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Theodore
(1857–1917)

Family notes



Born in Skallebolle, Denmark,
Theodore emigrated to Australia
via Melbourne in 1883.
He married Josephine Harrison in 1887
and settled in the goldmining town
of Chiltern. They had 10 children.
In Chiltern he worked as a well-borer
and was also part of a tug-of-war team.



Theodore

Life of

Carl Bernhardt Theodor Berthelsen / Theodore Bernard

1857-1917

and his

family, descendants and ancestors

Family notes

Stig Yding Sørensen

2026 v. 1 PDF
Ørbæk

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Dear reader

This is a collection of family notes for Carl Bernhardt Theodor Berthelsen (*17.1.-1857 – †21.11.1917), also known in Australia as Theodore Bernard. Theodor was born in Denmark and emigrated to Australia in 1883. This is his story.

My interest in Carl Bernhardt Theodor Berthelsen (Theodore) arose from my book[1] about his nephew's, Niels Berthelsen, immigration to Canada in 1928.

Niels, named after his grandfather, married and started a family in Canada, with whom we in Denmark still have strong ties. Niels Berthelsen's father was the youngest brother of Theodore: Pastor Jørgen Christian Berthelsen.

Theodore's parents were Niels Berthelsen and Maren Dorthea Rasmussen in Skallebølle in Denmark. They are also the great-great-grandparents of my wife, Lone Folmer Berthelsen. In a simple genealogical sense, she has inherited about 1/16 of her DNA from each of them. Together, they account for about 12.5% of her ancestry.

Jørgen Christian was only about ten or eleven years old when Theodore left Denmark and, so far as we know, Theodore never returned to visit. We also do not know whether he remained in contact with his siblings in Denmark or the United States during his life, as no letters or other evidence of such contact have been found.

Lone Folmer Berthelsen and I, Stig Yding Sørensen, visited Australia in January – March 2026 which motivated me to do some research in the descendants of Theodore. What happened to him? Could we find relatives alive? Did anyone have photos or letters from back in time?

The notes build on research I and Birthe Folmer Berthelsen, Lone's mother, have made in Danish and Australian archives, and I have also had kind help from Maureen Everitt & Viv Burnett at the Chiltern Athenaeum Museum in Chiltern, Victoria. They connected me to Christine Serre, a granddaughter of Theodore. Christine Serre has provided invaluable help with pictures and family history. In Denmark Jytte Grevsen at the local archives in Vissenbjerg has helped with more pictures and details of the family in Skallebølle. Timothy Carroll (USA), descendant of H.P. Berthelsen, mailed photos. Many thanks to both Maureen, Viv, Jytte, Birthe, Timothy and Christine. However, any mistakes in the notes lie solely with me.

There will inevitably be some mistakes, loose ends and open questions. In the book hundreds of individuals and hundreds of geographical locations are mentioned. Information is never complete, and much is lost or forgotten forever; even the things we believe we know, or have documented, may contain errors or gaps. I have tried to gather as much material as possible for

[1] Sørensen, Stig Yding "Berthelsen, Bonke and de Coninck Smith - Family Notes" (2022) can be bought as print on demand at https://www.blurb.com/b/11312885-family-notes

these notes on Theodore, his ancestry and descendants. Further information may come to light in future and allow the notes to be revised or made more complete.

My aim has been to focus on the story. At times this means making an informed judgement, often with the help of AI, to connect scattered pieces of evidence. Where that is the case, I will say so. I have, for example, restored and coloured many of the photographs in these notes using AI tools, as the coloured images help bring the people in the story a little closer to us. Other passages have also been produced with the assistance of AI based on written sources, such as the section on Chiltern, which draws on material and news articles I received from the Chiltern Athenaeum.

As a guide to your reading, I first follow Theodore's life from 1857 to 1917. Then I trace his descendants as far as possible and finally I follow his ancestors – his roots –back in time to around 1600s. Throughout the book I refer to Carl Bernhardt Theodor Berthelsen as Theodore, since that was the name, he chose or was called, upon arrival in Australia. And in his childhood home he might have been called just "Theodor".

Two of Theodores brothers, Hans Peter and Jørgen Christian, have their own portraits as annex 1 and 2 in the family notes since I found new information on them as well.

Wishing all a happy reading

Stig Yding Sørensen
Ørbæk, 2026

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Theodore in Denmark

Theodore came from a large and deeply rooted family from the island of Funen in Denmark, a family shaped by rural life, education, faith, hardship, and, eventually, emigration across the world.

Theodore's Danish world

Between 1857 and 1883, Denmark[2] was changing from a traditional rural society into a more modern and outward-looking country.



Odense about 1860. Theodore grew up in the village Skallebølle not far from Odense. Odense is well-known for being the birthplace of the Danish writer H.C. Andersen and it is also the largest town on the island of Funen. In 1860s, about 14.000 people lived here. With permission from Odense Bys Museer.

[2] Text on Theodore's Danish world were created with the help of AI and edited by Stig Yding Sørensen.

Between Theodore's birth in 1857 and his departure from Denmark in 1883, Denmark was still mainly a rural country. Most people lived on farms, in villages or small towns. Farming shaped much of everyday life. On Fyn (or Funen), the landscape was made up of farms, fields, hedges, parish churches, manor estates and local roads.

Denmark had become a constitutional monarchy in 1849. The new constitution gave more political rights than before, but influence was still unevenly distributed. In the countryside, landowners, officials, clergy and schoolteachers remained important local figures. For most people, daily life was shaped less by national politics than by work, family, parish and social position.



1864. We do not know which scenes took place in Skallebølle during the 1864 war, but the retreating and wounded soldiers from the Danish army probably passed through Skallebølle on the central road from west to east on Funen. The painting above is generated by AI and illustrates the scene in front of Skallebølle School as it might have been.

The war of 1864 was the major event in Denmark during Theodore's childhood[3]. Denmark lost Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenburg after defeat by Prussia and Austria. The 1864 war was also felt in Skallebølle and Vissenbjerg Parish, even though no actual battles took place in the area. Young men from Vissenbjerg were drafted and lost their lives at the front. Located on the main road between Odense and Middelfart, Skallebølle and Vissenbjerg must have seen the lines of retreating Danish soldiers. Local farms and inns were forced to house and feed them, straining local resources. After the fall of Dybbøl and Als, locals must have used Vissenbjerg high vantage points to anxiously watch the west, fearing Prussian troops would cross the Little Belt and invade Funen. The military requisitioned local horses, wagons, and supplies. Meanwhile, farms suffered from a labor shortage because the young men were away fighting. All this must have made an impression on the 7-year-old Theodore.

In the following years, the country turned much of its attention to *internal* development: agriculture, education, language, local associations and national culture. The call was "What is lost externally must be won internally"[4]. Funen was fertile and densely settled, but land was limited. Farms were usually passed on to one heir, often the eldest son. Younger children had to find other work as servants, apprentices, craftsmen, labourers, teachers or farmhands. Some moved to towns, and some left Denmark.

Theodore did not inherit a farm. His father Niels was a landless schoolteacher. The family had respectability and some education but not land and no money. Theodore's uncle, Hans, was a tenant at Torupdal (or Thorupdal), and Theodore lived there for a period after finishing school. He knew farm life, but it was not necessarily his future.

At the same time, Denmark was changing economically. Farming became more efficient and more market oriented. Cooperative dairies and other rural enterprises began to appear. These changes created new forms of work, but they did not remove the pressure on young people without land. Population growth made competition for jobs and places stronger.

The railway across Funen opened in 1865, and Bred station was a short walk from Skallebølle. Steamships made longer journeys more regular, and the telegraph improved communication. Emigration became easier to organise[5] than it had been for earlier generations.

[3] Theodores sons and grandsons later fought in WW1 and WW2.

[4] The quote originally stems from the poet H.P. Holst and became particularly well-known as a national motto following Denmark's defeat in 1864, when large land areas were lost. The expression referred to the idea that as the nation shrank geographically, it had to instead strengthen the country from within through, for example, the cultivation of the heath, industrial development, education, and a focus on close family life.

[5] Hamburg in Germany was a major port for emigration. Today, the former emigration station in the Port of Hamburg, Germany, BallinStadt is a very interesting memorial park and museum. From the 1850s to the early 1930s the ground's emigration halls were last homestead for some five million emigrants from various parts of Europe, waiting for their departure to the Americas and other destinations.



Niels Berthelsen's childhood home. Aerial view of Torupdal in the 1870s. It is recreated by AI from an aerial photo of the farm from 1948[6]. The main house is from 1760. Niels' parents Bertel Jørgensen[7] (*1782-†1853) and Ane Jørgensdatter (*1791-†1864) lived here with their 11 children. Bertel succeeded his parents on the farm (Jørgen Berthelsen (*1744-†1805) and Else Pedersdatter (*1754-†1836). After Bertel Jørgensen his son, Niels younger brother, Hans Berthelsen (*1826-†1926) and Anne Nielsdatter (*1826-†1902). They had no children and were able to help Niels Berthelsens children when Niels died in 1876.

[6] The aerial photo from 1948 can be found at https://www.kb.dk/danmarksetfraluften/images/luftfo/2011/maj/luftfoto/object75359

[7] Bertel was the third child of his father's, Jørgen Berthelsen (*1744-†1805) second marriage. His father's first wife, Kirsten Jørgensdatter, had died shortly after giving birth to their first child, who also lived for less than a year. In 1777, his father married Else Pedersdatter (*1754-†1836), Bertel's mother. In this second marriage, they had another ten children between 1777 and 1798. Sadly, only four of them survived into adulthood, and Bertel was the only boy who lived to grow up. See p. 30, https://annefrederiksen.dk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Slaegtsbog6Far.pdf



“Die Dorfschule von 1848” by Albert Anker (1831-1910) is a German painting of a village school in 1848 and today it can be admired at Kunstmuseum Basel in Switzerland. Found at Wikipedia, creative commons.

Niels Berthelsen’s classroom was very likely much like this painting at the time when Theodore grew up. Children’s behaviour not unlike today. Note the stick in the teacher’s hand. Until 1967, it was not only legal but considered a standard pedagogical tool in the Danish school system to discipline children physically. When mandatory schooling was introduced in Denmark in 1814, the law explicitly stated that teachers had the right to discipline children using "moderate physical punishment.". The "Spanskrør" (The Rattan Cane) is the most iconic symbol of that era. Teachers often used a thin, flexible cane to hit students on the hands or the backside.

Village life remained important, but new ideas also spread through schools, churches, newspapers, associations and folk high schools. The Danish school reform (The School Acts of 1814) established a unified mass schooling system in Denmark. It mandated 7 years of compulsory education for all children (starting at age 7), introduced standardized subjects like reading and math, and required schools to be built in every parish. N.F.S. Grundtvig influenced education and Danish cultural life, and Hans Christian Andersen from Odense was already known internationally.

By 1883, Theodore left a Denmark that was still rural, but increasingly connected by railways, steamships, schools, associations and migration routes.

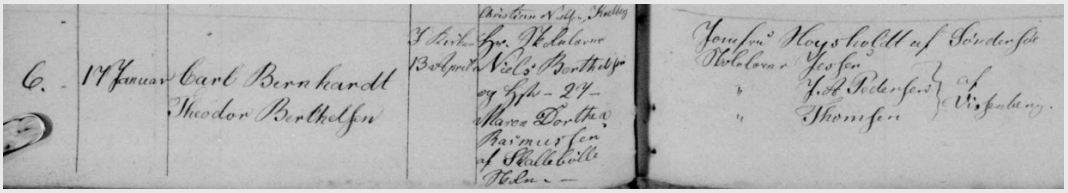
Many Danes left for the United States and Canada, where land was available and Danish communities already existed. Others chose more distant destinations like Argentina or Australia.

Between 1850 and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, approximately 300,000 Danes emigrated to other countries, which is about 10% of the population. In Norway 39% left. Most of this emigration (over 90%) was directed toward the United States, drawn by cheap or free farmland and new economic opportunities. In The United States they headed especially towards the Midwest, including states like Iowa, Wisconsin, and Nebraska. Emigration peaked during the 1880s and 1890s. It was primarily driven by young, landless farmhands and maids from rural districts, as well as unskilled labourers from the cities looking for a better life across the Atlantic.

We do not know the motivation behind Theodore's decision to leave Denmark, nor why he chose Australia.

Theodores childhood at Funen, 1857 - 1871

Theodore was born Carl Bernhardt Theodor Berthelsen in on 17 January 1857 in Skallebølle as number five in a line of the 12 children of Niels Berthelsen (*1823- †1876) and Maren Dorthea Rasmussen (*1830- †1910).



Screenshot from the Church book[8] at Vissenbjerg Church. The entry tells us that Carl Bernhardt Theodor Berthelsen was born January 17, 1857 and baptised in Vissenbjerg Church on 13 April 1857. His parents were Mr. schoolteacher Niels Berthelsen and wife – 27 (years old) Maren Dorthea Rasmussen from Skallebølle.

The witnesses in the church were maiden Hoysholdt of Søndersø, and three schoolteachers from Vissenbjerg Parish (Jensen, F.A. Pedersen and Thomsen) (Not an easy read) – they were probably colleagues of Niels. Thomsen might have been Christian Thomsen teacher in nearby Skalbjerg. Christian and Niels both became teachers in 1853 – and Christians son Chr. Gotfred Thomsen became teacher in Skallebølle after Niels[9].

Though Theodore's later life would unfold on the far side of the globe in Australia, his story began in the gentle countryside of Funen.

Theodor's father, Niels Berthelsen, had been born on 18 October 1823 at Torupdal in Torup, Sandager Parish, western Funen, near Assens as number 6 of 11 children. The family background on the paternal side was that of tenant farmers and smallholders. Niels's father, Bertel Jørgensen (*1782-†1853), had been a tenant at Torupdal[10] under the manor of Wedellsborg[11], and his mother was Ane Jørgensdatter (*1791-†1864).

[8] https://www.danishfamilysearch.dk/sogn868/churchbook/source137882/opslag15031437
[9] https://www.ronlev.dk/bibliotek/2093.pdf
[10] Adress today is Middelfartvej 104, Torup in Sandager Parish. The main house is from 1760.
[11] Wedellsborg, located near Ejby on West Funen, is Funen's largest estate and has a history dating back to the 13th century. Originally named Iversnæs (and before that Husbygaard), it was renamed in 1672 when Wilhelm Friedrich von Wedel acquired it and established the county. The estate is known for its scenic location on a peninsula in the Little Belt and its extensive, historic agricultural and forestry operations.



Current map of Denmark. Funen is the Island in the middle of Denmark. The biggest town is Odense, and Skallebølle is a tiny village just west of Odense. Torupdal north of Sandager and Assens and Gudbjerg between Ørbæk and Svendborg.

In his family Niels was child number 6 out of 10 children. Niels and his younger brother were the first to get a silent "h" in Berthelsen. The family's social world was agricultural, traditional, and local – just like at least 80 percent of the Danish population at the time. Yet Niels was part of a small social advance within Danish rural society: instead of remaining on the land as a tenant farmer like his forebears[12], he became a schoolteacher. In a nineteenth-century village, that mattered.

[12] Some of his forebears at the paternal side had the name Degn – which means teacher – in their name. So perhaps not everybody where farmers, but we have no further documentation for this.



How Skallebølle School might have looked in 1874. AI drawing based on the air photo of the school. Usually, the school would also be the home of the teacher and his family. They lived in one end, and there would also be a bit of land to support the teacher.

In the countryside, where 80 percent of the Danish population lived, the three great local authorities (outside the nobility and big landowners) were often the trinity of the doctor, the pastor and the teacher. To become one of them was to move upward socially, intellectually, and morally in the eyes of the parish. In the mid-1800s, Danish society shifted from an absolute monarchy to a modern class society. Society was still clearly stratified by status and social class, even though the 1849 Constitution abolished absolute monarchy. The differences were distinct, and people primarily socialized and married within their own class:

- At the top tier was still the old, landed nobility – and in mid-1800s Denmark, Lutheran pastors (*præster*) were powerful civil servants. They controlled local education, kept parish registers, and held immense moral and social authority over the community.
- Just below a new middle class (the bourgeoisie) of merchants, civil servants, and academics (including teachers) emerged.
- Below them the peasants with own land who were previously suppressed, semi-feudal class of tenants, but in the mid-19th-century the peasants became increasingly self-aware and politically active.



Skallebølle School arial photo (from before 1940?) The building on the photo is from 1900 and has replaced the original school where Niels was a teacher and Theodore grew up. The landscape behind the typical curved landscape with fields on Funen. The school building still stands at Kelstrupvej 73 in Skallebølle, though difficult to recognise. Skallebølle has grown since and a new, modern school has been built across the road.

- And, finally, at the bottom there was still a large underclass of landless labourers and farmhands.

Theodore's ancestors were represented in the three bottom layers. As the population exploded and industrialization gained traction, many surplus agrarian workers were forced into towns like Copenhagen, forming a new, wage-dependent working class or as Theodore and most of his siblings later did: Immigration to the new world. The boundaries between these groups were generally fluid, allowing for some upward and downward social mobility as the nation modernized.

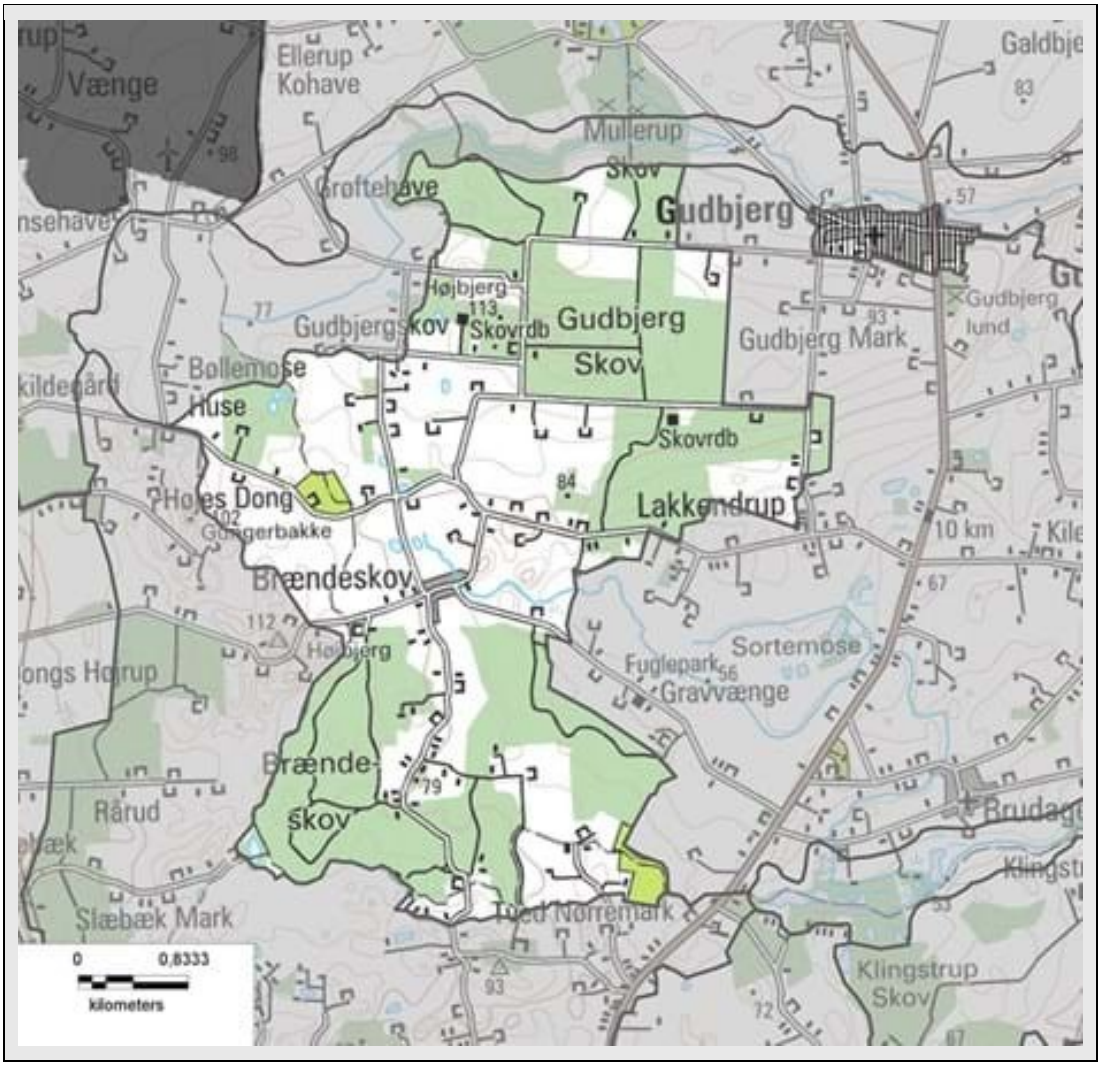


Gudbjerg Church where Niels and Maren were married on 10 October 1849. The church stands on a small hill in the middle of the village. Its oldest Romanesque parts date from the early 1100s and were built of granite ashlar on a high, profiled double plinth. This dating is supported by the discovery of a consecration cross on the church's north wall during whitewashing. The chancel and nave are the oldest sections. On the north side there is a small high-set Romanesque window, which may once have been above the women's entrance. It is also possible that an earlier wooden church stood beneath the present nave. In the early 12th century, the church likely consisted of one large open space, with the baptismal font placed centrally.

