

11 Warborough Ave.,  
Epsom,  
AUCKLAND 3,  
NEW ZEALAND.

4th. July. 1984.

Dear Mildred, Bill and Randy,

I thought you might like to hear a little bit of Uncle Hans and my father Peter Olesen's adventures before they came to the Colonies. Bill, you mentioned in your letter that your grandfather Christian remembered the Germans marching into their part of Denmark. Yes, that was why they left home. When they came to a certain age, it was compulsory to join the German Army. They had no intention of doing that if they could help it. Their father had a friend, a sea captain, who offered to get them out of the country: they had to go by night across fields to the sea port where his ship was.

The Germans hounded them all round Europe. On one voyage, ( Penang sticks in my mind ) they lost their Captain. He died, and they had to wait at that port until another Captain was sent out from London. They were at the port so long that barnacles etc. grew on the ship, so that she took twice as long to get home again, and was posted " Missing at Lloyd's." That must have been sad for their parents if they knew.

When they were in London looking for a ship to the Colonies, there was a crowd of fellows all wanting to go to the Colonies. When their names were called, the other fellows grabbed one and let the other go. That was how they became separated, — Uncle Hans got the ship to Australia, and deserted ship at Adelaide. I presume my father got the ship to New Zealand, and deserted at Port Chalmers in the South Island, and walked to Dunedin. It was hard to get work, as people were not allowed to employ deserters. However, he got a bit of seasonal work, harvesting in the Summer, and felling firewood in the Winter. He then worked his way on a sailing ship from Dunedin to Te Kopuru, up North, and worked in a timber saw mill there, before coming to Auckland, where he worked on Dr. Logan Campbell's One Tree Hill Estate. On my father's Naturalisation Papers, he is termed a Farmer.

After Auntie Ane and Uncle Andy came out, my father bought the little shop, but he was never in it. He bought the Greenfeed part of Dr. Campbell business from Mr. Hall, the manager. Auntie Ane and my mother looked after the shop. Uncle Hans worked for the Railways Work Shop in Adelaide. He had an accident, — a splinter of steel flew into his eye, and he lost the sight of one eye. He was a dear old man: I stayed with him and Tilde who was looking after him, when I was over there in 1924. I also stayed with Harry and Catherine.

Uncle Christian had two sisters married and living in U.S.A I think. I can remember writing to one in Minnesota, but do not remember her name. Do you know any of their families?

My father was delighted when after the 1914-1918 war, the people of Slesvig-Holstein voted to go back to Denmark. He lost customers at the time of the First World War because he came from Slesvig-Holstein, but he was no German, and had no time for them.

My father's friends were mostly Danish when I was very young — Larsen, Hansen, Paulsen, Mikkelsen, Hendricksen, Rostgaard, Fredriksen, Hans and Adolf Rostgaard. Adolf Rostgaard married my mother's cousin, Elisabeth Higgins, who also came from Sligo, Northern Ireland. The name Olesen over the shop, and the door always open, attracted the Danes.

Please thank Randy for the Danish Flag post-card. We always had two small flags up in the old home, one in my father's bedroom, and the other one in the sitting room. These were just a little bit bigger than the post-card,

and were made of red and white satin ribbon, and were on little flag stands. I was really pleased to receive it.

Auntie Ane told me that she and her sister were sent out to break a hole in the ice in the Winter, to catch an eel for the men's dinner, — but they didn't get any.

I am enclosing some photos you might be interested in. To begin with, the little store on the corner of Ranfurly Rd., taken before I was born. Archie would be about four years old. "Old Ned" (Edward Fredricksen) was an old sailor mate of my father's. He stuck to my father right through until he died at Ranfurly Rd. He did not speak very good English. We were quite a household there too; everyone who worked for my mother and father lived in, in those days. Old Ned milked the cow, groomed the horses, worked with my father on the greenfeed round, and did the garden. The man who worked in the shop, and the girl who helped my mother, and our family of four, mother father and four children, and nearly always a relation from Ireland, or a Danish friend, — one big, happy family. Several of the different ones were married from our old home in Ranfurly Rd.

1920's. The photo of my mother and father would be taken in the late 1920's. The one of Archie and his father ~~were~~ taken walking up Queen Street in the pit of Auckland would be when my father was well in his eighties; he was 90 when he died. Arch and Cis were taken in their back garden in 1965. The one of me was supposed to be taken to show my rose bed, but I was lucky to get in at all. It is a good photo of my front fence! Ian and Petrine, with Stuart, were taken at Surfers' Paradise, Queensland, when Stuart was working in Brisbane. They went over to Australia to see him. There is one of their home, with Stuart's brand new motor-bike, which he had two days, and then it was stolen.

A young, very kind friend of mine, Thelma McCarthy, who was married in 1943, and came from Wanganui to Auckland to live, visited us regularly, and my father used to call her his "little ray of sunshine." She now visits me in my old age.

( May I add that May has always been someone very special, to me. When I came up here, and knew very few people, she was kindness itself to me. I'm sure she doesn't realise just how much I appreciated her friendship in those days, and how I used to love coming over to see her. Her father was such a dear, and we were very good friends. I remember Auntie Ane, too. These old folk were very special, and I was fortunate to spend many happy hours over here, — memories that I'll always treasure. May is still the gracious lady she always was, and I still feel it a privilege to be a friend of hers. ————— End of quote! )

This letter is much longer than it was intended to be, and I hope it is not too much, all at once. It was so nice to hear from you, and I'm sorry I have taken so long to reply, but thought you would like to hear the history of my father and Uncle Hans, and receive the photos. I'll be looking forward to hearing from you again. I hope you are all well.

With love from

May Mumford nee Olsen



After the Prussian invasion of Danmark (Denmark) in 1864, most of Peder Olesen and Bothilde Marie (nee Hansen) 's children left the parish of Skast before being conscripted into the Prussian (German) army. Of those who escaped, eventually all immigrated to Australia, New Zealand or America. Peder and Bothilde are buried in Skast along with their daughter Bothilde Marie Olesen and her husband Karl Karlsen (Swedish). Also buried there are five great children.

Bothilde Marie Hansen was born just north of Skast at Mjolden. Peder had come from the Bork area just north of Esbjerg.

Christian Lassen Olesen with his wife Jorgine (Mortensen) and children went to the United States of America in 1890. First they went to Iowa (like all good Danes) then to Oregon about 1900. He was a tailor in Denmark and Iowa, but bought an orchard in Oregon.

Hans and Peter left in 1879, stood together in 'line' in London. One was sent to Australia and one to New Zealand. Peter arrived at Port Chalmers, worked his way up through the South Island doing odd jobs and seasonal work. He settled in Epsom, Auckland where he worked as a farmer at One Tree Hill Farm which was owned by Logan Campbell. Several years later, Peter sent for Ane and

Anders. They left at night for England, thence to N.Z. on the S.S. Triumph arriving 26.11.1883 as assisted immigrants.

The Shipping list notes: Andrew Olesen 17 years, Male, Germany.  
Cost 15 pds. 5 + 10 A.Olesen

Annie Olesen 20 years, Female, Germany.  
Paid 15 B.P.Olesen.

The S.S.Triumph sailed 26. 09.1883 and  
arrived Auckland 26.11.1883.