

THE DANISH FLEMMER FAMILY

1703 - 1870

FOREWORD

Always having had an interest in history, and in our own family, I turned my hand to doing research when living in Holland in 1994. The building up of a family tree is in itself interesting - putting together dates of births, deaths and marriages of people I knew or had heard of while growing up. Of course this led me further and further back in time and began to show me where we came from and who our ancestors were. Perhaps being African and cut off from our European roots makes this all the more important.

But the family tree is in reality only a minor part of the story. Of far more interest to me is who these people were and how and where they lived. In this first chapter of the Flemmer Family History I have tried to put what I have found out against the historical background of the times in which they lived. I am an amateur historian and having started this task, am filled with admiration for people who have written and published novels and social histories. The amount of work and detailed research involved is enormous, as I have found out even in this modest work. It is truly like a combination of detective work and building a jigsaw. Seemingly insignificant pieces of information combine and slowly the picture begins to emerge. I have been helped along the way by many people who have given me information, old files, photographs and encouragement to work on what is a thoroughly enjoyable task. I have been and am in contact with family members who I would never otherwise have met in countries all over the world. There are many I would like to thank - my wife Judy, Joan Geysler, Otto Broholm in Denmark, Joan Merritt in Montana and Dan Flemmer who lent me his own file of papers and set me on the path! My brother Terry who gave me invaluable editorial input and most especially Fay Lea who shares my enthusiasm for the Flemmer history and without whom this chapter would not have been possible.

Some people reading this may notice that ages quoted are not consistent throughout and that the spelling of names does not always match family papers that they may have. A word of explanation. In Denmark and South Africa there are books and other publications where Flemmers are mentioned and with them dates and ages. Wherever possible I have used actual records of births, marriages and deaths and this at times produces apparent inconsistencies. I am satisfied that the information I have is as accurate as it can be given the circumstances. As far as first names are concerned, I have again used details found in Denmark.

I have been asked if I have found out the meaning of the name Flemmer, and the origin of the name. As you will see they are recorded living near Odense in Denmark as early as 1461. The name Flemmer according to the Copenhagen University is almost certainly the same as Flemming: a man from Flanders. In 1991 the Danish census showed that there were 24 people in Denmark with the name Flemmer.

While this chapter covers the first four generations of Danish Flemmers, I should set out where I fit in:-

Frederich Flemmer c.	1703-1777	married Anne Pedersdatter	1711-1791
Johannes Flemmer	1740-1818	married Anna Lindholm	1750-1792

Hans Christian Flemmer	1771-1847	married Christine Rabeholm	1779-1852
Christian August Flemmer	1813-1870	married Betty Camilla Abo	1816-1896
Hans Christian Flemmer	1847-1896	married Aletta Alida Hopley	1853-1934
Marius Toger Flemmer	1877-1965	married Kathleen Nolan Neylan	1884-1948
Kathleen Norah Flemmer	1912-1972	married Ronald Harold Herbert	1914-1988
Stephen Wilfred Herbert	1946-	married Judith Ann Delbridge	1948-

No history is ever complete as more and more information becomes available. Perhaps this first chapter will help to prompt memories of people and times past. Even at the eleventh hour Fay and I were adding pieces to this before the final proof was complete. Like a family, its history is a story with no beginning and no end.

*Steve Herbert June 2000
Kalk Bay Cape Town*

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ANDERS FLEMMER c. 1647-1715

The only evidence we have of Anders Flemmer is a hand written note apparently from Denmark and of unknown date. Next to the birth year is written “*Vistnok fodt i Frankrig og fordrevet som Protestant 1685*”. Translated this means “*Probably born in France and exiled for being a Protestant 1685*”. There is a further note that says he probably died in Faaborg, Denmark in 1715. Under the name of Anders Flemmer follow some of the names of our own descendants.

It is interesting that this same hand written note shows the ‘title’ of Anders and his immediate descendants as *Seigneur*. There is apparently little significance in this as it was the fashion of the time to adopt all things French, particularly among the upper classes. There is even a saying from that time “If you are a man of manners, you speak French to your wife, German to your dog, and Danish to your servants”!

At the time of writing none of the Danish research has been able to find any written evidence of *Anders Flemmer*. Jorgen Flemmer, a distant relative who I met in Copenhagen in 1996, told me that he had been told as a boy that the Flemmers were Huguenots who fled France in the great exodus of the 17th century. The next generation of Flemmers were wigmakers in Odense (see below) and we know that French wigmakers moved into the Odense area at about this time. It is tempting to draw the conclusion that Anders Flemmer was one of them. But having said this, there is no evidence to support this conclusion. Otto Broholm, who is a Flemmer descendant, and lives near Odense, has spent many hours at the archives and has found no trace of Anders Flemmer.

The Flemmer name has been recorded in the area of Odense since the 1400’s when O. Flemmer and Lauris Flemmer were recorded as living northeast of Odense in 1460. In 1491 near Assens, which is 40 kms from Odense, a man named Olof Flemmer, the guardian of the village church, had his name inscribed on the church bells. Despite the romance of having our Huguenot ancestors fleeing persecution in France it seems more likely that we are descended from Danish Flemmers who were in the area from mediaeval times.

FREDERICH FLEMMER c 1703 - 1777

Descendants of Frederich Flemmer c 1703 - 1777

- 1 Frederich Flemmer, born: c 1703, died: 20 May 1777 + Anne Pedersdatter, born: 20 December 1711, died: 2 July 1791, married: 20 January 1729 in Vor Frue Church in Odense
- 2 Ingeborg Flemmer, born: 15 March 1731, died: 24 February 1772
- 2 Christian Flemmer, born: 28 August 1732 + Ulrica Rosina Guldener, married: 13 Sept 1766 in Holmens Sogn Copenhagen
- 2 Anne Maria Flemmer, born: 15 October 1733 + Hans Mathiassen Kragh, married: in Assens Denmark
- 2 Peter Flemmer, born: c 1735
- 2 Anna Flemmer, born: c 1737, died: 20 January 1789
- 2 Johannes Flemmer, born: 7 February 1740, died: 1818 + Anna Lindholm, born: 1750, died: 1792 - married: 2 July 1769 in Kappendrup north of Odense

2 Martha Flemmer, born: 4 April 1743 + Christen Hansen, married: 11 March 1785 in Odense
2 Daniel Flemmer, born: 15 February 1747, died: 24 August 1783 + Anna Kirstine Oluffsen, born:
11 Aug 1749, died: 11 Sep 1795, married: 30 Sep 1772 in St Knud's Odense

Frederich Flemmer is the earliest Flemmer that I have been able to trace in the Danish records. Despite the fact that Denmark is renowned for the accuracy of its record keeping, no trace of his birth in Odense on the island of Funen has yet been found. The earliest record we have is on the 3rd February 1729 when he was aged about 26, which reads:

“In the year 1729 Thursday 3rd February Frederich Flemmer appeared before the court and stated that he had begun his affairs here in this town as a wigmaker and he has now asked for citizenship. He therefore swore an oath according to the law so that from now on he shall enjoy all the rights and freedom of a citizen (burgher)”.

This registration as a burgher was required by law for anyone who wanted to practice their profession, and was also a means of registering taxpayers. By this registration Frederich would also have received his trading licence as a wigmaker.

There were other Flemmers in Odense at this time as there are burial records of Flemmers who were not Frederich's children, but probably the children of a brother, Peter.

Wigmaking was a major industry in Europe at this time and in fact enjoyed its heyday from about 1600-1800 when it went into decline as fashion changed. At its height no man of any means would be seen in public without a wig and would be considered to be undressed or of the poor labouring classes if he did so. In the 1730's, court documents recorded a standard expression for a poor man as having appeared “in his own hair” so one can assume that Frederich Flemmer would have been part of a thriving industry and relatively wealthy when his children were young.

Manuals of wigmaking testify to the painstaking methods used to create the various kinds of wigs worn. The process varied according to type but was exacting and laborious. It involved drawing out the hair with combs, frizzing, weaving the hairs into thick thread or string, measuring the head, weaving the hairs on to the block, mounting and curling. The art of wigmaking shares many of the qualities of lacemaking and weaving: deft fingers, fine eyesight, intense concentration and patience. Excellent light is needed to do this work.

Some of the articles needed by the wigmaker would have included: a stove, wig blocks, needles, tacks, iron cards or combs, wooden curlers, a loom, a ruler to measure the hair, ribbons, a pair of compasses and of course hair, whether human, goat or horse.

Denmark and Europe were going through immense political and social turmoil during the lifetime of Frederich Flemmer and it is only possible to give a brief background to life at this time. Between 1700 and 1730 the Great Northern War was fought in which 7 000 Danes of a force of 14 000 lost their lives. In 1711 bubonic plague reached Denmark killing 20 000 in Copenhagen alone. In some towns 40 per cent of the population was wiped out, and across the countryside farms and farmhouses lay abandoned.

Although improvements like paving and street lighting had been introduced in Copenhagen, life for the poorer classes would have been tough as the following makes clear *“the outward appearance of the Danish capital left a good deal to be desired. The city's canals were clogged with filth, the quays of the harbour were in such a poor state of repair that ships could not tie up there, and the*

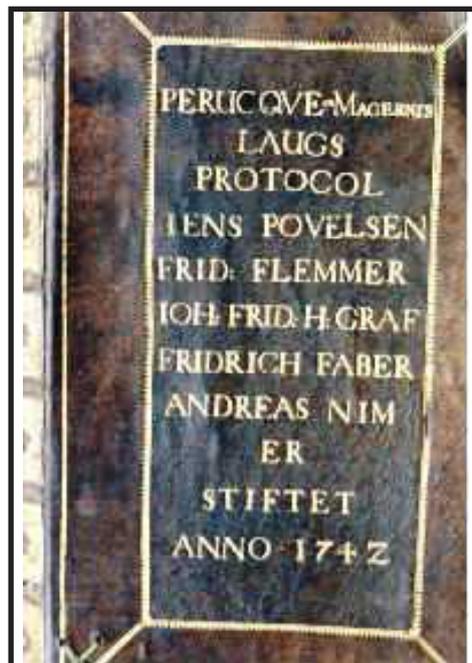
many straw-thatched houses were a fire hazard." It is no surprise to see that a large portion of the capital was destroyed in a fire in 1728.

Life was hard for people in the provinces too. In 1733 laws were passed to ensure that peasant males between the ages of 14 and 36 remained on the estates where they were born. Peasant labourers were described at this time as *"lazy, stubborn, given to smoking tobacco, and drinking spirits, rude to those in authority over them ... in sum, fear of punishment is the only thing which drives them to do good."* This description could so easily have been taken from a pre-1994 South African Government document of the late 20th century!

The agricultural depression that persisted over this period caused great hardship. In the small provincial towns like Odense, the livelihood of the citizens would have been constantly threatened by travelling peddlers and artisans protected by powerful landowners. The high life of the big city with its coffeehouses, shops selling exotic and costly foodstuffs and confections, the theatres and assembly rooms would be a world away.

Against the background of this turmoil, the government issued laws and decrees aimed at improving the economy and bringing better order to society. One area which would have directly affected wigmakers like Frederich Flemmer, was the issue of the formation of guilds. On the one hand the Danish government saw the guilds as a means of artisans developing closed shops which also controlled prices, keeping them high. On the other, the government was anxious to ensure that standards of workmanship were maintained.

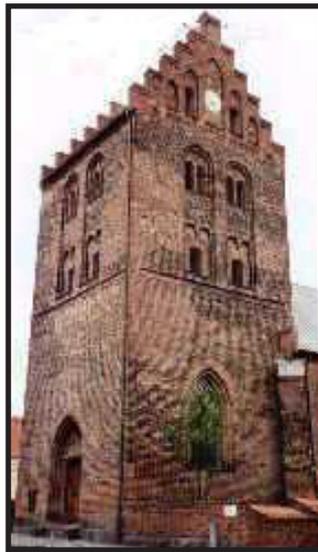
In 1742 the wig makers in Copenhagen and Odense were permitted to form guilds and the five wigmakers of Odense bought a book to record their minutes. The first meeting was held on 15th January 1743 at the home of Jens Poulsen, the guild master. In attendance were Frederich Flemmer and the other four members of the guild. The role of master of the guild was passed to each in rotation and between 1745-1747 this task fell to Frederich Flemmer. His name can still be seen written in gold on the cover of the guild book at the Odense Archive.



