

Ole J. Olson

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

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

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

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