

Guro Olsdatter Strand

Spel-Ola's mother was named Guro Olsdatter from Strand. Guro was born in Rogaland county Norway, in the Strand parish, on a farm called Qvalshaug (Kvalshaug). This farm is part of Jørpeland, which now includes a city of over 3000. Guro was born 9 May, 1779, the sixth of nine children. Guro's father was Ole Jonsen who was born about 1721. Guro's mother was Martha Sjursdatter from Viglesdalen, Årdal. Ole and Martha were probably cousins, and if not cousins they were closely related. Martha was Ole's second wife, and the two of them were required to obtain the king's permission to marry because of their kinship. The actual relationship is not yet known. Guro's christening was recorded in the church book as:

Ole Jørpeland's datter Guraa

After her son Ola was born, Guro married three times and she was widowed by all three men. Her first marriage was in 1814 with Torgils Halvorson from Bergeland. Torgils was the father of Ola Torgilson Volden mentioned above. Ola, was only six years old at that time. Guro and Torgils had a daughter together named Kari, born in 1820. Torgils died in 1822. The identity of Guro's second husband is not yet known, but he may have been the person who taught the young Ola to play the fiddle. Guro's third marriage was with Ola Tolleivson from Følsvik in 1835.

Guro emigrated to America in 1853 (at the age of 75) with the family of her daughter Kari and Kari's husband Markus Andersen from Vadla. This couple had two children at the time, Anders and Gurina (named after Guro). The family came with many other Norwegian immigrants to the Fox River settlement in La Salle county Illinois, and they are listed in the federal census of 1860. Guro was then over 80 years old. At that time Guro had taken the name Julia Anderson, Julia being an Americanized version of Guro, and Anderson being the surname used by Kari and her husband whom Guro lived with. As mentioned above, Ole J. Olsen, Spel-Ola's oldest son, emigrated in 1854, and he also came to La Salle County near Guro's family. Ole J. married in 1855 with Udbjörg Bertine Andersdatter from the Gaard farm (Bertha Gaard) on the island of Talgje. Guro most likely died shortly after 1860 because she is not found in census records of 1865 or later. Her daughter, Kari (Spel-Ola's half sister) died in Illinois during the birth of her third child in 1854. Kari's husband, Markus, married again and had several more children who moved to Grundy Illinois.

Spel-Ola's other half sister, Anna Iversdatter, married Helga Olsen from Tinn. They had one son, Ole Helgasen, born in Årdal. Then they moved to Sjernerøy, Rogaland county where they eventually had eleven children together. After Anna died, her husband Helga also came to America with one of their sons in about 1875.