*Wigmakers Guild Book
- Established 1742*



It is even possible 250 years later for us to see how he signed his name to the minutes thus: - He was married to Anne Pedersdatter (literally Peter's daughter) c.1711-1791, in the Vor Frue Church in Odense on 20 January 1729. Anne was the daughter of a burgher (master) butcher, Peder Lauritzen and Ingeborg Hansdatter. They were a fairly wealthy family as can be seen from their probate record, when their house in the Nedergade in Odense was valued at 1 000 rigsdalers (also known as rixdollars, or rijksdalders). It seems he had married well if we compare the value of this house to that of Frederich Flemmer when he died 48 years later. His house was then valued at 200 rigsdalers.



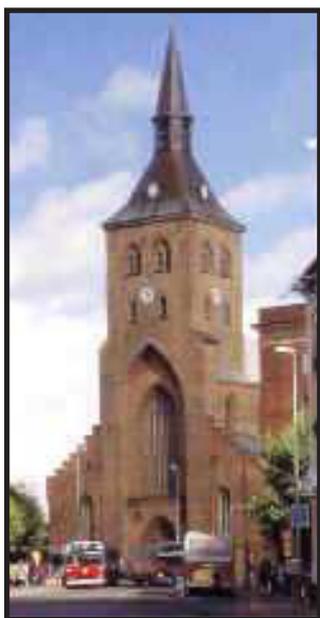
Vor Frue Church - Odense

I was able to visit Vor Frue (Our Lady's) Church, the original part of which was built in 1690. It is typical of other churches we saw, with a brick tower, tiled floor with baptismal font in the centre and maintained in immaculate order. Probably a coincidence, but as in some other churches I saw, there is a model sailing ship hanging from the ceiling. Presumably this is intended to draw attention to the perils of the sea and the Danes' close affinity with it and to call on blessings for those many Danes who would have been at sea. The interesting thing in this case is that the ship is named "Haabet" which was the name of a ship owned by Toger Abo, and which was seized as a prize in 1801. [See History of the Abos] I have no way of knowing whether there is any connection.

Like many of their time Frederich and Anna had a large family :-

Ingeborg	1731 - 1772	
Christian	1732 -	
Anne Maria	1733 -	married Hans Mathiassen Kragh
Peter	1735 -	
Anna	1737 - 1789	
Johannes	1740 - 1818	our direct ancestor married Anna Lindholm 1750 - 1792
Martha	1743 -	married Christen Hansen
Daniel	1747 - 1783	married Anna Kirstine Oluffsen 1749 - 1795

I have made no real attempt to research any of the family other than our direct ancestor Johannes. When I visited Odense in 1996 there were no Flemmers listed in the telephone directory for the area although there are several listed in Copenhagen.



St Knud's Church - Odense



The Clause Berg Altarpiece - St Knud's

On 20 May 1777 Frederich Flemmer was buried aged 74 at St. Knud's (Canute's) Church, Odense and the record states "there was ringing of bells". St. Knud's is the magnificent cathedral of Odense, the original church having been built 900 years ago. I assume its use for burials was reserved for prominent burghers as was the "ringing of bells" on such occasions. He was buried in the "first part" but today there is no graveyard and I assume that they have all been covered or moved, so it was not possible to look for any Flemmer gravestones.

On 21 May 1777 the Probate Court met to register the estate of Frederich Flemmer, and the sharing of his estate between his wife, Anne Pedersdatter, and his children listed as:-

1. Christian - wigmaker of Copenhagen
2. Johannes - wigmaker of Odense (age 37)
3. Daniel - wigmaker of Odense
4. Anne Marie - married to Mathiassen Kragh, living in Assens
5. Anna - serving as a maid on the manor Toejstrup here in Fyn (Funen) (age 34) (actually 40)
6. Martha - unmarried and living with her mother in this house

There is some interesting information in this probate record, if we compare it to the list of his children shown above. Peter Flemmer born in 1735 had already died by 1777 although he would only have been 42 at this time. Ingeborg Flemmer had also died and was buried aged 41 on 24th February 1772. The fact that Anna at age 40 was a serving maid would suggest that the family was not wealthy and this may well be due to a decline in the wig trade. We know that she did not marry as will be seen in later census records.

The family house was on the Norregade (literally North Street) and had been bought by Frederich at an auction on 1st July 1728. Unfortunately I was not able to find the Norregade when I was in Odense. Much of this part of the town was demolished and redeveloped in the 1950's.



16th Century Nedergade - Odense

The Nedergade, a nearby street, is still largely unaltered today and no doubt the Flemmer house would have been similar to those still standing. They are double storey, tiled and built of wattle and daub. Their age now makes them sag in all directions and they are painted in bright blues, yellows and dark reds, something that is quite common in Denmark. Most of these buildings are still occupied either as houses or small shops.

But to get back to the probate record and Frederich's will. It states that he owned a house on the Norregade between Postmaster Melby's house and tailor Warberg's house and that it consisted of 8 'bays' (*fag* in Danish meaning bay or window), was two storeys high with some land behind it and a basement. It is not clear what 8 'bays' signifies in terms of size. The house had an estimated value of 200 rigsdalers. It was to be bought by Daniel Flemmer "*according to an agreement between the widow and the children and even according to the oft expressed wish of his father before his death*".

It would probably have been similar to the houses still standing in Odense today, with four lead light windows on the ground and four on the upper floor. One can get an idea of the relative value of the property when looking at the annual salary of Toger Abo, who was earning 300 rigsdalers in 1771 at age 23.

In the estate there was also a "soldiers hut" at the Black Friar (*Sortebrode*) cemetery of 7 *fag* and one storey high valued at 100 rigsdalers of which the estate owned a third or 33 rigsdalers. There were also effects of little value. Creditors were the doctor and barber (often the same person) who were owed 3 rdl. From all of this we can see that Frederich Flemmer did not die a wealthy man. It is possible that other property had been passed to his other children before his death. My own theory is that the family were not as well off as they had been, with the wigmaking trade in decline and Denmark suffering financial problems.

Frederich's wife, Anne Pedersdatter died aged 80, 14 years later on 2nd July 1791 and was buried on the 7th, at St. Hans' Church in Odense, in the "second part".

JOHANNES FLEMMER 1740 - 1818

Descendants of Johannes Flemmer 1740 - 1818

- 1 Johannes Flemmer, born: 7 February 1740, died: 1818 + Anna Lindholm, born: 175, died: 18 February 1792, married: 2 July 1769 in Kappendrup north of Odense
- 2 Hans Christian Flemmer, born: 24 November 1771, died: 26 November 1847 + Christine Rabeholm, born: 13 July 1779, died: 5 October 1852, married: 24 November 1798 in Christianhavn Copenhagen Denmark
- 2 Fredricke Amalie Flemmer, born: c 1775 + Andreas Christian Moller
- 2 Carl Gustav Flemmer, born: 18 August 1774, died: 2 November 1845 + Sara Martine Hammer, born: 5 April 1770, died: 31 March 1815, married: 1 February 1797 in Helsing Denmark
- 2 Anne Flemmer, born: c 1777 + Rasmus Hunderup, married: 9 January 1813 in Veringe Odense
- 2 Margarethe Augustine Flemmer, born: 1780
- 2 Claudina Grubbe Flemmer, born: c 1784 + Jens Rasmussen
- 2 Rebekke Severine Flemmer, born: c 1784
- 2 Elisabeth Flemmer, born: c 1787 + Niels Adriansen

Johannes Flemmer was born in Odense on 7 February 1740, one of four sons and four daughters of Frederich Flemmer, master wigmaker. The first record we have of him is an entry in the record book of the wigmaker's guild on 16 January 1764. This shows that he received his appointment as an apprentice to the guild as a journeyman wigmaker at age 24. The guilds were set up to make sure that quality goods were produced by master craftsmen, and of course had the double role of controlling both quality and price. An apprentice in every trade would serve under the masters and would then request permission to make his own masterpiece for presentation to members of the guild. If this were of sufficiently high standard, he would be accepted as a member of the guild and could then earn a living.

On 26 July 1766 Johannes Flemmer asked permission to begin his masterpiece which was to be two wigs. On 18 August 1766 his father Frederich to whom he was no doubt apprenticed, presented the masterpiece and Johannes was accepted into the guild at age 26.

On 2 July 1769 (aged about 29) he married Anna Lindholm by "King's Letter" (*Kongbrevet*) at Kappendrup which lies just north of Odense. A *Kongbrevet* was in effect a special licence granted by the King to people who wanted to marry at home or in other special circumstances. Anna was about seven years younger than Johannes and was the daughter of a baker who owned a large farm at Kappendrup. She was probably from a relatively wealthy family and we can assume that the Flemmers were also well off. Presumably Johannes was establishing himself in the three years since he had become a master wigmaker. Their first son, Hans Christian, was born in Odense on 24 November 1772.

On the 30 September of this same year, 1772, Johannes' brother Daniel married Anna Kirstine Oluffsen at St. Knud's Cathedral in Odense. He had been accepted into the wigmakers guild in 1771. In September 1779 there is an entry in the minute book of the guild that is signed by both Daniel and Johannes.

Daniel and his wife Anna lived two houses away from his father and mother in the Norregade. They had six children, the last being born three months after Daniel died in the typhus epidemic of 1783. Anna married another wigmaker, Anthon Saiset, who also died young after six years of mar-

riage. She herself died in poverty in 1795 aged 45.

Wigs were suspected of transmitting disease and wigmakers like the Flemmers were at particular risk during plagues. They sometimes handled infected hair that had been cut from corpses. The disease was considered so contagious that the probate court sealed Daniel's house for two months after his death. It is from Daniel Flemmer that Otto Broholm, who has helped me with this history is descended.

I have very little information about Johannes Flemmer. Like his father and uncles he continued to be an active member of the wigmakers guild. On 30 December 1779 we see his signature in the guild minute book:-



Ten years after his father had died in 1777 we find an entry in the census of 1787, when the family was living at 108, Vestergade. This street is one of the main thoroughfares of modern Odense and has been almost totally redeveloped. There is still one old house left on the Vestergade which gives us a good idea of what houses of the era looked like.



House on present Vestergade - Odense

The census entries are always interesting and I quote it in full:-

Johannes Flemmer	Man	47	Married once	Wigmaker
Anna Lindholm	His wife	41	Married once	
Hans Christian Flemme		14		In Latin school
Carl Gustav Flemmer		13		In Latin school
Fridericke Amalie Flemmer		12		
Ane Flemmer		10		
Margrethe Augustine Flemmer		7		
Claudinia Grubbe Flemmer		3		
Rebekke Severine Flemmer		3		
Ana Flemmer	His sister	50	Spinster	Receives money from the hospital
Johan Hansen		17		Apprentice
Jorgen Hoheid		16		Apprentice

We can see from this census record that there were 13 people in the household, which would be enough to drain the fortune of even the wealthy! No servants are mentioned which probably only means that they did not live at the house. Johannes' sister Anna, working as a maid in 1771, is now living with them, and is a charity case receiving money from the hospital. Johannes' mother-in-law and two apprentices are also in the home. Although 7 children are listed, there was a further child born after 1787, named Elisabeth, making 8 in all, 2 boys and 6 girls.

In 1789, Johannes' sister Anna died aged 51 followed three years later in 1792 by his wife Anne. Both were buried from St. Knud's. It seems that Johannes did not remarry and would have been left with 8 children, ranging in age from about 19 to 2 years old at the time of Anne's death. One can imagine how difficult this was, especially for the young girls. Unlike a lot of other countries, many Danes of this time lived well into old age, and we have to speculate on Anne's death at 42. Of course she had had 8 children in about 15 years, but this was not unusual. Plague was another common killer, frequently sweeping through towns. Whatever the cause, Johannes was left with eight young children, and it is probable that some of them were brought up by uncles and aunts, a common practice with the extended and close families of the era.

Johannes died in Odense in 1818 aged 78, and there is a probate record dated 30th December of that year, made by his son-in-law, the wigmaker Andreas Christian Moller (husband of Fridericke Amalie Flemmer). The heirs were:-

1. Carl Gustav Flemmer, district deacon in Allerslev near Ringsted
2. Hans Christian Flemmer, *Ridder af Dannebrog* and vicar of Kongsted parish in the district of Faxe in Sjælland.
3. Frederiche Amalie, married to the wigmaker Moller here present
4. Rebekka Siverine, unmarried, present whereabouts unknown to Moller
5. Claudiana Grubbe, married to the veterinarian Jens Rasmussen, in Ringsted
6. Anne Flemmer, married to the merchant Hunderup in Assens
7. Elisabeth, married to cooper Niels Adriansen in Middelfart
8. Stine (presumably Margrethe Augustine), dead, who was married in Copenhagen and has left a child behind, but the name of the husband is not known to Moller, and he doesn't know if the child still lives.