During the late Middle Ages, the church was rebuilt and enlarged. It was extended eastward using Romanesque curved-cut ashlar stones, and the interior was raised with eight-part late Gothic rib vaults resting on low chamfered piers. At the same time, a porch was added on the south side and a tower on the west, both built of fieldstones. By the time of the Reformation in 1536, the church probably had much the same appearance it has today, with a pulpit and pews.

Like Gudme Church, the vaults are decorated with wall paintings from the workshop of the so-called "Wooden Shoe Painter." These paintings are a type of decorative mason's painting, and this master is known to have decorated around 20 churches in eastern Funen. His symbol was a wooden shoe. The paintings date from about 1470–1500, a dating supported by the paintings in Gudme Church from 1488. In Gudbjerg Church, the decorations include the wooden shoe, several rosettes, a consecration cross, two faces known as "Picasso heads," a coat of arms with a dog, and painted decoration around various ventilation holes. Photo by Stig Yding Sørensen.

The map of Gudbjerg, Brændeskov and Gudbjerg Skov. Rasmus Rasmussen and Karen Andreasdatter lived in Gudbjerg Skov, and they too were married in Gudbjerg church on 10. November 1827 22 years before their daughter Maren Dorthea and Niels. The Census just mentions Gudbjerg Skov as the location of their farm.



Theodore's mother, Maren Dorthea Rasmussen, was born on 15 April 1830 in Gudbjerg Parish on eastern Funen, near Ørbæk. She was the daughter of farmer Rasmus Rasmussen (*1880[13]-†1884) and Karen Andreasdatter (*1805-†1879), who married in Gudbjerg Church on 10. November 1827. Thus, Maren was child number 3 out of 12 children born between 1825 – 1848. Rasmus' father and grandfather were also named Rasmus.

In order words, Theodore came from two rural Funen lines: one from the west of the island, the other from the east.

The family in Australia has recorded that Theodores father, Niels, was a soldier, and he might have been involved in the Danish war with Prussia 1848-1850 or just served as conscript. It is possible, but so far, we have found no documentation for his enrolment in the Danish army or

[13] Some sources say 1797 – church book from Gudbjerg from 1797 is difficult to read.

navy in the archives. Since teachers were exempt from military service, it is most likely that Niels was not a soldier.

The local archives in Vissenbjerg found that Niels Berthelsen graduated as a schoolteacher from Skaarup Seminarium (teachers' school)[14] near Svendborg. Niels passed his examens in 1848 with the assessment "Duelig" — that is, deemed competent or fit for the position.

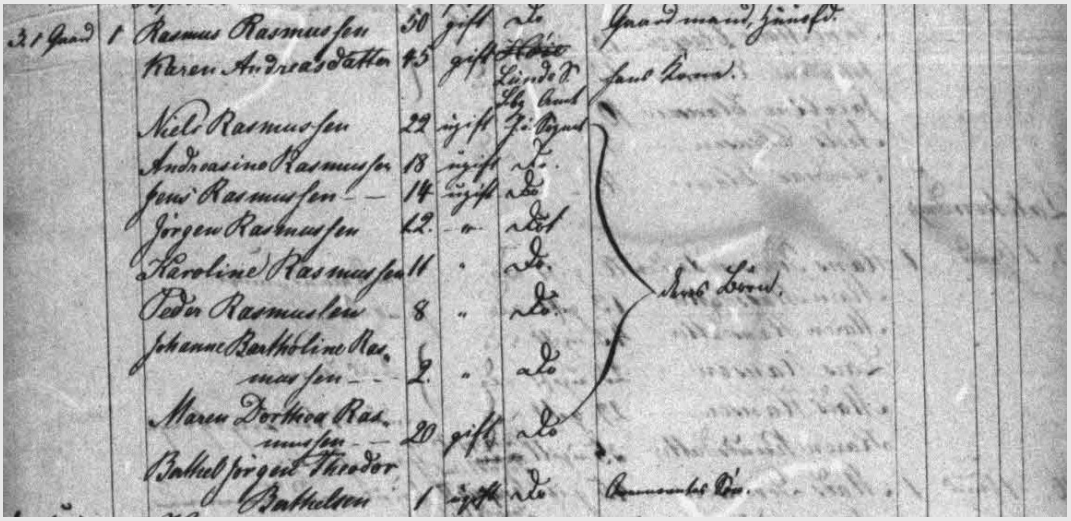
The marriage of Niels and Maren on 10 October 1849 in the church in Gudbjerg united the east and west of Funen, and eventually they became a family of twelve children, many of whom would eventually leave Denmark and scatter across the wider world.

The first children of Niels and Maren were born in Gudbjerg. Maren and Niels did not live together in the early years. Maren lived at her parents' farm in Gudbjerg Skov and Niels lived at the school in Brændeskov just 2-3 kilometres away as an assistant teacher. The separation might have been for both economic and practical reasons – but they did see each other often enough to have their first three children (Berthel, Rasmus and Anne) while Niels finished his time as an assistant teacher.



Brændeskov School in year 1900[15]. Niels Berthelsen worked here as assistant teacher in his early years as teacher 1848-1853. The school was established in 1830.

[14] See p.37 in "SKAARUP SEMINARIUM 1803—1903", www.ronlev.dk/bibliotek/2550.pdf
[15] https://www.svendborghistorie.dk/historier/skoler/308-braendeskov-skoles



Screenshot from the census[16] in Gudbjerg 1850. The farmer, Rasmus Rasmussen (50) lives here with his wife Karen Andreasdatter (45). Traditionally the last name comes from the father, so Rasmussen means Son of Rasmus, and Andreasdatter means Daughter of Andreas. Most of Rasmus and Karens children were still living at home: Niels (22), Andreasine (18), Jens (14), Jørgen (12) Karoline (11), Peder (8) and Johanne Bartholine (2) – and then Maren Dorthea (20) (Niels Berthelsen's wife) and their first borne son Berthel Jørgen Theodor Berthelsen (1) who died already in 1856.

Rasmus and Karen had 12 children themselves, so six of them were not living at the farm in 1850 – and at least one of them had died nine years before (Peder 1841-1841).

The family finally settled between east and west in the centre of Funen. They moved to the newly built Skallebølle School in Vissenbjerg Parish, where Niels served as the school's first teacher from 29. November 1853 until his death 23 years later. Up until then the other schools in Vissenbjerg Parish were too crowded.

Like many Danish village schools of the time, the school was also the teacher's residence. As part of their pay, first teachers and sole teachers were entitled to a residence[17] and fuel for their own use which meant six cords of beech firewood annually, or as much of another kind of fuel as the school directorate considered to be of equal fuel value. In 1902 the school building was described by the then teacher, Poul Christian Ejlersen[18], as built of masonry in 1853; but in 1875 three bays were added to the western end, so it must now be said that this is a good dwelling. The rooms are only small, but there are five rooms downstairs and three upstairs. The garden

[16] See http://salldata.dk/ Folketællinger in Gudbjerg, 1850, page 91

[17] In accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance of 29 July 1814 for rural districts, § 52; the Law of 8 March 1856, § 2; and the Law of 24 March 1899, § 21, subsections 7 and 8, cf. § 22, subsection 2. Note found in the school archives for Skallebølle School in Vissenbjerg written in 1902.

[18] Ejlersen was teacher after Christian Gotfred Thomsen, from 1902 to 1937.

and building plot amount to about four *skæpper*[19] of land, and the present teacher (in 1902) has planted several fruit trees. For about ten years (in 1902), 150 kroner has been paid for fuel for the school and for the teacher's own use; before that time, 54,000 peat bricks were supplied here by the inhabitants.

The private domestic quarters in the school building for the teacher's family were modest. Accounts describe the homes as cramped and damp, even though the landscape around it was beautiful: the softly rolling countryside of Funen, with fields, hedgerows, and cultivated land stretching behind the school. Niels Berthelsen's home with the many children has not been any different.

In 1853, the school had two classes. Boys and girls were taught together, so there was a class for the youngest children and a class for the older children. They did not attend at the same time, as Niels was the only teacher. A few children attended other schools. The schoolmaster kept a continuous school diary, which records any absences for each student. From this, it is evident that most of Niels and Maren Dorthea's children attended Niels's school, though I have not found records for all of them. For instance, I found no records for Theodore, so he may have attended a school other than his father's in Skallebølle. We simply do not know.

In mid-nineteenth-century Funen[20], the rural schoolteacher occupied a modest but important position between the church, the parish and the local community. Teaching was only one part of the job. The teacher was often expected to assist with church duties, keep records, support local administration and maintain the school's small plot of land.

The teacher's income was rarely a fixed salary in the modern sense. It was usually made up of several small elements: cash payments, housing, firewood, grain, fees from families and the use of school land. In 1902 in the school diary Niels' successor, teacher Ejlersen, has left the calculation of his salary for 1902: The teacher's official annual salary was entered as 1,000 Danish kroner. Against this amount a fixed deduction was made for benefits and local income attached to the post: 70 kroner for the land allotment, 100 kroner for fodder or forage, and 380 kroner for holiday offerings and incidental income. The total deduction therefore came to 551 kroner. Subtracted from the nominal salary, this left 449 kroner, which was rounded on the form to a cash salary of 450 kroner. A salary of 1000 kroners in 1902 would probably equal a yearly salary of 84.000 kroners in 2026 equal to about 18.260 Australian dollars – from which more than half were deducted. That is not much in 2026, it was not in 1902 and it were equally little when Niels Berthelsen was teacher.

This made the livelihood uncertain and difficult to compare from one parish to another. A seemingly good position could be weakened by poor land, irregular payments or heavy additional duties.

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[19] 1 skæppe is a measure of area and equals 0,17 acres or 690 m^2

[20] See "Beskrivelse over Skolelærer-Embederne i Fyens Stift saavel i Kjøbstæderne som paa Landet". In Danish and with gothic print, but AI will read it for you. https://www.kb.dk/e-mat/dod/130022884035-color.pdf

Many teachers therefore lived under restrained economic conditions, and with all the children that was also true for Niels and Maren Dorthea. Their household depended not only on his skill as educators, but also on local customs, parish support and the practical value of the resources attached to the school. In this sense, the Funen village teacher was both a public servant and a smallholder, both a cultural figure and a man exposed to the ordinary hardships of rural life.

It was in this setting that Theodore spent his childhood.



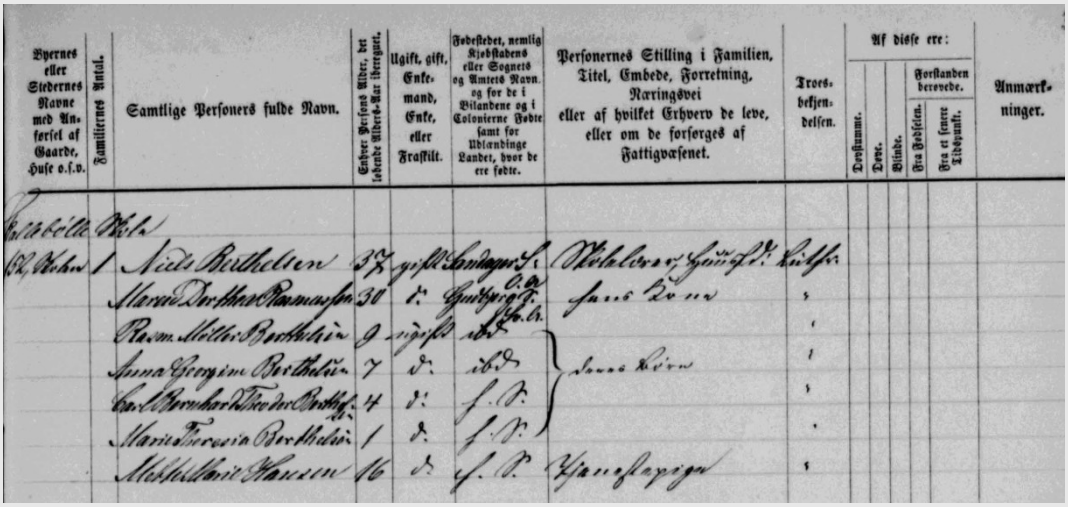
View of Vissenbjerg towards Fuglevej Mill. Skallebølle is part of Vissenbjerg Parish. In a book on Vissenbjerg[21] it is mentioned, that "*A first teacher at the new school in Skallebølle was Niels Berthelsen, previously assistant teacher at Brændeskov School, who received his appointment on 29 November 1853. He was born in Sandager in 1823, and his wife's name was Maren Dorthea Rasmussen*". Source: Historiske Oplysninger om Vissenbjerg Sogn og Birk af F. Hjort. (https://www.ronlev.dk/bibliotek/2093.pdf)

Several of Theodores siblings would leave Denmark for the United States or Sweden, but he was the only one who chose Australia:

The eldest child, Bertel Jørgen Theodor Berthelsen, born in 1849, died young in 1856. Rasmus Møller Berthelsen, born in 1851, later settled in Sweden. Anne Georgine Berthelsen, born in 1853, remained in Denmark and later lived in Odense. Juliane Maria Theresa, born in 1855, also died young. Theodore, born in 1857 and christened Carl Bernhardt Theodor. After him came Maria Therese, who went to the United States and largely disappears from the record; **Johannes**

[21] https://slaegtsbibliotek.dk/807100.pdf

Frederik, who likely became John Frederick in America; Johanne Emilie, who remained in Denmark and trained as a nurse; Elise Cathrine, who emigrated to the United States; Karen Andrea, who also went to America and later returned to Denmark after a long life of service for the Merck family in New York; Hans Peter, who became a pastor in the United States; and finally Jørgen Christian Berthelsen, the youngest, who became a pastor in Denmark.



Gaardes, Husenes o.s.v. Navne	Familiernes Antal.	Samtlige Personers fulde Navn.	Enhver Persons Alder, det sidstleverede Alders-Aar iberegnet.	Ugift, gift, Enkemand, Enke, eller Fraskilt.	Fødestedet, nemlig Kjøbstadens eller Sognets og Amtets Navn, og for de i Bilandene og i Colonierne Fødte samt for Udlandinge Landet, hvor de ere fødte.	Personernes Stilling i Familien, Titel, Embede, Forretning, Næringsvei eller af hvilket Erhverv de leve, eller om de forsørges af Fattigvæsenet.	Troesbekjendelsen.	Af disse ere: Døvstumme.	Døve.	Blinde.	Forstanden berørede. Fra Fødselen.	Forstanden berørede. Fra et senere Tidspunkt.	Anmærkninger.
Skallebölle													
62 Huse	1	Niels Berthelsen	37	gift	Sandager Sg.	Skolelærer og Gaardf.	Luthr.						
		Maren Dorthea Rasmussen	30	g.	Skallebölle	sine Børn	"						
		Rasm. Møller Berthelsen	9	ugift	d.		"						
		Anna Georgine Berthelsen	7	d.	d.	sine Børn	"						
		Carl Bernhardt Theodor Berthelsen	4	d.	d.		"						
		Marie Theresa Berthelsen	1	d.	d.		"						
		Mette Marie Hansen	16	d.	d.	Tjenestepige	"						

The census in Skallebølle 1860[22] counted the family members living at Skallebølle School. Niels Berthelsen (37) and Maren Dorthea Rasmussen (30) his wife, and the children Rasmus Møller Berthelsen, Anna Georgine Berthelsen, Carl Bernhardt Theodor Berthelsen, Marie Theresa Berthelsen and Mette Marie Hansen (probably a maid – handwriting not easy). In 1860 Niels and Dorthea had already lost two children: Bertel Jørgen Theodor Berthelsen who died in 1856 and Juliane Maria Theresa who died in 1858. Not uncommon at that time.

Notice how the names of the dead children are often inherited by the following children – like Theodore, his eldest, dead brother Bertel also had the name Theodor. The names were often reused through generations – a tradition that Theodore and Josephine also followed. First daughter named after the mother (and maybe Josephine's mother?), second daughter after Theodore's sister Marie Therese, third daughter partly after Anne Georgine, next son partly after Hans Peter, and Neil Patrick perhaps after Niels – Theodore's father?

Notice also, that Bernhard in Theodores name is written without a "t", though he was baptised "Bernhardt". Misspellings and variations are not uncommon in census registrations – and seems to have been even worse in USA where the names common in Denmark were difficult to understand and write correctly for the registrar.

[22] https://www.danishfamilysearch.dk/cid8456060



View of Vissenbjerg around 1900 with the old inn, the church and the Mission House. All the children of Niels and Maren, that were born in Skallebølle, were baptised in Vissenbjerg Church. AI restored from ”Historiske Oplysninger om Vissenbjerg Sogn og Birk” F. Hjort. (https://www.ronlev.dk/bibliotek/2093.pdf)

The Children of
Niels Berthelsen and Maren Dorthea Rasmussen

From Gudbjerg and Skallebølle to Denmark, Sweden, America and Australia



Niels Berthelsen

1823–1876

Born at Torupdal, Sandager Parish; schoolteacher at Brændeskov and first teacher at Skallebølle School

and

Maren Dorthea Rasmussen

1830–1910

Born in Gudbjerg Parish, Funen; daughter of Rasmus Rasmussen and Karen Andreasdatter



Married in Gudbjerg Church, 10 October 1849. Parents of twelve children born between 1849 and 1872.

1. Bertel Jørgen Theodor Berthelsen

1849–1856

- Born: Gudbjerg, Funen
- † Died at Torupdal

Note: Eldest child; died young.

2. Rasmus Møller Berthelsen



1851–1908

- Born: Gudbjerg, Funen
- Settled: Helsingborg, Sweden
- Spouse: Johanna Svensson (m. 1893)
- Children: no known children

Note: Clerk, bookkeeper and later merchant.

3. Anna Georgine Berthelsen



1853–1935

- Born: Gudbjerg, Funen
- Settled: Odense, Denmark
- Spouse: Jens Jespersen (m. 1877)
- Children: Niels Marius, Anna Marie, Metha Kirstine, Viggo Christian, Rasmus, Jensine Andrea

Note: Widowed young; seamstress and mother of a large branch.

4. Juliane Maria Theresa Berthelsen

1855–1858

- † Born: Vissenbjerg Parish, Funen
- † Died young

Note: Childhood loss in the family.

5. Carl Bernhardt Theodor Berthelsen / Theodore Bernard



1857–1917

- Born: Skallebølle, Funen
- Settled: Victoria, Australia
- Spouse: Josephine Harrison (m. Williamstown, 1887)
- Children: Josephine Agnes, Mary Theresa, Sarah Anne "Sadie", Peter Theodore, Elizabeth, Neil Patrick "Paddy", Madeleine Cecilia, John Vincent, Francis Robert, unnamed stillborn child

Note: Founder of the Australian branch.

