At this time Kari had married with Marcus Andersen, and they had two children, Anders and Gurina. So this young family came to America and brought with them their two children, Kari’s aging mother Guro, and some time later, both of Marcus’s parents as well. Remember that Ole J. Olsen (Spel-Ola’s oldest son) also immigrated to America in 1854 with two of his brothers. His emigration is recorded in our family history by Cleva Darling. However, there were many others in the family who also came here during this period. For instance, Iver Lillemo’s daughter Anna married and had eleven children while living in a neighboring parish called Sjernarøy, Norway. Anna died while her children were still young, and her husband, Helge Olsen, also came to America with one of his sons.

Back to Guro’s family. The census records in Illinois and Iowa give us more information about them. In 1860 the family is clearly listed in Manlius, Illinois. Guro, living with her daughter’s family, is there listed with the name “Julia Andersen, age 80”

(see the next page). One might pause to wonder whether this is indeed the same person, but in this case the evidence is very clear. Kari and her husband, Marcus Andersen and their children are unmistakable with their distinctive names and ages—known to us from the church and farm records of Norway. Also, the immigration records from Norway clearly show that Guro did come with them. Therefore, who would it be at age 80 who had taken the name Julia and was now living in the same home? No later record of her is known, but it was my search for her burial site that provides a most interesting epilogue to this story.

11	1854 11/14	Richard Larson	29	m
12		Betsy "	21	f
13		Christina "	7	f
14		Silvert Johnson	30	m
15	1855 11/15	Mark Anderson	40	m
16		Christina "	30	f
17		Grodeon "	10	sw
18		Julia "	8	f
19		Caroline "	4	f
20		Jacob "	2	sw
21		Richard "	7	sw
22		Julia "	80	f
23	1856 11/16	William Tice	53	sw
24		Elizabeth "	42	f
25		Sophia "	19	f

In 1870 Kari's husband, Marcus, is listed with his wife and several more children in the census for Nettle Creek, Grundy, Illinois. This large family is related to us because Kari was Spel-Ola's other half sister. I have recently had contact with the descendants of this family who still live in this same place. In 2001 our family traveled to Illinois and Wisconsin. While Lucinda and Katie stayed with some friends in Madison, my daughter Julianne and I spent a day exploring the Fox River Settlement of Illinois which is centered around the modern town of Norway, Illinois. The old Lutheran church building is still there. It was built in 1848, but it is now used as a museum for the relics of the Norwegian emigrants. We looked around for a while, then we went to the market to get

some lunch. I asked the owner if he knew where the local Norwegian cemetery was. He knew of several, and he sketched me a map.³⁰ After lunch we drove around to all the local cemeteries and a few other historical sites that were on the way. It's great to have your kids with you while searching through cemeteries because they can run and hunt through all the stones a lot faster than you can. After four charming old—but well kept cemeteries, we were still disappointed. As we drove to the last one on the map I didn't have much hope, and I felt like giving up as I often feel on such trips. The cemetery is about one mile south of town, just east of the road. As we drove up, another group of people were just leaving, and when they were gone we had the place to ourselves. It was quiet and peaceful, but it was also sunny and hot—a typical muggy mid-western summer afternoon. Julianne went quickly up the hill, and as before, I told her to look for any stones with the name Andersen. Surprisingly, in about two minutes she had located two sites with that name on the stones. It turns out that the second was finally the site of the family that we were looking for, but what we found was quite different than what I had expected.

Recall that Kari Torgeirsdaughter married Markus Andersen, and the two of them had two children in Norway whom they brought with them when they came to America with Kari's mother Guro (Julia). Later the parents of Markus Andersen came also. The census of 1860 clearly shows that Kari's mother, Guro (Julia), was still alive that year. As I have said, the 1870 census record shows that Markus had moved to Nettle Creek, Illinois and had several more children there. In both these census records the wife of Markus was named Christine, and I had assumed that this was the same person as Kari—that she had just changed her name slightly the same way that her mother did. This was not at all uncommon for the emigrants to do. However, the stones in that old cemetery told a different story. It turns out that Markus had buried his parents there shortly after they came here. I'm not sure what year they came. There is a large upright stone with inscriptions on all four sides. One side has the names of Markus's parents with both their birth and death dates, and it is very certain to me that these were indeed his parents. Also on the stone is an inscription with the birth and death dates of his wife Kari (Spelled 'Cora') who also died shortly after coming here—just three months after the birth of her third child, another son named 'Cornelius'. The boy lived just a little over one year, and then he died also. On the stone are the names and death dates of two other children: Julia (Gurina) who died at age 18 and Milton who died at age 20, and finally there is another inscription with the name and death date for the second wife of Marcus. One side is empty with just a scripture engraved on it. I can hardly overemphasize the

