

Regina Knutsdatter Olsen

My Grandfather's cousin, Cleva Darling wrote: "The Wald History" in 1939. This document has been extremely helpful for my research on the Wald family, all of whom came from Norway. Of what she wrote not all has been verified. That our direct line goes back to Iver Olsen Lillimo of Aardal, Rogaland, Norway, this is for certain true. Nevertheless, the family that I am writing about here received only brief mention in her history. What she did write led me on such a search as I have never had. I have never felt so compelled to search, faced with obvious mistakes, but with so many details that must fit somehow. Eventually I was able to find many original documents, and this is the story they tell.

From 'The Wald History' by Cleva Darling:

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

"Sarah and Gurina" here are sisters to Ole J. Olson Wold who was our great great grandfather. When looking for Gurina, my research quickly focused on her child, 'Regina', who would have been Ole J's niece according to the 1939 history.

Regina and her family are listed in the 1860 federal census of Adams, LaSalle, Illinois:

	age:	birth place:
Knud T. Oleson	48	Norway
Ingebor	48	Norway
Ole. K	21	Norway
* Regina K	14	Norway (b. ~1846)
* Andrew K	11	Norway (b. ~1849)
Clark K	8	Ill
Martin J	5	Ill

‘Adams, Illinois’ is one of many early settlements in LaSalle county where the Norwegian immigrants lived. This was a major staging place for further migration to Iowa and other places. From the census above we see that Regina’s father was indeed ‘Mr. Olson’, and there was another child named Andrew K. The initial ‘K’ for all the older children obviously represents the Norwegian naming which would be ‘Knudsen’ or ‘Knudsdatter’. The census records consistently state that Regina and Andrew were born in Norway. Note that Regina’s mother is not named Gurina. Initially I thought that Gurina may have died and their father remarried. Soon I discovered that this was impossible.

These two children, Regina K. and Andrew K., listed in 1860, are for sure the two that were spoken of by Cleve Darling. Note in the 1870 census, from the same place, that Regina has married ‘Hulver Warren’, also stated in the Wald history. There is a reference in the Rogaland emigration index showing that ‘Halvor Halvorsen Vaare’ immigrated in 1866 with his first wife and two sons. This reference reflects the original emigration record which is found in the church book where they lived.³⁸ It also states that his parents immigrated the year before in 1865, and that ‘Regina Olson’ was his second wife. Halvor’s first wife died soon after their arrival in America. Halvor remarried with Regina on 10 March, 1870.³⁹

From the Rogaland Emigration index, departing through Stavanger:⁴⁰

Departure from Norway in 1866 listing: “Halvor Halvorsen Vaare age 33, (b. ~1833)”. (The index states that his second wife is ‘Regine Olsdr.’, although the church book states that he originally emigrated with his first wife Inger). He does have his two sons with him: ‘Halvar Olai’ and ‘Erik Mathias’. Another entry: ‘Halvor Olsen, b. 1799, left in 1865, from Vore, Skjold, Norge with his (wife) Helga Olsdr, b. 1794.’ (These are Halvor’s parents).

38 Norwegian Digitalarkivet, <<http://digitalarkivet.uib.no/>>, Skåre i Torvasted, Rogaland, 1866, “Udflyttede”, pg. 251, #9.

39 Illinois marriage records, LaSalle County, Illinois, book D, #160, FHL US/CAN Film 1683303. See also:
<<http://cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/archives.html>>

40 Norwegian Digitalarkivet, <<http://digitalarkivet.uib.no/>>, “Emigranter fra Stavanger 1825-1970.”

From the 1870 federal census, Adams, LaSalle, Illinois:

Hulver Warren,	40,	Norway	carpenter
Regina	24	Norway	
Ole	9	Norway	
Matthias	7	Norway	
Burton	5	Ill	
Hulverson, Ingebor	60	Norway	

Notice that Regina is now married and is significantly younger than her husband. She is also only 15 years older than Ole, age 9. The first child born in Illinois is Burton—probably born early in 1866. This child was born to Halvor’s first wife, Inger, very soon after they arrived in Illinois. There is no doubt that Inger died shortly afterward. About 1874 or 1875, Halvor and Regina moved to Story county Iowa and lived for a few years in the Palestine township which is the same place that Ole J. Olson Wold lived with his family.⁴¹

41 See the 1880 census for Polk County, Iowa. Ole J. Olson lived on the northern most border of Polk County, bordering the Palestine township, near the town of Cambridge.

