

## The Wald History by Cleva Darling

Written in 1939

Norway, the most democratic kingdom, occupies the western part of Europe. It is a little larger than New Mexico. There are no privileged classes and no order of nobility;<sup>2</sup> and in no country are there so many great statesmen, professional men, and scientists of peasant birth.

It was here, in the middle of the eighteenth century, in the little town of Ordahl<sup>3</sup> that Iver Lillemo was born and lived all his life. He married and had one child named Ole Peter Vold, our direct ancestor. Ole married Siri--and they had eight children: Ole J.; Sarah; Torkel; Gurina; Peter; Martha; Oley; and Andrew.

Of these children not all is known. Oley chose the name Dahl because of coming from Ordahl. He came to the United States and bought a bakery in Indianola, Iowa. He married a Louder girl of Indianola and they had two children, Ella and Charles. Ella married a Mr. Gilbert. After his death she married Mr. Mathis and they had one child, Virginia. Virginia had stage ambitions and little is known of her.

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.

Torkel (or Tom as was his nickname), married a Swede girl from Boone, Iowa. They moved to Omaha, Nebraska and there three children were born. His wife never gave up her ambition to be an actress and began training the children for the stage when they

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2 In earlier times there were the poorer class called huusmand or cottagers who usually did not own the land and held no family rights to the land where they lived and worked. There were also various royalty and nobleman classes as well as military classes.

3 Årdal, pronounced: [ Or-dahl ].

were very young. One day Tom said he was going up town for a couple of hours. He never returned, nor did the family ever hear from him again. The family moved to the Western Coast where the children went on the stage.

Little of Peter and Andrew is known except they left Norway and went to Germany to seek their fortune.

Martha--ah, Martha loved not wisely but too well. One of the children, Ole Miller came to America and served in the Spanish American War. He never married and the last heard of him, he was in the Old Soldiers Home in Crookston, Minnesota.

The children of Iver Lillemo's families learned to work at an early age. There was always much sewing, weaving, and knitting by the girls; and the boys went out on the fiord with their father to fish. The waters of the fiord are too deep to freeze so that work went on the year around. Most of the fish were sold; but some was salted and dried to be used at home. Farming was the principal occupation of the family.

But there were good times too. Occasionally they met at homes of their friends; and their weddings were always a big occasion.

The Scandinavians are a religious people and Norway has the reputation of being the most Christian and the most Protestant country in the world. Every Sunday they would all don their best attire and go to church. The women and girls wearing their dark, full skirted dresses and shawls made a beautiful picture as they walked along the road.

Christmas was always a gala occasion. There was extra feed of all kinds for the stock and the birds. Carols were sung and the story of the Christ child told over and over again. The gifts were distributed. These were usually practical, such as clothing, but none the less appreciated.

Then there were the big dinners. Lutefisk<sup>4</sup> being the main dish with potato cakes, lefsa, kringla and probably komla. Of course, the Helliga Yule rice was never forgotten. They also had preserves from the berries that had been found in the woods.

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4 Lutefisk: Cod fish, treated in a lye solution and served boiled. Literal translation: "Lye (boiled) fish". Lefsa: (lefse) A thin pancake from rolled dough served buttered and folded, and sometimes sugared. Kringla: (kringle) A rolled, round, or twisted--pretzel shaped pastry. Komla: A type of candy. Helliga Yule rice: "Sacred Christmas rice".

The children were sent to school as soon as they were permitted. Every hamlet had it's parochial school, as public schools weren't so common. Here the minister taught them to read and write, and they studied the Bible around the fireplace at night. Legends of the skalds or early bards were told and many other songs and poems.

Taking up our ancestors on the Gaard side, which is our great grandmother's side, we have Andrew Olson Gaard, who was married twice. His first wife was Margreta Gaard and there were three children: Ole, who married Christena Meling; Elsie who died quite young; and Olous who drowned as a young boy after he slipped while walking on a cliff by a fiord. Before help could come, he fell into the ocean and drowned.