30 The family of Marcus Anderson from the 1860 census of Manlius, La Salle, Illinois. Note the entry for "Julia Anderson, age 80" at the bottom.

extraordinarily great fortune of the fact that fully three generations of the same family—parents, children and two wives, and also the name of Marcus Anderson himself—all are recorded on that one stone. That Kari's name is spelled 'Cora' was at first confusing, but as I read the entire stone the history of this family became much more clear. Also, there is another flat stone next to the tall one. On that stone is again inscribed the name of Marcus's wife and her son—the same inscription that was on one side of the tall stone. Now the sad tale can be told once more. Marcus Andersen had come here with his entire family, with all their hopes and dreams, and with only what possessions they could carry with them, only to see his wife and their baby son lost to death within a year of their arrival. No doubt this was a very difficult beginning to their lives in America. Even still, Marcus continued on with his two older children, he soon married again, and with his new wife he had many more children. In 1874 he lost his second wife, and I have recently discovered that he married again for a third time. Marcus died 25 November, 1892, age 68.

The following was found at the Norway Cemetery, east side of highway 71, less than 1 mile south of Norway Illinois (old Fox River settlement), at the center of the north most section of the cemetery, up on the hill.

Two family markers, one large gray stone,
and one flat (worn) white marble stone.

On the large gray stone:

Side one:

"Cora
Wife of Marcus Anderson
Died Aug. 10 1853
Aged 32 yrs. & 3 mos."

"Cornelius Anderson
Died Nov. 18 1854
Aged 1 year 4 mos."

Side two:

“Julia Anderson
Died Dec. 1 1869
Aged 18 yrs. & 8 mos”

“My Father and Mother
Andrew Marcuson
Died April.3 1875
Aged 86 years
Martha Marcuson
Died April 24 1874
Aged 83 years”

Side three:

“Christine
Wife of
Marcus Anderson
Died July 26 1874
Aged 48 yrs. & 2 mon.”

“Milton
Son of
Marcus Anderson
Died Aug. 24 1890
Aged 20 yrs. 11 mos. & 6 days”

Side four: empty

Worn white marble stone:
Same inscription as large grey stone:

“Christine
Wife of
Marcus Anderson
Died
July 26 1874
Aged 48 yrs. & 2 mon.”

I never did find another stone for Kari's mother Guro. In the birth record of her son Ole, she is named "Guro Olsdatter Qvualshaugen of Strand". Qvalshaugen is one of the farms at Jörpeland in Strand parish, so we can be fairly certain that the birth record below is indeed hers—listing her father as "Ole Jörpeland".³¹ Who would have imagined that her name would change so completely before her final days here in America. I suppose that there may yet be a stone for her in some other cemetery near Nettle Creek, Illinois. I

Lom: Rogale	Jøne Knutfer Biigem
9 th May. -	Gårdsm. Knut.
	Tid: Gjærtu Bjørn. Ingborg
	ibid. Tøren datter: Knut Grolle
	Tore Bjørnem. —
ed. S.	+ Huusmand Ole Jörpeland
	Hans datter: Guraa.
	Tid: Anna Svendsdatter Dahlen.
	Aasa & Tøre Torgiersdatter, Jens
	Baecka, Lars Naig. —

would like to go there some day and look.

31 Birth record for Guro Olsdatter, born 1779 in Strand parish, Rogaland, Norway. See the second entry above from the Strand kirkebok: "ibid. (Christened on the 9th of May) Huusmand Ole Jörpeland, hans datter: Guraa. Witnesses: Anna Svendsdatter Dahlen, Aasa & Tore Torgiersdatter, Jens Baecka, Lars Naig."

