

## The Families of Johan Grung and Ole Olsen : Emigration and the Debora Expedition.

Karen Olsen, Glenn Olsen and Megan Ballard, April 2010

When we first started researching our family history we had very little to go on. We found this excellent website about the Debora Expedition early on and thought that our families could be connected with the Debora because we suspected that they had spent some time on Madagascar. In time, and several surprises later, the Grung and Olsen's stories became clearer as well as their association with the Debora. The history of the families of our great grandfathers, Ole Olsen and Johan Georg Grung, became intertwined after several family members emigrated from Norway in the 1870s. Although only Hans Jacob Elkjaer Grung, son of Johan, was a passenger on the Debora, several other family members had associations with the expedition. As an introduction we have briefly outlined the background history of the two families. More information on the family lines are summarised in charts, below. Please email Glenn at [olsen@axxess.co.za](mailto:olsen@axxess.co.za) or Karen at [kmlsn60@gmail.com](mailto:kmlsn60@gmail.com) for further information or queries.

### Grung family background

Johan Georg Grung, our great grandfather, was born on 26 January 1828 in Bergen, Hordaland, Norway. Johan came from a line of wealthy rope makers, living and working in Sandvigen, Bergen, dating back to the mid 1700s. His parents were Arent Henrich Grung and Georgine Christine Grybel. Johan did not enter the family business. He first worked as a sailor and ship's captain but from about 1855 he became a store keeper, until at least 1867. He married Jussine Marie Magnusdatter on 11 August 1841, in Bergen. Jussine Marie was born on 26 March 1828, in Bergen. Her family were also from the Bergen area. Johan and Jussine had nine children, all born in Bergen and christened in the church where their parents were married, Nykirken, Bergen. The youngest child, Justus Marius, died when he was three years old, from scarlet fever. Jenny Marie, her brother Hans Jacob Elkjaer and sister Anna were the only children of Johan and Jussine, as far as we know, who married and had children.

### Olsen family background

Ole Olsen, our great grandfather, was born on 31 March 1835 on the farm "Finnestad" in Hetland, Rogaland, Norway. His parents were Ole Hansen and Marte Rasmusdatter. Ole Hansen was born on the farm "Rode" on the island of Finnoy in Rogaland. His family had a long history of farming on the island, going back to at least the early 1600s. Marthe Rasmusdatter was born on Finnestad in Hetland but her grandfather, Rasmus Rasmusen, was also from Finnoy. Ole Olsen enrolled as a seaman on 7 May 1860. He married Berthe Marie Sivertdatter on 15 March 1859 in Hetland. Berthe Marie was born in Haaland, Rogaland, on 23 September 1836. Her family was from the farm "Myklebust" in Sola, Rogaland. Ole and Berthe lived on the farm "Tastad" in Rogaland for a while, then moved to Stavanger. Two of their children were born on Tastad and three in Stavanger.

### Emigration and the Debora Expedition

Ole Olsen was among those recruited in Norway by Captain Ludvig Larsen to sail on the Agnes in 1872 to Madagascar and set up trading stations for the English company, Porter, Muir and Lang, along the west coast. They were given three year contracts but these were cancelled after two years. Ole Olsen evidently stayed on in Madagascar when many others left. They lived in difficult circumstances on Madagascar. Ole set himself up with a few other Norwegians as merchants in Tulear. In 1876 Ole's wife, Bertha Marie, and five children joined him on Madagascar, traveling on the missionary ship, Elieser. Two more children were born to them on Madagascar.

When the Debora Expedition was planned some of the traders, remaining on Madagascar after the closing of the trading stations, were supposed to organise supplies for the establishment of the settlement on the Aldabra atoll. Ole was probably among this group. When the Debora arrived in Tulear in 1879, according to Erik Ellingsen's article (Norwegian version), O Olsen and two sons of Ludvig Larsen went on board to greet the crew and passengers. Ole and his family stayed on in Tulear until about 1882, when their daughter, Anna Kristine, was born. They then left for Durban South Africa where Ole worked as a sail maker. In a letter written by Berthe Marie in 1885 from Durban, to Pastor Aas in Morondava, Madagascar on the death of his wife, she mentions Hangervig's return to Tulear (in "Seaman James" article he says that Hangervig, one of the traders, was expected to be in Tulear when the Debora arrived but was absent). She also said that she had lovely memories of her six years on the west coast of Madagascar. These were indeed remarkable people!