The tracing of heirs was in any event academic as it was declared that "*the deceased had left nothing apart from a few pieces of clothes, as he had been an old and weak bedridden man for a long time*".

Of interest here is that Johannes died with no assets. Although they may have been given to his children before he died, wigmaking as an industry had virtually ended. The French Revolution of 1789, when aristocrats and their wigs had tumbled at the guillotine, had seen the beginning of the end for the wigmaking trade. It is significant that both of Johannes' sons, Carl Gustav and Hans Christian, had joined the church, and not the wigmaking guild. Only Frederiche Amalie was still living in Odense at the time of his death, and Anne Flemmer was living in Assens, possibly having gone there to her aunt, Anne Marie, after her mother died.

HANS CHRISTIAN FLEMMER 1771 - 1847

Descendants of Hans Christian Flemmer 1771 - 1847

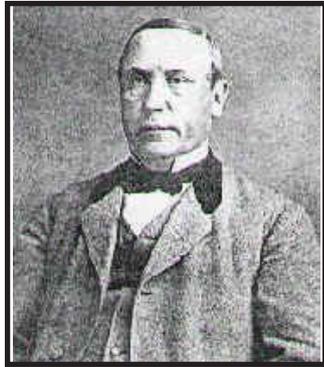
I Hans Christian Flemmer, born: 24 November 1771 + Christine Rabeholm, born: 13 July 1779, died: 5 October 1852, married: 24 November 1798 in Christianhavn Copenhagen

2 Sophie Charlotte Flemmer, born: 24 October 1799 + Christopher Peter Andersen, married: 29 December 1835 Kirke Stillinge

2 Carl Adrian Flemmer, born: 31 July 1802 + Johanne Marie Vilelmine Koyen, born: c 1825, married: 17 October 1843 Kirke Stillinge

2 Wilhelmina Frederitte Flemmer, born: 22 August 1810 + Joseph Christoph, born: 28 October 1810, married: 22 August 1843 in Kirke Stillinge

2 Christian August Flemmer, born: 9 March 1813, died: 11 November 1870 + Betty Camilla Augusta Abo, born: 28 November 1816, died: 19 September 1896, married: 24 September 1839 in



Hans Christian Flemmer

Havrebjerg Denmark



Christine Rabeholm

There is a view that Hans Christian was born in 1772, but the information I have shows that he was born at Odense on 24 November 1771, and was baptised at the St. Knud's Cathedral in that town on 27 January 1772. At the baptism he was 'carried' by Miss Langgreen and his Sponsors were prominent people: the Town Clerk Mr. Langhoff, Monsr. Lund, Councillor Boring and Mr Jorgen Espe.

In the census of 1787, his age is given as 14 and he was studying at the 'Latin School' (High School and also called a Gymnasium). He did not go into the wigmaking trade as had his father and grandfather. In 1790, aged 18 he was completing his schooling at the Odense Upper Secondary School. In 1791 he gained a degree in Philosophy cum laude and in 1794 a degree in Theology cum laude at the university in Copenhagen. His final graduation at the highest grade (*laudabilis*) was on 23 February 1798. His younger brother Carl Gustav was also educated at the Gymnasium and graduated at Copenhagen University. We might think that their father, Johannes, was a wealthy man to pay for this, as university education was something of a rarity at this time in Denmark.

A biography of Danish Clergy by Frederick Barford published in 1848 paints a somewhat different picture of the means of the young Flemmer brothers. Because of their financial circumstances they lived a pretty wretched life in which in mutual love and support they tried to the best of their ability to make life easier for each other.

Both brothers had "*regens og kommunitet*". The "*Kommunitet*" was and still is, a foundation established in 1569 by King Frederick II to give 100 'poor and diligent' young men the chance to study at university. In 1618 King Christian IV lent money to the foundation to build a hostel for these 100 students. The hostel, called "*Collegium Regium*" was first used in 1623. It burned down in the great fire of 1728 but was almost immediately rebuilt and can still be seen today. The brothers would have stayed at the "*Collegium Regium*" for at least part of their studies and would have received a small grant from the foundation.

Probably to help pay his way, Hans Christian took several jobs while studying. He was a proof-reader at the publisher Gyldendal, still one of the major Danish publishers. He worked as a teacher at the *Borgerdyd* School, an establishment with a top class reputation and also coached private students for university entrance. His obituary notice in the *Berlingske Tidende* (a major newspaper to this day) mentions some of the students he helped. Among them were E.C.Werlauff, who became a famous professor of history and the Orsted brothers. One brother, H.C.Orsted, became professor of physics at the university and is famous for his discovery of electro-magnetism.

In 1796 Hans Christian was offered a parish which he unselfishly turned down as he felt it would be of greater benefit to his brother Carl Gustav who was engaged to be married.

Two years later, in 1798 aged 27 Hans Christian became vicar at Vester and Oster Egede parishes in Sjælland. I passed through this very small farming community when visiting Denmark two hundred years later in 1996. I doubt that very much has changed! It was in this same year 1798, that he married 19 year old Christine Rabeholm (born 17th July 1779, died Copenhagen 5th October 1852) on 24th November at her home at Christianhavn in Copenhagen. Christine was also from a prominent family, her father having been Mogens Rabeholm, a Captain of a Danish ship in the China trade. He had died at the Danish settlement of Tranquebar on the Coromandel Coast of SouthEast India. Christine's mother was Sophie Charlotte Nielsen (born 1756, died c.1846).

An aside about the "China Trade". It would have been a lucrative business to be in as a Captain at this time as the Danish Asiatic Company was sending only two vessels a year to China. The Danish ships at 1 000 tons were the biggest of their era although tiny by today's standards, and the Captains of these vessels would have been famous in Copenhagen.

It is difficult in this day and age to imagine the life of a '*Chinacaptain*' late in the 18th century. Where we complain about being subject to delays in aircraft and uncomfortable seats, try to imagine setting out from Copenhagen in the winter months on a voyage that would see you at sea for a total of about 450 days. Returning to your home and family, if you survived, after 18 months away!

As I sit writing this at our house in Kalk Bay the wind is howling outside and the sea pounding against the harbour wall. What could it have been like far out to sea in small sailing vessels with no means of communicating with the rest of the world? And yet shipwrecks were surprisingly infrequent. One can only ponder at these brave and hardy souls of a bygone era.

Mortality on board would account for about 32 of the 160 people during the voyage, mainly from dysentery, cholera and malaria and one can only try to imagine what the medical treatment was like! There is a report of a ship of this time that introduced a competition to help clean up the ship and while away time on the long Indian Ocean crossing. The reward was a tot of brandy for every 1 000 cockroaches caught. In little more than five weeks more than 38 000 of these omnivorous insects had been collected! Add to this attacks by pirates and frequent wars with local princes in the East and we can see that it was a life for the strong, brave and adventurous.

The Danish captains and crews were very experienced and it was normal practice for a navigating officer to make 9 trips to the East before having a chance of promotion to Captain. As voyages lasted 18 months, it seems that captains were in their 40's and it is no surprise to find that the highest mortality rate was among the officers. While they would have had better food and conditions than the ordinary seamen, they were older and no doubt the long voyages and tough life made them more susceptible to disease.

Sadly then, Mogens Rabeholm had died at the Danish base at Tranquebar before his daughter Christine married Hans Christian Flemmer in November 1798.

The following year Hans Christian was appointed vicar at Kongsted in Sjælland, a bigger parish than his previous responsibilities. It was here that Christian August Flemmer, *stamvader* of the South African Flemmers was born 15 years later on 9th March 1813, but I am getting ahead of the story!



Kongsted Church - Sjælland

Kongsted is set among beautiful rolling farming countryside with villages and hamlets for miles around, and it is itself only a small village. The church is typical of many others we saw, built mainly of red brick with a square tower and stepped gables. The original church was built in about 1425 and the inside is beautiful, with a unique collection of paintings of the saints and angels on the ceiling. I doubt if anything has changed, apart from the addition of electricity, in the 200 years since Hans Christian was vicar.

The census of 1801 finds the following entry for the Kongsted parish:-

Hans Christian Flemmer	man	29	married once	vicar
Kristine Rabeholm	his wife	22	married once	
Sophia Charlotte Flemmer	their daughter	2		
Glaudina Flemmer	his sister	17		
Ingeborg Larsdatter		17		
Vilhelmina Baji		22		
Ane Larsdatter	servant	21		
Peer Peersen		28		
Hans Nielsen		13		

We can picture the young vicar and his wife living fairly comfortably in the church house with their daughter and five servants. They would not only have worked for the family but also looked after the church, its grounds and the graveyard. The servants would probably also have farmed a small holding growing vegetables for the family. You will see also that the vicar's sister is living with them after the death of her mother in 1794.

Being a parish priest was a well paid occupation at this time, as the clergy in effect acted as employees of the King, making announcements regarding laws and keeping the records of the parish. They were also expected to play a leading role in schooling, and the Danish author, Johannes C. Jessen has written a series of books about the conflict between schoolmasters, deacons and haughty church ministers.

We are fortunate to have a review of his book '*A Look through Kongsted Parish History for 20 Years 1799-1819*' published in 1948. Much of it covers the friendship and productive relationship between Hans Christian Flemmer and his Schoolmaster and Deacon, Niels Schafte who met at Kongsted parish in September of 1799. They obviously held each other in high esteem, unlike many of the other deacons and ministers recorded by Jessen.

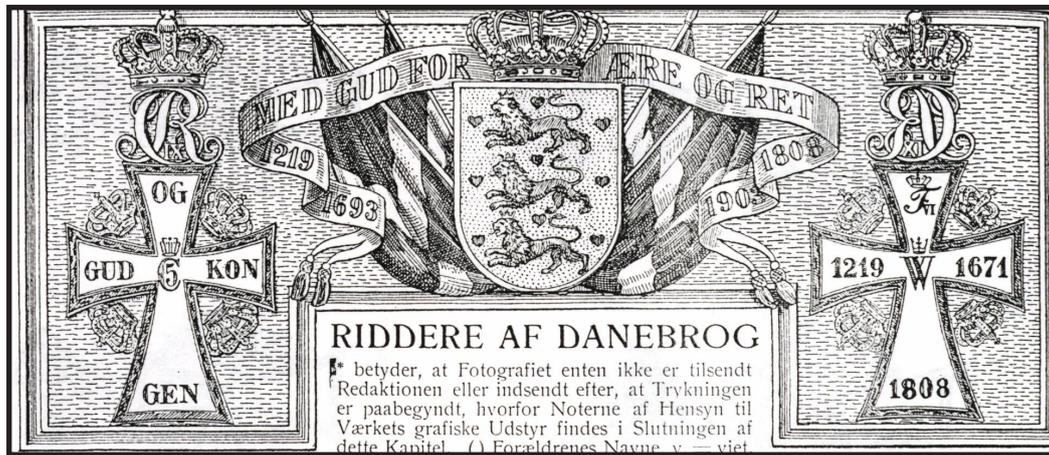
It is worth quoting the translation of the review of the book in full as it gives us a good insight into the village world of 200 years ago.

"We will tell here how these two men put in a lot of work within the schools. Things that are so far removed from the present day circumstances and conditions. In 1807 Pastor Flemmer started a Sunday school at Kongsted Parish, very unlike what we know of a Sunday school now. These were grown men who were being educated, and it had to be on Sunday as they all had full time jobs in the area. They needed to learn writing which the Deacon Schafte took upon himself to teach them.

Count Danneskjold Samsø had lent the Pastor electrical machinery and an air pump, and he taught them physics and natural science and other things that would help educate them and help them in their daily lives, and also help them against quacks and other superstitions. It was apparently a very good school and both pastor and deacon enjoyed the fruits of it. There were many other tasks taken up as well.