From the 1880 federal census, Palestine, Story, IA:

H. H. Warren	46	Norway (b. ~1834)
Regina	34	Norway (b. ~1846)
Ole H.	17	Norway
Ellen I.	9	Ill
Charles O.	7	Ill
Henry H.	5	IA
Hannah J.	3	IA
Enoch	1	IA
Hellen Warren	89	Norway (mother)

The oldest son, Ole H. is still with the family (presumably the same as ‘Halvar Olai’ in the emigration record). Burton is not listed and Matthias has gone to work for the rail road. Regina now has two of her own children born in Illinois and three born in Iowa. Note that Halvor’s elderly mother is living with the family (her Norwegian name was Helga Olsdatter).

We know that Matthias has gone to work for the rail road and ended up in California because his history can be found in the family history of his son, Earl Warren, who became Chief Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court. This connection provides an interesting set of details that were significant in this research. My search for the name ‘Warren’ in the Rogaland emigration index brought up several references to Earl Warren, and it was noted each time that this was “Earl Warren, Chief Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court.” During his life Earl Warren traveled to Norway to visit the place where his grandfather was born. The place is called Vaare (also spelled Vore and Vårå) in Tysvær parish, Rogaland county. The name ‘Warren’ is derived from this place and can be translated directly meaning: ‘The place called ‘Vaare’. A visit of such a high dignitary from the United States was very significant to the people who lived in this rural place, so it was duly noted and later written in the bygdebok (farm book) for Tysvær.⁴² It was also noted that Halvor Warren’s second wife was ‘Regina Olsen’.

Before we can lay claim to a relationship between our family and Earl Warren of the U. S. Supreme Court, I am compelled to note that Matthias, who was Earl Warren’s father, was born of Halvor Warren’s first wife who was Inger Knutsdatter from Nes in Tysvær. According to Cleve Darling, the Wald family relationship was through Halvor’s

42 “Tysvær Gard og ætt”, Nils Olav Østrem, Tysvær Kommune, 1999, vol. 5, gard 91–Vårå, pg. 42, 43 #101.

second wife, Regina, who was said to be the daughter of Gurina, (Ole J.’s sister). Unfortunately, we know that Ole J’s sister Gurina was born in 1838 and would have been less than eight years old when Regina was born. Also, we have Regina listed as a daughter to Knud T. Olson and wife Ingebor in the 1860 census (above). This incongruity was the problem that became the heart of my investigation, and I was determined to find the truth of it.

There are several coincidental connections between our Wald family and the Warren family. Other than the written history by Cleva Darling, one of the strongest is the fact that both families lived very near each other in Story County, Iowa for several years around the time of 1880. (Ole J. Olsen and family actually lived on the northern border of Polk County). Also, Andrew Olson, Regina’s brother, did settle in Cambridge, Story County, Iowa, and his family is found in the 1900, 1910 and 1920 census records. Andrew and his wife are buried in the Cambridge Cemetery, north section, row 22, #5 and #6.⁴³

Halvor Warren, Regina and family moved from Story County to Eagle Grove, Iowa some time between 1880 and 1885. There was a local census in Story County in 1885. Their family was not listed. There is no 1890 federal census because it was destroyed. The next time the family is listed is 1900 and 1910:

Form the 1900 federal census of Eagle Grove, Wright, Iowa:

Warren, H. H.	67	Norway
Regina	54	Norway
Chas. O	27	Ill
Henry	25	IA
Hannah J	23	IA
Enoch	21	IA
Anna	16	IA

From the 1910 federal census of Eagle Grove, Wright, Iowa:

Warren, Hulver H.	77
Regina	64

43 “Story County, Iowa cemeteries, grave marker inscriptions,” compiled by: Story County Genealogical Society, vol. 8: Union Township including city of Cambridge.