Lars Jacobson Rostvig was the Norwegian missionary in Tulear who conducted a service for the passengers of the Debora after their arrival. Lars' first wife, Anne Elisabeth Larsen Figved, came to Madagascar on the Elieser in 1876 at the same time as the wife and children of Ole Olsen. She was not well during the voyage and was nursed by Marthe Serine Olsdatter, daughter of Ole. Anne Elisabeth died in 1879. At that time Marthe Serine was working for the missionaries in Morondava, not far from Tulear. She was introduced to Lars by a colleague. They married in Tulear in 1881. Lars and Marthe spent time in both Norway and Madagascar. They had nine children, the last were twins, born in Norway.

Jenny Marie Grung, daughter of Johan Georg, and her brother Johan George, emigrated to South Africa. From 1888 to 1890 Jenny taught at Umpumulo Mission in South Africa. In 1891 she married Sivert Olaus Olsen, merchant son of Ole Olsen, in South Africa. They had one child, Sverre Reidar Fraser Olsen, our father. Johan George did not marry and had no children.

Hans Jacob Elkjaer Grung, Jenny's brother, signed up as a passenger of the Debora in 1879. He later married Ingeborg Kirstine Olsdatter, another daughter of Ole Olsen and settled in South Africa. They had six children.

There is some speculation about the identity of "A Grung" and associates in Bergen, who originally owned the Debora. "A Grung" would definitely have been a member of Hans Jacob Elkjaer Grung's family. The Grungs in Bergen were all descendants of Frans Diderich Grung/Grundt who arrived in Bergen in about 1720. There are not many A Grungs in the line. Johan Georg's father, Arent Henrich, was named after his maternal grandfather, Arent Henrich Stuvitz. A Grung and associates could have been a company set up by this Arent Grung. "A Grung" could also have been the son of Jan Danchert Christian Grung, Arent Henrik Grung, born in 1859 in Bergen and a first cousin of Hans Jacob Elkjaer Grung. Jan Grung was a sail maker and ship owner in Bergen at the time the Debora was built. The 1891 census for Bergen gives Arent's occupation as steam ship owner among others. As members of a wealthy family, they would certainly have had the means to purchase the Debora.

## Sources / acknowledgements

Most of the basic information (names, dates, places) was sourced from the [Digital Archives](#) of the National Archives of Norway.

Information on the Olsen family line 1600-1700 on Finnøy, is courtesy of [Geir-Arne Helgeland](#)

Debora Expedition details are from this Debora Expedition website, thank you, David!

Information on Jenny Grung's missionary work and the Olsen family emigration are from the [Norwegian Missionary Society Archives Norway-Heritage web site](#) volunteers provided additional details about the families.

Documentation in South Africa was obtained by agents, from the [South African National Archives and Records Service](#)

Our extended family has also very kindly provided information about their relatives.