6. Maria Therese Berthelsen



1859–1905

- Born: Skallebølle, Funen
- Settled: New York, USA
- Spouse: Lorentz Boisen (m. Lansingburgh, 1898)
- Family/stepchildren: Rasmus, Anna, Christian Peter

Note: Nurse in Denmark before emigrating.

7. Johannes Frederik Berthelsen / John Frederick Bertelsen



1860–1953

- Born: Skallebølle, Funen
- Settled: Brunswick, New York; later Los Angeles
- Spouse: Inger Marie Jensen
- Children: Larry Peter, Andrea M., Anna Elise

Note: Carpenter; one of the clearest American branches.

8. Johanne Emilie Berthelsen "Hanne"



1862–1943

- Born: Skallebølle, Funen
- Settled: Skydebjerg; later Silkeborg
- Spouse: never married
- Children: none

Note: Nurse; an independent Danish path.

9. Elise Kathrine Berthelsen "*Lise*"



1864–1940

- Born: Skallebølle, Funen
- Settled: South Dakota and Spokane, Washington
- Spouse: John Oscar Anderson (m. 1895)
- Children: Adolf N., Dewey John, Anna Louise, Carl Oscar, Wilhelm Theodore, George Victor, Elise Katrine

Note: Large American branch in the Pacific Northwest.

10. Karen Andrea Berthelsen "*Andrea*"



1866–1958

- Born: Skallebølle, Funen
- Settled: United States; later Frederiksberg, Denmark
- Spouse: never married
- Children: none

Note: Nurse for the Merck family; later returned to Denmark.

11. Hans Peter Berthelsen



1869–1956

- Born: Skallebølle, Funen
- Settled: United States
- Spouse: Gunhild O. Prestegaard (m. 1894)
- Children: Jørgen, Niels Olav, Dorothea, Marie/Andrea, Hans, Esther, Viggo, Adolph, Ruth

Note: Lutheran pastor and missionary.

12. Jørgen Christian Berthelsen



1872–1957

- Born: Skallebølle, Funen
- Settled: Denmark
- Spouse: Mathilde Ammentorp
- Children: Ane Marie "Mia" (foster daughter), Ulla, Niels, Karen Andrea "Søster", Johannes Michael "Dægnse", Constance Jacobine "Cok", Maria Theresia "Rese", Theodora "Dora", Anders Christian Ditlev, Christian Harbo, Sara Elise

Note: Pastor in Denmark and founder of a large Danish branch.

Gudbjerg → Skallebølle → Sweden / United States / Australia

Several of the children left Denmark; Theodore went to Australia, while others settled in Sweden or the United States.

Legend

- Solid line = child of Niels Berthelsen and Maren Dorthea Rasmussen
- Small names below = children of that branch
- Flower or star = child who died young
- Ship = emigration branch
- Cross = pastor or church connection
- Nurse's cross = trained nurse
- Dates shown as birth–death years
- Map pins = important towns and migration destinations

Theodore and his eleven siblings – what happened?

Theodore was fifth out of twelve children born to Niels Berthelsen and Maren Dorthea Rasmussen between 1849 and 1872. Together the children had more than 50 children of their own. Theodore, and his little brother Jørgen Christian seems to be the most productive. Two of their children became pastors (Hans Peter and Jørgen Christian) and three of the girls became nurses. Two died in childhood and out of the seven children that emigrated only one returned to live in Denmark (Karen Adrea)[23]:

1. The eldest child, **Bertel Jørgen Theodor Berthelsen** (*1849- †1856) born in Gudbjerg, carried the name of both his father's and grandfather's line, but his life was short. He died in 1856 at just six years of age, at his grandparents' home at Torupdal.

2. Next came **Rasmus Møller Berthelsen** (*1851– †1908) born in Gudbjerg, who would become one of the family's early emigrants within Scandinavia. He settled in Sweden. In the 1870s and 1880s, the brickwork, shipbuilding, and coal industries of southern Sweden in Skåne—particularly around Helsingborg and Malmö—attracted large numbers of Danish laborers. Rasmus's leap across the Sound made him a part of Sweden's early industrialization and severed his ties to his Danish rural heritage, making his descendants completely Swedish.

   Archival records at MyHeritage reveal that Rasmus did not work as a heavy industrial laborer or brickmaker. Instead, he utilized the high literacy level of his schoolmaster heritage to establish himself as a commercial clerk and bookkeeper (*handelsbiträde* / *bokhållare*). He later expanded into independent trade as a shopkeeper and merchant (*handlande*) in Helsingborg. This professional standing placed him probably in the emerging Swedish urban middle class (*borgerskap*). It allowed him to secure a stable livelihood for his family, directly contrasting with the precarious economic conditions faced by his sister, Anna Georgine, in Odense.

   Rasmus married Johanna Svensson (*1851-?) 8 December 1893. Rasmus and Johanna lived in Helsingborg in Malmöhus County. Johanna had married before with Hans Pettersson (*1849-) from Ugelösa in Skåne. Johanna and Hans Petterson married in 1872, and they had the children Emil Allan (*1873 - ?), Albert Leonhard (*1874-†1897) og Hans William (*1877-?) and Ruth Ingeborg (*1885 -1951†). It is not clear what happened to Hans Pettersonn – he may have died or they were divorced before 1893. Rasmus has no known children.

3. **Anna Georgine Berthelsen** (*1853–†1935) born in Gudbjerg remained in Denmark and represents a more locally rooted path. She married the worker Jens Jespersen (*1846-†1890) in 1877. Her husband died tragically shortly after the birth of her youngest daughter, Jensine. Jensine was born 2 June 1890 and her father Jens died October 1890. In 1890 Denmark, a woman thrust into the role of sole breadwinner faced a society structured entirely against her financial independence.

   The sudden loss of her husband Jens in 1890 must have stripped the family of its primary economic anchor. This left Anna Georgine as a widow to navigate a labour market that offered women only fractions of male wages. For a mother managing a large household alone, employment options were confined to grueling piecework like sewing, which required exhausting, around-the-clock hours under poor lighting just to afford basic sustenance and crowded, damp urban lodging. Institutional welfare was practically non-existent, meaning

that public relief carried a heavy social stigma and often resulted in the loss of personal autonomy or voting rights.

This absolute lack of a state safety net forced working-class mothers into a relentless cycle of physical exhaustion, where they were entirely dependent on their own resilience and the early labour of their young children just to survive on the margins of the industrial economy. Perhaps also Uncle Hans at Torupdal stepped in here – or Andrea from the USA? We don't know. In 1911 she lived in Odense as a seamstress, raising her daughter Jensine Andrea Jespersen. Despite these immense hardships, Anna lived to the age of 81 or 82, passing away in 1935. Her last address was Sct. Jørgensgade 10, st., Odense – and it is noted in the death register that she died a widow after a restaurant owner – so she might have married twice? She survived the hardships of late-19th-century urban poverty, witnessed the birth of the modern Danish labor movement, and lived to see the tentative early steps of the Danish welfare state (social reform of 1933) which sought to protect women and children from the exact destitution she had faced.

Jens and Anne had at least six children between 1877-1890:

a. Niels Marius Jespersen (*1877-†1971). Niels Marius became a master shipbuilder (skibsbygger) and shipwright based in Middelfart. He was notably photographed participating in the construction of the historic Little Belt Bridge (Lillebæltsbroen) in the early 1930s[24]. He married first Amalie Ingeborg Petersen in 1905 who died in 1916. Niels Marius and Ingeborg Amalie lived in Middelfart, Denmark and had the children: 3a1: Jens Anker Jespersen (*1906-†1989) Named "Jens" after his grandfather Jens Jespersen. He grew up learning the maritime trades around his father's shipyard, *Middelfart Bådebyggeri*. 3a2: Anna Ingeborg Jespersen (*1908 – ?) and 3a3: Ellen Margrethe Jespersen (*1911 – †2001). After Ingeborg Amalie's death in 1916 he remarried with Jenny Caroline Rasmine Hansen (*1892–†1978) in 1920, and Niels Marius and Jenny had: 3a4: Ingeborg Jespersen (*30 October 1921 .-?) and 3a5: Hans Christian Jespersen (*1924 –†2004). Hans Christian followed in his father's footsteps, developing an affinity for wood craftsmanship.

b. Anna Marie (*1881-†1939) born in Sct. Knuds Parish in Odense. As the oldest daughter, 11-year-old Anna Marie probably became her mother's primary assistant. By the turn of the century, Anna Marie works alongside her mother as an independent seamstress (*syerske*) according to 1901 census. She might have been married to a "Hansen" and lived as a widow in Randersgade, Copenhagen when she died 7 July 1939 in Rosenvængets Parish[25].

c. Metha Kirstine (*1882-†1950) Metha was just seven years old when her father died. While her older sister Anna Marie took on the immediate, heavy burden of assisting their mother with the newborn infant Jensine, Metha's role was probably to help maintain the household's razor-thin economic margin. Following her confirmation at Odense Cathedral in 1895, Metha was legally permitted to enter full-time employment and perhaps took a position as a live-in domestic servant which would

[23] For many of the descendants of Theodore siblings I have supplement sources with input from Google AI on names and dates. The results *seem* consistent with sources I have checked. But there still might be errors and some AI hallucination. Also, I must rely on other people's research in MyHeritage and FamilySearch. Frequent writing errors can blur the picture.
[24] See photo with Niels Marius Jespersen in the background: https://arkiv.dk/vis/709261
[25] https://kbharkiv.dk/permalink/post/1-330190

include running errands, cleaning stoves, and carrying heavy buckets of water for middle-class households in central Odense. In 1901 census she is registered as seamstress as well in the family at home with Anna Georgine. Metha married in 1904 with Hans Christian Stougaard Andersen (*1879 -). They lived in Odense suburb Bolbro and they had the children Jørgen Aksel (*1905-) and Ingeborg Marie (*1907-) and Johannes Stougård (*1925-). Metha died in Odense 6 October 1950.

d. Viggo Christian Jespersen (*1884-†1973) was apprentice blacksmith in 1901 in Odense and he later emigrated to New York, USA. Shortly after his arrival in New York, Viggo married Anna C. Christiansen (*1881-†1957). The couple settled permanently in upstate New York, establishing their longtime family home in the city of Schenectady, New York. Their primary residence was located at 2508 Campbell Avenue. They had: Anna Jespersen (*1908-1998), Viggo Charles Jespersen (*1910-1975) (and perhaps also Edith and Dorothy?).

e. Rasmus Jespersen (*1886 – †1960) Rasmus pursued an educational track. He graduated as a schoolteacher in 1907 and served as the longtime head schoolmaster at Klattrup Skole for 38 years until retiring in 1952[26]. Following Rasmus's retirement in 1952, the couple bought a private home in the nearby city of Fredericia. He and his wife Ella (*1889-†1957) are buried at Smidstrup Cemetery.

f. Jensine Andrea Jespersen (*1890-†1964). Growing up in a fatherless, working-class home, Jensine had to contribute to the household economy as soon as she was able. She found employment as an ironing maid (strygejomfru) according to the census registration in 1901. Jensine married Niels Marius Larsen Lethmar (*1887) in 1915. Niels became a dance teacher, and he was a former sergeant in the Danish army. They had the children Inga (*1918-) and Gerda (*1920 -). Gerda married Mogens Agner Andersen (*1913-) in Th. Kingo's church in Odense I 1940. The family lived in Odense.

4. **Juliane Maria Theresa Berthelsen** (*1855– †1858) was another child lost in infancy, born and dying at just three years old in Vissenbjerg. Such losses were not uncommon, but each would have weighed heavily on the family.

5. Then came Theodore himself – **Carl Bernhardt Theodor Berthelsen** (*1857– †1917), who would carry the family name far beyond Denmark to Australia, establishing an extensive branch of the family abroad. The name Theodor he inherited after his elder brother Bertel Jørgen Theodor who died 6 years old the year before Theodore was born and Juliane Maria Theresa died a year after Theodore was born.

6. After Theodore came **Maria Therese Berthelsen** (*1859–†1905). When she left home, she first worked as a servant, or "Gangkone", at Albanigade 23 in Odense in 1880. In the basement of the same building lived the Bauzon family, including their eldest son, Lauritz Wilhelm Bauzon. Lauritz was a wheelwright apprentice and the same age as Maria Therese.

   By 1890, Maria Therese was living in Slagelse, where she worked as a nurse. She later emigrated to the United States, arriving in New York on 28 September 1895 aboard the ship Venetia. In America she used the name Therese Berthelsen, and on 2 April 1898 she married Lorentz Boisen in Lansingburgh, Rensselaer County, New York.

[26] More here: https://www.borkophistorie.dk/klattrupskole.html

Lorentz Boisen had already emigrated from Denmark to the United States in 1880. He had three children: Rasmus (*1886–†1959), Anna (*1888–†1973), and Christian Peter (*1890–†1975), all born in Lansingburgh, New York. In later census records, they are listed as Maria Therese's children, but since they were born before her arrival in the United States and before her marriage to Lorentz, they were probably Lorentz's children from an earlier marriage. One possible clue is that Lorentz Boysen married Johanne L. Kler in Lansingburgh, New York, 15 August 1885. No further traces of Johanne have so far been found, but she must have been the mother of Rasmus, Anna and Christian Peter. The names appear in American census records in many different spellings, which adds some uncertainty.

There are several unresolved possibilities about Lorentz's identity and how Maria Therese came to know him. One possibility is that he was perhaps the same person as Lauritz Wilhelm Bauzon from Albanigade 23 in Odense, later recorded in America as Lorentz Boyson or Boisen? Another possibility is that he was Lorentz Boysen, baptised in Aabenraa, Denmark, on 5 September 1852.

A further theory is that Maria Therese may have travelled to visit her little brother Johannes Frederik in Brunswick, which is not far from Lansingburgh, where Lorentz lived, and that the couple met there through the Danish community? At present, none of these theories can be confirmed.

Behind these uncertain records there may have been many possible stories: a romance begun in Odense, a later meeting in America, a widower with young children, or a more tragic family history since Lorentz lost both his wifes. For now, however, the documents only allow us to say that Maria Therese emigrated, married a Lorentz Boisen in New York, and became part of a family whose earlier history is still unclear.

7. **Johannes Frederik Berthelsen** (*1860– †1953) represents one of the more traceable American branches. According to the 1880 census he worked first as a miller at Grønne Mølle in Skjellerup at Funen and then emigrated from Copenhagen 12 May 1880 to New York at the age of nineteen. He appears to have adapted his name to John Frederick Bertelsen, perhaps for making it easier to navigate English-speaking society.

   He settled initially in New York State, working as a carpenter, and later married Inger Marie Jensen[27] (*1860-~†1940). Inger was also a Danish emigrant from 1880 who arrived to the port of New York with the ship Harald[28] from Copenhagen. Johannes and Inger Marie lived in Brunswick, Rensselaer, New York, United States. Johannes eventually moved to Los Angeles, to spend his later years with his daughter Andrea Butler. Johannes / John was buried in California, far from the Danish countryside where he was born. Johannes and Inger Marie had three children:

   a. Larry Peter (*1888 – †1968) married German Marie around 1912. Larry and Marie lived in Evansville, Indiana.

   b. Andrea M. (*1890 -†1965) married Mr. Walter Butler in 1910 in New York. They had the son Robert (*1910-†1963) and the daughter Anna Marie (*1912-?). In the late 1920s, they joined the mass migration to the American West, moving to Los Angeles,

[27] A popular name: 15 – 20 Inger Marie Jensen were born in Denmark in 1860.
[28] https://www.seawarmuseum.dk/cgi-files/mdmgfx/file-1045-607778-5326.pdf

California and later brought her elderly, widowed father, John Frederick, with her to Los Angeles.

c. Anna Elise Berthelsen (*1895) also lived in Los Angeles in the same household as Walter and Andrea in Los Angeles in 1940.

8. **Johanne Emilie Berthelsen** (*1862–†1943) remained in Denmark and pursued a professional path as a nurse, a role that required both training and discipline and marked another step away from purely rural life. She lived for many years in Skydebjerg at Funen and is believed to have died in Silkeborg. Her life suggests independence and a degree of self-sufficiency uncommon for women of earlier generations. In his school diaries Niels Berthelsen referred to her as “Hanne”. She never married.

9. **Elise Kathrine Berthelsen** (*1864– †1940) was born in the midst of the Danish-Prussian war in 1864. The day she was born the Prussian forces were bombing the Danish fortress of Dybbøl outside Sønderborg and of Fredericia. All the fighting took place in Jutland and not on Funen, where Elise was born. In his school diaries Niels Berthelsen referred to her as “Lise”. Elise emigrated to the United States in 1889 where she arrived with the ship Thingvalla to New York. In 1895 she married John Oscar Anderson (*1862-†1936), a Swedish-born man.

   Following their marriage in 1895, US Federal Census records show that the couple did not head straight to Washington State. They spent the late 1890s homesteading in South Dakota, where their eldest children were born. Around 1902, drawn by the booming logging, mining, and railroad expansion in the Inland Empire, they relocated to Spokane, Washington. They had a large family of seven children. In South Dakota Elise and John Oscar had:

   a. Adolf N (*1896-†1908). The “N” may refer to Niels.

   b. Dewey John (*1898-†1972). Dewey married Elanor Kruger in 1916 in Kootenai, Idaho.

   c. Anna Louise (*1900-†1952) married Lewis G. Gower (*1883) in 1921 in Spokane, Washington. In 1944 she married George Wilhelm Tibert (*1902-1957)

      In Spokane, Washington Elise and John Oscar had:

   d. Carl Oscar (*1903-†1933) US Federal Census records track him working as an urban laborer and commercial delivery worker in Spokane. He died early.

   e. Wilhelm Theodore (*1903-†1988). He married May E Wuesthoff, née Hafer (*1914-†1982) in Stevens, Washington in 1932. She was the daughter of Elias Emanuel Hafer. U S Federal Census records track him working as a railway switchman, operator, and logistics clerk. He handled the continuous staging, routing, and movement of industrial freight and timber across the Pacific Northwest rail corridor. Wilhelm and May had 8e1: Theodore Oscar Anderson (*1934-†1994) and Vernon Lee Anderson (*1936-†1998) in Spokane.

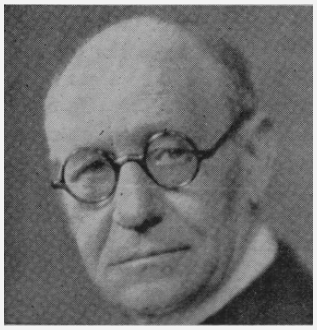
   f. George Victor (*1907-†1971). US Federal Census and municipal directories track George building a lifelong career in the automotive service and machining trade. he married Florence McBride (1911-1987) in Twin Falls, Idaho in 1941.

g. Elise Katrine (*1908-†1965) Named directly after her mother. Elise married Howard J. Wood (*1905-†1968) in Washington state in the early 1930s in Spokane, Washington.

10. **Karen Andrea Berthelsen** (*1866– †1958) followed a different path. Trained as a nurse, she emigrated to the United States in 1890 and entered service as nurse for Georg Friedrich "George" Merck (*1867–†1926) who was a German-American entrepreneur who founded the pharmaceutical company Merck & Co. in the United States, now one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies. George was born in Darmstadt, Germany, he relocated to New York in 1891 to establish the American branch of the family business. In 1893, he married Friederike "Freda" Schenck (*1866–†1943) of Antwerp, Belgium. George and Freda settled in Llewellyn Park, West Orange, New Jersey. They had five children. Karen Andrea remained with the family for many years and appears to have achieved a level of financial security unusual for someone of her background.

    Later in life, Karen Andrea returned to Denmark, where she lived in Frederiksberg. Her success enabled her to support other family members, and at her death she left a substantial sum—over a million Danish kroner—establishing a legacy of assistance for her extended family. Her final years were marked by blindness, but also by continued connection to both her Danish roots and her American experience. In his school diaries Niels Berthelsen referred to her as "Andrea".

