

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 Cleve 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 Sjernerøy, 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	1654	1664	Richard Larson	29	m
12			Betsy "	21	f
13			Christine "	8 1/2	f
14			Silvert Johnson	30	m
15	1655	1665	Mark Anderson	40	m
16			Christina "	30	f
17			Andrew "	10	m
18			Julia "	8	f
19			Caroline "	4	f
20			Jacob "	2	m
21			Richard "	7 1/2	m
22			Julia "	80	f
23	1656	1666	William Tice	53	m
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 Torgeirsdatter 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.”

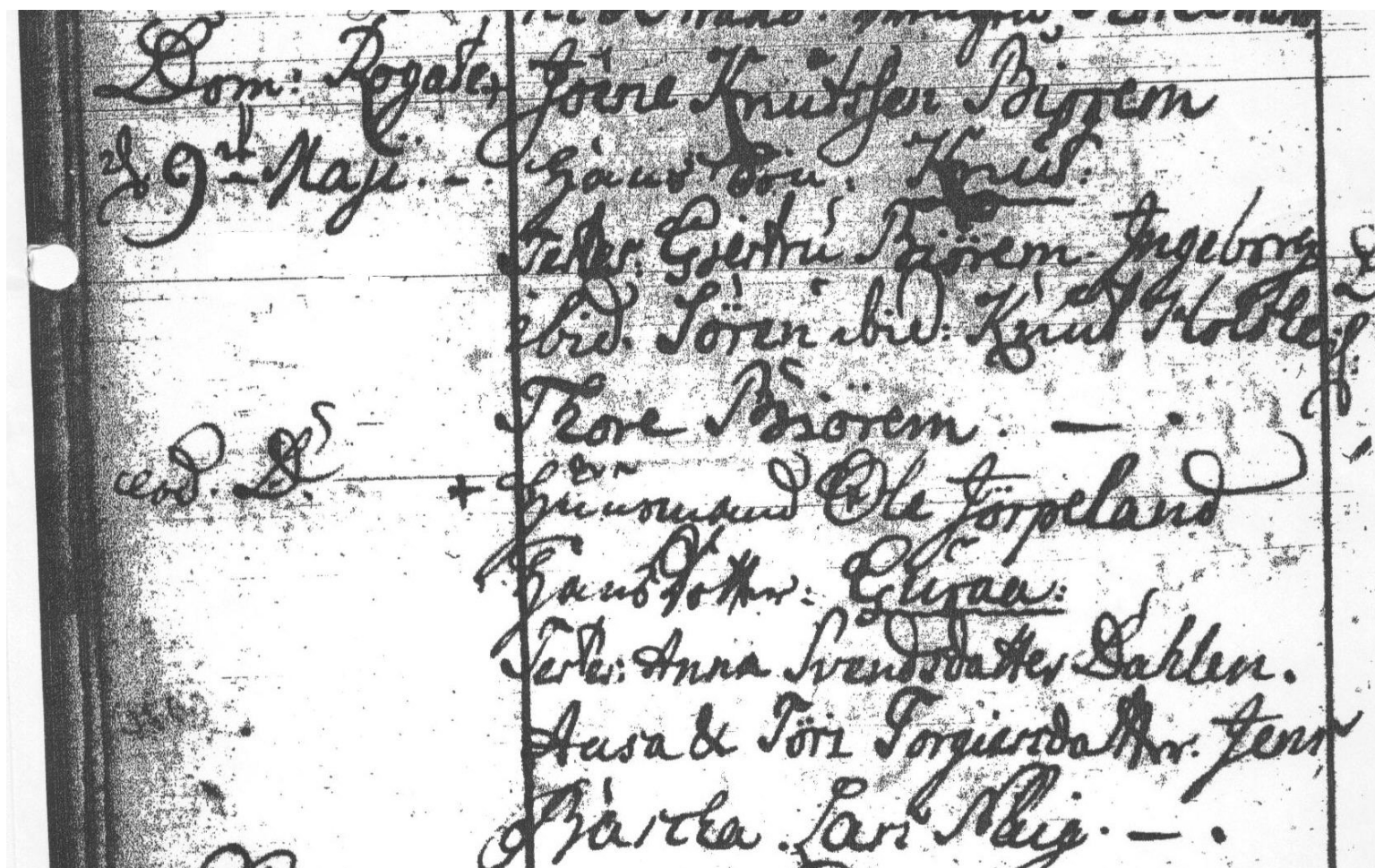
“Milton
Son of
Marcus Anderson
Died Aug. 24 1890
Aged 20 yrs. 11 mos. & 6 days”

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



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 & Töre Torgiersdatter, Jens Baeca, Lars Naig."