## Johan Grung family line 1700 - 1900

### 1-Frans Diderich GRUNG b. Cir 1701, d. 1744, Bergen, Norway

- +Gierke Catharine HANSDATTER BILDØE b. Cir 1698, m. 25 Oct 1724, Nykirken, Bergen, Norway, d. 1744, Bergen, Norway, par. Hans ANDERSEN BILDØE and Gierke ELLERTSDATTER GARBOE
- 2-Frans Diderich GRUNG b. 1733, Bergen, Norway, d. 1777, Bergen, Norway
  - +Else Margarete JACOBSDATTER HOVLAND b. 1738, Bergen, Norway, m. 22 Nov 1763, Bergen, Norway, d. 13 Jan 1808, Bergen, Norway, par. Jacob JACOBSEN HOVLAND and Karen Kristine JONSDATTER ASCHEN
- 3-Jacob Olaj GRUNG b. 3 Jan 1769, Bergen, Norway, d. 22 Mar 1811, Bergen, Norway
  - +Anna Maria STUVITZ b. 1772, Bergen, Norway, m. 14 Jan 1799, Korskirken, Bergen, Norway, d. 6 Apr 1835, Bergen, Norway, par. Arent Henrich STUVITZ and Kirstine Marie GRIB
- 4-Arent Henrich GRUNG b. 21 Feb 1801, Bergen, Norway, d. 19 Sep 1846, Bergen, Norway
  - +Georgine Christine GRYBEL b. 5 Apr 1799, Bergen, Norway, m. 6 Jul 1824, Korskirken, Bergen, Norway, d. 11 Mar 1879, Bergen, Norway, par. Johan Georg GRYBEL and Ingebor STEPHENSDATTER
- 5-Johan Georg GRUNG b. 26 Jan 1828, Bergen, Norway, d. 18 Sep 1881
  - +Jussine Marie MAGNUSDATTER b. 26 Mar 1828, Bergen, Norway, m. 11 Aug 1851, Nykirken, Bergen, Norway, d. 19 Aug 1877, Bergen, Norway, par. Magnus MAGNUSSEN and Marte Elisabet EIDE
- 6-Jenny Marie GRUNG b. 11 Sep 1856, Bergen, Norway, d. 16 Jul 1897, Mooifontein, Middleburg/Lydenburg District, South Africa
  - +Sivert Olaus OLSEN b. 27 May 1864, Tastad, Hetland, Rogaland, Norway, m. 1891, St Olaf Lutheran Church, Durban, South Africa, d. 3 May 1899, Mooifontein, Lydenburg District, South Africa, par. Ole OLSEN and Berthe Marie SIVERTDATTER
- 7-Sverre Reidar Fraser OLSEN b. 4 Apr 1895, Mooifontein, Middleburg/Lydenburg District, South Africa, d. 30 Jun 1972, Port Elizabeth, Cape Province, South Africa
- 6-Catharina Georgine GRUNG b. 13 Jan 1852, Bergen, Norway
- 6-Minda Elisabeth GRUNG b. 1 Aug 1853, Bergen, Norway, d. 2 Jun 1935, Bergen, Norway
- 6-Alfred Henrik GRUNG b. 16 Jan 1855, Bergen, Norway
- 6-Hans (Henry) Jacob Elkjaer GRUNG b. 2 Jan 1858, Bergen, Norway, d. 1943, South Africa
  - +Ingeborg Kirstine OLSDATTER b. 27 Sep 1865, Stavanger, Rogaland, Norway, d. 13 Mar 1923, Springs, Transvaal, South Africa, par. Ole OLSEN and Berthe Marie SIVERTDATTER
- 7-George John GRUNG
- 7-Olaf GRUNG
- 7-Harold GRUNG
- 7-Inga GRUNG
- 7-Hilda Martha GRUNG b. 14 Feb 1902, d. 10 Jan 1983
- 7-Minda GRUNG b. Cir 1906
- 6-Harald Magnus GRUNG b. 20 Sep 1859, Bergen, Norway
- 6-Ingeborg Georgine Weltzin GRUNG b. 27 Jan 1862, Bergen, Norway, d. 13 Nov 1945, Bergen, Norway
- 6-Johan Georg GRUNG b. 21 Jul 1863, Bergen, Norway, d. 31 Dec 1919, Zoutpansberg, South Africa
- 6-Anna GRUNG b. 5 Dec 1864, Bergen, Norway
  - +Christian BERENTSEN
- 7-Ruth BERENTSEN b. , USA
- 6-Justus Marius GRUNG b. 22 Aug 1867, Bergen, Norway, d. 15 Oct 1870, Bergen, Norway
- 5-Didrich Hagelsteen GRUNG b. 11 Dec 1827, Bergen, Norway
- 5-Ane Maria GRUNG b. 11 Feb 1830, Bergen, Norway
- 5-Arent Henrich GRUNG b. 9 Feb 1832, Bergen, Norway, d. 11 May 1876, Bergen, Norway
- 5-Ingebor Georgine GRUNG b. 20 Aug 1833, Bergen, Norway
- 5-Jan Danchert Christian GRUNG b. 4 Sep 1834, Bergen, Norway
- 4-Frants Diderich GRUNG b. 1800, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway), d. 6 Jan 1862, Bergen, Norway
- 4-Jacob Olaj GRUNG b. 1802, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway), d. 3 May 1851, Bergen, Norway
- 4-Christine Maria GRUNG b. 1803, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 4-Elisa Margarethe GRUNG b. 1804, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 4-Lars Nicolaj GRUNG b. 1805, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 4-Petter Andreas GRUNG b. 1808, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 4-Anna Maria GRUNG b. 1810, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 3-Frans Diddrich GRUNG b. 3 Jan 1765, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 3-Jens Aevers GRUNG b. 1 Feb 1766, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 3-Diderich Carl GRUNG b. 26 Apr 1770, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 3-Gierke Catherine GRUNG b. 12 Aug 1771, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 3-Nicoline Christiana GRUNG b. 21 Feb 1775, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 3-Karen Dorthea GRUNG b. 28 Aug 1767, Bergen, Norway
- 2-Ernest GRUNG b. 1725, (Nykirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 2-Anna GRUNG b. 1726, (Nykirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 2-Hans GRUNG b. 1728, (Nykirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 2-Giertie Catrina GRUNG b. 1730, (Nykirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 2-Peter Andereas GRUNG b. 1732, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 2-Jens GRUNG b. 1736, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 2-Gierke Christine GRUNG b. 1735, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway)
- 2-Catharine Elisabeth GRUNG b. 1737, (Korskirken, Bergen, Norway)