11. **Hans Peter Berthelsen** (*1869– †1956) Hans Peter Berthelsen was born on 6 January 1869 at Skallebølle School in Vissenbjerg Parish on Funen, Denmark. He emigrated to the United States in 1889 and became a Lutheran pastor after graduating from Luther Seminary of the Norwegian Synod in 1894. He worked as a missionary pastor in the Black Hills of South Dakota for eight years, travelling on horseback, and later served for eleven years in Indianapolis, Indiana. His ministry also took him to Illinois and Nebraska. In 1914 he joined the United Danish Church, and according to "De Forenede staters danske almanak, haand- og aarbog", he was then serving the Pella Danish Lutheran congregation in Omaha, Nebraska, with the address 2721 N. 30th Street. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1898. His missionary work was recognized by the King of Denmark, who knighted him.



    Hans Peter married Gunhild O. Prestegaard in 1894. She was born in Illinois in 1869 and was of Norwegian descent. Together they had nine children. The names given are Jorgen Senior, Niels Olav, Dorothea, Andrea, Hans, Esther, Viggo, Hans, and Ruth. One son, Hans, died in childhood. The census records you provided show some variations in names: in 1900 the household in Ganeer Township, Momence Ward 1, Kankakee, Illinois, included Hans, Gunhild, Jørgen, Olaf or Niels Olav," possibly Dorothea. In 1920, in Omaha, the children at home were Dorothy Jorund, Marie, Esther, Viggo, Adolph, and Ruth. In 1940 Hans and Gunhild were living in Jerusalem, Yates County, New York, where Hans was recorded as a retired naturalized citizen; a lodger, Andrew Pablsen, was also in the household. Hans Peter and Gunhild are buried together in First Lutheran Church Cemetery in Lee, Illinois, USA29.

    Hans Peter's son, Jørgen Berthelsen Senior, born in Lead, South Dakota, in 1895. He worked for the Scandinavian-American Steamship Company and the Swedish-American Steamship

[29] https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/148209233/hans-peter-berthelsen



Line, and he married Anna Thomasine Petersen, who was born in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1894[30]. See Annex 1 for more about Hans Peter Berthelsen.

12. The youngest of the siblings, **Jørgen Christian Berthelsen** (*1872– †1957)[31], was only four years old when his father died and thus grew up largely without knowing him. He was taken in for a time by relatives, including his uncle, Hans Berthelsen, at Torupdal while he finished his school at Assens Realskole with top grades before studying at the university in Copenhagen. Hans and his wife Ane had no children but a relatively well of farm (judging by the number of helpers employed), are most likely the couple who supported Jørgen Christian in his studies in Copenhagen, but this is not documented so far.

In her memories Mathildes sister, Karen[32], wrote that when Jørgen Christian met his fiancé Mathilde Ammentorp that was a secret the first years in order not to offend his financial donors. Despite these difficult beginnings, he rose to become a pastor, first serving as assistant pastor in Pjedsted and later holding a long tenure as pastor in Harboøre, followed by a position in Skanderup. His life reflects both resilience and determination. He married Mathilde Ammentorp, and he was widowed in 1917 with ten children, he managed both a demanding clerical career and a large household, even establishing a form of home-based schooling for his children and others in the parish. His character was remembered as strong-willed and disciplined, and his influence on his children was considerable.

Jørgen Christian son Johannes Berthelsen married Ellen Sørensen. They had four children and their son Jens Jørgen Berthelsen married Birthe Jensen and they had three children. Their eldest daughter Lone Folmer Berthelsen married Stig Yding Sørensen. And here we are.

See Annex 2 for more on Jørgen Christian Berthelsen.

[30] Much more on Hans Peter Berthelsen in the file "Berthelsen, Hans Peter 1869-1956) on Danish American Archives http://danishamericanarchive.net/ - See t.ly/s7RV5

[31] https://harbooerelokalarkiv.dk/joergen-christian-berthelsen/

[32] Karen Ammentorp (*1875-†1961) was Mathildes one-year younger sister. Karen was creative and a good writer. She wrote her memories (not published) by hand around 1950 with very detailed and vivid descriptions of her childhood 1875-1899 and with many drawings and pictures. This is also Mathildes childhood. Their parents where pastor Christian Michael Ammentorp (*1838-†1914) and Francisca Ulrikka Bergenhammer (*1841-†1925).

Tragedy in 1876

Niels Berthelsen died on 3 October 1876 from tuberculosis[33] and the family was thrown into crisis. Theodore was then nineteen years old, no longer a child but still a young man and did not live at home, while several of his younger siblings were very small. Jørgen Christian just four years old. The death of the father meant not only grief but also practical collapse. The children were divided among relatives and friends. Some were taken in by extended family; some were raised by older siblings; some remained with their mother for periods. The family that had once filled the schoolhouse in Skallebølle was broken apart. The local archive in Vissenbjerg has helped finding records of the time after Niels Berthelsen's death.

The now widowed Maren Dorthea managed to gather her youngest children again and in 1878 she bought the house at Skallebøllelund 2 in Skallebølle[34] for 330 kroner. According to census records for 1880 she lived in Skallebølle as a widower and she received a pension after Niels Berthelsen. The three youngest children lived at home then: Karen Andrea, Jørgen Christian and Hans Peder. Theodore didn't live at home.

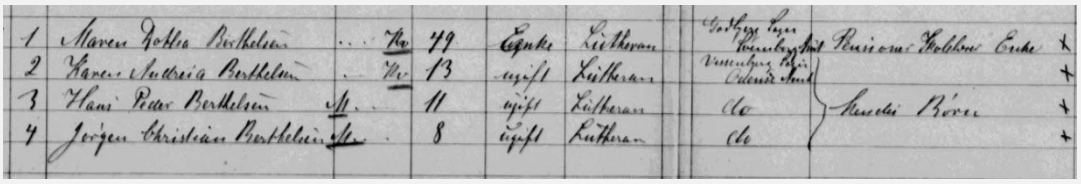


Photo of the census in Skallebølle from 1880. In the household is the widow, pensioner Maren Dorthea Berthelsen and three children. This census also records their marital status (Widow and not married), their nomination (Lutheran) and the parish where they were born. In the School diary for 1880/81 their teacher, Niels' successor, Christian Gotfred Thomsen, has noted Jørgen Christian in the youngest class and Hans Peter in the elder class.

The emotional burden on Theodore's mother, Maren Dorthea, must have been immense from the loss, from the relatively poverty and loss of status – though in the School Diary in 1880 for Hans Peter and Jørgen Christian she is referred to as "Mrs. Widow Teacher Berthelsen" and not as Maren Dorthea. It was common to refer to the man and his job when referring to his wife. Maren Dorthea increasingly showed signs of mental illness. In the sales records[35] for 1889 we can read that she had been legally placed under guardianship and the J. F. Johansen, the Poor Inspector in Odense, acted as the formally appointed guardian for Maren Dorthea Berthelsen. The Poor Inspector sold the house which included the house, fixed fittings, an "indmuret gryde" — a built-in or fixed cooking pot — and an associated plot of land. The land is listed with a small amount of hartkorn, ½ album, and an old tax assessment of 23 øre. This suggests a modest

[33] The diagnosis was written in the school diary by Niels Berthelsen successor Christian Godtfred Thomasen. Found in Skallebølle Skolearkiv in Vissenbjerg.
[34] 17e i Skallebølle. Odense Herredsfoged, Skøde- og panteprotokol - Odense Herred 1878-1879, fol.109, no.311 [ops.111 AO] https://arkivalieronline.rigsarkivet.dk/da/billedviser?bsid=177124#177124,29958616
35 Odense Herredsfoged Skøde- og panteprotokol - Odense Herred 1887-1890, no.410 [ops.338 AO] https://arkivalieronline.rigsarkivet.dk/da/billedviser?bsid=177498#177498,30047144

rural property rather than a large farm. The buyer was Hans Christiansen, described as a merchant or tradesman. He paid 600 kroner, and the payment was made to the municipal treasurer of Odense. Once the payment had been made and the terms of the purchase contract fulfilled, Johansen formally transferred the property to Hans Christiansen and his heirs. The deed also states that Maren Dorthea Berthelsen and her heirs would no longer have any claim to the property.





We never found a photo of Niels Berthelsen, but his daughter in law, Mathilde Ammentorp married to the pastor Jørgen Christian Berthelsen, was an early and eager amateur photographer. She took this photo of Maren Dorthea Rasmussen, Theodore's mother, in 1908 (right). It is blurred and even with the help of MyHeritage for restauration and colouring of the photo it is far from a perfect photo. The photo on the left is generated by AI based on the original photo. This is as close as we get to the old lady. On the photo it looks as if her hands were tied? and considering the diagnosis of mental illness they may have been.

In time thereafter she was admitted to the mental asylum in nearby Middelfart, likely from around the time of its opening in the late 1880s until around the turn of the century, when she came to live with the family of her youngest son, the now pastor Jørgen Christian Berthelsen, in Harboøre. A fisherman's village at the vest coast of Jutland, Denmark. The reasons for her decline are not fully documented, but the early death of her husband, the strain of possible poverty, and the scattering of so many children must surely have played a role. Maren Dorthea died in Harboøre in 1910.

Theodore – the young years 1871-1883

Theodore is mentioned in the census in 1870 in Skallebølle, but according to records located by the local archives in Vissenbjerg Theodore left Skallebølle already in 1871.

Carl Bernhardt Theodor Berthelsen was confirmed on **1 April 1871**, at the age of fourteen. Only a month later, on **1 May 1871**, he left his home parish to enter service. This was not unusual but rather reflects a broader social pattern in nineteenth-century rural Denmark.

The first record is an "afgangsliste" in the churchbook, a list of people leaving Vissenbjerg parish, dated 1 May 1871. Here Carl Berhardt Theodor Berthelsen is recorded as 14 years old and described as a tjenestekarl, meaning a farm servant or hired boy. He left Vissenbjerg for what appears to be Kullerup near Nyborg on Funen.

Confirmation marked a decisive transition from childhood to adulthood in both a religious and social sense. Once confirmed, a young person was considered ready to take on adult responsibilities. For boys like Theodor, this typically meant leaving home to work—either as a farm servant (*tjenestekarl*) or as an apprentice in a trade. His departure immediately after confirmation therefore illustrates how closely these two stages of life were linked.

In rural families, economic necessity often meant that children contributed to the household from an early age. It was not uncommon for children to be sent out to serve already at the age of seven, usually in lighter roles suited to their age. By fourteen, however, they were expected to work more fully and independently, often living with another household and earning wages or training.

A later "tilgangsliste", a list of arrivals to Vissenbjerg, records that Carl Bernhard Theodor Berthelsen returned to the parish on 1 May, now described as 17 years old, coming home from Nyborg Landsogn. This indicates that he had spent time outside Vissenbjerg, probably working or training, before returning to his home parish.

On 1 May 1874, he appears again in the departure list from Vissenbjerg. This time he is recorded as 17 years old and as a gartnerlærling, a gardener's apprentice. He left Vissenbjerg for Gamtofte, showing that by this point his work had become more specialised than ordinary farm service.

The final entry confirms his arrival in Gamtofte parish on 12 July 1874, coming from Vissenbjerg. He is listed as Carl Bernhardt Theodor Berthelsen, 17 years old, and the note says he was going to H. Gmd. Peer Berthelsen at Aborre Mark. "Gmd." means gårdmand, a farmer or farm owner. This may indicate that he entered the household or service of Peer (Peder) Berthelsen at Aborre Mark, possibly in connection with his apprenticeship or agricultural work. Peder Berthelsen (*1836-†1901) was Theodore's uncle and Niels Berthelsen's youngest brother.

Taken together, these records trace Carl Bernhardt Theodor Berthelsen's movements between the ages of about 14 and 17. They show him leaving Vissenbjerg as a young servant, returning from Nyborg Landsogn, and then moving on to Gamtofte as a gardener's apprentice.

After that we lose trace of Theodores whereabouts until he shows up in Melbourne in 1883. Theodore, born in 1857 in Skallebølle on Funen, was of conscription age in the late 1870s. It is

therefore quite possible that at least part of the time he was entered in the Danish conscription rolls and called for examination. If he served, he would most likely have been attached to a unit connected with Funen, possibly through the Odense military district. However, not all registered men were taken into active service; some were rejected, postponed, or never called up beyond the session.

For Theodore, this family background *may* explain the path he later took. Many of his siblings responded to those conditions by leaving. The wider world drew them outward – but many Danish people choose to immigrate in those years. In the 1880s more than 80.000 Danish people left Denmark – or roughly 4% of the population. In that sense Rasmus, Theodore, Maria Therese, Johannes Frederik, Else Cathrine, Karen Andreas and Hans Peter was not alone in seeking their fortune elsewhere in the world.



This photo probably shows Theodore. It has been speculated that he was perhaps a sailor who jumped ship in Melbourne.

It is, however, more likely that this is a photo Theodore had from a photographer in Odense to give to his mother, Maren, and to have himself. But we do not know for sure.

An AI analysis says: The photograph shows a young man posed in a studio setting, dressed in what appears to be a sailor's outfit: a soft cap, loose blouse with a laced front, and trousers. He stands in a relaxed but deliberate pose, one hand resting on a prop—likely a draped pedestal or studio stand—while the other rests on his hip.

The backdrop and props are typical of late 19th-century portrait studios, suggesting this is not a candid image but a carefully staged photograph.

The clothing is important. It does not look like a formal naval uniform but rather a generic "sailor style" costume, which was very popular in studio photography at the time. This supports your suggestion that he may be "dressed up" for the occasion, perhaps to evoke travel, seafaring, or the idea of departure. Such imagery was often chosen by emigrants as a symbolic statement when leaving home or arriving in a new country.

The format of the photograph—an oval portrait mounted in an album page with decorative borders—fits well with the 1880s to early 1890s, making a date around 1883 plausible. The man's moustache, hairstyle, and overall presentation also align with that period.

As for location, there are no clear visual markers that definitively distinguish Denmark from Australia. The studio backdrop is generic, and the sailor costume was used internationally. However, the image feels like a departure portrait rather than an arrival one: the theatrical costume and composed stance suggest a symbolic image, something one might take before emigrating. In contrast, newly arrived immigrants were more often photographed in everyday dress due to cost and practicality.

A cautious conclusion is therefore that the photograph was likely taken in a studio, probably in the early 1880s, and possibly before emigration. That said, without a photographer's imprint or inscription, it cannot be firmly placed in Odense rather than Melbourne.

Photo courtesy of Christine Serre. Cleaned and lightly coloured by MyHeritage.

Immigration to Australia in 1883

In Theodore's case, that outward path led all the way to **Victoria in Australia**. There he became known more simply as **Theodore**, and in that new land he built an entirely new branch of the family. We do not know Theodore's motivation to leave Denmark nor why Australia was his port of destination. But we may speculate:

When considering Theodore's decision to leave Denmark for Australia, it is important to place it within the broader patterns of migration in the early 1880s.

At that time, Danish emigration was overwhelmingly directed toward the United States and, to a lesser extent, Canada. Australia remained a far more distant and less common destination. Yet it was not unknown, and for a small number of individuals—often younger men with initiative, skills, or a willingness to take risks—it held a particular kind of appeal.

Denmark in the late nineteenth century was undergoing significant transformation. Agricultural reforms were reshaping rural life, population growth placed pressure on land and livelihoods, and traditional social structures were slowly shifting. For families such as Theodore's—rooted in farming but already moving toward education and social mobility—these changes created both opportunity and uncertainty. The path forward was no longer fixed. For some, the logical step was to follow established routes to America, where Danish communities were already forming. For others, however, the attraction lay precisely in going somewhere less defined, where competition might be lower and the scope for advancement greater.

But, of course, there might have been more personal reasons to leave that we do not know, and the choice of destination may have had many other explanations. We do not know.

Melbourne was already then a major city in Australia. Greater Melbourne's population was roughly estimated at 300,000 as it went through its rapid "Marvellous Melbourne" boom. At the time, official censuses were conducted infrequently, but in nearby official census years, the population was 282,947 in 1881 and 490,896 in 1891.

During this decade, the city expanded aggressively as public transit and infrastructure developed. It became the richest city in the British Empire and, for a time, rivaled London in land area and wealth. Today, Melbourne has just surpassed Sydney as the largest city in Australia. 5.4 million people lives in Greater Melbourne today (some figures say), Melbourne is one of Australia's most diverse cities - 33.2% of its residents in 2006 were born outside of Australia. The city has attracted waves of immigrants over the years (more about this in our population history section below) and, as well as a large (around 150,000) British community, there are more than 50,000 people in Melbourne who were born in each of the following countries: China, Greece, India, Italy, New Zealand and Vietnam[36]. Williamstown and Footscray where Theodore got to live and work are just one of many townships in 1883 that are now engulfed by Melbourne.

[36]https://worldpopulationreview.com/cities/australia/melbourne#history-of-melbourne-and-population-growth

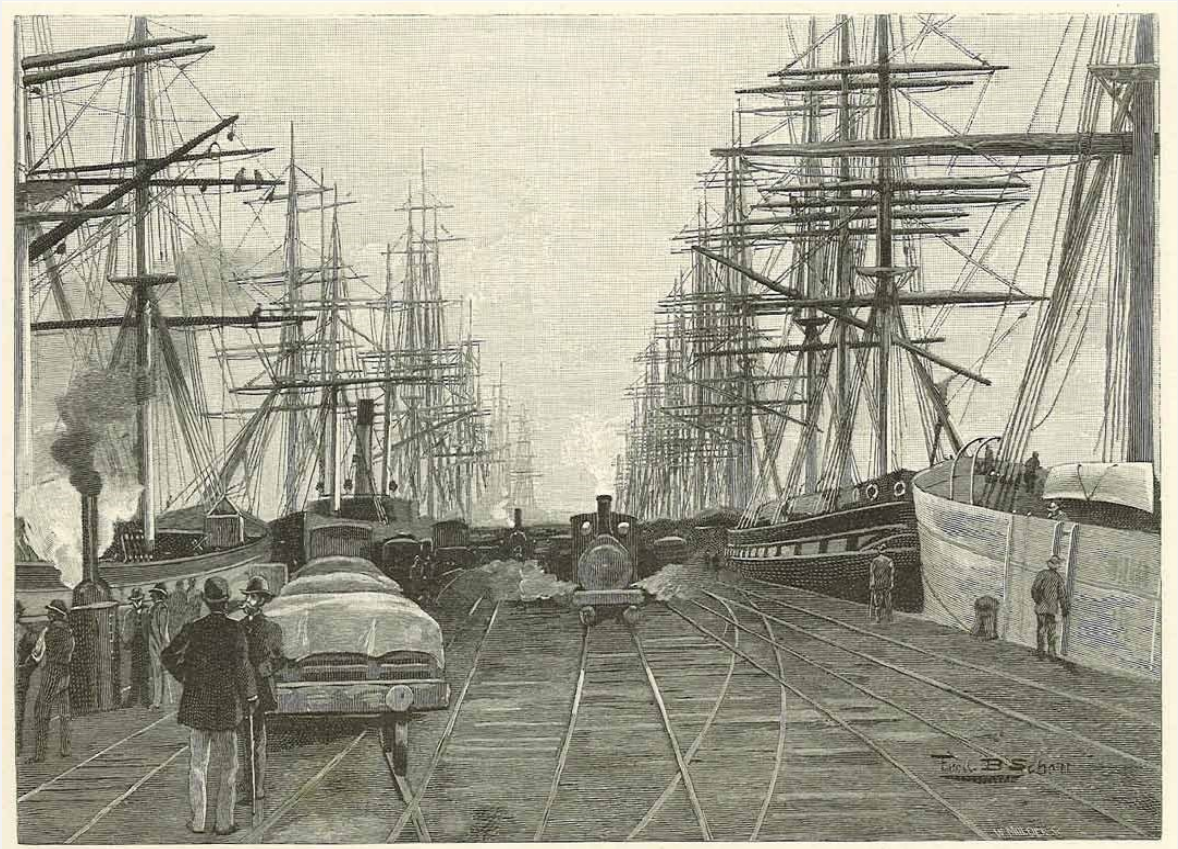


Elizabeth Street from Flinders Street looking north in Melbourne city. 1883. The hustling and bustling of Melbourne in 1883 were very different from the rural Denmark that Theodore left.

