

## FOREWORD

In his book *Foe* the great South African author J.M. Coetzee alludes to the writer of a biography bringing the dead back to life. This idea has fascinated me ever since I read the book. When researching the story of the Flemmers in South Africa I realised that it was what I, in an amateurish way was attempting. I was trying in a sense to bring them back to life – what were they like, what were the times they lived in like. If only photographs could speak! What was there in these Flemmer ancestors of ours that continues in all of us today?

Originally I intended that this book was going to cover the Danish children and their descendants up until about 1914 but this proved to be impractical. Instead you will find that the early generations are dealt with in detail while more recent descendants are recorded with briefer entries. An enormous effort has gone into trying to make sure the facts are accurate but inevitably there will be mistakes for which I apologise in advance.

Some of the information has come from archives and newspapers. Much has come from the many people I would like to thank for telling me old family stories. I have included some of these stories and in some cases my own interpretation of them. It seems quite likely that different people have different versions of the same family story. Where there is no information about a branch of the family it's because despite our best efforts it wasn't available. Lastly, we have included family trees – a vast collection of information which again we have been at pains to verify as far as possible. By the very nature of a large family, the tree will change almost day by day.

I hope you enjoy reading this book as much as I have enjoyed putting it together. I have met wonderful people who have helped enormously. In particular the end result would not have been possible without the help and encouragement of Fay Lea, who has done so much to preserve photos and documents and collate family trees. My brother Terry has been invaluable in proofing and checking the final draft. My wife Judy has been patience itself over the last 10 years of Flemmer research and writing, and it's much appreciated.

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