

## Serina Olsdatter Volden

Serina was the second child of eight born to Ole Iversen Volden and Siri Pedersdatter Hagen. She was born 8 September, 1833 in Årdal, Rogaland, Norway. Being second, Serina was the closest sibling to their oldest son, Ole J. Olsen Volden (Wold) who was our gg-grandfather. In the minister's birth register her name is written 'Sussane' then crossed out with 'Serine' written below. In the clerk's duplicate register her name is just written 'Susane'. The name 'Susanna Olesdtr.' also appears in the local census for Årdal in 1835. In America the names Serina and Susanne were often used interchangeably, but we don't see the name Susanne very often in Norwegian records. The equivalent name 'Siri' is found much more often, especially in older records. In all the records with her own children she is called 'Serina'.

The family is described in the bygdebok (farm book) on Volden, which is the place where they lived. There it states that Serina had also lived on Mælshorten which is often abbreviated as Horten<sup>50</sup>. We don't know when she moved there, but we know that Serina's father died in 1860 and her mother died in 1861. At that time she was 28 years old. It was probably then that Serina went to live with her mother's sister who was Martha Pedersdatter, b. 1811. Martha lived on Mælshorten with her husband Nils and their children. In the bygdebok<sup>51</sup> she is called Martha Pedersdatter Hagen because that is where she lived as a child. But in the kirkebok we see her present at all of the christenings for Serina's children where she is called Martha Horten. I like to call her

1833. Fødte Kvindelen.						
No.	Aar og Datum.	Barnets fulde Navn.	Daabs Datum enten i Kirken eller hjemme.	Forældrenes Navn, Stand, Haandtering og Bøepæl.	Faddernes Navn, Stand og Opholdssted.	Hvor anført i det almindelige Jernsørelses-Register.
10.	Sepbr. 8 <sup>de</sup> .	<del>Susanne</del> Serine	Hjemme Søst Septbr. 11 <sup>de</sup> , i Kirken Septbr. 22 <sup>de</sup>	Huusmand Ole Iversen og Siri Pedersdatter Volden.	Ole Kirkhuus... 360. Gudmund Wallem, Martha Hagen, Kirsti Østigaard og Ingeborg Lillimoe.	

1833, #10, born September 8, ~~Susanne~~ Serine, christened at home on September 11, christened in the church September 22, parents: huusmand Ole Iversen and Siri Pedersdatter Volden, witnesses:  
Ole Kirkhuus, Gudmund Wallem, Martha Hagen, Kirsti Østigaard and Ingeborg Lillimoe.

50 Årdal bygdebok, "Årdal, Frå istid til nåtid", Sigurd Eikeland, 1969, vol. 1, pg. 218.

51 Årdal bygdebok, "Årdal, Frå istid til nåtid", Sigurd Eikeland, 1969, vol. 1, pg. 138.

Aunt Martha. We also see her named Martha Hagen listed with the witnesses in Serina's birth record (above). It seems that Aunt Martha was present at nearly every important event in Serina's life. When her parents died, Martha took Serina in, with two small children, and made a place for them in her home.

It appears that Serina may have been somehow mentally handicapped. The birth record gives the first clue because she was christened at home soon after birth, then later again in the church. This may have been done because they thought the child might not live. This is of course speculative, but we also have clues from the little we know about her life. Serina eventually had three children by three different men, but she never married any of them. Perhaps we can imagine her as a beautiful young woman, friendly, outgoing, and easily taken in by hansom young men with selfish intentions. She had the ability to become a mother, but was unable to form a stable relationship with a man who could care for her and the children. In the following we see her listed in the 1865 census, living with Aunt Martha and family:

1865 census, Horten (Mælshorten), Aardal / Hjelmeland, Rogaland, Norway:

3254	23	Niels	Niels.	Husfader	Husmand med Jord	g	68	m
3255	24	Martha	Pedersd.	Hans Kone		g	53	k
3256	25	Asoline	Nielsd.	Deres Datter		ug	17	k
3257	26	Maria	Nielsd.	Deres Datter		ug	13	k
3258	27	Maline	Nielsd.	Deres Datter		ug	10	k
3259	28	Serina Olsd.	Lossierende	Dagarbeider		ug	31	k
3260	29	Olaus	Gustavs.	Hændes Søn		ug	2	m
3261	30	Anna	Gundersd.	Hændes Datter		ug	7	k

At this time Serina is listed with her two older children. Her daughter was named Anna Karina Gundersdatter, born 1 April, 1859, christened in Årdal. The kirkebok reads as follows:

“1859, #15, born 1 April, christened 8 May, Anna Karina, uægte (the parents were not married), parents: Gunder Helgesen and maiden Serina Olsdatter, from Egland in Aardal, witnesses: Marta Horten, Gurina Volden, Martha Olsdtr. ibid, Johne Lillemoe, Jens Yttrevold the younger.”