Margreta died, and Andrew married again. We find that our grandmother is a child of this marriage. His second wife, Sarah Haanda, and Andrew had eight children, all of whom married. Margreta married Nels Jorstad. Sarah married Lars Larson and they had no children. Olous had four children, Andrew had two, and Theodore had two. Bertha Hubert married Ole J. Wald and they had nine children. Malein married John Hanson and had six children. Helena married Jorgen Gangness and they had six children also. Andrew's second children and their descendants still reside in Norway.

We find things were easier for Andrew Gaard's family than for the Iver Lillemo family. He had inherited some money and with perseverance had accumulated enough money and land to be considered well-to-do. He gave the children the best education within his means. The girls were sent to sewing school, which is the same as college in our day; and the boys were taught the rudiments of farming for he intended to start them out when they desired to make homes of their own.

Andrew Gaard build and furnished a nice home. One of the nicest things about this home was a parlor. A parlor was a luxury in those days. Only the wealthy could afford them so this family was the envy and admiration of the country.

After Margreta had been married for a while, they heard of the many opportunities in America, and as times were harder, decided to come to this country. But Margreta was loathe to go to this strange land without some of the immediate family so she prevailed upon her parents, and Helana and Bertha were permitted to accompany her. So in the year of about 1850 they started for America.

It was a long, tiresome journey, but they finally reached the United States, and then went to Morris, Illinois, where there was a large Scandinavian community. Here Margreta and her husband moved on a farm. But Margreta was not to enjoy this new land for long. She became sick and after a long illness, died.

Ole J. Wald with two brothers, Torkel and Oley, also decided to try their luck in America. They were tired of the sea and so many of their friends had written back to tell of the rich black soil that grew crops in abundance, that being of an adventurous nature, they made their plans to come. They also came to Morris, Illinois.

These boys and girls were never to see their native land again. Here Bertha and Ole J. met and after a short courtship were married in Ottawa, Illinois, in 1854 and moved to a farm between Ottawa and Morris. It was here they had four of their children; Sarah in 1857; Susie in 1860; Oley in 1861; and Andrew in 1863.

This farm was small and stories were coming in of the rich land at low prices in Iowa. But it was far away; still it would be wonderful to have a place of their own. So by hard work and diligent saving, after a few years, they had almost enough for a farm.

One day a stranger came through the country. He had been in Iowa and bought a farm. He told of it's location, the nearness to market and neighbors. Ole listened and knew that this was what he wanted. He found the man was willing to sell and soon the deal was completed. The hard earned money of the Wald family had been exchanged for a deed to land they knew nothing about.

Ole began to have misgivings about the deal and decided to see the farm. He made the trip and was far from disappointed. Hurrying home, he began to prepare for the westward journey. They loaded their possessions into a covered wagon; and hitching their two horses, their only livestock, they set out for their new home in the early spring of 1865. Towns were far apart, but Ole hunted for wild game so there was always plenty of fresh meat. The roads were poor and at places practically impassable, but they seldom lacked a house in which to sleep, or assistance when needed. Many of the families along the way were only too glad to exchange a night's lodging to the weary travelers for news of "back East".

Finally, after several weeks of tedious traveling, they reached Story County. Here they stayed with friends until a log house could be built. Then the long, hard work of clearing the fields began.

The first year, just small fields of corn and small grain were seeded. Since there were few pieces of machinery, the work was done by hand. The fields were marked off in rows in both directions for the corn and then holes were dug at these intersections and the corn planted. In the fall the small grain was cut by hand, then a flail was used for threshing it. Many a hot afternoon, the younger boys stood in the field with a sling shot to keep the cranes and crows away from the fresh young shoots.

The men and boys were not the only ones who were busy. The girls got up just as early. Their days were spent in sewing, knitting and preserving or drying fruits for the long, cold winter months. The fruits could easily be found in the woods, and the wool for knitting had to be cleaned and carded in the home.