At that time Denmark was a leader in the world in that it passed laws that provided for and made schooling for children compulsory. In this situation the old uneducated schoolmasters risked being sacked as not competent to teach within the new system. Pastor Flemmer then offered to teach these teachers. It was a special sight to see this "schoolmasters school" start up. Every Saturday afternoon at 3pm promptly, an estate worker who was schoolmaster at Eskildstrup, a pensioner from Lestrup and a millkeeper who kept school at Borup, came to the Kongsted vicarage to be educated for teaching. From 3 pm until 7 or 8 pm the pastor taught them writing and arithmetic, geography and nature from 'Need and Help Book' for schoolmasters. He also tried to teach them general knowledge to help them cope with a changing world. On Sundays the men met at the Church to learn their catechism from the deacon and pastor."

Given this story of selfless dedication to the cause of education it is not surprising to find in the history handed down by members of the family, that the vicar's efforts and contribution to education were recognised by the government of the day. At the age of 43, on 31st July 1815, Hans Christian was awarded the order of '*Ridder af Dannebrog*', literally, Knight of the Flag, an honour awarded by the King on the advice of his government.



I know little about the order of *Ridder af Dannebrog* except that it was awarded in many different classes. It was used at this time to create a sort of upper middle class in an effort to lessen the powers of the entrenched nobility. The award to Hans Christian would have been a considerable honour for him and the people of Kongsted. In a book recording vicars in Denmark at this time Hans Christian is noted to be “friendly and helpful, strong, intelligent and very active”.

There were four children born in Kongsted:-

Sophie Charlotte	born: 24 October 1799
Carl Adrian	born: 31 July 1802
Wilhelmine Frederitte	born: 22 August 1810
Christian August	born: 9 March 1813

Joan Merritt of Montana USA who has helped me with this account is a descendant of Carl Adrian Flemmer.

On 25th November 1825 at age 52 the vicar and his family moved to the parish of Stillinge in Sjælland and the next information we have is 9 years later when the census of 1834 for Stillinge records the following:-

Hans Christian Flemmer	62	Vicar and <i>Ridder af Dannebrog</i>
Kirstine Rabeholm	55	His Wife
Sofie Charlotte Flemmer	35	
Carl Adrian Flemmer	33	
Vilhelmine Flemmer	25	
Nicolai Hansen	29	
Jens Andersen	37	
Niels Jorgensen	28	
Soren Jorgensen	20	
Hans Christensen	17	
Jorgen Rasmussen	15	
Trine Jacobsdatter	21	
Maren Nielsdatter	23	
Ane Marie Jensdatter	16	
Maren Larsdatter	12	

We see that only three children are mentioned. This is because the youngest, Christian August

had started his studies as a doctor in Copenhagen. He was about 21 at this time.

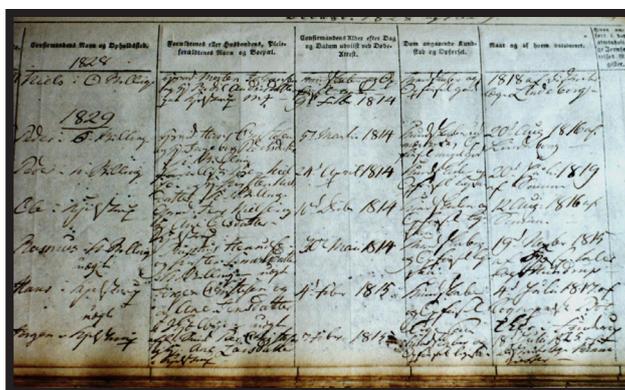
Once again the Census helps to give us some interesting information and in the absence of any other records we can only try to interpret what we have. The three oldest children are still living at home even though two of them are in their thirties and unmarried. We can only speculate why this should be so. There is a family story that Hans Christian gave all the family silver to the Crown, to be melted down for coin because of the financial crisis facing Denmark at the time.

The story behind this story is probably a little less romantic. In 1813 the Danish Government and the Bank of Denmark were bankrupt. At that time a silver tax was introduced which was payable depending on the area of each farm. There was no alternative to the tax, it had to be paid in silver or the land would be sold. So rather than handing the silver over as a noble act, there was little choice in the matter. Perhaps the late marriages of these children did have something to do with their financial situation because they did all eventually marry:-

Sophie Charlotte	29 December 1835 (aged 36)	married Christopher Peter Andersen
Carl Adrian	17 October 1842 (aged 41)	married Johanne Koyen (aged 18)
Vilhelmine Frederitte	22 August 1843 (aged 34)	married Joseph Christoph (aged 33)

The Census also shows us that the good vicar had seven servants and farm hands. Whatever financial problems there were with the Danish economy, he would have been relatively one of the wealthiest people in the parish.

Although I have not yet been able to find a copy of the signature of Hans Christian Flemmer it is possible to see his handwriting in this extract of the 1829 parish register of boys' confirmations:-



1829 Parish Register - Stillinge

Stillinge Kirke is marked on maps of Denmark and lies between Stillinge Ostre (East) and Stillinge Strand. It can hardly be called a village, but is at the centre of the most beautiful rolling, peaceful farming area. Trees line the public roads, and lovely sandy beaches are only a few kilometres away. No doubt the family made picnic trips to the beach in the short Scandinavian summer. How strange and alien the Eastern Cape, dry, virtually uninhabited and with its wild animals, must have been to Christian August and his family when they went to live in Africa. It is hard to think of two more different environments than Stillinge and 19th Century Cradock.

Stillinge Kirke is only about 3kms from Havrebjerg, where the same Census of 1834 finds Betty Camilla Augusta Abo living, aged 18 with her uncle, the vicar Andreas Kjeldberg. His wife, who was Betty's aunt, was Charlotte Henriette Naested. It is obvious from this Census how Christian

August Flemmer came to meet and eventually marry Betty Camilla Augusta Abo!



Stillinge Church

The church at Stillinge is one of the most beautiful that we saw. Although the style is typical of many, inside it is painted white and has the most wonderful murals. The original church was built in the 12th century, although the nave is the only part of the original remaining. Extensive additions were made in 1400 with the tower being added in 1807. Born and brought up in Africa, I always find it difficult to comprehend that buildings this old are still standing and in daily use!

The wonderful frescoes are from different periods starting from 1525 and the magnificent altar-piece was carved at Roskilde in 1602. While changes and improvements were made during Hans Christian's time as vicar, the church would have been largely as we see it today. Next to it is a large 'vicar's house' and here, no doubt the vicar and his seven servants and family would have lived and farmed the parish land.

From 1845 we have records of a further Census-

		Birthplace	
Hans Christian Flemmer	73	Odense	Vicar, <i>Ridder af Dannebrog</i>
Kirstine Rabeholm	66	Christainhavn	His Wife
Carl Adrian Flemmer	44	Kongsted	Son of Vicar/farm manager
Johanne Marie Vilelmine Koyen	20	Kalten, Seyeberg	His Wife
Hans Christian Flemmer	1	Here	Their Son
Emilie Koyen	17	Kalten, Seyeberg	Sister of Madam Flemmer
Christian Hermansen	31		Housemaid
Maren Nielsen	26		Servant of Vicar
Maren Jensdatter	20		
Anders Andersen	25		
Jens Pedersen	28		Flemmer's Farm Manager
Karen Christiansdatter	24		Servant
Ane Pedersdatter	14		

We see from this Census that Carl Adrian, eldest son, is still living at home, now with his young wife and the vicar's grandson. There are still six servants recorded, and far from being the poor shepherd of his flock, he would have been one of the wealthiest men in the parish. His youngest son, our Christian August Flemmer was now 32. He was practising as a doctor in nearby Korsor where he lived with his wife and four children.

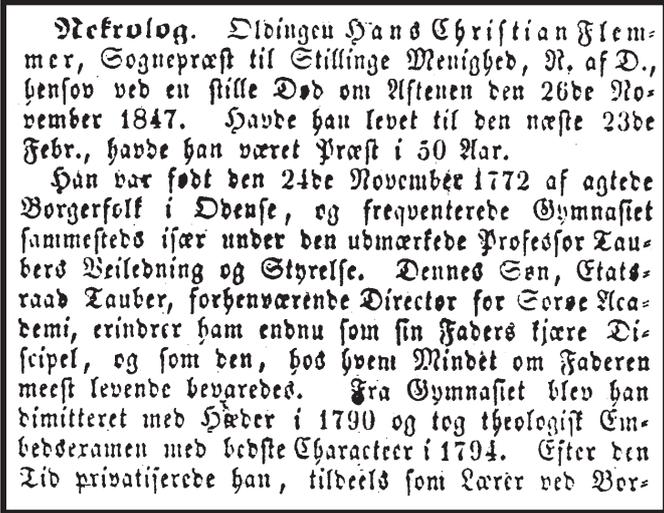
Two years after this census, Hans Christian Flemmer died on 26th November 1847, two days after

his 76th birthday. It is worth quoting in full the record of his death:-

“The honourable Hans Christian Flemmer died 26th November 1847, and was buried 3rd December. Ridder af Dannebrog, vicar for Stillinge congregation for 22 years, 75 years old (I believe he was 76). Born in Odense 22nd November 1772; 23rd February 1798 vicar in Vester and Oster Egede parishes; 1799 in Kongsted and 25th November 1825 in Stillinge; Funeral oration for him in the Dining Room by Thorvald Leuning vicar of Slagelse; in the Church by Peder Andreas Fenger of Slots-Bjergbye, at the grave by Andreas Kjeldberg of Havrebjerg”

The Barford biography gives more detail *“he died 26 November 1847 after having been severely ill during the last 8 years. During the past couple of months he was extremely weak, but despite this continued to carry out his duties. It was not until the day before his death that he agreed to have a curate, A. Tielmann, who gave Hans Christian the last Sacrament.”*

We are very fortunate to have the translation of the obituary from the newspaper *“Berlingske Tidende”* which lets us have a close-up of the moving end of this grand old man-



Nekrolog. Eldingen Hans Christian Flemmer, Sognepræst til Stillinge Menighed, R. af D., hensov ved en stille Død om Aftenen den 26de November 1847. Havde han levet til den næste 23de Febr., havde han været Præst i 50 Aar.
Han var født den 24de November 1772 af agtede Borgerfolk i Odense, og frekventerede Gymnasiet sammesteds især under den udmærkede Professor Taubers Veiledning og Styrelse. Dennes Søn, Etatsraad Tauber, forhenværende Director for Sorø Academi, erindrer ham endnu som sin Faders kjære Discipel, og som den, hos hvem Mindet om Faderen meest levende bevaredes. Fra Gymnasiet blev han dimitteret med Hæder i 1790 og tog theologisk Embedsexamen med bedste Character i 1794. Efter den Tid privatiserede han, tildeels som Lærer ved Bor-

Newspaper Extract: Berlingske Tidende

“On Sunday the 14th the old man preached his last sermon. The following Tuesday evening he attended the assembly of the municipal council. Up until Friday he went for his usual evening walk in the garden, but it was on Friday that he called his youngest son who is a doctor. It was too late. Inflammation in his chest and abdomen caused him a lot of pain, and no remedy could help his old body. As a pious and devote Christian he suffered for several days with great patience and quietly drew his last breath.”

I quote in full too the probate record:-

“ - 27th November 1847, the death was reported of the pastor H.C. Flemmer of Kirke Stillinge, 77 years old. The widow retains undivided possession of the estate according to the testament of the deceased. There were children of age.

(Signed)

- Acknowledging the good love, care and diligence of my much beloved wife, Kirstine Flemmer, born Rabeholm, during our long happy marriage of almost 47 years, it is my last will that she,

when I die, shall have the right to retain all of the estate undivided.

To confirm this last will of mine I have signed this testament in the presence of two witnesses.