A Trek on The Paper Trial, part II: Names

My great grandfather, Ole Olson Wold, was at the age of 16 confirmed in the Palestine Lutheran church of Story county, Iowa. It is written in the history of that congregation that Ole was born in Illinois and that he became a preacher in Fertile Iowa. Therefore, there is little doubt as to his origin in this place. In all documents that I have seen he was known as Ole Olson or Ole Wold or O. O. Wold etc. His parents were much more interesting however. His father apparently called himself Ole J. Olson (spelled ‘Olsen’ in Norwegian documents). I also have documents which name him the following: Ole, son of Ole Iversen Volden, Ole Olson, Ole Oleson, Ole Volden, Ole Olsen Volden, Ole O. J. Olsen, Ole J. Olson Wold, Ole O. Wald, Ole Vold, and Ole J. O. Wald. Perhaps the only thing he wasn’t confused about was that his name was ‘Ole’. It does confuse the research though. And how about his wife? At birth she was named: Udbjørg Bertine Andersdatter Gaard. She was also named Betsey Anderson, Bertha Andersen, Bertha Gaard, Bertha Andersen Gaard, Bertha A. Gaard-Wald, Bertha Hubert Gaard, Bertha Olson, Betsey Oleson, Betsey J. Olson, Elizabeth Oleson, Bertha Olson Wold, and on her grave stone, Bertha Olson Wald! In fact, it seems like the more I find documents for these two, the more variations I find for their names. This might appear to be unfortunate or even telling of the possibility that the research is flawed and filled with various different people. Perhaps they just ‘seem to fit’ but are not really the same individuals. Nevertheless, I have seriously studied every document that I have, and with few exceptions I am convinced that all these names represent just two individuals who came from Norway to Iowa, probably weren’t very literate, and left this broken trail for me to follow. Furthermore, it is by no means unfortunate, and indeed I think the opposite is true. Since each name above came from such widely varying documents which were produced over their entire lives, this serves to weave a more complete history about them. The variation in names has also compelled me to look for more documentation to prove or disprove the validity of the rest. As a result, I believe that I have a very good summary of their lives, and this is what I wish to write about in the balance of this chapter.

Bertha was born at the Gaard farm on the island of Taljge, Rogaland county, in south western Norway. In the church book her name is written “Udbjørg Bertine

Ølsdatter Andersdatter Gaard".³² Her parents were named "Anders Olsen Gaard and wife Siri Thorbjørnsdatter". The fact that her father's father (who is listed as a witness at the christening) was named Ole Andersen and her father was Anders Olsen (the younger) seems to have confused even the priest, and he had to cross out his first attempt at her father's name. But we know that he finally got it right because her name is given again in full when she leaves to come to America: "Udbjørg Bertine Andersdatter Gaard" with her sister: "Margrethe Marie Andersdatter Gaard", "Udflyttede til Amerika, 18 April, 1855".

In "The Wald History" by Cleava Darling, it is documented that Ole and Bertha were married soon after their arrival here, and they lived at the Fox River settlement as did many newly emigrated Norwegians at the time. (There is also a version which states that they traveled together and met on the boat, but I have not been able to confirm this). The Fox River settlement included the Mission township, and part was also called Lisbon. Today there is a small town there named "Norway", and these places are all found within La Salle county, Illinois. In the records from La Salle county there is a marriage certificate which lists the following couple: "Ole Olsen and Betsey Andersen, married Sept. 15, 1855". There is no other information given, and I might be very reluctant to say that this is indeed our couple. However, the dates do coincide with their dates of emigration, and the 1860 census of Mission township lists the following family:

"Oleson, Ole	age 30	b. Norway
Betsey	age 25	b. Norway
Serine	age 3	b. Illinois
Sophia	age 1	b. Illinois"

Well now, these are the same names as those on the marriage certificate, living in the same county, and here they have two daughters just a few years after their marriage. Cleava Darling states that the family moved to Iowa sometime in the mid 1860's. The 1870 census for Elkhart township in Polk county (between Slater and Cambridge, Iowa) lists the same family, now with six children:

"Oleson, Ole	age 35 (?)	b. Norway
Elizabeth	age 33	b. Norway
Sarah	age 12	b. Ill

32 Birth record from Talgje, Rogaland, Norway: "Udbjørg Bertine Andersdatter Gaard, born 19 July, 1835, in Talgje church; parents: Anders Olsen Gaard the younger and wife Siri Thorbjørnsdatter.