By the early 1880s, the colony of Victoria—and particularly the city of Melbourne—had become one of the most dynamic and prosperous regions in the British Empire. Although the peak of the gold rush era had passed, its legacy continued to shape the economy. Melbourne was a thriving port, a commercial hub, and a rapidly expanding urban centre. Its suburbs were growing, infrastructure was developing, and there was steady demand for labour across a wide range of sectors, from construction and transport to trade and services.

For an immigrant like Theodore arriving with determination and adaptability, the city offered both immediate employment and the longer-term possibility of stability. A book on Danish Emigration to Australia stated: ”*It is no wonder that Melbourne became MARVELOUS MELBOURNE, the glamour city of the continent with magnificent boulevards, one of the finest botanical gardens found anywhere, the biggest and most impressive Governor's Residence in the British Empire and a huge Exhibition Building which accommodated the World Expo in 1880 (where Denmark had a stand) and the Australian Centenary Exhibition in 1888*[37].”

[37] Se “Danish Emigration to Australia” (1988) https://slaegtsbibliotek.dk/2024/946431.pdf



Melbourne 1886 - three years after Theodore arrived with ship.

Melbourne also functioned as the principal gateway to the wider region of Victoria. From there, migrants could move outward into smaller towns and former goldfield areas such as Chiltern, where opportunities still existed in mining, land development, and associated trades.

The journey itself was not insignificant. Danish migrants to Australia typically travelled by steamship via Britain or Bremerhaven in Germany, a long and demanding voyage that required both financial means and a firm commitment to leaving Europe behind. Unlike migration to America, which often followed established networks of relatives and neighbours, Danish migration to Australia was more individual and exploratory in nature.

Once in Australia, adaptation tended to be rapid. Migrants frequently adjusted their names, just like Theodore, to fit English usage, entered marriages within the local population, and integrated into colonial society within a relatively short time. The distance from Denmark, both geographical and cultural, accelerated this process. In regions such as Melbourne and western Victoria, Danish origins could quickly become one element among many in a broader immigrant identity.

Theodore in Australia

Theodore arrived in Australia on the ship **Poseidon**[38] at Port Melbourne in 1883, according to family legend in notes from Christine Serre. There is some speculation in the family that he jumped ship in Melbourne – possibly due to the "seaman portrait", and that version cannot be ruled out since we do not know much about Theodore's whereabouts, life and work from 1880 to 1883 in Denmark or from 1883 until his marriage with Josephine.

Williamstown 1883 - 1888

In Australia, Theodore's life took a decisive turn when he met the 5 year younger Josephine Harrison (*1862-†1916). Josephine was a young woman whose own story, like his, was shaped by migration and distance.





Theodore and **Josephine** were married in Williamstown in January 1887 at Williamstown Roman Catholic Church, probably the St Mary of the Immaculate Conception, located on Cecil Street. Both portraits are rendered by AI based on photos. Theodore's portrait is guessed based on dressing codes for weddings in 1887 and the portrait of him in sailors dress – and Josephine is guessed by the photo of her below. Did they look like this at their wedding? Probably not exactly so, but it may be close. It is anyone's guess. A handsome couple.

[38] There were at least four ships named Poseidon that sailed to Australia.



Photo of Josephine Harrison. The photo is restored and coloured with AI, and ChatGPT said this about the photo: This studio portrait presents Josephine Harrisson as a composed and self-possessed young woman, carefully staged within the visual language of late 19th-century

bourgeois respectability. The photograph is typical of the late Victorian era, where portraiture was both a social statement and a declaration of identity.

Josephine stands upright, slightly turned, with one hand resting near a floral arrangement placed on a rustic studio prop. The flowers are not incidental: in Victorian portrait conventions, flowers often symbolized femininity, refinement, and moral virtue. Their presence softens the otherwise severe tone of her dark attire and adds a layer of cultivated domesticity.

Her dress is strikingly dark—almost entirely black—suggesting several possible interpretations. Black in the 1880s could indicate mourning, but it was also a fashionable and dignified color associated with seriousness, elegance, and middle-class status. The fitted bodice, high collar, long sleeves, and layered bustle skirt are characteristic of late 1880s fashion. The high neckline and structured silhouette communicate modesty and propriety, aligning with Victorian ideals of womanhood: discipline, restraint, and moral strength.

The chain at her waist—likely attached to a watch or small accessory—suggests practicality and modernity. A watch chain on a woman subtly signals punctuality, responsibility, and perhaps education or professional engagement. This detail introduces a quiet note of independence within the otherwise conventional feminine presentation.

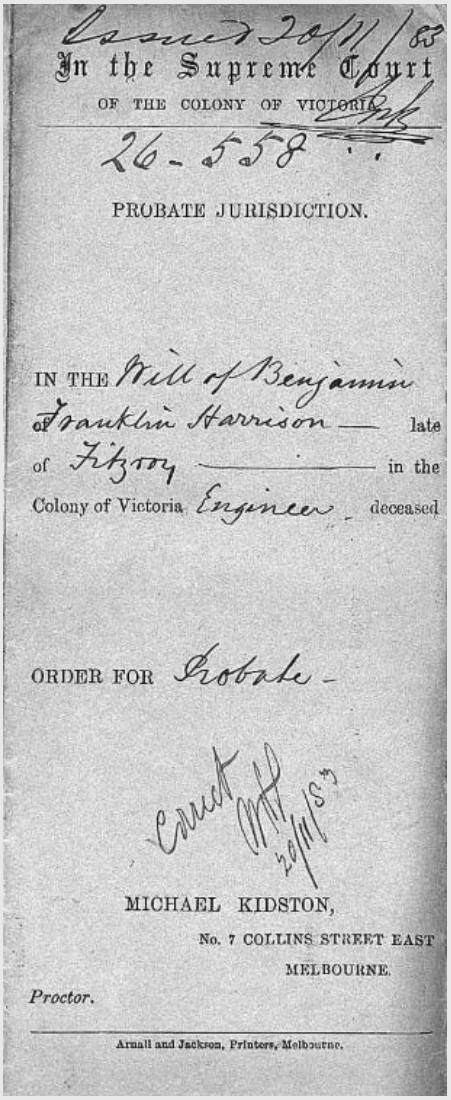
Her gaze is direct and calm. She looks neither submissive nor overtly expressive; instead, her expression conveys composure and inner steadiness. This self-contained expression was typical of formal portraiture, yet here it also communicates quiet confidence. She is not merely an object of display but a person conscious of being recorded for posterity.

The studio backdrop—softly blurred with painted scenery—and the artificial "natural" setting (tree trunk, arranged flowers) reflect the aesthetic conventions of the time. Photography in 1887 was both theatrical and symbolic. Subjects were placed within controlled environments meant to evoke nature, refinement, or gentility rather than depict reality.

Overall, the portrait constructs Josephine as a respectable, cultivated woman of her time—serious, dignified, and socially established. At the same time, subtle details—the watch chain, her steady gaze, the strong vertical posture—hint at individuality and quiet strength beneath the formal Victorian exterior.

Courtesy of Christine Serre. Cleaned and coloured by MyHeritage.

Josephine had according to family legend arrived in Victoria in 1878, then about sixteen years of age, having travelled from the island of Mauritius (British colony then) alone with her father, engineer Benjamin Franklin Harrison (*1828-†1883). But it must have been earlier, since Benjamin married Esther Anna Dibbs in 1873 in Victoria according to the marriage register for Victoria?



In the Supreme Court
OF THE COLONY OF VICTORIA
26-558
PROBATE JURISDICTION.
IN THE Will of Benjamin Franklin Harrison — late of Fitzroy — in the Colony of Victoria Engineer deceased
ORDER FOR Probate -
MICHAEL KIDSTON,
No. 7 COLLINS STREET EAST
MELBOURNE.
Proctor.
Arnall and Jackson, Printers, Melbourne.

Benjamin Franklin Harrison's will left his estate to his widow, Esther Anna Harrison of Fitzroy, Victoria, who was also named as executrix. No other beneficiaries are clearly named.

The estate was modest, valued for probate at no more than £225. The listed assets included household furniture and personal effects in the dwelling house, cash in the house and at the bank, and debenture bonds. There was also interest due, probably, on those investments.

A significant item was money owed to Benjamin by Francis Drake Mitchell, described as the balance of purchase money for a house and land in Cremorne, Victoria. The furniture and household goods were given a separate probate value, apparently adjusted down from their ordinary value.

In simple terms, Benjamin left Esther Anna the household contents, small cash and investment holdings, and money still owed from a property sale.

In Benjamins will[39] in 1883 his widow Esther Anna Harrison (Nee Dibbs) (*1840-?†)[40] of Fitzroy is mentioned as the sole heir to the net value of his personal estate of 226 pounds equal to ~ $36,000 AUD in 2026.

Is Esther Anna Harrison perhaps the mother of Josephine? –we do not know and since Benjamin apparently arrived in Australia only with Josephine it is just as likely that Esther Anna Harrison is his second wife, but not the biological mother of Josephine. If so, then Josephines biological

[39] Australia, Victoria, Wills, Probate and Administration Files, 1841-1926," database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-6X4S-6VR?cc=2207846&wc=2VG9-FCW%3A1517068403%2C1518788763%2C1519381201 : 11 May 2021), Probate and administration files > 1883 > 28-P2-u0154 > image 767 of 798; Public Record Office of Victoria, Australia

[40] Found the grave of Ann Harrison (1830-1917) in Nundah that also notes that her husband was Benjamin Harrison. But it is probably another Benjamin.

mother have probably died in Mauritius since Benjamin and Josephine travelled alone in 1878 (or earlier). That is for someone to find out.

If the family photo below is indeed of Benjamin Harrison, then he managed to get married and have three children (half-sisters & brothers to Josphine) from 1878 – November 1883.

Benjamin Harrison died already in 1883, so maybe a bit too early for him – but could it be photo of an unknown son and his family? AI Analysis suggests: The photograph appears to show a modest but settled family household in colonial Australia, probably in the late 1880s to early 1900s. The clothing, the mounted presentation of the photograph, and the style of the timber weatherboard house with its veranda all point to that period. The large, corrugated water tank beside the house is also a strong sign of an Australian setting, very likely Victoria. The house and garden look modest but well cared for, which suggests respectability and some stability rather than wealth.



Family photo of Benjamin Harrison?

If this relates to Benjamin Harrison, the setting and social character would fit what is known of his life in Victoria. We may guess that Josephine is back left with her father Benjamin. In front is then his wife Esther Anna Dibbs with three half-sisters of Josephine. No records of children to Esther Anna Dibbs have been found.

Photo courtesy of Christine Serre. AI cleaned and coloured by MyHeritage. Original:







Benjamin Harrison and his wife, Josephine's stepmother, Esther Anna Dibbs in Fitzroy, Victoria. AI generated portraits based on family photo above.

Benjamin Franklin Harrison was born in about 1825, although his grave inscription gives an age at death of 54, which would suggest a birth year closer to 1829. He died on 11 October 1883 at his residence, 27 Charles Street, Fitzroy, Melbourne.

A death notice described him as late of Footscray and formerly an engineer for the Mauritius Government. Benjamin was buried in Melbourne General Cemetery, Parkville, in plot MGC-COE-Comp-DD-No-256. His name appears on a grave that also commemorates Watkin Tench Kerswill, a master mariner of Plymouth and pensioner of the Mauritius Government Pilot Service, who died in 1874.



Benjamin Harrison was an engineer by profession. In Australia he appears to have found work connected with the goldfields, as part of the wider movement of skilled migrants whose labour supported the mining economy that drew so many people to colonial Australia.

Records suggest that he had arrived from Mauritius, probably through government service there, and that by the early 1880s he was living in Victoria. In February 1883 he was described in a land notice as "Benjamin Franklin Harrison, of Fitzroy street, Fitzroy, in the county of Bourke, Pensioner."

That notice concerned an application to bring a parcel of land in Footscray under the Transfer of Land Statute. Probate was later granted for his will in November 1883, and the estate was valued at £225.

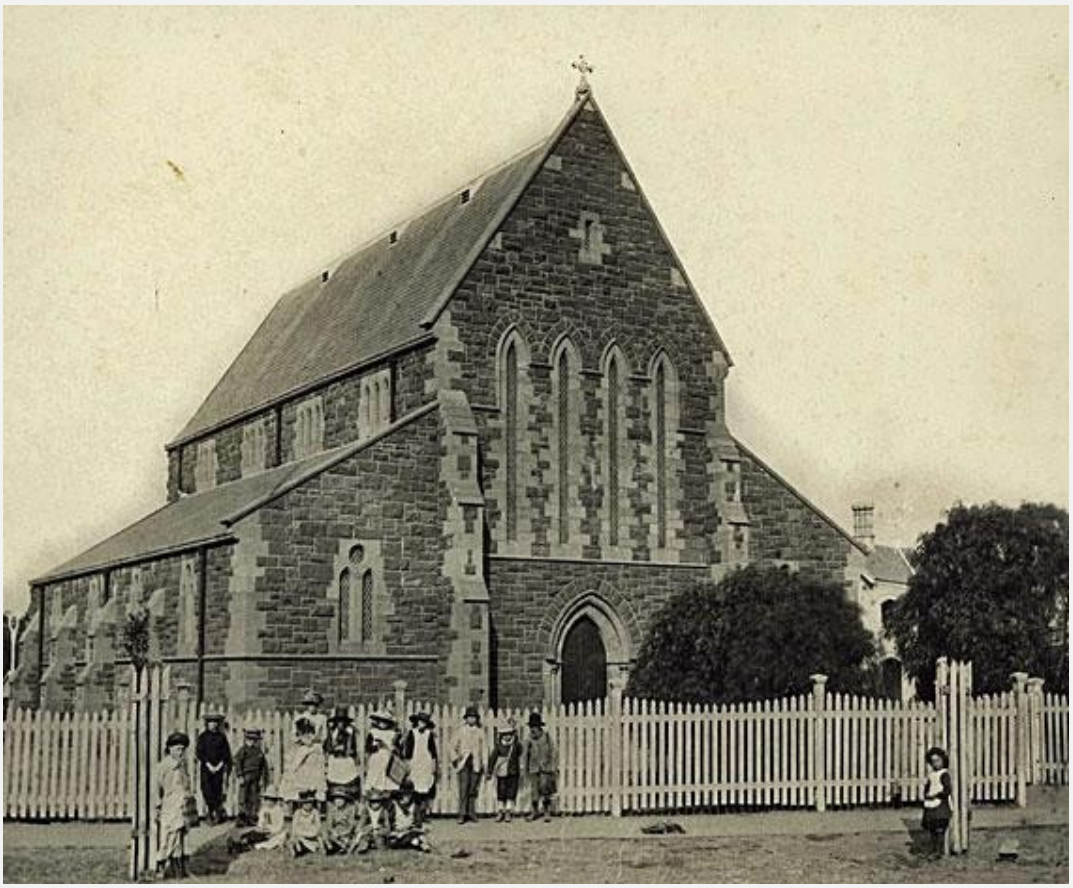
We have found no further traces of the ancestors of Benjamin Harrison. Further progress would probably require archival research in Mauritius or India. Since Benjamin died the year Theodore arrived in Australia means that they probably never met.

Josephine's background set her slightly apart from the Danish emigrant communities. She came not from Europe but from the Indian Ocean world, and her upbringing would have been marked by different cultural influences. One would think, that in Australia, such differences often dissolved into the shared experience of building new lives far from one's origins.

Christine Serre remembers: "*My father told me many years ago he saw a photo of the entire Bernard family taken at Chiltern. There was a tiny dark-skinned lady on the end dressed in a long skirt with a full white apron and he asked who she was. He was told she was the housekeeper when in fact she was his grandmother. In the late 1800 hundreds and early 1900 hundreds mixed marriages were obviously frowned upon so not discussed. Very sad*."

We do not know about Theodores whereabouts from 1883 to his marriage in 1887 with Josephine.

Theodore and Josephine were married in Williamstown in January 1887 at Williamstown Roman Catholic Church, probably the St Mary of the Immaculate Conception, located on Cecil Street. Williamstown was a busy port town near Melbourne that served as a gateway for migrants and goods alike.



St. Mary's Catholic Church in Williamstown was originally built in the 19th Century, which made it the second Catholic Church to be constructed in the Port Phillip district. The church was designed by the famous architect William Wardell (*1823 - †1899) who later designed both St. Patrick's Cathedral and Victorian Government House. St Mary's Catholic Church, Williamstown on the photo the original design of the aisle windows and before the building was completed. [photograph from State Library of Victoria (before 1900)]

Footscray 1888 - 1895

Their early married life unfolded in the working-class suburb of Footscray.

Here, their first four children were born, and the foundations of their family were laid:

1. Josephine Agnes Bernard (**1888- †1960)*
2. Mary Theresa Bernard (**1890 – †1955)*
3. Sarah Anne ("Sadie") Bernard (**1892 – †1984)*
4. Peter Theodore Bernard (**1894 – †1982)*

Between 1888 and 1895, Footscray[41] was one of the fastest-growing industrial suburbs of Melbourne. Located just west of the city and close to the Maribyrnong River, it developed as a working-class area shaped by factories, railways, and port activity. The expansion of the railway network made Footscray an important transport hub, linking Melbourne to regional Victoria and supporting the movement of goods such as wool, grain, and manufactured products.



Barkly Street in Footscray, 1890. Except for more cars Footscray still has areas that remind us of the early times.

Industry was central to daily life. Meatworks, tanneries, brickworks, and chemical plants provided employment but also made the area smoky, noisy, and often polluted. Housing grew

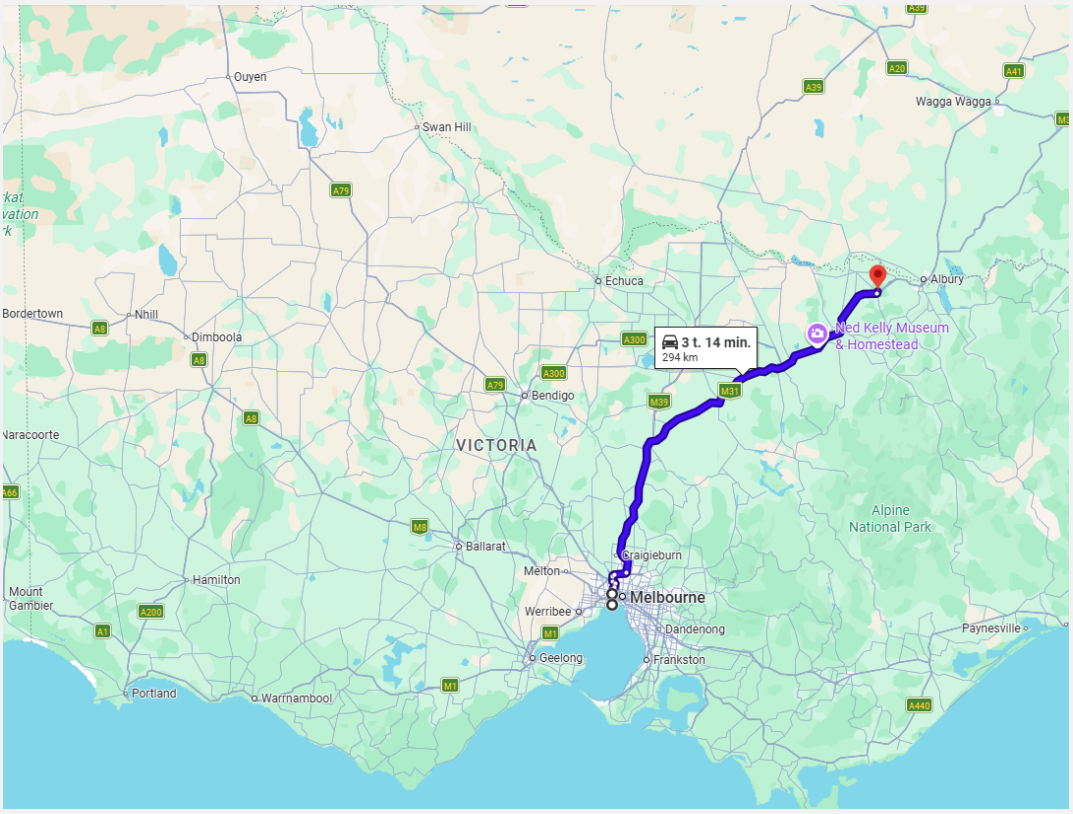
[41] The text on Footscray in the 1890's is written mostly by AI

quickly to accommodate workers and their families, typically in small, modest cottages. Streets were busy and sometimes rough, reflecting a mix of cultures and backgrounds among the residents.