Notice among the witnesses are Aunt Martha and Serina's two younger sisters Gurina Volden (b. 1838) and Martha Volden (b. 1844). We should note that there was another girl named Matha Pedersdatter Horten (b. 1834) who was nearly the same age as Serina. This girl lived on the same farm but was not a close relation. It is possible it was she listed here at the christening, not Aunt Martha, but I think this is unlikely. It also states here that the parents were living on the Egland farm in Årdal when the child was born, but there is no mention of them in the bygdebok at Egland. So this is perhaps a mistake, or it could be that Gunder was working on that farm at the time. The father, Gunder Helgesen, was born on Tjentland. In the bygdebok he is listed with his family on a different farm called Kaltveit, #29, where it shows that he had married Anna Sveinungsdatter that same year, 1859. Soon after his marriage, Gunder had another daughter with his wife. Her name was Ane Malena, born 1860. This couple previously had a daughter together named Kari who was born in 1854. That was six years before they were married.<sup>52</sup> It seems Gunder was a busy man.

Serina's next child was a son, Olaus Gustavsen, born 9 September, 1864 in Årdal, Rogaland, Norway. His father was Gustav Bernhard Olaus Beutlich (also called Bøitli). He is listed in the 1865 census living in Stavanger, working as 'Handlsbetjent'. In the birth record he is called 'Krambedsdreng'. Apparently he was an apprentice clerk of some kind, possibly for the police courts in the city. The birth record for Olaus reads as follows:

"1864, #33, born 9 September, christened 16 September, Olaus, uægte, parents: krambedsdreng in Stavanger, Gustav Bøitli and maiden Serine Olsdatter Horten, witnesses: Martha Horten, Klara Smitt, Analine Horten, Tjoran Horten, Syvert Bokken(?)".

Once again Aunt Martha is present with two other family members from Horten. In the 1865 census Serine is living on Horten. There she is called 'Lossierende / Dagarbeider'. This means that she is simply a roomer and a day laborer. She is with the family, but she is poor and has no husband to support her. She also has two young children and soon will have another:

"1868, #5, born 20 December, 1868, Olaus, uægte, parents: Ole Olsen Totland and piga Sirene Olsdatter Mælsosen, witnesses: Gunla Horten, Karoline Schmidt, Guri Mælsosen, Tjoran Horten, Aanen Riskedal."

---

52 Årdal bygdebok, "Årdal, Frå istid til nåtid", Sigurd Eikeland, 1969, vol. 1, pg. 465.

Here note that she names another son Olaus, so immediately we suspect the death of her first son. Unfortunately that is what happened, and we find it recorded the year previous:

“1867, #2, died 30 December, buried 5 January, male child: Olaus Gustavsen, age 2, from Horten under Mæle.”

Only nine years later in 1876, Serina died. In the death record from Årdal she is called ‘Fattiglem’ and ‘ugift’. This means that she was poor, and still unmarried. This word ‘Fattiglem’ also translates ‘destitute / pauper’. The record states that she died in the county sick house in Stavanger. This seems to imply that she had suffered a prolonged illness and the family was not able to care for her. Even still, they brought her home to bury her. There is a corresponding death record in Stavanger in St. Petri’s church, #67 in 1876. That record is nearly identical and only confirms the Årdal record.

Olaus the younger was only seven when his mother died. He continued to live on the same farm and was confirmed in 1882 at age fourteen. At that time he was called ‘Olaus Olsen Mælsosen’. We aren’t sure what became of him. Olaus’s father was from Totland which is a nearby farm in Hjelmeland parish.

In ‘The Wald History’ by Cleve Darling we read the following:

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 Berg. 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;...

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.

From previous research we know that Cleve Darling had several of these family members mixed up. Here we should now consider all three sisters who were daughters of Ole Iversen Volden. Gurina was the one who “married a man from Esmond, Illinois”, and it was her daughter, Sarah (b. 1864), who married Ludwig Berg. ‘Regina’ above was not Gurina’s daughter, and I have previously written a full report of what we know about her. Sarah listed above with Gurina would have been the sister named Serina who is the

subject of this report, but we know that this Serina died in Norway and likely never even visited America. When Cleva Darling writes: “Martha--ah, Martha loved not wisely but too well”, perhaps it was actually Serina to whom she was referring. We see from the documents that Serina would certainly fit this description. Cleva Darling also writes: “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 way this was written seems to imply that Ole Miller came to America but his parents did not. Could this be Serina’s son Olaus? He was born in 1868 and would have been about the right age to have served in that war. Serina had no other children that we know of. So far no further connection has been found.

Now we have just the youngest sister, Martha Olsdatter (b. 1844) to account for. When we look for her in the 1865 census we find the following:

1865 census, Mæle Nedre 18b, Aardal / Hjelmeland, Rogaland, Norway (see also #38, 43, pg. 124, in the Årdal bygdebok):

3262	31	Niels	Peders.	Husfader Gaardbruger og Selveier	ug	37
m						
3263	32	Bertha	Pedersd.	Hans Moder Føderaadskone	g	63 k
3264	33	Kleng	Ols.	Tjenestekarl	ug	17 m
3265	1	Martha	Olsd.	Tjenestepige	ug	20 k

This looks like a good possibility for our Martha Olsdatter. Her age given as twenty is younger than we expect since our Martha was born in 1844. However, she is working as a servant girl on another part of the Mæle farm, so she would have been very near the rest of the family. I have yet to find more good information about her in several searches through Årdal parish records. It seems very possible that it was she who came to America soon after 1865 with her sister Gurina. In that case there may yet be another family here that is related to our Wald family from Årdal.

Allen H Wald

2010