## Ole Olsen family line 1600 - 1900

### 1-Eivind b. Cir 1590, Vestbo, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. Cir 1657, Sevheim, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway

- +Ingeborg RASMUSDATTER b. Cir 1617, Sore Vignas, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, m. Cir 1636, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. , Sevheim, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, par. Rasmus KNUDSON and Kirsten LARSDATTER
- 2-Ole EIVINDSON b. Cir 1637, Sevheim, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. 1674, Sevheim, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
  - +Berta OLSDATTER b. 1658, Berge, Jelsa, Rogaland, Norway, m. Cir 1658-1660, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. 14 Oct 1724, Sevheim, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, par. Ole ODDSON and RASMUSDATTER
  - 3-Ole OLSON b. Cir 1673-1675, Sevheim, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. 1738, Nordre Vignas, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
    - +Torborg BAARSDATTER m. Cir 1697, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, bur. Jan-Feb 1733, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
  - 4-Hans OLSEN b. Cir 1699-1702, Nordre Vignas, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. 1767, Nordre Vignas, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
    - +Karen CHRISTIANSDATTER b. Cir 1702-1703, m. 8 Jul 1725, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. 1767, Nordre Vignas, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
  - 5-Baar HANSEN b. Cir 1734, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. 7 Mar 1817, Kingestad, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
    - +Brita JONSDATTER b. Cir 1731, Lund, Rogaland, Norway, m. 21 Oct 1767, Sjernaroy, Rogaland, Norway, par. Jon TOLLEIVSON and Anbjorg MONSDATTER
    - 6-Hans BAARSEN b. 1772, Kingestad, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. 1 Sep 1818, Rode, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
      - +Ingeborg OLSDATTER b. 1774, Hauskenased, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, m. 27 Jan 1799, par. Ole OLSEN and Britha RASMUSDATR
    - 7-Ole HANSEN b. 1802, Rode, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
      - +Marte S RASMUSDATTER b. Cir 1797, Hetland Proj., Norway, m. 28 Jun 1831, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, par. Rasmus RASMUSEN and Ingeborg RASMUSDATTER
      - 8-Ole OLSEN b. 31 Mar 1835, Finnestad, Hetland, Rogaland, Norway, d. 16 Aug 1911, Durban, Natal, South Africa
        - +Berthe Marie SIVERTDATTER b. 23 Sep 1836, Haaland, Rogaland, Norway, m. 15 Mar 1859, Hetland, Frue, Rogaland, Norway, d. 2 Sep 1906, Durban, South Africa, par. Sivert GUDMUNDESEN and Ingeborg Kirstine OLSDATTER
        - 9-Sivert Olaus OLSEN b. 27 May 1864, Tastad, Hetland, Rogaland, Norway, d. 3 May 1899, Mooifontein, Lydenburg District, South Africa
          - +Jenny Marie GRUNG b. 11 Sep 1856, Bergen, Norway, m. 1891, St Olaf Lutheran Church, Durban, South Africa, d. 16 Jul 1897, Mooifontein, Middleburg/Lydenburg District, South Africa, par. Johan Georg GRUNG and Jussine Marie MAGNUSDATTER
          - 10-Sverre Reidar Fraser OLSEN b. 4 Apr 1895, Mooifontein, Middleburg/Lydenburg District, South Africa, d. 30 Jun 1972, Port Elizabeth, Cape Province, South Africa
        - 9-Marthe Serine OLSDATTER b. 9 Sep 1862, Tastad, Hetland, Rogaland, Norway, d. 19 Jan 1941, Naerbo, Rogaland, Norway
          - +Lars Jakopson RØSTVIG b. 17 Aug 1846, Svaberget, Røstvik, Hemne, Sør-Trøndelag, Norway, m. 14 Apr 1881, Tulear, Madagascar, d. 18 Feb 1936, Trondheim, Sør-Trøndelag, Norway, par. Jakop STEFFENSON and Maren LARSDATTER ROMUNDSET
          - 10-Jacob LARSEN RØSTVIG b. 1883, Madagascar
          - 10-Olaf LARSEN RØSTVIG b. 1885, Tastad, Hetland, Rogaland, Norway
          - 10-Karl LARSEN RØSTVIG b. 1887, Madagascar
          - 10-Lars LARSEN RØSTVIG b. 1890, Madagascar
          - 10-Haakon LARSEN RØSTVIG b. 1892, Madagascar
          - 10-Kristian LARSEN RØSTVIG b. 1896, Tastad, Hetland, Rogaland, Norway