Socially, Footscray was a place of opportunity but also hardship. Many families were recent migrants, and work could be irregular or physically demanding. Churches, schools, and local institutions played an important role in providing structure and support. Catholic and state schools served the growing population, and community life developed around parish, workplace, and neighbourhood.

By the early 1890s, however, the **economic depression** hit hard. Unemployment rose, wages fell, and conditions worsened. For many families, including those with young children, Footscray could feel uncertain and encouraging some to seek more stable lives elsewhere.

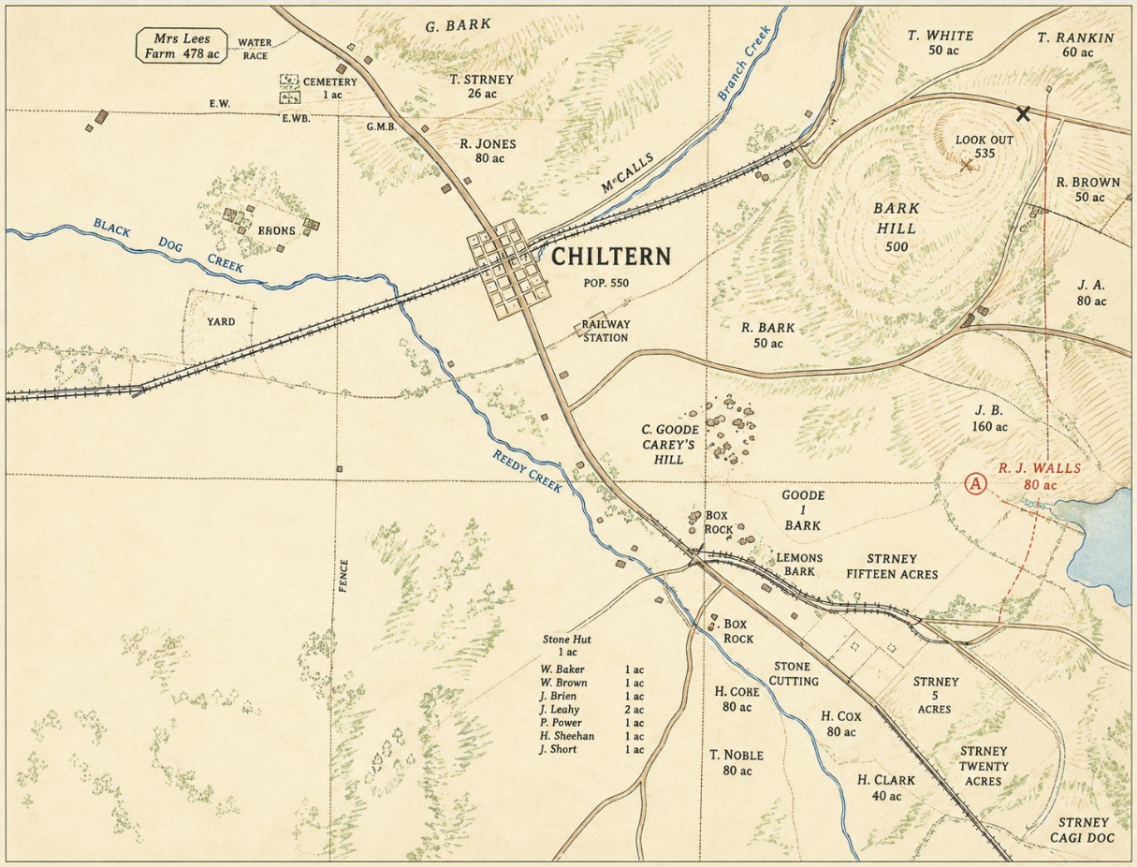
The Bernard family moved to Chiltern in 1895.



Map of Victoria, Australia that shows the route from Williamstown to Footscray (now both part of Melbourne) and further up to Chiltern. 3:14 hours today on M3 highway to cover the 294 km.

Chiltern 1895 - 1917

In 1895, Theodore and Josephine made another significant move, this time northward to Chiltern[42] in Victoria, a town shaped by the legacy of the gold rush[43]. There, Theodore worked as a miner and well borer, occupations that demanded both endurance and physical strength. He undertook some extensive contracts boring for leads throughout the Chiltern district and for water in Riverina.



Map remade after hand-drawn map by Frank L. Frost about 1915-1918 centred on Chiltern showing the Melbourne Road [Now Hume Freeway] and the Beechworth-Rutherglen Road. Theodore and Josephine lived on Melbourne Road. Chiltern has grown since and today the busy M31 (Hume Freeway) passes just south of the railway station. Today it has a population of 1.580 people, which is twice as much as Skallebølle on Funen today. See original hand-drawn map here:

https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/51fb08452162ef156c79a623

[42] The text on Chiltern in the 1890's is summarised mostly by AI from news articles and notes on Chiltern history, courtesy of Chiltern Athenaeum Museum.
[43] On the gold rush see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_gold_rushes

Set at the foothills of the Great Dividing Range in northeastern Victoria, Chiltern is a small and characterful town, today home to around a thousand residents. Chilterns origins lie in the years of the Victorian gold rush, emerging in the late 1850s as one of the many settlements shaped by the search for gold. Although the most intense period of gold mining had passed by the late 1860s, Chiltern did not fade. Instead, it adapted and remained a stable and reasonably prosperous community, supported by agriculture, timber work, and a range of local trades and small businesses.



Chiltern 1859. Chiltern has deep roots in the drama of the gold age. In the late 1850s and 1860s Chiltern had surged up almost overnight, first at the Indigo and then at the Chiltern lead, with tents, stores, dance halls, theatres, bakeries, sly grog shops, and rough hotels appearing in what had recently been bush. The early place had been noisy, violent, improvised, and cosmopolitan. White diggers, Chinese miners, publicans, entertainers, hawkers, attorneys, storekeepers, blacksmiths, and policemen all crowded into its makeshift streets. By Theodore's day that raw energy had settled, but it had not been forgotten. Older Chilternites still lived among the relics of those decades, and many of the families who remained had either made or lost their fortunes in the mining era. Picture AI generated.

Before it became known as Chiltern, the area was referred to as Black Dog Creek, a name said to derive from a black dingo hunted in the district in the 1830s. As settlement expanded, the town was formally recognised—gazetted in the early 1850s and surveyed soon after. In time, it was renamed Chiltern, likely inspired by the Chiltern Hills in England, reflecting the British heritage of many of its early settlers.

From 1895 to 1917, the years when Theodore and Josephine made their home there, Chiltern was no longer the wild, explosive gold-rush town of its youth, but neither was it merely a sleepy farming village. It was a place living in two times at once. The memory of gold still hung over everything, and the older residents could still speak of the great days of the mines with a mixture of pride, amusement, and disbelief. Yet by the turn of the century the town was also learning to live more steadily, drawing its strength not only from quartz and alluvial wash, but from sheep, vines, dairying, poultry, tobacco, honey, and the patient work of men and women who meant to stay.



Conness street in Chiltern 1911 – AI restored from old photo, courtesy of Chiltern Athenaeum. The free-standing belltower to the right might be the same as the one today at Chiltern Athenaeum.

For Theodore, arriving in 1895, Chiltern would have been a town with a powerful past all around it. The landscape itself bore the marks of mining. Old workings, mullock heaps, shafts, batteries, and abandoned claims were part of the district's everyday scenery. Even where the fever of the rush had cooled, it had left its shape on the ground and in local memory. Men still measured time by mines, reefs, and yields. The Chiltern Valley mine remained one of the great presences in the district, and mining still employed men and drew others into related trades.

A man such as Theodore, working as a miner and well borer, would have fitted naturally into this world of hard physical labour, practical skill, and uncertain rewards.

The town retained something of that old character. It was a place with stories. One of the most famous local tales was that of Morgan's Diggings, where a publican, nearly hanged by angry miners for luring them to a supposedly false claim, was saved only when gold was found at the bottom of the shaft after all. Such stories belonged to the local folklore, and a newcomer who stayed long in Chiltern would soon hear them. The district delighted in such yarns: near-hangings, fabulous finds, dance halls full of noise, all-night card games, improbable fortunes, and men who began with nothing and ended rich. In a town like Chiltern, these were not merely amusements but part of its identity.



Chiltern about 1910. A postcard found at an internet auction. The postcard was mailed to A. Barnard, Ascot Yale, 144 "The Parade", Melbourne by Mary. Surprising that Chiltern had both Bernards and Barnards? Or is it from Mary Theresa to (Sarah) Anne Bernard?

By the time Theodore settled there, however, Chiltern was maturing. The biggest mining operations continued into the early twentieth century, but the town was increasingly turning toward a broader and more stable economy. Agriculture and grazing grew in importance. Wheat and oats were produced in quantity. Sheep raising expanded, and the district became known for particularly fine wool. Dairying supported butter factories at Springhurst and Wangaratta, with

cream and milk moving regularly from the Chiltern district. Vineyards were well established, and tobacco growing was beginning to show real promise. Beekeeping, too, became an unexpectedly prosperous line of work, with large quantities of honey leaving the district. Thus, the Chiltern of Theodore's years was a transitional town: still mining, still remembering, but already becoming something else.

That transition would have shaped daily life. It meant that the town was not solely dependent on one industry or one class of worker. Miners lived alongside farmers, graziers, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, merchants, teamsters, bakers, publicans, and railway men. The railway, opened in 1873, tied Chiltern more closely to the wider region and to Melbourne. Wool, wine, firewood, wheat, eggs, honey, gravel, and timber went out by rail, while goods and people came in.

It was also, by Theodore's time, a place with established institutions and a recognisable civic life. There was the Federal Standard, the local paper whose history went back to the earliest goldfield days and which helped preserve the memory and gossip of the district.

There were churches, the Athenaeum and Public Library, the shire offices, the State school, the racecourse, sporting clubs, the cemetery, and the public park.

That flavour came partly from the town's mixture of solidity and anecdote. Older buildings and businesses carried echoes of another age. Hotels that had once catered to gold seekers still stood, though often under changed fortunes and altered names. Some of the great old establishments had declined with the mines; others survived by adapting. The Star Hotel, for example, remained one of the best-known places in town and was already embedded in local history.

Chiltern's identity was also bound up with its public spirit. Sport and sociability were important. The district had long traditions of racing, cricket, football, rifle shooting, and other organised pursuits.

Physical capacity was valued not just in work but in public recreation and competition. A man with Theodore's build and reputation for strength would not have gone unremarked in such a place.



Conness Street in Chiltern in 1908. Conness Street is the main business street in the historic gold-rush town of Chiltern, Victoria, Australia, named after John Conness. And who knows, one of the men in photo might be Theodor or a young Barnard? Take a walk in the street with google maps and you'll see that the street still today is lined with buildings featuring wide verandas from the 1850s-1860s gold-rush era. It also features well-preserved 19th-century architecture, including the Athenaeum Library & Museum (1866) and the Star Theatre.

Many of the people active in the early twentieth century were children or grandchildren of pioneers, or at least of early arrivals. Their names recurred through business, council, sport, and agriculture. Chiltern was proud of its "old hands." At the same time, it could absorb newcomers. The place had been built by migrants from the beginning—Scots, Irish, English, Germans, Chinese, Californians, and others had all passed through or settled there. Theodore, a Dane, and Josephine, who had come from Mauritius, would not have been the first people in Chiltern with far-travelled origins. In that sense the town, though provincial, had a surprisingly global past.

Life there between 1895 and 1916 would have mixed hardship with community. Mining and boring were not gentle occupations. Seasons mattered. Markets rose and fell. Children were born, neighbours watched one another's fortunes, and the cemetery filled, as it always did in country towns.

It is easy to imagine Theodore and Josephine in this setting: a large family growing year by year, first sustained by mining work and then surrounded by a town increasingly tied to mixed rural production. Their children were born into a Chiltern that still knew the old gold legends, where older men could point to former claims and lost dance halls, but where the future increasingly

belonged to those who fenced paddocks, planted vines, cured tobacco, kept bees, milked cows, bred sheep, and sent produce out by train.

By 1912, when the larger mining operations ceased, the direction of the town was clearer still. Chiltern was no longer to be a mining camp living by sudden luck, but a settled country community drawing on the land. Theodore did not live to see much beyond that transition, but he lived through the years in which it took place. He belonged to Chiltern in its last substantial mining phase and in its first settled agricultural maturity[44].

Over the following years, Theodore and Josephine had six more children in Chiltern. Their last child, born in 1908, was stillborn:

5. Elizabeth Bernard (**1896- †1991*)
6. Neil Patrick ("Paddy") Bernard (**1898 - †1991)*
7. Madeleine Cecilia Bernard (**1900 - †1981)*
8. John Vincent Bernard (**1902 - †1976*)
9. Francis Robert Bernard (**1904 -†1984)*
10. Unnamed child (**1908 – stillborn*)

All six were born in Chiltern, Victoria, Australia, after the family moved there in 1895.

[44] The section on the history of Chiltern is based primarily on Frank Whitcombe, "History of Chiltern," published in the Weekly Times (Melbourne), 25 May, 1 June, and 8 June 1929. The account draws on contemporary descriptions of Chiltern's mining history, local industries, institutions, and social life, as well as anecdotal material reflecting the town's development from goldfield settlement to agricultural community.



Illustration of Tug-of-War contest. AI Generated. Here Danish team vs Scottish team.

By this time, Theodore had established himself not only as a working man but also as a figure of notable physical presence. He was remembered as a strong and powerful man, and this strength found expression beyond his daily labour.

Around 1900 to 1910, he competed in tug of war competitions at the Exhibition Buildings in Melbourne, representing Danish teams. Tug of war at that time was a serious and popular competitive sport, often linked to national pride among immigrant communities. The Danish teams, including Theodore, were known for their discipline and strength, though they faced formidable opposition—particularly from the Irish teams, who were regarded as their strongest rivals. These competitions were more than sport; they were social gatherings and expressions of identity, where immigrant groups could assert both physical prowess and cultural presence in their new homeland. Theodore's participation suggests not only his strength but also his continued connection to his Danish roots, even as his life and name became firmly rooted in Australia.



The photo may show **Theodore** about 1890-1900 in Melbourne dressed in a free mason costume. This photograph presents Theodore not simply as a man in formal dress, but as a man deliberately shown through rank, ritual and authority. Taken in a Melbourne studio around 1900, it is a carefully staged image of status. His upright posture, steady gaze and controlled pose give him an air of confidence and self-command, while the regalia makes clear that this is not an ordinary portrait.

He is shown as an 18th Degree Freemason of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite, and the richly decorated collar and prominent jewel immediately signal that the photograph was

meant to record more than membership alone. The collar jewel, as you note, indicated that he held an important role within the lodge, so the image works almost like a visual declaration of honour, office and belonging.

What is striking is the contrast between the plain studio setting and the ceremonial richness of Theodore's dress. The dark coat frames the brighter Masonic elements so that the eye is drawn to the embroidered collar, the apron and the hanging jewel. The white apron, with its symbolic decoration, anchors the image in ritual identity, while the collar and jewel elevate it further into the realm of office and distinction. Even his pose contributes to this impression. One arm is set firmly at his side, the other rests on a studio prop, creating a composed, almost official bearing. He does not look relaxed in a casual sense; he looks presented. This was clearly intended as a portrait of dignity.

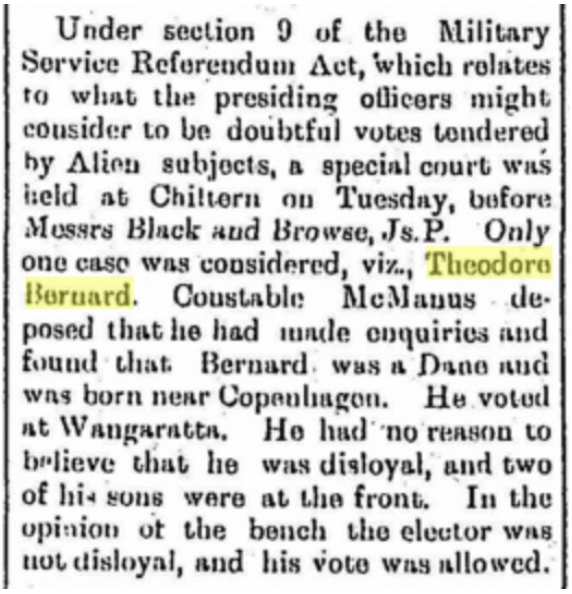
The Melbourne setting matters as well. The fact that the photograph was taken at No. 21 Collins Street East, in the same street as the offices of the United Grand Lodge of Victoria at No. 25, gives the image an added layer of meaning. Collins Street was one of Melbourne's most prominent urban addresses, associated with business, prestige and institutional life. To be photographed there in full Masonic regalia suggests proximity not only in geography but in social world. This was a portrait made in the orbit of official Freemasonry, close to one of its centres of authority in Victoria. That nearness would have reinforced the impression that Theodore was part of a respected and organised fraternity with public standing.

As a historical image, the portrait also tells us something about aspiration and identity in colonial and post-gold-rush Melbourne. Freemasonry offered fellowship, ritual order, moral seriousness and social recognition, and this portrait seems to preserve Theodore at exactly that intersection. It shows a man who wanted to be remembered not only for his face, but for the office he held and the community to which he belonged. The result is both personal and institutional: a likeness of Theodore, certainly, but also a statement about honour, advancement and place within the Masonic world of Melbourne at the turn of the century.

Photo courtesy of Christine Serre. Photo below restored and coloured by MyHeritage AI. Photo above AI generated based on original.



The Danish roots, so strong only one generation earlier, must gradually have faded in everyday life as the family became fully Australian in language, identity, and experience. That was the way of migration. Distance, especially the immense distance between Denmark and Australia, did not merely separate relatives geographically; it often transformed them culturally within a generation or two.



Under section 9 of the Military Service Referendum Act, which relates to what the presiding officers might consider to be doubtful votes tendered by Alien subjects, a special court was held at Chiltern on Tuesday, before Messrs Black and Browse, Js.P. Only one case was considered, viz., Theodore Bernard. Coustable McManus deposed that he had made enquiries and found that Bernard was a Dane and was born near Copenhagen. He voted at Wangaratta. He had no reason to believe that he was disloyal, and two of his sons were at the front. In the opinion of the bench the elector was not disloyal, and his vote was allowed.

On 17 November 1916, the *Federal Standard* in Chiltern, Victoria, reported a small but revealing case from the First World War conscription referendum. Se clip to the left.

Under section 9 of the Military Service Referendum Act, special attention was given to votes that presiding officers considered doubtful, especially where the voter was an "alien subject" — a foreign-born person whose status or loyalty might be questioned in wartime. These cases could be reviewed by a local court before the vote was finally accepted or rejected.

At Chiltern, a special court was held before Messrs Black and Browse, Justices of the Peace. Only one case was considered: that of Theodore Bernard.

Theodore Bernard had voted at Wangaratta, but his vote had been questioned because he was not British born. Constable McManus gave evidence that he had made enquiries into Bernard's background. He found that Bernard was a Dane, born near Copenhagen[45]. However, the constable also stated that he had no reason to believe Bernard was disloyal.