More children were also added to the family: Severen on December 10, 1865; Martin on October 11, 1869; Bessie on November 9, 1872; Burton on December 25, 1875; and Marie on January 10, 1879.

When Burton was a baby, a new frame house was built. Before this, there had been just a two room log house with the children sleeping in the loft, so the new house was something to be proud of.

In the evenings and on rainy days, Ole repaired harnesses and sharpened the tools or made wooden shoes; these were more practical and cheaper for the fast growing children. Bertha sat near, sewing or knitting, telling the children stories of the childhood in Norway.

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. He died in May of 1906 <sup>5</sup>.

When the children began to grow up, it was Sarah (the oldest in the family) who went ahead with the sewing and management of the home. She also gave sewing lessons, which was her work until all the children were grown. Then she married Hector Auestad in July 1899, and they lived in Slater, Iowa, where she died in January, 1929.

With Sarah to help her mother, Susie, the next child could work out. She worked in Minneapolis for many years, then went to Omaha, Nebraska. Here she met Charley Anderson and they were married in Omaha. They made their home in Omaha, Des Moines, and finally moved to Slater, where she lived until her death in 1930.

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5 Ole J.'s actual death date is June 1908; (from Humboldt county records).

Bertha managed the farm to the best of her ability, with the children to help her, which must have been plenty good, for they all had plenty. She never acquired an extensive use of the American language, so most of the conversation at home was in her native tongue. In later years she seldom talked of Norway, but one wonders if she didn't sometimes wish she could visit the land of her youth. Of course, she would not wish to stay since all her children were here. She died August 19, 1899.

Andrew and Oley helped on the farm. They helped with the field work in the spring, summer, and fall, but in the winter they hunted to supply fresh meat for the table. There was always plenty of beef and pork. To keep the meat, the beef was dried and the pork salted.

When Severen was old enough to help with the work, Oley (the oldest boy), decided to study for the ministry. He went to Minneapolis. After he had graduated, he married Augusta Simerson on July 8, 1891. Then they went to Fertile, Iowa to preach. He stayed there until his death on January 18, 1908.

Oley and Augusta had eight children. Bertilla was born March 29, 1892. Alvah was born April 4, 1894. Both graduated from high school and taught for several years, then went to Business College. After the family moved to Minneapolis, they got stenographic positions and resided at home.

Ferdinand, born July 27, 1896, married Velma Howe on December 31, 1925. They had five children: Fred, born September 20, 1927; Oletta, born May 19, 1930; Leonard, born December 15, 1933; Gordon born August 17, 1935 and died March 13, 1938; and Lorna, born February 14, 1941. They reside in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Joseph, born September 30, 1898, graduated from high school and attended Minnesota University. He then went to New York City to work but returned to St. Paul. He married Ruth Gibson on June 24, 1934. They had five children: Leon, born September 13, 1935; Kenneth, born March 18, 1939; Karen, born March 25, 1943; Janet, born April 1, 1944; and James, born January 8, 1949.

Burton, born February 8, 1901, also graduated from Minnesota University. He married Evelyn Gulden in January of 1939. He works for the Toastmaster Co. in Elgin, Illinois, where they reside.

Ina was born July 18, 1903, and graduated from Minnesota University. She taught a number of years, then left for California where she furthered her work in Home Economics, taking up tearoom management.

Reuben, born September 25, 1905, also graduated from Minnesota University. He married and has three daughters: Kay Larae, born March 7, 1939; DeEtta Bea, born May 15, 1942; and Rona Lee, born August 25, 1945. They live in Portland, Oregon.

Oletta was born August 22, 1908. She graduated from a Minneapolis high school and attended Augsburg College in Minneapolis. She has taught in Minnesota high schools and is very outstanding in her work in art.