*Stillinge 2nd October 1845
Vicar of Stillinge and Ridder af Dannebrog
(Signed)"*

That brings to an end the information I have been able to find from my research into the life of Hans Christian Flemmer except for one, to me, final matter. On our visit to the Stillinge Kirke we examined in detail the graveyard surrounding the church. It is extensive and immaculately maintained with small trees and shrubs and carefully raked walk ways. Like other graveyards we went into, most of the graves are of fairly recent origin, usually about 50 years old with a few over 100 years. It seemed that we would be disappointed not to find any Flemmer graves until right near the end of our search we came across a tablet set into the South Eastern church wall. Although of some soft stone and somewhat weathered it was still quite clear:-

*HER HVILER
EFTER ET DAADRIGT LIV*

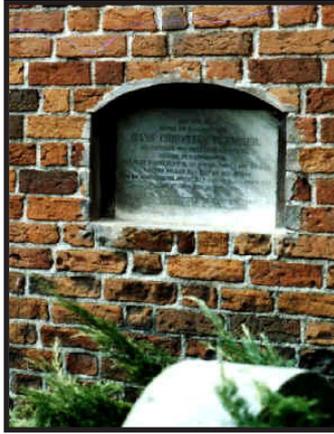
HANS CHRISTIAN FLEMMER

*SOGNEPRAEST FOR STILLINGE MENIGHED
RIDDER AF DANNEBROGE
HAN BLEV HJEMKALDT D 26 NOVBR 1847 I SIT 77 AAR
I NÆSTEN 50 AAR VAR HAN EN TRO HYRDE
FOR DE MENIGHEDER HVOR HAN VIRKEDE OG HVILKE HAN
STEDSE MINDES MED KÆRLIGHED
HANS AANDSERUGTER VARE HANS RIGDOM
SALIGT DEL MENNESKE SOM ALDRIG FRYGTER*

This simple message was translated with the assistance of Jorgen Flemmer, well-known Danish artist of Copenhagen, who is a distant relative of the South African Flemmers. It reads:-

HERE RESTS
AFTER A BLAMELESS LIFE
HANS CHRISTIAN FLEMMER
PARISH PRIEST OF STILLINGE
KNIGHT OF THE DANISH FLAG
HE WAS CALLED HOME 26 NOVBR 1847 IN HIS 77TH YEAR
FOR NEARLY 50 YEARS HE WAS A FAITHFUL SHEPHERD FOR THE
CONGREGATION IN WHICH HE SERVED
FOREVER HE WILL BE REMEMBERED WITH LOVE
HIS SPIRITUAL ACHIEVEMENTS WERE HIS WEALTH
BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO NEVER FEARS

It was very special for me to be standing in that quiet, peaceful churchyard at Stillinge in the place where this great man had spent so many years serving his community and country.



*Memorial Stone: Hans Christian Flemmer
- Stillinge Church*

CHRISTIAN AUGUST FLEMMER 1813 - 1870

Descendants of Christian August Flemmer 1813-1870

- 1 Christian August Flemmer, born: 9 March 1813, died: 11 November 1870 + Betty Camilla Augusta Abo, born: 28 November 1816, died: 19 September 1896, married: 24 September 1839 in Havrebjerg Denmark
- 2 Christian Ludvig Flemmer, born: 12 November 1841, died: 14 October 1903 + Anna Distin, born: 1849, died: 1924, married: 8 September 1869 in St Peter's Cradock
- 2 Camilla Henrietta Flemmer, born: 30 November 1842, died: 14 October 1922 + Hans Michael Naested, born: 13 March 1827, died: 30 August 1907, married: 1860 in Cradock Cape
- 2 Toger Abo August Flemmer, born: 15 October 1843, died: 20 June 1913 + Rosa Caroline Philips, born: 10 December 1852, died: 17 March 1908, married: 16 October 1873 in St Peter's Cradock
- 2 Charlotte Marie Louise Flemmer, born: 8 April 1845, died: 17 June 1934 + Edward Stockenstrom Lodewicus Gilfillan, born: February 1838, died: 20 July 1908, married: 7 September 1864 in St Peter's Cradock
- 2 Cathinca Christine Flemmer, born: 18 January 1846
- 2 Hans Christian Flemmer, born: 20 January 1847, died: 8 September 1896 + Aletta Alida Hopley, born: 18 November 1853, died: 26 May 1934, married: 1 June 1873
- 2 Andreas Salvator Flemmer, born: 11 December 1850
- 2 Marius Flemmer, born: 1 April 1853 + Aletta Alida Hopley, born: 18 November 1853, died: 26 May 1934, married: 1899
- 2 Sophia Wilhelmina Flemmer, born: 13 December 1856



Betty Abo & Christian August Flemmer

Christian August Flemmer was born in Kongsted on 9 March 1813, and was baptised the next day at his home. We do not know why- perhaps there were concerns about his health when he was born- but in any event he was baptised in the church again on the 22 March. He was 'carried' at the christening by Capt. Sperling's wife from Copenhagen. His sponsors were Capt. Sperling, the vicar Bjornson from Ronholt and Mr. Leth at Strandegaard. He was the youngest of Hans Christian and Christine's four children. At the time of his birth his brother Carl was 11 while his sister Sophie was 13 and Wilhelmine was 3.

Little is known of his early years but life in Kongsted would have been pleasant for the son of the well-loved vicar. There were servants in the house as we have seen from the census, and the Flemmers were an educated and well-known family.

In 1825, when he was 12 the family moved to Stillinge, where his father was to be vicar until his death 22 years later in 1847. We do not know much about Christian August's early education, but in 1831 after private education he entered medical school aged 18. We assume that this was in Copenhagen. It would have been a real adventure for young Christian to leave Stillinge, which is hardly a village even today, and move to the big bustling city of Copenhagen. The census of 1834 for Stillinge shows that his siblings were living at home aged 35, 33 and 25, and his older brother, Carl Adrian was the farm manager. We must assume that Christian August had shown particular promise and ability for his education to be continued.

In 1837, at age 24, he completed his surgeon's examination and on 16 May 1838, he was promoted 'bataillion-surgeon' and went into medical practice in Korsor. It was a little over a year later that he married Betty Camilla Augusta Abo, who at that time was 22 years old.

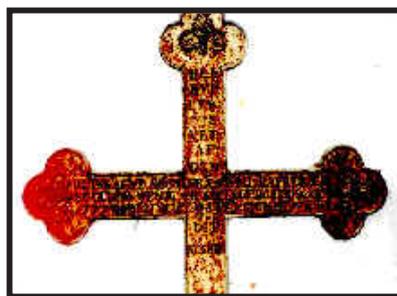
Betty was the granddaughter of Toger Abo 1747 - 1806 and daughter of Johannes Christian (von) Abo 1787 - 1869 and Louise Dorothea Naested 1793 - 1823. Both the Abos and Naesteds were prominent families. Johannes Christian Abo and Louise Dorothea Naested, had married in Copenhagen in 1810, and had three children - Marie Sophie Frederikke, Toger and Betty Camilla Augusta, born 28 November 1816.

Denmark was lurching from financial crisis to crisis at this time and it was probably for this reason that Johannes Christian Abo decided to try to make a new life for his family in South Africa. He had been trained in surveying in the Danish Navy, and could use his skills as a surveyor in the

new country. We do not know when he left, but Betty was said to be 6 months old, which would put it at 1817.

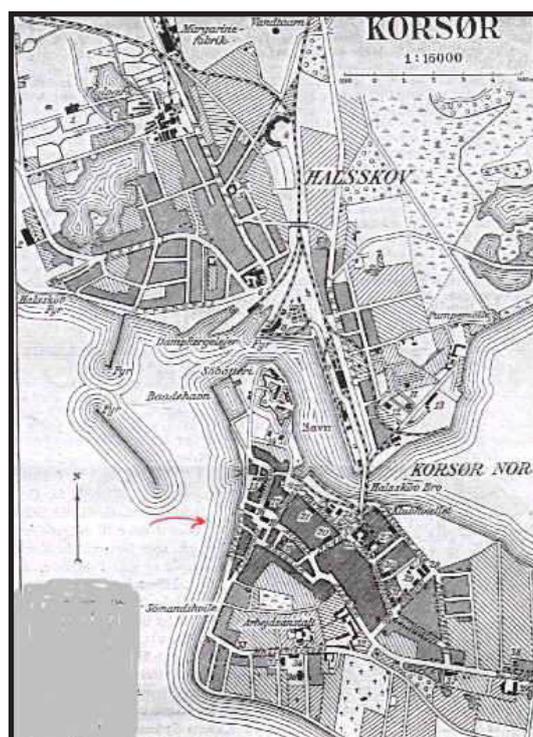
As far as I know he never came back to Denmark, nor apparently made his fortune in South Africa. In 1823 his wife Louise Dorothea died. Family legend has it that she died of a broken heart, and this may be so. Life must have been very difficult for the young mother and her three children, relying on the charity of her own brothers and sisters. When their mother died the three children, Marie now aged 11, Toger 9 and Betty 7 were split up and brought up by their mothers' brother and sisters.

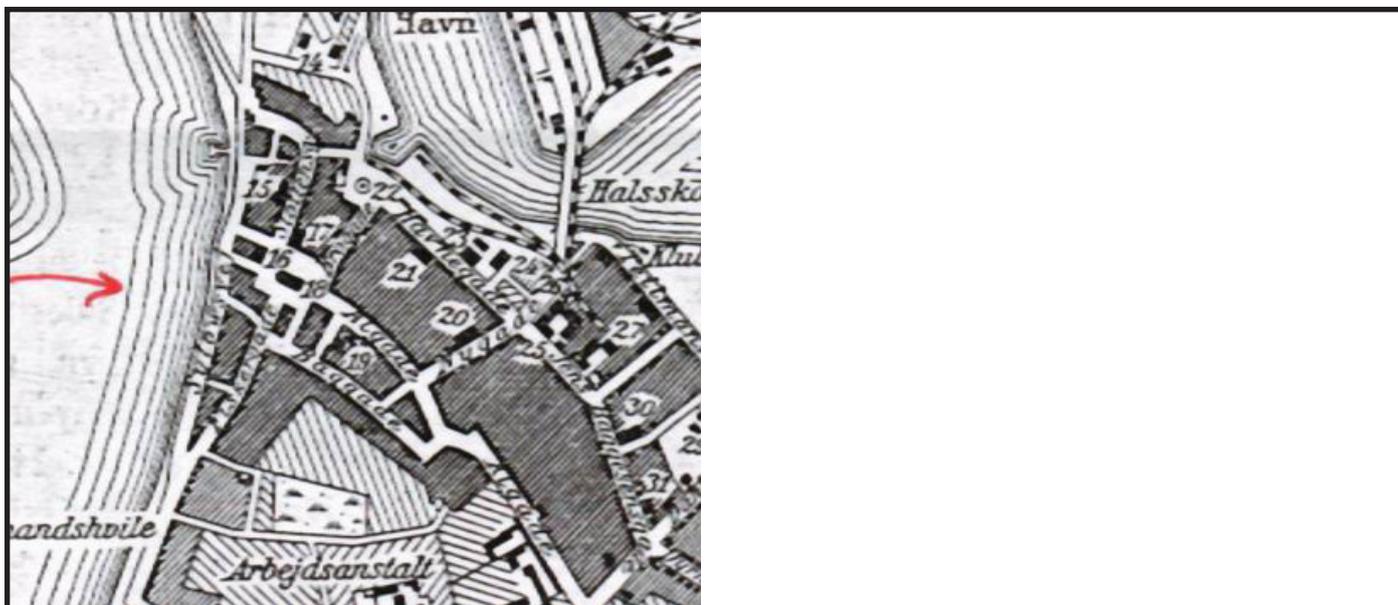
Betty went to her aunt Charlotte Henriette Naested who had married the vicar Andreas Hansen Kjeldberg. They had a daughter of their own, Methea Sophia who was four years younger than Betty. Kjeldberg was the vicar for the parish of Havrebjerg, about 3kms. from Stillinge, the home of the Flemmer family. They were obviously old friends of the Flemmers as the vicar Kjeldberg made the graveside funeral oration at the burial of Hans Christian Flemmer in 1847. Andreas Kjeldberg's memorial cross of wrought iron is still to be seen fixed to the wall of the Havrebjerg church graveyard.



Kjeldberg Cross Havrebjerg

MAPS OF KORSØR





And so it is clear how Betty and Christian Flemmer came to meet. To quote 'The Little Dane' by Anna Louie Flemmer 1874 - 1941 "*Dr. Christian August Flemmer was a medical student and a very welcome visitor at the home of Betty's aunt. Very popular with the two girls, he played his cards so well and hid his feelings with such success that it came as a great shock when he asked for the hand of Betty. He carried her off in triumph and they lived very happily for many years in the little fishing village of Korsor.*"

The official record of their marriage reads "*Battailion-surgeon Christian August Flemmer of Korsor, 28 years, vaccinated. Miss Betty Camilla Augusta Abo of Havrebjerg, 23 years, vaccinated. Sponsors: Vicar Hans Christian Flemmer, "Ridder af Dannebrog" and county-lawyer Johan Henrich Naested of Holbaek. Date of marriage: 24 Sept 1839 in the church.*"

'Vaccinated' in this record would refer to the fact that they had both been inoculated against small-pox, a relatively new development in medical science.