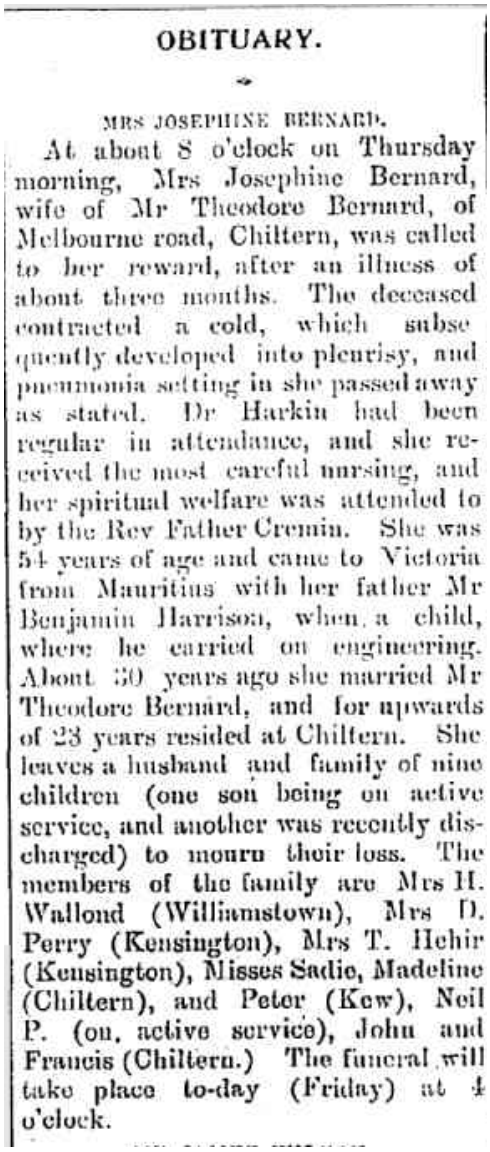
A particularly important point in Bernard's favour was that two of his sons were serving at the front. In the middle of the war, this was a strong sign that the family was regarded as loyal to Australia and the British Empire.

The bench accepted this view. The justices decided that Theodore Bernard was not disloyal, and his vote was therefore allowed.

The story is short, but it says a great deal about the atmosphere in Australia in 1916. The country was divided over whether men should be conscripted for overseas military service, and the war had created suspicion toward people born outside the British Empire. Even a long-settled Danish-born man could have his vote challenged. But in Bernard's case, the authorities concluded that foreign birth did not make him disloyal — especially when his own sons were already fighting at the front.

All this happened just a few weeks before Theodores wife, Josephine Harrison died.

[45] Theodore was born in Vissenbjerg but explaining that in Australia was probably hopeless. There is only 182 kilometers from Vissenbjerg to Copenhagen. In Australia that is just around the corner.



OBITUARY.

MRS JOSEPHINE BERNARD.

At about 8 o'clock on Thursday morning, Mrs Josephine Bernard, wife of Mr Theodore Bernard, of Melbourne road, Chiltern, was called to her reward, after an illness of about three months. The deceased contracted a cold, which subsequently developed into pleurisy, and pneumonia setting in she passed away as stated. Dr Harkin had been regular in attendance, and she received the most careful nursing, and her spiritual welfare was attended to by the Rev Father Cremin. She was 54 years of age and came to Victoria from Mauritius with her father Mr Benjamin Harrison, when a child, where he carried on engineering. About 30 years ago she married Mr Theodore Bernard, and for upwards of 23 years resided at Chiltern. She leaves a husband and family of nine children (one son being on active service, and another was recently discharged) to mourn their loss. The members of the family are Mrs H. Wallond (Williamstown), Mrs D. Perry (Kensington), Mrs T. Hehir (Kensington), Misses Sadie, Madeline (Chiltern), and Peter (Kew), Neil P. (on active service), John and Francis (Chiltern.) The funeral will take place to-day (Friday) at 4 o'clock.

Josephine Harrison died the 30. November 1916. In the newspaper Federal Standard on Friday 1 December her obituary was printed: "OBITUARY.

M*RS JOSEPHINE BERNARD*

At. about 8 o'clock on Thursday morning, Mrs Josephine Bernard, wife of Mr Theodore Bernard, of Melbourne Road, Chiltern, was called to her reward, after an illness of about three months. The deceased contracted a cold, which subsequently developed into pleurisy, and pneumonia setting in she passed away as stated. Dr Harkin had been regular in attendance, and she received the most careful nursing, and her spiritual welfare was attended to by the Rev Father Crcmin. She was 54 years of age and came to Victoria from Mauritius with her father Mr Benjamin Harrison, when a child, where he carried on engineering. About 30 years ago she married Mr Theodore Bernard, and for upwards of 23 years resided at Chiltern. She leaves a husband and family of nine children (one son being on active service, and another was recently discharged) to mourn their loss. The members of the family are Mrs H. Wallond (Williamstown)[46], Mrs D.Perry (Kensington), Mrs T. 1 Hehir (Kensington), Misses Sadie, Madeline (Chiltern), and Peter (Kew), Neil P. (on active service), John and Francis (Chiltern.) The funeral will take place to-day (Friday) at 4 o'clock[47].

Theodore died in **Chiltern, Victoria,** on 21 November 1917 after an illness extending over a period of five years.

[46] Notice how the daughters are listed by their husbands names. Josephine Agnes Bernard becomes Mrs. Herman Warlond!

[47] Federal Standard (Chiltern, Vic. : 1914 - 1918) fre. 1 dec. 1916 Page 2 OBITUARY.



Photo of an elderly Theodore? Courtesy of Christine Serre, who is not sure.

In many family albums it is often the case that names, dates and occasion is not noted in the album. For the first owner, who knows all about it, that is not important.

But for the descendants the historical photo with no records turns into just a random picture of some random people. The photo loose its relevance.



Photo from the grave[48] in Chiltern. **Inscription:** In loving memory of Josephine Bernard, died 30 .11 1916. also her husband Theodore Bernard, died 21.11.1917. Our dear parents.

[48] https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/138443898/theodore-bernard

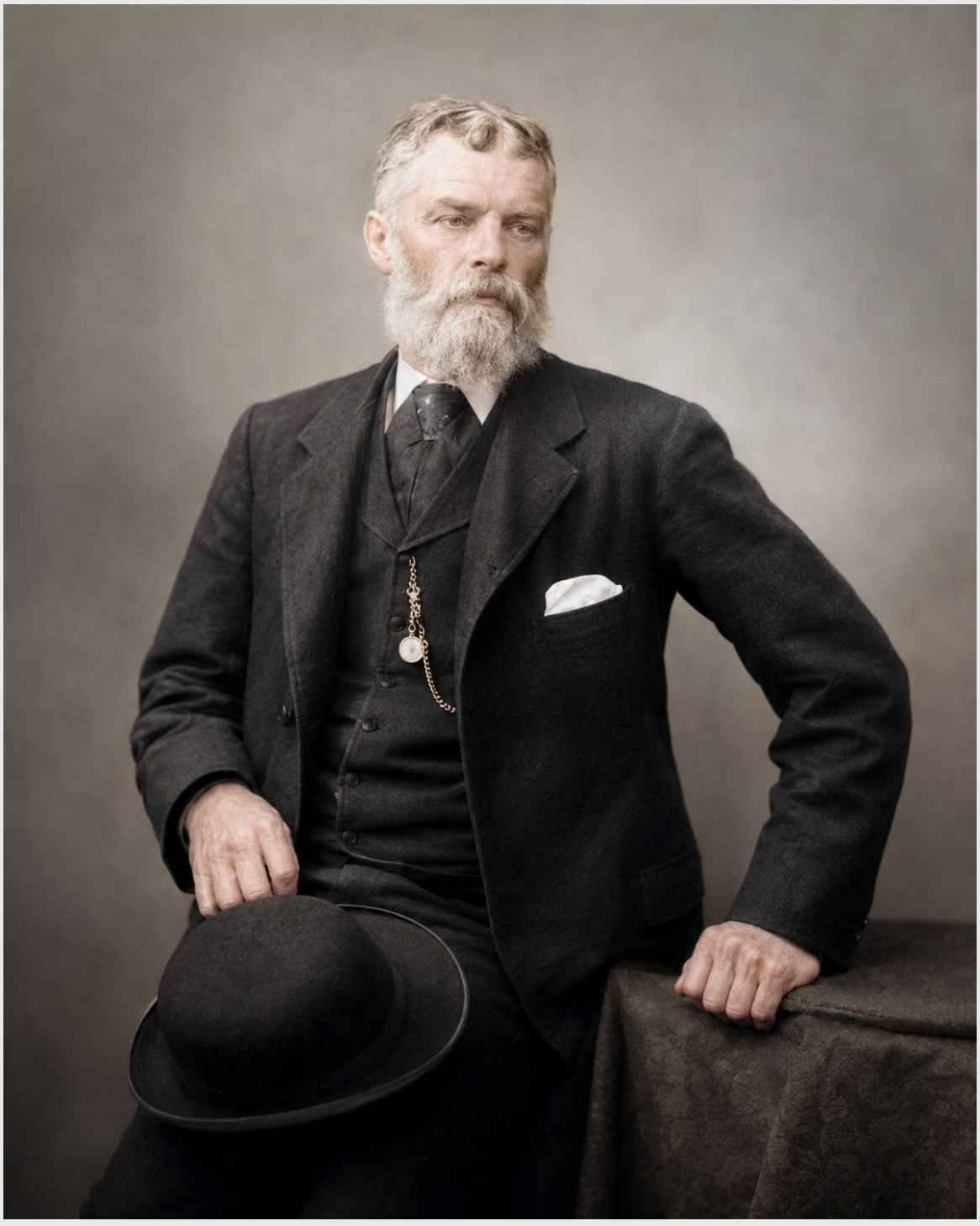
Obituary for Theodore Bernard in Federal Standard

Federal Standard (Chiltern, Vic.), Fri 23 Nov 1917, Page 2.

- The death occurred at Chiltern, on Wednesday, of Mr Theodore Bernard, aged 60 years, after an illness extending over a period of five years. Deceased who retired apparently in his usual health on Tuesday evening was found dead in his bed on Wednesday morning by his son, 13 years of age, with whom he was residing. Mr Bernard, who had been a resident of Chiltern for a number of years, was in his younger days a most powerful man and was a-member of the great Danish tug-of-war team that battled on the cleats for some considerable time with the famous Irish team at the Exhibition buildings, Melbourne. The exertion on that occasion became too much for him and he never enjoyed the best of health after.

Mr Bernard was known locally as a well-borer and undertook some extensive contracts boring for leads throughout the Chiltern district and for water in Riverina. His wife, to whom he was much attached, died just twelve months ago. Mr Bernard, was a native of Copenhagen[49], Denmark, and was the son of a soldier, and in the present terrible war two of his sons have seen active service, one, Neil Patrick, having been invalided home a wreck through being dreadfully knocked about by shrapnel. Mr. Bernard leaves a family of four sons and five daughters.

[49] Again – Theodore was born in Vissenbjerg, Denmark.



Theodore Bernard, 1916 or 1917? Ai-generated from original (see above).

Australian descendants of Theodore

The Children of Theodore Bernard and Josephine Harrison

From Denmark and Mauritius to Victoria, Australia

Theodore Bernard

Carl Theodor Bernhard Berthelsen
1857–1917
Born near Copenhagen, Denmark; miner and well-borer in Victoria

and

Josephine Harrison

1862–1916
From Mauritius; daughter of Benjamin Franklin Harrison

Married in Williamstown, Victoria, in January 1887.
Their family lived first in Footscray and later in Chiltern.

1. Josephine Agnes Bernard
1888–1960
Born: Footscray, Victoria
Spouse: Herman Rudolph Warlond; married Williamstown, 1913
Towns: Williamstown; Yarraville
Children: Recard Harrison Warlond; John Bernard "Jack" Warlond
Note: Warlond branch rooted in Williamstown.

2. Mary Theresa Bernard
1890–1955
Born: Footscray, Victoria
Spouse: Daniel Perry; married Wagga Wagga, NSW, 1912
Towns: Kensington; Melbourne; Molong, NSW
Children: Daniel Talbot Perry; Theresa Mary "Tess" Perry; William Patrick "Bill" Perry; Molly Edith Perry; Josephine Ruth Perry
Note: Perry branch later included Australian war service.

3. Sarah Anne Bernard *"Sadie"*
1892–1984
Born: Footscray, Victoria
Spouse: Charles Lawrence Northausen; married 1918
Towns: Chiltern; Dandenong; Euroa
Child: Norbert Bernard Northausen
Note: Bernard and Northausen branch.

4. Peter Theodore Bernard
1894–1982
Born: Footscray, Victoria
Spouse: Ann Jane Weston; married 1916
Towns: Kew; Fawkner; Victoria
Child: Josephine Margaret Bernard
Note: First World War soldier.

5. Elizabeth Bernard
1896–1991
Born: Chiltern Valley, Victoria
Spouse: Thomas Patrick Hehir; married Carlton, 1914
Towns: Carlton; Kensington; Melbourne
Children: Margaret Elizabeth "Girlie" Hehir; Mary Veronica Hehir; Eileen "Toss" Hehir; Dorothy "Dot" Hehir; Thomas Bernard Hehir
Note: Major Hehir branch.

6. Neil Patrick Bernard *"Paddy"*
1898–1991
Born: Chiltern, Victoria
Spouse: Irene Myrtle Shobbrook; married South Yarra, 1921
Towns: Chiltern; South Yarra; Prahran; Oakleigh
Children: Aileen Bernard; Alan Lindsay Bernard
Note: First World War soldier; severely wounded in France.

7. Madeleine Cecilia Bernard
c.1900–1981
Born: Chiltern, Victoria
Spouse: Eric Benjamin; married Sydney, 1938
Towns: Chiltern; St Kilda; Sydney; Townsville; Prahran; Williamstown
Children: none listed in the notes
Note: Later buried in Williamstown.

8. John James Vincent Bernard
1902–1976
Born: Chiltern, Victoria
Spouse: Vina Myrtle Burford; married 1932
Towns: Chiltern; Ballarat connection; Geelong
Children: none listed in the notes
Note: Second World War service; later lived in Geelong.

9. Francis Robert Bernard
1904–1984
Born: Chiltern Valley, Victoria
Spouse: Helena May Schram; married Victoria, 1935
Towns: Chiltern Valley; Deans Marsh; Bentleigh; Springvale
Children: none listed in the notes
Note: Buried at Springvale Botanical Cemetery.

10. Unnamed Bernard child
1908–1908
Born: Chiltern, Victoria
Stillborn
Buried: Chiltern New Cemetery

Williamstown → Footscray → Chiltern

The first four children were born in Footscray; the later children were born in Chiltern.

Legend

- Solid line = child of Theodore Bernard and Josephine Harrison
- Small names below = children of that branch
- Flower or star = child who died at birth
- Map pins = important towns in the family story

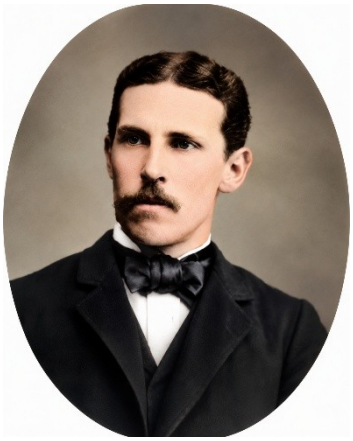
Dates shown as birth–death years
Birthplaces: Footscray for children 1–4; Chiltern / Chiltern Valley for children 5–10

The ten children of Theodore Bernard and Josephine Harrison were born between 1888 and 1908 and grew up between two worlds: first the industrial suburb of Footscray near Melbourne, and then the smaller but still active mining and agricultural town of Chiltern in Victoria. Several of Theodore's and Josephine's descendants were involved in both WW1 and WW2 and the Vietnam war.

Josephine Agnes Bernard (*1888– †18.5.1960)

The eldest daughter, Josephine Agnes Bernard, named after her mother was born in Footscray and later married Herman Rudolph Warlond (*1888- †1980) in Williamstown in 1913.

Herman Rudolph Warlond lived until 1980 and he died in Yarraville, Victoria. He was one out of nine sons and daughters of Herman Richard Warlond (*1857-†1957), known as John Warlond, and Emma Jane Nicols (*1858-†1944) from 86, Morris Street, Williamstown. They owned the Pier Hotel in Williamstown from 1883[50].



The photo to the right of Herman Rudolph Warlond is AI restored from a newspaper article photo in Ballarat Star, 15 December 1921. Herman served in the First World War as a private in the 58th Infantry Battalion. On 25 September 1916, holding service number 2759, Herman embarked from Melbourne aboard His Majesty's Australian Transport HMAT *Shropshire* (A9) for overseas service. All Hermans brothers also enlisted for the WW1. They all survived.

On the 27 October 1917 Herman Rudolph Warlond was reported wounded in newspapers (The Mildura Cultivator) – he was just one name on the 345th casualty list of 1.284 names. In October 1917, Herman Rudolph Warlond's unit, the 58th Australian Infantry Battalion, was serving in the Ypres sector in Belgium during the Third Battle of Ypres, also known as Passchendaele.

The battalion had recently taken part in heavy fighting at Polygon Wood, beginning on 26 September 1917, as part of the 15th Brigade, 5th Australian Division. By 25 October, the large attacks had largely subsided, but the men remained in the line under extremely difficult conditions. Heavy rain and constant shelling had turned the battlefield into deep mud, making movement, supply and survival exhausting.

For the 58th Battalion, this period was less a single dramatic assault than a continuation of the struggle after Polygon Wood: holding the line, resisting German counter-attacks, enduring artillery fire, and living in the waterlogged Flanders battlefield. It was part of the wider

[50] https://www.andrewwarland.com.au/australia/hermanwarlandvic.html

Passchendaele campaign, remembered as one of the most brutal and miserable battles of the First World War.

Josephine and Herman spent their life in Williamstown where they died and were buried 20 years apart.



The children of Josephine and Herman:

a. Recard Harrison Warlond was born in 1913, in Williamstown, Victoria, Australia. Recard was his grandfather's name (Herman Recard Warlond) Recard married Doris Bennett in 1940, in Victoria, Australia. Recard, also known as "Richard" was probably named after his uncle, Herman Recard "John" Warlond (*1857- †1948).

b. John Bernard "Jack" Warlond (*1915 - †1997), who married his cousin Eileen Mary Hehir (1919-2016) in 1946. Eileen was the daughter of Elizabeth Bernard, Theodores fourth daughter. They lived in Williamstown, Victoria.

   In 1942, Jack joined the Royal Australian Air Force, and during the war he served as a Corporal in the 112 Air-Sea Rescue Flight. The 112 Air-Sea Rescue Flight played a specialised and often dangerous role during the Second World War. Operating from Darwin in the Northern Territory, the unit was equipped with PBY Catalina flying boats, aircraft well suited to long-range missions over open water. Its primary task was to support Allied operations in the Pacific by locating and rescuing airmen forced down at sea during bombing missions against Japanese positions.

Jack and his fellow servicemen were involved in missions across the Pacific theatre, including areas such as Flores Island and Morotai. Their work required both skill and courage, as they flew into remote and often hostile environments to recover survivors, including crews from downed B-24 Liberator bombers and other aircraft.

After the war, the unit's role shifted from combat support to humanitarian and logistical work. It assisted in the evacuation of prisoners of war and carried out courier and supply duties in the region. The 112 Air-Sea Rescue Flight continued its service until it was disbanded in Darwin on 16 September 1947, having played a vital role in saving lives during and after the war. John and Eileen had the children:

a. Barry Warlond (*1949) who married Cheryl
b. John Warlond (*1949) John and Barry are identical twins.
c. Theresa ("Tess") Warlond – (*1951)
    i. Jane Abbott-King
    ii. Leon (son deceased)
d. Robin Warlond (*1953)
    i. Luke Warlond
    ii. Ashley

Mary Theresa Bernard (*12 January 1890 – †26 November 1955)

Mary Theresa Bernard was also born in Footscray. She married Daniel Perry (*1879– †1953) in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales in 1912. Daniel Perry was born in Molong, New South Wales, and worked as a cook. A Roman Catholic by faith, he lived with his wife, Mary Theresa Perry, at 25 McCracken Street in Kensington, Victoria. At the age of 39, and already married and father, he enlisted for service on 6 July 1915.

In the First World War Daniel Perry served in the Australian artillery, not as an infantryman in the front-line trenches. He enlisted in 1915 as a Gunner, which was the basic rank for an artillery soldier. Daniel embarked from Melbourne in June 1916, travelling first aboard HMAT *Wandilla* and later HMAT *Barambah*, as part of the deployment of Australian forces overseas during the First World War.