Susan	age 10	b. Ill
Ole	age 8	b. IA
Andrew	age 6	b. IA
Sevard	age 4	b. IA
Lewis	age 6/12	b. IA

There are some discrepancies with the ages, but this is common in early census records. The women all have slightly different names. Even still, the 1870 record is certainly the family whom we know to be our great great grandparents. The 1860 record is perhaps less certain but only slightly so. Remember that names were often ‘Americanized’, and Serine is the full form of the Norwegian name Siri. The name Sarah is very nearly the same name only spelled differently. Also remember that Susan has been substituted for Sophia in this same family before (see Ole’s sisters in the gedcom file). Finally, both Ole’s mother and Bertha’s mother were named Siri. Ole’s father was named Ole, and Bertha’s father was named Anders (Andrew). Therefore, with the exception of Susan (Sophia), they have followed the Norwegian naming practice as we should expect (the oldest son is named after the father’s father and the next son is named after the mother’s father, the oldest daughter is named after the father’s mother and etc.). This is a very important point that we might fail to fully appreciate today. Modern people just don’t think it too important to honor their parents this way. In Norway the tradition was very strong and lasted for many centuries. Remember that both Ole and his wife were born in Norway. In 1880 we have the same family again in Elkhart township:

1880 U. S. census, Elkhart, Polk, Iowa

Ole J. OLSON	Self	Male	W	53	NORWAY	Farmer
Betsey OLSON	Wife	Female	W	50	NORWAY	Keeping
House						
Sarah OLSON	Dau	Female	W	22	IL	
Susan OLSON	Dau	Female	W	19	IL	
Ole OLSON	Son	Male	W	18	IL	
Andrew OLSON	Son	Male	W	17	IL	
Severen OLSON	Son	Male	W	14	IA	
Martha OLSON	Dau	Female	W	11	IA	(Martin Lewis)
Betsey OLSON	Dau	Female	W	7	IA	
Brolin OLSON	Dau	Female	W	4	IA	(Burton)
Mary OLSON	Dau	Female	W	1	IA	
Mary PETERSON	Other	Female	W	22	NORWAY	Keeping House

Once again there are discrepancies, but we see that this is indeed the same family living in the same place. Here Ole J. has his distinctive middle initial, and his wife is back to Betsey again. There are also mistakes in the writing and the transcription. Martin Lewis is listed as a daughter and named: ‘Martha’. Burton is also listed as a daughter and his name is transcribed as ‘Brolin’. (Is this really a name?) If you inspect the original carefully, you will see that it appears the writer did mean to write ‘Burton’ but didn’t cross the ‘t’ very well. This doesn’t explain the designation of daughter however. I don’t know if Mary Peterson was related to the family, but there is no doubt from the list that this is the same family again. All of these children were documented by Cleava Darling, and several of the birth records have been found in the county record books. More importantly, Ole J. Olson did in fact purchase land in Elkhart township. On the land deed they are named “Ole J. Oleson and Betsey J. Oleson”. The land is described as: “The north east fractional quarter of section Six in Elkart township...” It turns out that this piece of land is precisely one mile east and one mile south of the Palestine Lutheran church where we have found several other family records previously discussed.

Before the next available census in 1900 the couple was divorced and Bertha had died. I was not able to find a census record for Ole J. in that year, and he died in 1908 while living in Thor township near Humboldt, Iowa. After so many records already found for this family, one might think that this would be a good place to stop. But the more I find, the more I discover that other documents might yet be available. There are early records available in the Lutheran church archives in Chicago that I would really love to search some day. There is also two full sets of news papers from Slater and Cambridge Iowa that go back to the 1880’s. I’m sure that most of the early editions will be written in Norwegian. I’m also sure that they won’t be indexed. Nevertheless, they have been microfilmed at the local libraries in Iowa, and I plan to spend time looking through them in the near future. There is also the matter of Ole J.’s younger brother Andrew Olsen Volden. Cleava Darling tells that Ole J. came here with two of his brothers. The Rogaland emigration index lists only the one: “Andrew Olsen Volden”, but it doesn’t tell the year that he emigrated. I only know that he did not come the same year that Ole did. There are a few possible matches among individuals in the census records, but I haven’t been able to pin him down yet.