Charles H. 37
Henni J. 33
Anna 26

Here we see that Regina has another child, Anna. This would be six children that we know of, not three as told by Cleva Darling. But clearly this is the same family which lived nearly next door to the Wald family in 1880. The following document lists her father's name which helps to verify that this is the same family that was listed in Adams, LaSalle, Illinois in 1870:

Wright Co., Iowa funeral home records: ⁴⁴

Funeral expenses charged to "Chas Warren, of \$174.00, regarding deceased: Regina Warren, Norwegian Lutheran, residence: Eagle Grove; Birth place: Norway; Date of birth: Aug. 18, 1845; age: 71 years, 8 months, 6 days. House keeper; Father: Knut T. Olson; Date of death: April 24, 1917; Place of burial: Gold Field cemetery; Husband: Halvor Warren."

As you can see, this is an extraordinary document with many details about Regina's life. The county records show that there is a Warren family plot at Gold Field Cemetery, but the reference I have states that there is only a large family stone with no details on it. The details we need to know are Regina's true mother and the precise place in Norway where Regina was born. Here they were not given. I did find the following biography about her father.

From the History of LaSalle County: ⁴⁵

Knud T. Olsen, section 15, Adams Township, was born in Riskedal, near Stavanger, Norway, Jan. 1, **1811, a son of Ole Knudsen ... was married in his native country in June, 1837, to Isabelle Aslagsdatter, (she is named Ingebor in the 1860 census)... by whom he had seven children, five of whom are yet living—Ole K., Regina, Andrew, Charles and Martin. Mr. Olsen

44 Funeral records from 1913-1929, original records in the possession of the Kastler Babcock Funeral Home, Eagle Grove, Iowa; FHL US/CAN Film #1403584.

45 "History of LaSalle County," 1886, [vols. 1-2] / compiled by Berdeane Wagner, FHL US/CAN 977.327 D3h, vol.II, pp. 27, 28.

brought his family to the United States in 1850, first locating in Freedom Township, LaSalle Co., Ill, and since 1857 he has made his home in Adams Township. His family are members of the First Norwegian Evangelical Free and Independent Lutheran Church of Leland. His son Ole married Julia Jensen and resides in Freedom Township; Regina married Halver Warren and resides near Eagle Grove, Iowa; Andrew lives at Huxley, Iowa, he married Elsie Jensen; Charles married Johanna Johnson and lives in Shelby County, Iowa; Martin is farming on the homestead in Adams Township, he is unmarried.

Regina's father, Knud T. Olson, was from 'Riskedal' which is a farm in the Aardal parish. This is the same parish where Ole J. Olson Wold was born. Surely Regina's birth record should be found there. After several searches in this and all the surrounding parishes I found no Regina born in 1845. Furthermore, the Aardal parish record contains the following marriage record for Ole J's sister Gurina:⁴⁶

From the Aardal parish register, marriages, 1864:

"Gurine Olsdtr., Volden under Østigaard, age 26, father Ole Iversen, Syvert Pedersen, Store Dovig, age 22, father Peter Bjornsen, married 29 March."

This is almost certainly the real Gurina, sister of Ole J. Olson Wold (Volden). It is certain because the place name is specific, her father's name is the same as Ole J.'s, and her age is what we expect from her birth record. At this point we must give up all pretense that Regina is Gurina's daughter. Nevertheless, there must be a reason that Clea Darling would have said so.