Eleven years later the census of 1850 finds them living in Korsor at 'the forehouse', 139 Baggaden-

	Age	Born	Occupation
Christian August Flemmer	39	Kongsted	bataillion-surgeon, doctor
Betty Camilla Augusta	32	Copenhagen	his wife
Hans Hansen	16		servant
Frederikke Susanne Hansen	23		servant
Hanne Dinesen	19		servant
Christian Ludvig Flemmer	10	Korsor	
Camilla Henriette Flemmer	9	Korsor	
Toger Abo August Flemmer	7	Korsor	
Charlotte Maria Louise	5	Korsor	
Kirstine Catinka Flemmer	4	Korsor	
Hans Christian Flemmer	1	Korsor	

At the time of this census, Betty was pregnant with the last of our Danes to be born in Denmark. He was Andreas Salvator Flemmer born 11 December 1850.



Baggaden, Korsor

I visited Korsor in 1996, and had no difficulty finding the Baggade where the Flemmers had lived. It is a small quiet street near the church, and although the modern numbers are different, the street is probably little changed. It is easy to imagine Dr. Flemmer going on his rounds of the village and the children playing outside on a summer's evening.

Although we can see that the good doctor had three servants, life was proving difficult, especially from a financial point of view. I quote from an account written by Charlotte Maria Louise Flemmer (Gilfillan) many years later:-

“When our grandfather (Hans Christian) was alive he greatly assisted our father with a monthly allowance, but after he died (in 1847), the family increasing, father sometimes found it difficult to make ends meet. Uncle Toger (Betty’s brother) then arrived in Korsor from Cradock, South Africa after an absence of 16 years from Denmark, and having become very well off and giving such glowing accounts of the chances in South Africa, our father decided to cast in his lot with Uncle Toger, who meanwhile assisted with the money needed for such an undertaking. Uncle Toger was eventually paid back for the outlay if not altogether yet in part.”

Betty's brother, Toger von Abo (as he was known in the Cape Colony) had gone to South Africa in about 1836 when he would have been 23, to join his father Christian Johannes von Abo, who as we know was a land surveyor. Toger obviously did well in South Africa and in 1846, aged 36 he is listed as a Roads Commissioner in Cradock. For many years he played a leading role in the affairs of the town.

How pleased the family must have been when Toger returned from Africa and married his cousin Methea Sophia Kjeldberg, then aged 31, on 30 July 1852. They also went to live in Cradock, and as far as I have been able to find out had no children. Betty of course, had lived with the Kjeldbergs after her mother died. Perhaps knowing that her cousin was going to live in Africa was another factor in the momentous decision to move. Perhaps the thought of seeing her father again after 35 years played a part. Whatever the reasons we do know that the Flemmers and von Abos sailed for the Cape on the same vessel later that year.

And so the decision was made, the die was cast. Moving to another country is a major undertak-

ing as I know from personal experience, but how much more final it was in 1852. So much of our knowledge today comes from newspapers, TV, the Internet, holidays. How different at that time when Africa was still the Dark Continent, and to the family almost unknown. They would leave on a long and arduous journey and there would be no coming back. The only contact with loved ones left behind, was by a very slow postal service. When families left they left for good and in most cases never saw their homelands again.

Although we in Africa might think of Denmark of this time as civilised and Africa as primitive, Denmark was by no means without its own problems. It fought the First Slesvig War from 1848-1850, and it is quite possible that Dr. Flemmer saw service in this war. He was a *'battailion-surgeon'* and his letter of application on arrival in the Cape mentions that he had one year of military service. In 1853, the year after the family left, Copenhagen itself suffered a cholera epidemic that killed 6 000 of a population of 150 000.

But to continue with our story, and to quote Charlotte Flemmer again - *"My dear sweet grandmother who was a refined lady, I do not ever remember hearing her maiden name (it was Christine Rabeholm), was the mother of four children, two sons and two daughters, my father Christian August being the youngest. I believe his leaving with wife and 7 children hastened the end of our grandmother, for she died 10 days after our leaving Korsor, while we were still in Copenhagen waiting for the steamer which was to take us to London on our way to Africa."*

We know that Christine Rabeholm died on 5 October 1852 aged 73, so it seems that the family left Korsor at the end of September of that year. How exciting it must have been for the children, now aged between 14 and 2, what a tremendous adventure! First travelling to Copenhagen, then the voyage to London, one of the centres of the world in terms of trade and culture. The family must have spent some weeks there as Christian August was admitted as a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons in London on 5th November 1852. I have not been able to find out what this qualification entailed, but no doubt he would have had to write an examination in English to qualify him to practice in the Cape Colony.

Once the formalities of getting this qualification were out of the way, little time was wasted and the family sailed from London on the *'Corsairs Bride'* on 22 November 1852. She is described as a bark of 348 tons under Capt. Crawley and was a regular on the run from London to Algoa Bay. They arrived on 1 February 1853, after a voyage of two and a half months. One would assume that the ship had called at Cape Town en route but in the days of sail this was not necessarily the case. Ships leaving Europe sailed far out into the Atlantic to pick up favourable winds and then sailed well south of the Cape itself, following the winds. Those of us who know the Cape will realise what it must have been like on a ship of this size sailing through the *'south easter'* season when winds frequently blow at over 100kms/hr, and the seas can be very rough.

The *'Corsairs Bride'* was one of 16 ships recorded as having arrived that month at Port Elizabeth. The smallest was the 46 ton schooner *'Espiegle'* from East London, the largest a 3 500 ton *'screw steamer'* from Melbourne. The arrival is noted in the various newspapers of the day among them the grandly named *'Cape of Good Hope & Port Natal Shipping & Mercantile Gazette'* of 11 February 1852 which says:-

"Arrivals at Algoa Bay from London- Corsairs Bride- Mr. & Mrs. Von Abo, Dr. & Mrs. Plummer (sic) Messers. Holmes, Nastch, seven children, six in steerage and two servants."

And so we can see from this entry and others that the two families had travelled out from London together. Being confined on this tiny ship with seven nieces and nephews for the long haul out

from Europe would be quite a start to married life for the newly wed von Abos!

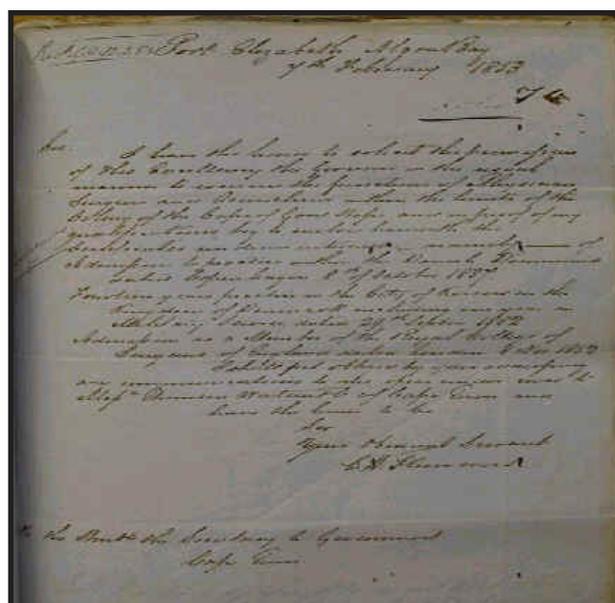
There is no doubt that our ancestors were tough and hardy people. It is hard to imagine in this day and age what it could have been like to undertake a voyage like this. Cooped up with 7 children on a ship that was little bigger than a large yacht, without any means of communicating with the outside world. I suppose the least we can say is that they were fortunate that Christian August was a doctor and well able to look after the health of his young family on this voyage.

Their arrival at Algoa Bay, or Port Elizabeth as it was already called, is described in various family accounts, the following being from 'The Little Dane' by Anna Louie Flemmer:-

"After a voyage of nearly three months, the family of Danes together with servants and workmen, landed in Port Elizabeth during the month of February 1853. Betty's father Christian Johannes von Abo, who parted from Betty when she was six months old, now beheld his daughter, a mother of seven fine children, two daughters and five sons. Tents were pitched to receive the travellers as at this time there was only one house in Port Elizabeth on the hill. After resting a few days the Danes, with all their possessions, were packed in to ox wagons and the journey inland commenced."

And from my own grandfather (Marius Toger Flemmer's) notes - *"The family arrived at Port Elizabeth in December 1852. As there was no landing stage, the children got the fright of their young lives when they had to be carried through the surf to the shore by natives. They had never seen black people before."*

These accounts written from memories long handed down, are slightly inaccurate. As we have seen there were not 'two daughters and five sons' but three daughters and four sons. While it is quite possible that tents were pitched for them, Port Elizabeth was already a major port of the Cape Colony by this time, and there would have been many houses in the area. Similarly, there was a wharf and boats were not landing through the surf. I suppose the young children would have been frightened at their first sight of black people. We can see from the newspaper accounts of the arrival of the Flemmers and Abos that two servants arrived with them. One wonders what happened to these servants over the years as I have never found any other reference to them.



Christian August Flemmer: Letter of Application to Cape Government

Christian August wasted little time in applying for permission to practice in the Colony. There is a letter dated 7th February 1853 in the Cape Town Archives written by him a week after arriving in Port Elizabeth. It is addressed to the Secretary of Government, Cape Town. In it Dr. Flemmer sets out his qualifications and requests permission to practice “as *Physician, Surgeon and Accoucheur within the limits of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope.*” An ‘accoucheur’ was a male midwife and in this case would have been the forerunner of our present gynaecologist. The Colonial Medical Committee wrote back on 23 February recommending that he be granted a license.

And so this band of hardy Danes set out on the long trek inland to Cradock. The trip was made by ox wagon and must have been a tremendous adventure for the children, especially the boys. Another child, Marius, was born at Cradock on 1 April of that year which means that Betty not only had the worries attached to travelling through a foreign and alien land with her children but also was about seven months pregnant on arrival at Algoa Bay. She then had to endure what was no doubt a rough and jolting three-week journey by ox wagon up to Cradock!

When describing their trip inland, I can do no better than quote again from ‘The Little Dane’:-

“After resting a few days the Danes, with all their possessions, were packed into oxwagons and the journey inland commenced. The wild unbroken country through which they passed was a mixture of grandeur and monotony, the ever changing hills a source of constant interest and delight, a great change from the almost dead level of the Denmark they had left, with trees and water everywhere and its dense population. Now they would travel a whole day without passing a single homestead. Weird and wonderful night noises thrilled the travellers. The furtive eyes and stealthy tread of animals beyond the range of the campfire were abundant evidence of the presence of denizens of the veld; the call of the jackals at night and the bark of baboons during the day kept the children in a state of panic or delight throughout the journey.

Parts of the country through which they travelled were thickly covered by a wild fruit, the prickly pear, a fruit that is relished by the Natives. Thinking to please the children, one old wagon driver ‘Windvoel’ collected a dish of prickly pear fruit, the cleaning of which is quite an art as the fruit are covered with minute thorns, almost invisible. These are brushed off with a bush gathered for the purpose, and then a thin skin is removed, leaving the luscious fruit the size and shape of a large egg.

Old Windvoel’s efforts were greatly appreciated; the children were delighted and thoroughly enjoyed the fruit. The following day, as soon as a halt was called and the camp pitched, the eldest son, Ludvig, full of enterprise, himself made off for the prickly pear bushes and collected a quantity of the fruit, filling his pockets and shirt without realising the presence of the millions of minute thorns. The agony that he suffered can only be realised by those who have handled this unkind fruit and have found that one thorn is enough to cause great inconvenience. It was most fortunate that his father was a medical man and was thus able to alleviate his suffering. The rest of his life was spent in South Africa but nothing would induce him to eat another prickly pear.”

And what exactly were our intrepid Danes heading for through the wilds of the Eastern Cape in 1853?

The town of Cradock which stands on the banks of the Great Fish River had been founded in 1814. It was a true ‘border town’ lying as it did at the very edge of the Cape Colony with Kaffraria across the river. In 1837 the district of Cradock was created by Ordinance and William Anderson Gilfillan was appointed Commissioner. The Gilfillans played a major role in the area over many years and later married into the Flemmer family, when Edward Gilfillan married Charlotte Marie

Louise Flemmer in 1864.