One final note on this family. The census record of 1880 lists the youngest daughter of Ole J. as: “Mary Olson”, age 1. Cleave Darling also lists her as Ole J.’s youngest child. However, the fact is that this child was the daughter of Sophia who gave birth out of wedlock at age 19. The child’s full name was listed in the church book at her christening: “Anna Maria, daughter of Sophia Olson Wold, b. 10 Jan. 1879”. The church book also states that Sophia was unmarried at the time, and this fact has been confirmed

to me personally by a living descendent of Anna Maria. Nevertheless, the whole family raised the child as one of the rest, and the actual father's name was never recorded that I know of.³³ ³⁴

14.	Udbjørg Bertine Goddotter Andersdotter Gaard	19 Juli i Talje sister	Anders Olsen Gaard & yngre q f. Siri Thorbjorn dotter	Elisabeth. Guri Megland Anne Rasmussen st. Gaard, Ras, nis Enda Gaard Anders Mortg. Hauge Helandsgaard & yngre
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33 From La Salle county, Illinois marriage records

34 Talje emigration records; see # 6 & 7 "Margrethe Marie and her sister Udbjørg Bertine"

Udflyttede (ogsaa Børn.)

a Folio

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Medbragte Akterster.	No.	Opgiven Datum.	N a v n.	Alder.	Til hvad Sted.
Abt. fra Tønder. Gjort d. 20/11-52.	1.	(1851)	Hans Hennrikssen	folk 1820.	
	2.	- " -	Helle og højre		{ til
	3.	- " -	Anna Kjeldstatter	1829	{ Slavanz
	4.	- " -	Hans Christian	1840	{ Vindööri
	5.	Planum 1855.	Mallene Einosdatter	43.	{
Akt. af fra Tønder. Dietrichson af 20/3-55.-	6.	- " -	Margrethe Marie Einosdatter Gaard	27.	{ til Annarida.
Abt. fra Tønder. Dietrichson af 10/4-55.-	7.	- " -	Udbygning Berthune Einosdatter Gaard	20	
	8.	- " -	Valentin Valentine Eccius	33.	{ til Annarida.
Abt. fra Tønder 10/4-55.	9.	- " -	Rasmus Klemm Klemm	96	90.

MARRIAGE LICENSE.

STATE OF ILLINOIS,
LA SALLE COUNTY,

The People of the State of Illinois:

To any regular Minister of the Gospel authorized to marry, by the Church or Society to which he belongs, any Justice of the Supreme Court, Judge, or Justice of the Peace, SEND GREETING:

Upon Application being made, and it satisfactorily appearing to the Clerk of the County Court of La Salle County, that

Ole Olson is of the age of Twenty-one Years, and that
Betsy Anderson is of the age of Eighteen Years,

WE DO GRANT THIS LICENSE, and authorize either of you to solemnize the rite of Marriage between the above named individuals within said county; and we hereby require you to make Certificate of such Marriage and return the same, together with this License, to the Clerk of our said court, within Thirty Days after solemnizing such Marriage.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, The subscriber, Clerk
of the County Court of La Salle County, has hereunto set his Hand
and affixed the Seal of said Court at Ottawa, this 14th day of
Sept. 1855.

Sam'l M. Raymond Clerk
La Salle Co.

STATE OF ILLINOIS,
LA SALLE COUNTY,

I do hereby Certify, That by virtue of and pursuant to the authority in the above License granted, I DID, on the 15th day of September 1855, solemnize the Rite of Marriage between Ole Olson and Betsy Anderson herein named.

31		Brooks Gates	26	m	
32		Jane "	24	f	
33		Ellena "	5	f	
34	2117	Ole Olson	34	m	
35		Betsy "	25	f	
36		Serine "	3	f	
37		Sophie "	1	f	
38	2108 2118	Rasmussen Williamson	57	m	
39		Julia "	37	f	
40		Christina "	9	f	
		No. white males,	19	No. colored males,	No. foreign born,
		No. white females,	21	No. colored females,	No. deaf and dumb,

1860 census for Mission township, La Salle, Illinois.

8	—	Henry	2	M	14			
9	—	Martin	2	M	11			
10	118	119	Clemon Oli	35	W	M	farmer	6000 850
11	—	Elyzabeth	33	F	11		keeping house	
12	—	Sarah	12	F	11			
13	—	Susan	10	F	11			
14	—	Oli	8	M	11			
15	—	Shareco	6	M	11			
16	—	Bernard	4	M	11			
17	—	Lewis	6	M	11			
18	119	120	Clemon Andrew	27	M	M	farmer	14000 750
19	—	Eliza	21	F	11			

1870 census for Elkhart township, Polk county, Iowa.

