

## 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 <sup>Iverson</sup> ~~Olson~~ Voldeu i Østigaard ← ?  
& Siri Pedersdatter. Born in 1809.  
emigrated 1854 to America  
Aardal Bygdebok p. 194 in Vol 2 948.31/A1  
pp 399-400 in Vol 1 H2c

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 Cleve 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 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.<sup>27</sup> 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.

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

D. Begravede og						Dødsfødte.
Nr.	Den opgivne Dødsdag.	Begravelses-Datum.	Den Begravedes fulde Navn og Stanb.	Allder.	Opholdssted.	Om død af smitsom Sygdom, og da fev, eller ved ulykkelig Hændelse.
1.	9 <sup>de</sup> Juni	12 <sup>de</sup> Juni	Kingkarl Ole Andreas Johnsen Borge	55.	Vikremoland 18	58. Afkøstet.
1.	17 <sup>de</sup> Jan.	19 <sup>de</sup> Jan.	Kingkarl Ole Jørgensen Liestøl	23.	Lodde Rogn 18	59. Hæmofili.
2.	16 <sup>de</sup> Sept.	21 <sup>de</sup> Sept.	Jørgen Mathias Ole Brothius Samuelson, Kingkarl.	38.	Christianssand.	Bevans.
3.	2 <sup>de</sup> Nov.		Kingkarl Andreas Halvorsen (Austanger)	28.	Løjtnant Løuanger.	Erythras.
1	25 <sup>de</sup> Feb.	1 <sup>de</sup> Marts	Gift Mand Ole Iversen Volden	51.	Hjelmeland Rogn 18	60. Blodstørning.

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