By 1837 better buildings were going up and a weekly post was received on Saturdays and delivered on Sundays. The streets were described at this time as being ill kept, and in a shocking state and the Square a mass of stones and dust. The 1845 Cape Almanac shows that the district was improving. William Gilfillan was still much in evidence as the President of the School Commission, and there was a Municipal Board, a doctor (R.M. Armstrong) and an apothecary. It had a government school and a private seminary. The Almanac describes the village thus:-

“It is a very thriving village, and for an inland station is a place of considerable trade. Several of the stores are large substantial buildings, and well stocked with British manufactures, and indeed with every article conducive to convenience and comfort. The main street towards the river is planted with various fruit trees which afford a grateful contrast to the embrowned and rocky hills.”

Main Street: Cradock



The border area had seen and continued to see conflict and war between the settlers and the indigenous people, the Bushmen, Khoikhoi (called Hottentots) and the “Kaffirs”. There were numerous wars and in 1846 the War of the Axe had broken out. By this time the Cradock Mounted Volunteers had been formed in which Gilfillan was to also play a prominent part.

Between 1850 and 1852 the Eighth Kaffir War broke out, threatening the whole border district. It was raging as the Flemmers were making their decision to move to the Colony. One has to wonder whether prospects in Denmark were seen to be so bleak that immigrating to what we would call a war zone seemed a better option. Of course there would be little up-to-date news available in Denmark, but Toger von Abo would have been well aware of the local situation. He was a member of Cradock’s Board of Defence. As we will see below he was involved in raising finance for the defence of the town. I cannot decide whether it was on blind faith or blind ignorance that the future of the South African Flemmer descendants was decided.

Here we have a description of the situation in the district during the war of 1850 - 52:

“All hands here have enough to do-high and low, rich and poor, have to turn out day and night day after day. The most urgent calls for help, for men and ammunition, come in - this being the only point from which they can get either. Yesterday we had two expresses from Baviaan’s River, im-

ploring help. The Hottentots in great numbers have assembled in those parts and with Kaffirs are devastating the country. The frontier line is now in this direction, within thirty miles of Cradock. Numbers have already fled and the whole of the district is dotted over with houseless farmers wandering to and fro."

The situation was so severe that a decision was made to fortify the Town Hall to be used as a fortress in the event of a direct attack on Cradock itself. A notice was published calling for loans from the local citizens for this purpose. The loans were guaranteed by none other than Toger von Abo. Meanwhile the Cradock Volunteers performed sterling service in this and future conflicts and it was noted at the time that their 80 men had to try to provide protection and support for the 2 000 people spread over the entire district.

Into the aftermath of this great conflict the oxwagons of the Flemmer family trundled, late in February 1853, three weeks after having left Port Elizabeth. Much of the countryside had been laid waste and farms and grazing destroyed. No doubt the town and district were still in a state of great turmoil. Contemporary reports tell us that Cradock was already beginning to regain its prosperity. There were two stone quarries, two lime kilns (an indication that building was booming) four wool-washers and the Cradock Union Bank opened during 1853.

The family would have been greatly assisted in settling into their new home by Betty's brother Toger, but even so life must have been so very different from Denmark. It was after all a frontier town and although quite developed as we have seen, primitive by European standards. There would have been a language problem, schooling to deal with and, no doubt the management of a household with servants who were very different to what had been left behind. Added to this would be a strange climate, sicknesses, insects and not least wild animals which freely ranged the area, not to mention the constant conflict with local tribespeople. Yes, life would have been a great challenge to these resourceful people.

We can have some idea of what Cradock was like at this time by quoting from an interview with Edward Gilfillan 1838-1908 as told to Miss Eliza Butler:

"Cradock was an important stopping place, and the main road to the interior for traders and travellers. Their arrival meant an extra market and the Market Bell was rung at one o'clock. Before leaving Cradock, these travellers replenished their stock of cattle and provisions. They brought with them lions and other wild beasts, lions' karosses and curios of all kind to sell. In the early fifties the post was still carried on horseback, and though due once a week was seldom punctual-full rivers or horses knocked up, often detained it for days. The English mail arrived once in three months. [so it would take a minimum of six months for a letter to get from the Cape to Denmark and back!].

At one time the Postmaster was much addicted to drink, and it was no uncommon thing for him to be lying incapable in the office, so people used to sort their own letters, and consequently letters often got mislaid and turned up weeks afterwards."

As I have mentioned before, Toger von Abo was already a prominent citizen of Cradock by this time. There are several letters from him in the Council records, mainly complaining about the state of the streets of the town. At one stage he was charged with letting his servant cut wood illegally. He refuted the charge and used the opportunity to once again complain about the streets! Wool was one of the major industries of the area and we see from these same records that von Abo was involved in woolwashing,. Again from the interview with Edward Gilfillan I quote:

"Until the railway came, wool washing was carried out near the Warm Baths. This was to lighten

the wool for carriage by wagon down to the Bay. The water used by the wash girls was afterward saved, because of the soap in it, which was used to wash the wool. A strange custom these wash girls used to have, was to throw pins, needles, beads etc., into the water, before beginning their washing to propitiate the 'water spirit' or it would pull them in."

The family record says that Dr. Flemmer was the first doctor in the area, but as we have seen, the 1845 Cape Almanac recorded a doctor and an apothecary in Cradock. Certainly doctors would be in short supply and his services welcomed. From the 'Little Dane'

"After travelling by oxwagon for three weeks, this little company of Danes arrived in Cradock. Here Dr. Flemmer set up as a medical man. He had a very successful practice and was much beloved by his patients. He was specially interested in the ailments of infants and made a powder which he used to say "was as necessary for baby as the Lord's prayer was to grown up people." It has been handed down from generation to generation and used by all his descendants with great success.

Dr. Flemmer and his family were very musical and in spite of her family cares, Betty retained her interest in the social side of life, and she and her husband would sing Danish duets and songs, to the delight of their audiences."

Life would have continued pleasantly enough in Cradock, and I'm sure would have been terrific for the boys, with the wonderful climate, the outdoor life and opportunities for hunting. Although here were schools for boys in Cradock a girls school was only opened in 1875, so it is probable that the girls were educated at home.

In 1855 we see the first mention of Dr. C.A. Flemmer in the Cape Almanac of that year and subsequently for the years 1856-58. He is listed as Medical Practitioner along with Dr.E.Davies. On the 13th December 1856 the ninth and last child, Sophie Wilhelmina was born. We presume she did not grow into adulthood as no further trace of her has been found nor has any record of her death.

In January 1858 there is a mention of Dr. Flemmer in the local newspaper when nine horses started in the Hack Race, the winner being Princess Royal owned by Dr. Flemmer. It seems then that the good doctor had interests other than the healing of the sick!

In 1859, Dr. Flemmer is recorded as District Surgeon of Bedford at an annual salary of 75 pounds. It has not been possible to find out how long they actually lived in Bedford which is about 70kms. from Cradock. Bedford itself had only been founded 5 years before, and would have been a tiny village. It seems that the stay was short as subsequent years' records show Dr. Flemmer back in Cradock. In this same year the eldest son, Christian Ludvig, was the agent for the Cradock News based in Bedford although only 18 years old at the time.

There is no mention of Dr. C. A. Flemmer in the Almanacs for 1860-62, although we see that T. von Abo is head of the Immigration Board and that P. von Abo is storekeeper of his gunpowder store!

Dr. Flemmer's name reappears in 1865 as Medical Practitioner in Cradock and then appears continuously until his death in 1870. But perhaps we should pause at 1860, at which date the Flemmer children would be as follows:-

Christian Ludvig	aged	19
Camilla Henrietta		18 she married Hans Micheal Naested this year
Toger Abo August		17
Charlotte Marie Louise		15

Cathinca Christine	14	have not been able to establish if still alive
Hans Christian	13	
Andreas Salvator	10	
Marius	7	
Sophia Wilhelmina	4	have not been able to establish if still alive

The Cape Almanac of 1860 records that the preceding year had been one of mingled prosperity and adversity. Certainly no further wars had broken out since the 1850-52 war, and it records that “*All the chiefs have had their power effectively broken, and the majority of them are now confined on Robben Island in hopeless exile.*” This statement will be seen to have been optimistic as a further war broke out on the border in 1863. The Almanac also notes serious defects in the systems of irrigation being used and that severe losses had occurred following a devastating drought the previous year. Towns like Cradock and its surrounding community would have been badly affected by drought as its economy was almost entirely based on agriculture.

On a positive note the Almanac records continued government investment in roads and bridges and the installation of the first telegraph on a short line in Cape Town. We see the Colony on an upward path of development and this would have presented opportunities for the Flemmer boys which they simply would not have had in Denmark. I am sure that life for them would have been hard but pleasant in their new country, riding, hunting and camping out being major activities. In Cradock this same year Edward Gilfillan who married Charlotte Flemmer in 1864, is recorded as a notary.

In 1856 the “The Cradock News” appeared, soon to change its name to the “Cradock and Tarkastad Register”. From an 1862 edition we see the results of a cricket match played in Cradock, and that there is a concert in the Town Hall. Hans Michael Naested, who married Camilla Flemmer in 1860 is advertising his shop as ‘*Koopman te Cradock*’, apples are 2d a pound, butter 1/6d and tobacco 7d a pound. Hans Michael Naested was another Dane, being the cousin of Toger and Betty von Abo (Flemmer). I have not found out when he arrived in Cradock, but perhaps he had come to the Colony with his cousin Toger.

Advertisement from Cradock - Tarkastad Register

BEKENDMAKING.

DE Onderzeteekende maakt hierdoor aan zyn veel vrienden bekend dat hy onlangs in de Bani geweest is, om een menigte van

NIEUWE GOEDEREN

te ontvangen, en terwyl de grootste gedeelte daarvan uit ander Land komt is hy in staat dezelve tegen zeer

Lage pryzen te kunnen verkoopen.

DE WAGENS ZYN REEDS OP PAD.

HANS MICHAEL NÆSTED,

KOOPMAN TE CRADOCK.

WOL EN VELLEEN wordt nog, zoo als altoos, tegen een goede prys ingekogt voor

KONTANT OOK.

H. M. Næsted.

Cradock, den 10den Februarij, 1863.

In 1863 Dr. Flemmer wrote a letter to the paper on the subject on the high price of food at the market caused no doubt by another drought. He had been the only doctor in town at the time of his letter. In five days he had only seen one patient, a fact which he ascribed partly to the fact that food prices were high and people were eating less, and partly “*to the glorious fact that so many had signed the pledge as Teetotallers.*” In the same year a decision was made to build a new school. The town was divided into four wards, one represented by Dr. Flemmer and guarantees of

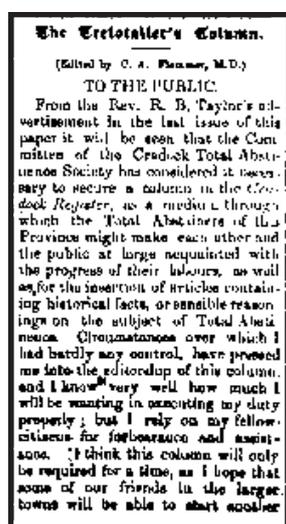
175 pounds were raised. Hans Flemmer, by now 16, is shown to be no great cricketer. Playing in the Excelsior Cricket Club second team he is out for a duck in both innings!

Dr. Flemmer was very involved in the Total Abstinence Society judging by the number of times he and the Society are mentioned in the paper. Meetings were held at the Town Hall attended by all of the churches in Cradock. Dr. Flemmer gave a lecture on the '*Social, Domestic and National advantages derived from Total Abstinence*'. The reporter notes '*The Doctor's discourse was on this occasion, particularly interesting and in his usual happy manner, he succeeded in enlivening the duller and sadder shades with a few witty anecdotes.*'

These meetings were well attended and entertainment was provided by the Glee Club, with "vocal entertainment" from Miss Flemmer. This was probably Charlotte Marie Louise who would have been 18 at the time. She married Edward Lodewicus Stockenstrom Gilfillan in 1864 and more will be said about them in the section of this history devoted to Charlotte. Not everyone was totally supportive of the Total Abstinence Society. Commenting on a heavy rainstorm that had struck Cradock in October 1863 the editor notes - "*Of course rain couldn't stop the meeting. Strange fish-those fellows- put a damper on them and they are more cheerful.*"

While the notion of a Total Abstinence Society may seem quaint to us today it was a powerful movement both in Europe and in the Cape Colony at this time. The demon drink was seen as a major cause of violence and a wasteful consumer of grain products, adversely affecting the peasant classes. On 1st of January 1864 Dr. Christian August Flemmer became the editor of the "*Teetotaller's Column*" in the Cradock and Tarkastad Register. His opening column could not state the position of the Abstainers more plainly:

Teetotallers column



It reads:-

"Circumstances over which I had hardly any control, have pressed me into the editorship of this column and I know very well how much I will be wanting in executing my duty properly; but I rely on my fellow citizens for assistance and forbearance.