Unwilling to give up, I determined that I would find Regina's birth record. For many years the Norwegians have done extremely well preserving and researching the historical records of their farms and families. Very recently they have completed the unprecedented task of scanning virtually all of the parish registers and made them available online for all to search. These are hand written books, some hundreds of pages, not indexed by name, but searching them online is by far easier than going to the library in Salt Lake City to search using dozens of different micro-films. Since I have the document from Eagle Grove that gave me Regina's birth date in 1845, I determined that I

46 Norwegian Digitalarkivet, <<http://digitalarkivet.uib.no/>>, Aardal, Hjelmeland, Rogaland, Norway, parish register for 1864, marriages, #2, pg. 163, married 29 March, 1864.

would just look through all of the parish registers in Rogaland County on this date. There were many books, but the name ‘Regina’ is not very common in Norway, so it was not difficult to determine whether she was there as I looked through each one. Fortunately, I finally found her birth in the following record.

From Stavanger, Domkirken, Frue, parish register, 1845 births:⁴⁷

This document, along with the birth record of her brother Andrew, tells us that her parents had moved to the city and stayed there for a few years before they came to America. It is certain now that Regina’s mother was not Gurine, sister to Ole J. Olson Wold.⁴⁸ We have the census in 1860, the biography of her father, and finally the very

No.	Den opgivne Fødsels Datum.	Døds Datum.	Barnets fulde Navn.	Om ægte eller uægte født.	Førelses fulde Navn, borgerlige Stilling og Opholdssted.
36	Aug. 18 - 14		Regina	ægte	Stavanger. Matthias Knud Olsen og Ingeborg Aslaksdatter H. Børn Woldet.

record of her birth from Norway. Her mother was ‘Ingeborg Aslaksdatter’ as shown here and also told in the biography of her father. This is without doubt the birth record for the same individual who lived in Adams Illinois, then Story Co., Iowa, and finally Eagle Grove, Iowa. The documentation of her life is very consistent, and the birth date of August 18, 1845 is the same here in this Norwegian record and in the record of her death. It is not very common to have so many documents that all coincide for one individual who lived on two different continents in these early times. So, if Regina was not the

47 Norwegian Digitalarkivet, <<http://digitalarkivet.uib.no/>>, Stavanger, Domkirken, Frue, parish register, 1845 births, pg. 43, #367.

48 Note that the 1895 local census for Palestine Twp., Story Co. has: ‘Ole O. Olson, 59, and Gurie Olson 57,’ (b. ~1838) with four children. Both were born in Norway. There is a possibility that this could be the same Gurina if she lost her first husband and remarried. Her children were all born in Iowa about 1874 through 1880.

daughter of Gurina Olson, why did Cleve Darling write that she was? At least one answer to the puzzle comes from the family of Regina's father.

Knud T. Olson's birth record is found in the Aardal parish register (**actually 1813 not 1811), where it states that his mother was 'Aasa Torkildsdatter Borgen'. When I found this record I realized that I recognized the place name. After a short search in the farm book, sure enough, this Aasa was a sister to Siri Torkildsdatter Borgen, who was Ole J. Olson's grandmother. The result is that Regina, daughter of Knud T. Olson of Riskedal, Aardal, Norway and Ole J. Olson of Volden, Aardal, Norway were in fact second cousins having a set of great grand parents in common. I suspect that this is the relationship with Regina that was known while the families lived near each other in Story Co., Iowa. The actual family connection must have been distorted over the years after Regina's family moved to Eagle Grove. Given this documentation, we can now state that our Wald family is related through Regina's marriage to the family of Halvor Warren who was the grand father of Earl Warren of the U. S. Supreme Court. More important though, the common great grand parents of Regina and Ole J. were: Torchild Kjelsen Borgen, b. 1742, and his wife Anna Jakobsdatter, b. 1750. Torchild and Anna were married in 1768 in the Aardal parish and had a total of eight children born there. There are many more Norwegian records to be found in the history of this parish concerning these families and their connections with our own.

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