Andrew, the fourth child of Ole J. and Bertha's family, married Clara Hansen. He moved to another farm. There, they had four children: Archibald, Meranda, Cora, and Charlotte. Then leaving Charlotte with some relatives at Eagle Grove who raised her, the family moved to Calamette, Oregon, where he did truck farming. There five more children were born: Theodore; Burton; Harold; Raymond; and Barbara. Archibald now lives in Santa Clara, California. Meranda married a Mr. Bower and lives in West Linn, Oregon. Theodore and Cora both live in Portland, Oregon. Charlotte married Orville Boughton of Eagle Grove, Iowa, and had one child, Patricia. Charlotte died in 1938. Barbara died when a child, and Raymond was killed by a train in December of 1933. Andrew died in 1905 and his wife and most of the children reside in Oregon.

Severin was born in December 1865, and was the third boy. He also helped with the farm work, but early in life decided he wanted to study law. Not having all the money necessary, he took and passed an examination to teach. He taught school in the winter months and worked in the harvest fields of Minnesota during the summer. After several years he had acquired enough to go to college.

He entered Iowa Business College in 1895 and then entered Drake University and finished in 1897. He then married Minnie Johnson and they moved to Slater where he began the practice of law. They had seven children: Curtis, born April 13, 1900, is married to Elinore Sydness. They live in Des Moines and have three children: Mary Louise, Kenneth, and Jeanne. Curtis works for Central Life Insurance Co.

Lowell was born on September 9, 1902. He was in the army for a while and is now at home.

Roscoe was born March 20, 1904. He attended Iowa State College where he graduated. He married Lillian Berggren and they have three children: Bonita, Joan, and Robert. Roscoe taught for several years at Neola, Iowa, and is now Superintendent at Defiance, Iowa.

Bonnie was born May 12, 1906, and married Jack Reinertson. She lives in Slater and has one boy, Jimmie.

Doris Minnie was born August 25, 1908 and only stayed with the family three weeks.

Melba was born January 27, 1910. She married A.A. Olson and has one boy, Lee.

Laura, born August 11, 1912, married Merle Horn and has one daughter, Sharon Kay. She lives in Rockford, Illinois.

All of Severin's children attended high school in Slater, Iowa and all finished there.

Next in order comes Martin, who was born October 11, 1869. He helped at home, too, but when he was about seventeen, he went to Omaha and worked and then went to Humboldt County. He married Myrta Fowler in 1896 and then he went to Oklahoma, then back to Iowa where he lived nineteen years. Deciding that Minnesota was where he next wanted to live, he stayed there six years but returned to Runnels, Iowa, where he lived just two years before his death on March 22, 1939.

Martin and Myrta had seven daughters, the oldest dying in infancy.

Cleva Bevine was born September 25, 1898. She taught school seventeen years, which certainly is a wonderful record. She married Homer Darling in 1935 and lives on a farm near Runnels, Iowa.

Marjorie Opal, born March 10, 1901, taught school five years. She married Arthur Kabrick in 1926. She has two children, Ordean and Sharon Lee. They live on a farm near Cylinder, Iowa.

LaVona Jeraldine was born May 25, 1903, taught school nine years, and married Ray Lees. She has a daughter, Margaret and lives in Des Moines, Iowa.

Frances Melva was born October 25, 1905. She taught eleven years, then married Dgbert Helland in 1935 and they have one son. She now lives in Rodman, Iowa, where her husband is a teacher in the high school. These four girls graduated from Harley High School and attended Iowa colleges.

Lilith Esther, born April 19, 1908, graduated from Patterson High School. She attended Iowa State Teacher's College for three and a half years and then began teaching.



She has taught nine years and a half and now teaches in Elkhart, Iowa. She married Fred Brown.

Urcela Delores, born April 17, 1919, graduated from high school at Lakefield, Minnesota, and attended Simpson College and Iowa State College. She married a Mr. Coventry.

Bessie, the next child after Martin, was born November 9, 1872. She attended Highland Park College in Des Moines and Iowa State Teacher's College at Cedar Falls. She taught school until her marriage to Andrew Maland in 1900. They moved to Slater where Andrew was editor of the Slater News. They had two children, Ella and Obert.