" Anna	W H 7	Sister	
" Berlin	W M 4	Sister	
old Martha	W F 16	Grand 1	Working house
Eliza. Oleg.	W M 53	Mother 1	Warren
" Abby	W F 13	Mother 1	Refugees
" Hazel	W F 22	Sister 1	
" Lydia	W 4 14	Sister 1	
" Ella	W M 18	Sister 1	
" Amanda	W M 17	Sister 1	
" Scrappy	W M 14	Sister	
" Martha	W M 11	Mother	
" Harry	W F 7	Daughter	
" Sophie	W F 4	Sister	
" Hazel	W F 1	Sister	
Grover Harry	W F 22	Second 1	Working house
Garrett Andrew	W M 61	Mother 1	Fracino

Note D.—In making entries in columns 9, 10, 11, 12, 16 to 23, an affirmative mark only will be used—thus /, except in the case of divorced persons, column 11, when the 1 is used.

Note E.—Question No. 12 will only be asked in cases where an affirmative answer has been given either to question 10 or to question 11.

Note F.—Question No. 14 will only be asked in cases when a gainful occupation has been reported in column 13.

Note G.—In column 7 an abbreviation in the name of the month may be used, as Jan., Apr., Dec.

1880 census for Elkhart township, Polk county, Iowa.

Deed of Mr. Upshur,

Done this 19th day of August, 1876, before all us by these presents,
John W. O. J. Olson and Party J. Olson, husband and wife
of the County of Polk, and State of Iowa, party of the first part,
for and in consideration of the sum of Six Hundred (600)
Dollars, in hand paid by W. de M. Upshur of the County of
Kings and State of New York, party of the second part, its
receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged; do hereby sell and
Convey unto the said party of the second part, the following
described premises situated in the County of Polk, and State
of Iowa, to-wit:

The North East fractional Quarter (1/4) of
Section Four (4) in Township Eighty One (81) North
Range, Township Three (3) West 5th P.M.

I have and to hold the above described premises, together
with all and singular the appurtenances now or hereafter in
anywise belonging or appertaining thereto; the saleation
being to convey hereby an absolute title in fee simple, in-
cluding all the rights of homestead, unto the said party of
the second part, their legal representatives, or assigns, forever
Provided, always, and these presents are upon this express
condition, that if the said party of the first part, their
heirs, executors, administrators or assigns, shall pay or
cause to be paid unto the said party of the second part his
legal representatives, or assigns, the sum of Six Hundred
(600) Dollars according to the tenor and effect of one bond
and for the principal sum of Six Hundred Dollars
bearing interest herewith, and payable for years from
the first day of January A.D. 1876, with interest thereon at
the rate of ten per centum per annum, payable semi-annual
as provided by law composed, numbered from one to one hundred
inclusive, attached to the said bond, to-wit: - on the first
days of the months of July and January in each year
until said principal sum become due; but with interest
however, at the rate of ten per centum per annum, to the
last day of December in each year thereafter, to the

1st of this Mortgage to
be in Book 186, page 111.

Reading Old Cemetery Stones

I've heard of several methods for reading information on old grave stones such as rubbing charcoal on cloth, or dusting the stone with flour, but I'm convinced that these won't hold a candle to a method that we recently discovered by accident. Last summer my wife and I were visiting several small cemeteries in Ohio looking for ancestors from her family. One day it was nearly dark when we arrived at a small, well kept cemetery near Zanesville. As the evening light faded, we had just enough time to find the family plots that we wanted to see, but when we found them it was too dark to read any of the stones. Unwilling to give up, I got a flash light from the car and we were very pleased to discover that many of the oldest grave stones are much easier to read in the dark! All you need is a good strong flashlight held very nearly parallel to the face of the stone. This allows the relief of the lettering to be nicely cast into shadows. As you move the light up and down and from side to side, many old stones that are practically illegible during the day become wonderfully clear and easy to read.

Later that same trip I decided that I would try this same method in the day time. At a different cemetery in Illinois, my daughter and I found a family grave site with another very old stone of importance to our research. I went to the car and got the flash light, but this time I also brought a large heavy quilt. I covered the stone and myself with the quilt, and my daughter worked as a scribe. Again, I was able to read the stone with wonderful clarity using the shadows cast by the flash light in the darkness under the quilt. I have to admit that it was not very comfortable under that quilt in the middle of the summer, but the result was well worth the effort. This method also leaves the lettering on fragile old stones untouched and completely undamaged. For this reason it is highly preferable to many other methods.

Allen H Wald