          - 10-Marie LARSDATTER RØSTVIG b. 1897, Tastad, Hetland, Rogaland, Norway
          - 10-John Stefan LARSEN RØSTVIG b. 3 Sep 1904, Stavanger, Norway, d. 16 Mar 1975, Trondheim, Sør-Trøndelag, Norway
          - 10-Astrid Elisabeth LARSDATTER RØSTVIG b. 3 Sep 1904, Stavanger, Norway, d. 25 Dec 1989, Trondheim, Sør-Trøndelag, Norway
        - 9-Ingeborg Kirstine OLSDATTER b. 27 Sep 1865, Stavanger, Rogaland, Norway, d. 13 Mar 1923, Springs, Transvaal, South Africa
          - +Hans (Henry) Jacob Elkjaer GRUNG b. 2 Jan 1858, Bergen, Norway, d. 1943, South Africa, par. Johan Georg GRUNG and Jussine Marie MAGNUSDATTER
          - 10-George John GRUNG
          - 10-Olaf GRUNG
          - 10-Harold GRUNG
          - 10-Inga GRUNG
          - 10-Hilda Martha GRUNG b. 14 Feb 1902, d. 10 Jan 1983
          - 10-Minda GRUNG b. Cir 1906
        - 9-Olaf Bertinius OLSEN b. 8 Sep 1868, Stavanger, Rogaland, Norway, d. 27 Oct 1909, Durban, Natal, South Africa
          - +Agnes Katrina Magdalena m. 2 Apr 1902, Usinganbuzi Church, Kranskop, Natal
          - 10-Olaf Carl OLSEN b. 8 Sep 1907, Durban, South Africa, d. 15 Jan 1955, Salisbury, Rhodesia
          - 10-Emma Mary OLSEN b. 1 Sep 1909, Durban, South Africa, d. 14 Jan 1966, Johannesburg, South Africa
        - 9-Engvald Martinus OLSEN b. 8 Mar 1871, Stavanger, Rogaland, Norway, d. May 1928, Kimberley, Cape Province, South Africa
        - 9-Gudmund (Goodman) OLSEN b. , Madagascar, d. , Adelaide, Cape Province, South Africa
          - +Ruby D T SMITH m. 1908, St Olaf Lutheran Church, Durban, South Africa
          - 10-Kaio OLSEN
        - 9-Anna Kristine OLSDATTER b. 21 Feb 1882, Tulear, Madagascar, d. , Rhodesia
          - +Robert John KENNY , par. Unknown and Unknown
          - 10-Bertha Marie KENNY
          - 10-Kathleen (Cass) KENNY
          - 10-Robert Terrence KENNY b. 21 Oct 1911
          - 10-John (Jack) KENNY
      - 8-Rasmus Johannes OLSEN b. 21 Aug 1832, Finnestad, Hetland, Rogaland, Norway
    - 7-Baar HANSEN b. 1799, Rode, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
      - +Malin JACOBSDTR b. Cir 1774
      - 6-Christi BAARSDATTER b. 1770, Kingestad, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. 1797, Kingestad, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
      - 6-Hans BAARSEN b. 1768, Kingestad, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
        - +Kirstie KNUSTSDATTER b. Cir 1731, Kingestad, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, m. 3 Jan 1758, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. 1767, Kingestad, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
        - 6-Karen Magrete BAARSDATTER b. 1758, Kingestad, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
        - 6-Ingebor BAARSDATTER b. 1761, Kingestad, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. 21 Jun 1761, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
        - 6-Ole BAARSEN b. 1762, Kingestad, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
        - 6-Kari BAARSDATTER b. 1765, Kingestad, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, bur. 2 Feb 1766, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
        - 6-Kari BAARSDATTER b. 1767, Kingestad, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
      - 5-Oluf HANSEN b. 1726, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. 1740, Nordre Vignas, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
      - 5-Christian HANSEN b. Cir 1728, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. 1783, Sevheim, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
      - 5-Torborg HANSDATTER b. 1737, Nordre Vignas, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. 14 Jul 1817, Osthus, Rennesoy, Rogaland, Norway
      - 5-Margrete HANSDATTER b. Cir 1731
      - 4-Sissel OLSDATTER b. Cir 1698, Nordre Vignas, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway, d. 1735, Vaaga Nora, Bokn, Rogaland, Norway
    - 3-Eivind OLSON b. , Sevheim, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
    - 3-Tore OLSON b. Cir 1662, Sevheim, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway
    - 3-Hans OLSON b. , Sevheim, Finnoy, Rogaland, Norway