Ella was born August 22, 1901. She graduated from Slater High School and attended Drake University. After her graduation she taught several years but because of ill health had to give it up. She entered Sunnyslope Sanatorium and spent several years there. After her recovery, she entered the Deaconess Home in Omaha and is now located in Denver.

Obert, born March 27, 1904, also graduated from Slater High School. He attended Iowa State Teacher's College. He worked with his father for awhile, then went to Minneapolis where he has since lived. He married Tena Larson and they have two children, Betty and Marie.

Burton, the youngest boy, was born November 20, 1875. He attended Iowa State Teacher's College at Cedar Falls and taught for several years. He then decided to study for the ministry and entered Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis. It was while there that he became ill with typhoid fever and passed away on December 13, 1900.

Marie, born January 10, 1879,<sup>6</sup> the youngest daughter, was full of vitality. She loved to be with people and have fun. She worked in Des Moines for a few years and then with her mother moved to Slater, where she and her older sister, Sarah, established a dressmaking shop. She married Clarence Clark, who was manager of the creamery at Slater. They had eight children, one dying in infancy. All of the children attended and graduated from grade school and all but Marium graduated from high school. Marium will graduate in the spring of 1940.

Ralph, born March 19, 1904, attended Iowa State College at Ames, Iowa, then went to work in the creamery. In 1929 he married Hazel Hoop. They make their home in Slater where Ralph is now manager of the creamery since his father's death.

Bessie, born December 22, 1905, was destined to brighten the home for only a short time, and died September 18, 1906.

Maylo was born August 7, 1907. She attended Capital City Commercial College in Des Moines and then worked for three years in the offices at Iowa State College. She married Morrill Nervig in 1928 and they have two boys, Paul and Clark. They now live in Slater, Iowa.

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6 The birth of this child was found in the churchbook for the Palistine congregation of Story county Iowa, pg. 5-6, born 10 January, 1879, named Anna Maria, mother Sofia J. Olsen (unmarried), witnesses: Bertha Nyhru, Bertha Olsen, Serine Olsen, O.O. Olsen, A.O. Olsen

Maylo Nervig, daughter of Anna Maria, stated to me personally that Anna Maria was not the daughter of Charles Andersen. Maylo told me that her mother had confided this to her before she died and that she was the only one who knew that this was true. Maylo told me that Anna Maria's mother, Sophia Olson Wold went to Des Moines to work as a seamstress, and it was there that she "got in trouble" with a Swede man. The name of Anna Maria's true father is not known. The family of Ole J. and Bertha took the child in and raised her as their own. All of the children accepted Anna Maria as one of their siblings, and that is the way it always was. When Cleve Darling wrote the family history in 1839 Anna Maria was then listed as the youngest child of Ole J. and Bertha. Maylo asked me to make it known that Anna Maria wanted to always be considered a Wald, and so she always will be.

Oriett, born March 20, 1909, attended University of Commerce in Des Moines where she affiliated with Gamma Delta Chi sorority. She also worked at Iowa State College for six years, then became dental assistant for Dr. Buck at Ames where she still works.

Marshall was born September 9, 1910. After graduation from high school he went to work in the creamery where he still works. He is interested in music and sings with a quartet over different radio stations.

Robert was born April 23, 1912. He also worked in the creamery during the summer months and then full time after graduating from high school. He married Edwinna Ramsey and has one son, John.

Jessie Mae was born August 17, 1915. She finished high school and attended Simpson College where she affiliated with Delta Delta Delta sorority. After finishing college, she began teaching school at Ralston, Iowa, where she has been the past two years.

Marium was born April 3, 1921. She attends Slater High School where she will be a senior next fall. She is drum major in the Slater band and also plays basketball.

This concludes our line of the family history. Probably none of us will be long remembered nor considered great, but we make up the average American family, with our small successes and failures. It is hoped that each one in his own way has made the way a little bit smoother for someone else.