Some Total Abstainers differ in their opinions as to the manner in which the system is to be carried out in all its bearings, and I therefore openly state my views on the subject. I firmly believe that Total Abstinence will be victorious over the whole world because sense and experience has shewed us that that it is the greatest worldly boon to man, and history teaches us that it is the only as yet known remedy which can put down drinking and a very large majority of sensible men agree that drinking is a curse and an abomination and must be put down."

The column continues at length and week by week in the same vein. One wonders how the good doctor came to terms with his son-in-law Hans Naested running a bottle store in Adderly Street, Cradock at this time!

In October of 1864 the Total Abstiners held a ball attended by 140 people in the Town Hall. Writing in his column the good Doctor is exultant “...not even a boisterous word or laugh was heard.....Teetotalism in this place has never won a greater victory.” While this description does not make the event sound like a lot of fun, the Ball did go on from eight thirty until four the next morning!

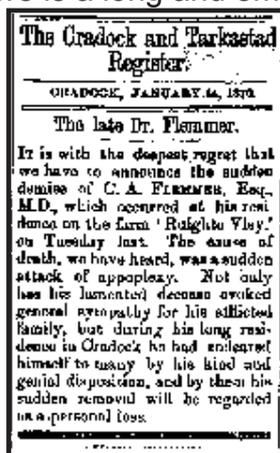
1864 also saw Salvator Flemmer’s entry on to the crickets fields of Cradock, with about as much success as his older brother. Playing for the Cradock Boys against the Grahamstown Boys in December, Salvator is run out for a duck in the first innings and bowled and caught for 0 in the second!

But to return to 1863 for a moment. It was a busy year for Dr. Flemmer apart from his work with the Abstinence Society and his practice. From the newspaper we see that in October he was elected to a committee to watch progress of the elections to the Legislative Assembly. In December he had hosted the visit and a series of lectures and field trips by a Dr. Brown, a visiting botanist. Dr. Brown had considerably enlightened the town with his knowledge and the visit seems to have been doubly welcome as it was entirely fortuitous, Dr. Brown having been trapped in Cradock by floodwaters!

Some extracts from the Cradock and Tarkastad Register of 1864 give us a flavour of the times and of Cradock. The “New Butchery” is offering prime beef at 5d. per lb. and steak at 6d. The telegraph has reached from Cape Town as far as Grahamstown and was steadily extending towards the Eastern Cape. There is an advertisement with a 3 pound reward for the missing Bushmen ‘Klein-boy’ 3ft 10ins, and ‘Kievi’ 4ft. Although slavery had been banned years before there was a system of indentured labour which was very close to slavery, and these Bushmen would no doubt have been confined as labourers by a local farmer. In other news the Turf Club (Secretary E. Gilfillan) meets regularly. In March the same year Hans Michael Naested, husband of Camilla Flemmer, applies to renew his bottle store licence in Adderley Street.

In 1870 the Cape Almanac records Dr. C.A. Flemmer as a Justice of the Peace at Cradock and in the same year the Cradock and Tarkastad Register was recording the first demonstration of a bicycle in Cradock to ‘general merriment’. H.M. Naested scored 21 out of 25 in a competition organised by the Cradock Rifle Association. On January 14th 1870 an obituary for Dr. Flemmer appeared.

In the same issue of the newspaper there is a long and emotional letter eulogising the late doctor



by his good friend the Rev. R.B. Taylor, of the Independent Church, with whom he had worked so hard in the cause of total abstinence.

THE LATE DR. FLEMMER.

To the Editors: Sirs,—The intelligence, doubtless, has reached you of the sudden demise of U. A. FLEMMER, Esq., M.D. The bereavement which will plunge his family and immediate connections in profound grief, will deeply afflict many others also, and among those not the least the members of the Cradock Total Abstinence Society. For myself I feel that I have lost not only a highly valued personal Friend, but one of my most earnest, devoted, and efficient co-adjutors in the cause of Total Abstinence. You know, Sirs, for you were yourselves associated with him in Committee for several months, that although at the first Dr. Flemmer stood aloof from any active co-operation, no one exceeded him in right cordial good-will to the cause, in zeal and devotedness from the moment that he came forward as a decided total abstinence. As a Member of Committee he was always punctual to an engagement, and as an advocate was ever ready in private and in public. As a lecturer he could always calculate upon being well received. There was always an originality and an earnestness about his prolocutions which aroused and rivetted attention, and withal a vein of quiet humour ever and anon cropping up which made him one of our most popular and enjoyable public speakers. Considering that he wrote and spoke in a language which he had to acquire after having become a resident in Cradock, it was often matter of surprise to his friends that he wrote and spoke so well. The little slips which now and then occurred in grammatical accuracy tended to give a zest to his composition rather than be noted as a defect, especially when, as in reading, these slips were accompanied with his inimitable stamp and smile. He ever threw his whole heart into his subject, and his zeal in the cause of Total Abstinence, I have reason to believe, never left him from the time he signed the pledge to the day of his deeply lamented death.

I will not presume to intrude upon the privacy of domestic grief by an attempt to describe what my late dear Friend was as a husband and a father—that is ground sacred to the mourning widow and children—but I may without offence say this much, that while his affection for his children was of the tenderest kind, it was tempered by singular wisdom, and his love to the partner of his days was at once sincere, deep, and reverential—what every right-minded husband's ought to be.

I am not writing a memoir, or there are many incidents which might be brought together illustrative of the character, general and professional, of DR. FLEMMER. I am merely snatching a few minutes to secure in your present issue a small space for a few hasty scraps in memory of a friend whose death will be deplored by very many.

R. B. TAYLOR.

Cradock, Jan. 13, 1870.

His eldest son Christian Ludvig had married Anna Louie Distin of the prominent Distin family in September the previous year. They had been given the farm where Christian Ludvig was farm manager as a wedding present. He and Anna were to enjoy this for only the first three months of their married life as Anna Louie gives this account of Dr. Flemmer's death in The Little Dane-

'It was Monday morning. Mr Flemmer (Christian Ludvig) was up with the lark and on scanning the horizon, he beheld a horseman riding as if for his life. He handed a letter which he scanned with paling face and trembling hands. He returned to the house. "Anna" he called, sinking into a chair, "I have very bad news. My father is dead." He handed her the letter, which she read, tears filling her sweet blue eyes.

Dr. Flemmer had retired and was living on a farm near Steynsburg. On Sunday afternoon Betty left her room to attend to the afternoon tea, and in the midst of her preparations returned to the bedroom for her handkerchief. She was just in time to see her poor husband breathe his last! He died painlessly from heart failure. Ludvig had promised his father that should the Doctor be taken, it would be his, Ludvig's, special care to take charge of his mother. He said " We must leave at once. I will arrange to let this farm as we must now make our home with my mother on her farm near Steynsburg."

Poor little Anna shed bitter tears at giving up her charming little home where she had reigned supreme: and although she was very fond of her mother in law she did not look forward to making her home with the Danes, where practically only Danish was spoken and Danish dishes eaten.'

It certainly would have been difficult for the newly wed Anna but apparently she accepted with good grace. This arrangement continued for three years until, according to The Little Dane, Betty

and her brother Toger were given a cottage in Cradock to live in. It is interesting to speculate here what had happened to Toger's wife Methea. I have found no record of her death in the Cape. Toger died in Steynsburg on 9 April 1879. His death certificate, signed by Christian Ludvig Flemmer states that he was unmarried. Perhaps life in the Cape Colony was too difficult for her and she had returned to Denmark.

There are some interesting facts in the accounts of Christian August Flemmer's death. He was 56 years old when he died, and had apparently already retired. Details of his estate shows that he was by no means wealthy, so it is possible that he was in poor health and unable to attend to his practice. This is possibly why he had already arranged that his eldest son, Ludvig, would care for his wife Betty in the event of his death.

The Death Certificate records he died on the farm '*Ruigtersvlei*' District Cradock. Anna Louie states that he died on a farm near Steynsburg. A son of Camilla Henriette Naested (Flemmer) was born on this same farm in 1865, when it is shown as District Steynsburg. The district boundaries changed from time to time and I believe he died on the farm '*Ruigtevlei*' in the present District of Middelburg. This farm is about 10kms. off the R66 road from Cradock to Middelburg.

The Death Certificate also records his eight surviving children. Six had achieved their majority and the youngest two, Andreas Salvator and Marius were minors. The family finances were in a parlous state, but these boys would have been aged 20 and 17 respectively and beginning to make their own way in the world.

The Estate late Christian August Flemmer M.D.

Paid: Scanlan & Gilfillan	£4.08.00
Creditors: H.M.Naested	£89.04.09
E. Gilfillan	£53.04.00
F. J. Philips	£11.08.06
Burgersdorp Gazette	£3.15.00
H.C. Flemmer Funeral Exp.	£10.00.09
	£172.00.09
Proceeds:	
Movable property	£115.00.00
Book Debts Collected	£50.06.00
	£165.06.00
Amount paid in by H.C. Flemmer to cover	
Deficiency in estate:	£6.14.09
	£172.00.09

Ruigtevlei Divison of Cradock, July 1870 Signed: C.L. Flemmer Executor
Scanlen Gilfillan Attorneys

10.9.1869	Promissory Note	Hans Michael Naested	£89.04.09
1.10.1869	Promissory Note	E. Gilfillan	£53.04.00

Received from Executor Dative sum of Ten Pounds being funeral expenses
Of the Late C.A. Flemmer M.D.

Advanced by me Cradock £5.7.1870 Hans Flemmer

Also £3.15.00 subscription Burghersdorp Gazette Ruigtevlei

27.06.1870

Signed: Hans Flemmer

Among the assets were 20 head of cattle, sold for 50/- each and 3 old horses that went for 30/-, along with old furniture and crockery. There is also a list of creditors ranging from 2/- to 7 pounds 10/-, presumably patients who had not settled their accounts.

So the long journey from Denmark had ended, albeit somewhat prematurely. Although the Doctor did not die a wealthy man in the financial sense, he had given his family the chance of a new life in a growing Colony where prospects were improving, and where opportunities for those with courage and skill abounded.

Christian August Flemmer was buried in the graveyard of St. Peter's Anglican Church in Cradock. The grave number is 48 and his tombstone fittingly a combination of English and Danish:-

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
CHRISTIAN AUGUST FLEMMER
BORN DENMARK 9TH MARCH 1813
DIED IN THE DISTRICT OF CRADOCK
ON THE 11TH JANUARY 1870
LAER MIG, O SKOV AT VISNE GLAD
SOM SENT I HOEST DIT GULE BLAD
ET BEDRE FORAAR KOMMER!
DER GROENT MIT TRAE SKAL HERLIG STAA
OG SINE DYBE ROEDDER SLAA
I EVIGHEDENS SOMMER

We are indebted to Otto Broholm, our distant Danish relative for both the translation and the source of this verse. It is the first of four verses of an old hymn, sometimes still used today at funeral services. It was written by Danish poet and author Adam Oehlenschlaeger 1779-1850. Translated it reads-

TEACH ME, OH FOREST, TO WITHER AWAY HAPPILY
AS LATE IN AUTUMN DO YOUR YELLOW LEAVES
A BETTER SPRING IS TO COME!
WHERE MY TREE WILL BE STANDING GREEN AND LOVELY
AND WITH IT'S DEEP ROOTS GROWING
INTO ETERNITY'S SUMMER



St Peter's Church, Cradock

His wife, Betty lived on another 26 years, dying on 19 September 1896 at the home of her son-in-law and cousin Hans Michael Naested in Cradock. She was 78 years old and the local newspaper records that she was one of the town's oldest inhabitants, and *"was greatly esteemed and respected by a large circle of friends and relatives."*

This then brings to an end the narrative about the 'Danish Flemmers'. Although most of their children were born in Denmark they became to all intents and purposes, South African, although of course that term did not exist until much later. The sections that will follow attempt to trace the families of the children of Christian August Flemmer and Betty Camilla Augusta Abo. Although my grandfather, Marius Toger Flemmer, son of Hans Christian, died when I was quite young I can clearly remember him. There was no doubt that although much to his regret he had never visited Denmark, he was a Dane and proud of it.

Steve Herbert Kalk Bay June 2000