

My grandfather's grandmother was called Anne Marie Müller and was a woman of good family in the town of Porsgrunn-Skien on the south coast of Norway. She was born in the winter of 1833 and at the Confirmation in 1847 it was noted in the Church Book that she was "moving in her whole being". She was probably an unusually accommodating person.

Her father had indeed gone into personal bankruptcy in 1848 after the great upheavals in Europe then, but before that Porsgrunn had been perhaps the most respected and most influential merchant with everything from sawmills, real estate, sailing shipowners to boat yards in his own. That was before the steam engines victory train. No money was left, everything disappeared in the bankruptcy, but he did right to the last crown and a little of the former elevation probably still remained.

Even more remarkable was Anne Marie's mother Louise, Philippine de Coninck, who was the illegitimate daughter of the Danish king Fredrik VI. He was a notorious horbock with many happy metrics and court ladies in his wake right down to the Vienna Congress after the Napoleonic Wars. But royal blood was always a kind of security and could never be of any use to the subjects involved.

The written evidence that Anne Marie's mother really had it together with Fredrik VI is weak. But it is clear that she was the court lady at the time that spanned the calculated conception moment and it is noted in the courtly birth record that the father was "unknown". However, as I (and several others) claim, Louise Philippine did not belong to the most favored castle whores, since no morganatic relationship was legally regulated. That she could have scandalized by publicly announcing that she was the mother of one of the king's children is hardly likely. There were many in that sex and it was for everyone to get the most out of the King's leap. She therefore had to settle for a good party (a prelate in the Danish king's service by the name of Jean Monand) and the magnificent Customs official family Torkildsens in Copenhagen as a family for the little girl. A little of all this brilliance was certainly also found with Anne Marie.

On midsummer Eve 1857, Anne Marie and Niels Julius Hessler, both 24, were married. Niels Julius was the son of the region's foremost shoemaker John Johansen Hessler and his wife Dorthea Marie Nielsdatter, thus not five shame either. Anne Marie was pregnant in the fourth month and gave birth to her first child on October 23, a girl who dies after only two weeks. But she had to be christened Dorothy Marie. It was possibly a sort of emergency wedding, or they kept the light up and made for as big a party as it did so well-regarded families.

However, on July 12, less than a month after the wedding, husband Niels Julius had another child (Julie Marie) with Maren Andrea Larsdatter (from the town of Tjølling a few miles from Porsgrunn). Not only that, in 1861 when Niels Julius was still married to Anne Marie and had two small children at home (Jacob and Charlotte), he also became the father of the boy child Herman with Anne Larsdatter in Kristiania as mother. In four years, Niels Julius became the father of five children with three different women.

Niels Julius was obviously that kind who can't pass a skirt fabric without being drawn into new adventures. He undoubtedly had a wide register, called himself a shoemaker, artist, decoration painter and artist. He certainly played violin too, but there is no evidence for that. At least he had many strings on his lyre.

In the 1864 census, Anne Marie lived in Skien near Porsgrunn with Jacob, Charlotte and a maid. But Niels Julius no longer belonged to the household. In the midst of a fierce civil war, he had traveled to the United States, more specifically to the gold digging hole Mariposa, California - in the middle of the Wild West. There, brother Jonas (John) Hessler had since established himself as a shoemaker.

Because there is evidence. The ad was found in the Mariposa Gazette in 1862. Niels Julius was in Mariposa already in 1862. That he had good reasons to leave home is beyond doubt. He is said to have traveled via Hartlepool to bid farewell to his two great children Jacob and Charlotte. He made a detour to Scotland, where there are also relatives named Hessler.

For a lonely man in the 1860s with little money, it was relatively easy to get to New York. It was just buying a ticket. From New York to California, across the continent in the midst of a fierce civil war, however, was a far greater adventure. How many more children he fathered during this trip, of course, you know nothing about.

Anne Marie remarried on November 7, 1870 with yet another wife fraudster; bookkeeper, church singer and teacher Hans Christian Olay Kolstad. In September 1872 she gave birth to Kristiania Anna Henriette, a little half sister to Charlotte (12 years) and Jacob (13). In 1875 they were still living with three children and a maid at Bjerregaardsg. 6 in Kristiania, but the marriage cracked. His C's profession was then "stud. Philos ". They had it financially scarce. The teenage children Jacob and Charlotte need to be pushed out of the nest as soon as possible to manage themselves and to get some more food on the table for the rest.

Anne Marie had a married but childless brother Charles (Herman Louis) Müller who established himself in West Hartlepool in north-east England as a shipman in the expanding coal freight industry. Therefore, to him and his English wife, Jacob and Charlotte were sent shortly after 1875. But that is another story.

It is clear from notes in hospital records from the "Oslo Hospital's ward" that an "illegitimate" girl, Clara Sofie, was baptized on March 22, 1891. The father was the accountant Hans Christian Olai Kolstad (46 years and with a different address than Anne Marie's) and the mother is the clerk Karen Halvorsen (34 years), who remains in the hospital to "lie in Brussels" (recover after childbirth). With this, the definitive separation between Anne Marie and Hans Christian occurred.

Anne Marie was now financially stranded, but succeeded because in 1892 Anna Henriette had married a relatively well-ordered customs officer Oluf Johan Löschbrandt in Kristiania. Anne Marie died in 1896, aged 62.

What happened to Hans Christian Kolstad really falls outside my family history, but I still tell, because the story is so sad. The same year as Anne Marie, however, he married Karen Halvorsen. Clara Sofie was then five years old. Hans Christian became a bookkeeper at the University of Oslo and lived until he turned 80, until 1925. The "Death Protocol" states: "The bookkeeper Hans Christian Olai Kolstad ... widow Karen Halvorsen Kolstad was informed that Hans Christian Kolstad had gone bankrupt in 1897 and that the estate was still bankrupt. He then blew Karen too most of the time.

As a footnote in Anne Marie's story, it can also be added that her mother (royal offspring) Louise Philippine and prelate Jean Monod (born 1865) first settled in Switzerland, returned to Copenhagen in 1794 and later settled in Paris, where Monod became a priest in the Reformed Assembly. They had 12 children, 8 of whom reached adulthood. Bingo!

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This text has become possible thanks to a new-found relative Steve Heimerle of Iowa (USA), who has done very thorough research on the genus from his vantage point across the Atlantic.

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