Daniel was first assigned to the 3rd Divisional Ammunition Column, Section 2. This unit belonged to the supply side of the artillery. Its job was to keep the guns supplied with shells, fuses and other ammunition. That meant moving ammunition from depots and railheads forward toward the batteries, often by horse-drawn wagons, limbers, carts or motor transport, depending on the situation. It was heavy, dangerous work, because ammunition columns had to operate close enough to the front to supply the guns and could be exposed to shellfire, air attack, mud, gas and night movement under difficult conditions.



He later served with the 7th Field Artillery Brigade. A field artillery brigade operated batteries of field guns or howitzers that supported infantry attacks and defended the line. As a gunner attached to such a brigade, he may have worked with the guns themselves, helped handle shells, maintain equipment, move ammunition, prepare positions, or support the firing batteries.

The 7th Field Artillery Brigade was part of the 3rd Australian Division. It went into action on the Western Front in early 1917 and is associated with several major battles. The clearest likely battles are:

Armentières sector, early 1917
The brigade went into action around Armentières in northern France in January 1917. This was a quieter but still dangerous sector, used for trench warfare, raids, artillery fire and training before larger operations.

Messines, June 1917
The 3rd Australian Division fought at Messines in Belgium. The artillery was central to the attack, firing barrages and supporting the infantry advance. If he was with the 3rd Divisional Ammunition Column or 7th Field Artillery Brigade at this time, his role would have been connected to supplying and supporting the guns.

Third Ypres / Passchendaele, 1917
The 7th Field Artillery Brigade is specifically associated with the battles of Menin Road, Broodseinde and Passchendaele.

The German Spring Offensive, 1918
In March–April 1918, Australian divisions were rushed to help stop the German advance in France. The 3rd Division fought around the Somme/Ancre area, including defensive operations near Morlancourt and Villers-Bretonneux. Artillery and ammunition supply were vital in this period.

The Hundred Days Offensive, August–November 1918
In the final Allied advance, the 3rd Australian Division took part in operations beginning with Amiens in August 1918 and continuing through the fighting that broke the Hindenburg Line. The artillery supported the infantry advances with moving barrages, and ammunition columns had to keep up as the front moved forward. In practical terms, his war was probably spent behind and near the front line rather than in hand-to-hand infantry fighting. But it was still front-line service. Artillery units were central to the fighting on the Western Front, and ammunition supply was essential. After nearly two years of service, he returned to Australia on 12 March 1918[51]. His military career reflects the contribution of older, married men who left behind families to serve, bringing practical skills such as cooking and logistics into the war effort while supporting frontline operations.

Mary died on 26. November 1955, in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, at the age of 65. Daniel died in Molong, NSW in 1953. Mary and Daniel Perry had the children:

a. Daniel Talbot Perry (*1912– †1994) he married Emily Rebecca Frith (*1916-†1968) and their son were:
    i. Keith Talbot Neil Perry was born on 7. November 1942, in Carlton, Victoria, Australia. He fought in Vietnam for 201 days between

[51] https://aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=238972

27/12/1967 and 20/08/1968 in 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment. Because his timeline aligned with the National Service conscription draft, Keith was thrown directly into the deadliest period of the entire war, surviving: The fierce urban clearing actions of the Tet Offensive (including the Battle of Bà Rịa). Operation Coburg around the heavily shelled US base at Bien Hoa. The legendary, regiment-sized human-wave defensive stands at Fire Support Base Balmoral in May 1968, which marked some of the most intense, close-quarters infantry fighting in modern Australian military history. He died on 4. November 2001, in Victoria, Australia, at the age of 58.

b. William Patrick “Bill” Perry (*23 June 1919 – †25 July 2019), who served in the Australian Army during the Second World War with the 13/33 Infantry Battalion and reached the rank of sergeant. Bill was born on 23 June 1919. He reached enlistment age right as World War II broke out in Europe. While he was assigned to the 13/33rd Infantry Battalion—a unit belonging to the Militia (Citizen Military Forces)—Bill chose to take an extra step. His service number, VX147753, features the "X" prefix. This means he formally volunteered for the Second Australian Imperial Force (2nd AIF). By signing up for the AIF, he volunteered to fight anywhere in the world, shedding the standard legislative restrictions that kept ordinary Militia troops bound to domestic soil. He died, in Parkville, Victoria, Australia, at the age of 100.

c. Molly (Mollie) Edith Perry (*1921-†2007), who married Gordon William Prentice (*1917-†1981) in 1939 in Victoria.

d. Josephine Ruth Perry (*1925 in Sunshine - †14.6.1966) married Harold Alfred Dewsbury (*1915?- †1977) in Melbourne in 1952.

e. Theresa Mary “Tess” Perry (*1910–†1964), who married James Finley Purdy.) married James Finley Purdy (*1910-†8.12.1989) from Liverpool in 1939 in Springvale, Greater Dandenong City, Victoria Australia

Sarah Anne "Sadie" Bernard (21 April 1892 – †29 December 1984)

Sarah Anne "Sadie" Bernard was born in Footscray.

In 1908 Sarah was a young girl and working as a domestic servant in Chiltern, when she was assaulted by a young miner, Norman Ramage. It ended in court and the newspaper Ovens and Murray Advertiser gave a detailed and vivid account in its issue 21. mar. 1908 (Here abbreviated):

The case concerned Norman Ramage, a young miner from Chiltern Valley, who was charged with an indecent assault on Sarah Bernard, the daughter of Theodore Bernard. Sarah was a domestic servant and stated in court that she would turn sixteen on 21 April.
Sarah told the court that she had known Ramage for about eight months. He delivered milk, and she had sometimes spoken to him when he came by. On the evening of 20 January, she was staying at Mrs Tozzy's and left for home at about a quarter to seven. On the road near Mrs Coad's shop, she met Ramage. According to her evidence, he asked where she was going. She replied that she was going home. After some conversation, she said, Ramage caught hold of her and made an indecent proposal. She refused and offered him a half-crown to let her go. Instead, she said, he took the money, repeated the proposal, and assaulted her. Sarah described the incident in detail to the court. She said the place was about 300 yards from her home. When she reached home, she told her father what had happened:

"I am a domestic servant. My parents reside at Chiltern Valley No. 1. Will be 16 on the 21st April. Knew the accused first eight months ago. Met him at Possett's when he was bringing milk. On the 20th January was staying at Mrs. Tozzy's. Left for home about a quarter to 7. Met Miss Rosengren a short distance from Mrs. Coad's shop. On reaching the slum heaps at the Chiltern Valley met accused. He came out from the bushes. Did not recognise him. It was 8 o'clock, and dark. He bid me 'Good night.' I said, 'Who are you?' He said, 'The old milk-boy who used to supply Possett's.' He asked where I was going, and if I had left my place. Was walking towards home. After some conversation he caught hold of me." *And*

"The place was about 300 yards from home. When I got there I told my father. Said it was accused. Was examined by Dr. Harkin. Showed the sergeant of police the place next day. Found a piece of ribbon that had been round my hair"

Under cross-examination, Sarah admitted that she knew Ramage from his milk round and had spoken with him before, but she denied that she had ever encouraged him. She also denied that she had invited him to commit the offence or that the encounter was voluntary.

Her father, Theodore Bernard, gave evidence that Sarah came home around eight o'clock, very distressed, and told him she had been assaulted by Ramage. The next day he went with Sergeant

Kane to the place she had described. He could not remember her exact words, but he remembered the effect of what she told him.
Dr Harkin, a medical practitioner from Chiltern, examined Sarah. He said there was evidence consistent with the more serious offence having been committed recently, though under questioning he also said there was no external evidence of a struggle and that the physical signs could be consistent with voluntary intercourse.

Other witnesses placed Ramage in the area that evening. Ernest Mafferzoni, a sixteen-year-old miner, said he saw Ramage near Robson's verandah around seven o'clock and later near Mrs Coad's shop. Sergeant Kane said Sarah had grass in her hair and on her dress, and that a black ribbon found at the place was identified by her as hers.

Ramage gave evidence in his own defence:

"Was quite friendly with her. Saw her several times after. Met her on the evening stated, and had some conversation with her. (The witness here stated that the girl invited him to commit the alleged offence.)"

He said he and Sarah had known each other for two or three months and had talked while he was delivering milk. He claimed that Sarah had made indecent suggestions to him before, and that the encounter on the evening in question had been voluntary. He said the half-crown was given to him so that he would not tell anyone. He denied assaulting her:

"Her evidence was a pack of lies. Had not seen her for two or three months. Had told the truth throughout".

The defence argued that Sarah's story was unreliable and that the evidence did not prove force. The prosecution argued that her account was truthful and supported by the circumstances.

The judge told the jury that the case turned on whether they believed Sarah Bernard. He said the defence version was highly improbable,but reminded the jury that if there was reasonable doubt, Ramage must receive the benefit of it.

After about twenty minutes, the jury returned a verdict of guilty. At sentencing, Ramage's counsel appealed for leniency, saying he was a first offender and that relatives would take responsibility for him. His father, Thomas Ramage, told the court that he had given his son a sound thrashing when he heard of the case, but said Norman had previously been well behaved. A constable also described the Ramage family as respectable.

Taking Ramage's previous good behaviour into account, the judge did not send him to prison immediately. Instead, he released him on a £50 bond, with his father as surety, requiring him to come up for sentence if called upon.

Sarah also called “Sadie” later married Charles Lawrence Northausen (*1891-†1968) in 1918. Charles’ parents were William Northhausen (*1860-†1914) and Margaret Perry (*1861-†1942) – who may have been related to Daniel Perry married to Mary Theresa. Charles Lawrence was also soldier a part of his life and served as a private both in WW1 and again in the 28th Australian Infantry Battalion in WW2 from 1940 to 1942.

Sarah died in Dandenong and was buried in Euroa. They had one known son,

a. Norbert Bernard Northausen (*26 September 1919 – †1977), born in Victoria. Norbert Bernard Northausen enlisted in the Australian Army in Melbourne in May 1941 at the age of 21. He served throughout most of the Second World War and was discharged on 1 November 1945. He held the rank of Sapper, meaning he served as a military engineer rather than as a regular infantry soldier. At discharge he was posted to 5 AA TP COY, probably an Australian Army Troops engineer company. His work would likely have involved practical army engineering such as construction, repair, transport support, camp works, roads, bridges or other infrastructure needed by the army.





Peter Theodore Bernard (*25 March 1894 – †1982)

Peter Theodore Bernard the youngest of the Footscray-born children, attended St Joseph's Catholic School, reflecting the family's religious upbringing. He married Ann Jane Weston (†1972) in 1916. He died in 1982, at the age of 88, and was buried in Fawkner, Victoria, Australia.



Peter Theodore Bernard AI restored photo from the two black and white photos below.

Peter enlisted in the 1st Australian Imperial Force on 22 January 1915, at the height of the First World War, and embarked from Melbourne on the *HMAT Ulysses* on 10 May 1915. His service placed him among the early Australian troops sent overseas. Later in life, his war medals—including an ANZAC medal—were donated to the Chiltern Athenaeum by his daughter's estate, preserving his memory within the town.

With the information given, the safest answer is that Peter almost certainly served first at Gallipoli and later on the Western Front in France and Belgium — but the exact battles depend on his battalion.

He embarked from Melbourne on HMAT Ulysses on 10 May 1915. That ship carried men of the Victorian battalions of the 6th Brigade, 2nd Australian Division, especially the 21st and 22nd Battalions. Australian War Memorial records show men of the 21st Battalion embarking from Melbourne on HMAT Ulysses on that date, and other records show 22nd Battalion men doing the same.

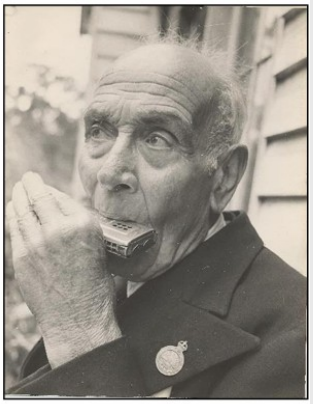
The mention of an ANZAC medal is also important. The Anzac Commemorative Medallion was awarded to surviving Australian forces who served on the Gallipoli Peninsula, or directly supported the Gallipoli operations from offshore, between April 1915 and the evacuation in January 1916. So, Peter's likely war path was:

He left Australia in May 1915, trained briefly in Egypt, and then served at Gallipoli later in 1915. If he was in the 21st Battalion, that unit reached Anzac Cove in September 1915 and mainly carried out defensive duties until the evacuation in December. After Gallipoli, the battalion returned to Egypt and then went to France in 1916, becoming one of the early Australian units on the Western Front.

On the Western Front, the likely battle areas include Armentières, then the Somme, especially Pozières and Mouquet Farm in 1916. In 1917 the battalion fought around the Hindenburg Line, including Second Bullecourt, and later in Belgium during Third Ypres, including actions such as Menin Road, Polygon Wood, Broodseinde and Passchendaele. In 1918 it was involved in the fighting against the German Spring Offensive and then the Allied advance, including Hamel, Amiens, Mont St Quentin and the Hindenburg Line/Beaurevoir area.

Peter and Ann had one daughter Josephine Margaret Bernard (*~1917) who married Mr Patterson.





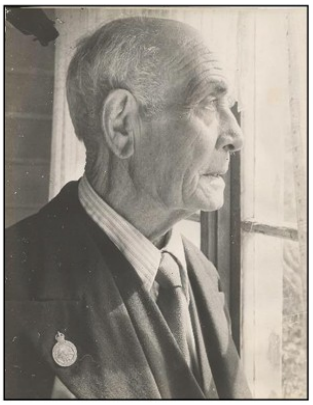


Photo of Peter Theodore Bernard and his decorations from WW1. The medal group records the First World War service of an Australian soldier, often referred to as an ANZAC. ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, the force that became famous after the landing at Gallipoli in 1915. Over time, the word came to symbolise Australian and New Zealand soldiers' courage, endurance and sacrifice in the war.

The bronze, star-shaped medal is the 1914–1915 Star, awarded to those who served in a theatre of war during the first part of the conflict. Beside it are the British War Medal, in silver, and the Victory Medal, with its rainbow-coloured ribbon. Together, these three medals recognise early overseas service and participation in the Allied war effort.

The purple display also includes the Australian Rising Sun badge, the emblem of the Australian Imperial Force, and the large bronze Memorial Plaque, often called the "Dead Man's Penny". This plaque was sent to the family of a man who died in service. Taken together, the medals, badge and plaque tell a story of ANZAC service, overseas war experience and sacrifice.

The symbol on Peter's jacket is most likely the Rising Sun badge, the cap badge of the Australian Imperial Force. This badge shows a radiating sunburst with a scroll bearing the words "Australian Commonwealth Military Forces" (or a similar inscription depending on the version). It was worn on the slouch hat and sometimes appears in photographs pinned to the tunic or jacket. The Rising Sun became one of the most recognisable emblems of the ANZAC soldiers and is still a central symbol of Australian military identity today.

Elizabeth Bernard (*29 March 1896 – †27 July 1991)

Elizabeth Bernard (*29 March 1896 – †27 July 1991) was born in Chiltern Valley. Elizabeth attended Chiltern State School briefly in 1904 after transferring from the Catholic convent school, and her father, Theodore, was recorded as a miner at the time. As a teenager, she showed independence by travelling alone by train to Melbourne in search of work. There she met Thomas "Tom" Patrick Hehir (*1890-†1954) from Ballarat, Victoria, an assistant stationmaster, and they married on 15 October 1914 at St George's Catholic Church in Carlton.



Elizabeth Bernard

AI manipulated photos based on wedding photo below.



Thomas "Tom" Patrick Hehir

Photographed at their wedding 15 October 1914

Thomas's father, James Patrick O'Hehir (*1858-†1939) had arrived from County Clare in Ireland in mid-1860's and after embarking at Port Melbourne he immediately found work as a ganger building the cable tram route between Melbourne and South Melbourne. This line opened in 1890. His Irish name was O'Hehir, but the family name was simplified to Hehir in Australia—likely encouraged by his wife Margaret George—as part of a common pattern of adapting Irish names to English-speaking society. Margaret A. George (*1866-†1946) was a young widow with several children when they married. James and Margaret married and had 6 children: Jack, Jim, Tom, (Kath), Margaret and Mary.



Photo courtesy of Christine Serre: Elizabeth Bernard and Thomas P. Hehir wedding day 15 October 1914. Theodore's daughter and Christine Serre's grandmother.



Photo courtesy of Christine Serre



Photo courtesy of Christine Serre: From left to right, Mary Cuddon, Eileen Warlond, Elizabeth Hehir, Margaret Taylor, Dorothy Blyth and Thomas Hehir. My aunties, grandmother and my father. Theodore's daughter and grandchildren. Original.



Elizabeth Hehir née Bernard, Theodores fifth child.



Margaret Taylor "Girlie", Née Hehir



Mary Veronica Cuddon, Née Hehir



Eileen Warlond "Toss", Née Hehir



Dorothy Blyth "Dot", Née Hehir



Thomas Hehir "Tom"

Elizabeth with her five children. The occasion is not known, but it might very well have been on Elizabeths 75th birthday in 1971 which fits the clothes, hairstyle, photo-quality and buffet very nicely.

The "cut-out" portraits are adjusted with the help of AI. Below is the family photo adjusted with AI – and now they all smile into the camera.



Elizabeth and Thomas had five children (Margaret, Mary, Eileen, Dorothy and Thomas):

a. Margaret Elizabeth ("Girlie") (*1915 - †2010) born in Kensington, Victoria married Leonard "Horace" Taylor (*1911 – †1963) in 1936. They had
    i. Margaret Dorothy Taylor was born on *11. April 1938, in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. She married Terry Hunt. They had the children
        1. Carol P. Hunt. She have the children Madeline, Maxwell and Alexandra
        2. Lynette D. Hunt
        3. Graham W Hunt who married Gwyn. They have the children Brie, Idris and Rhyll.

    ii. John L Taylor married to Patricia O'Brian. Their children:
        1. Leonard F. Taylor married to Michele Roche have the children: Sophie and Lachlan.
        2. James A. Taylor married and divorced to Terry Kelly. Their children: Georgia and Charlii
        3. Robert D Taylor married to Anne More. Children: Oscar, Zachary
        4. Peter J Taylor married to Becky Zac and have Indigo. With Nicole Lynch Peter have Emily.
        5. Steven C Taylor married to Nicole Brasher have Logan and Jaxon.

b. Mary Veronica Hehir (*1917 - †2012) married Leslie Wilfred Cuddon (*1918-†2007) in 1937. Leslie died in Corowa, New South Wales, Australia and is buried in Rutherglen, Victoria. Mary and Leslie had the children
    i. Ray Cuddon married to Mary. Children:
        1. Tony Cuddon
        2. Mark Cuddon who has children Jacob and Josephine
        3. Carolyn who has children Daniel and Kiera
    ii. Kathleen who married Brian Warren. Children:
        1. Christine Warren
        2. Raelene Warren
        3. Linton Warren
    iii. Rosemary married to Lindsay Shannon. Children
        1. Michelle Shannon
        2. Glenn Shannon
        3. Lesley Shannon

c. Eileen "Toss" Hehir (*1919 -†2016) married her cousin "Jack" John Bernard Warlond (*1915-†1997). See Josephine Agnes Bernards second son.

d. Dorothy "Dot" Hehir (*1927 – †2022) married William "Bill" Blyth and had the children
    i. Anne Kyl who had the children
        1. Coriann Kyl
        2. Jason Kyl
    ii. Pam Blyth

e. Thomas "Tom" Bernard Hehir (*1930 -†1998) had 6 children. Thomas first married Joan Thelma Rowe on 28. July 1950, in Footscray, Victoria, Australia. Thomas and Joan had two children:
    i. Christine Hehir-Serre married Josephus Serré
        i. Joseph Serré
            1. Shakira Serré
            2. Matilda Serré
        ii. Jayde Serré
            1. Bailey Serré
            2. Cooper Serré

    ii. Peter Hehir long-time partner Ingrid Katgert

    Thomas divorced Joan and later married Joanna Anderson. Thomas and Joanna had four children:
    iii. Jody E Hehir married to Sean R. Crawford:

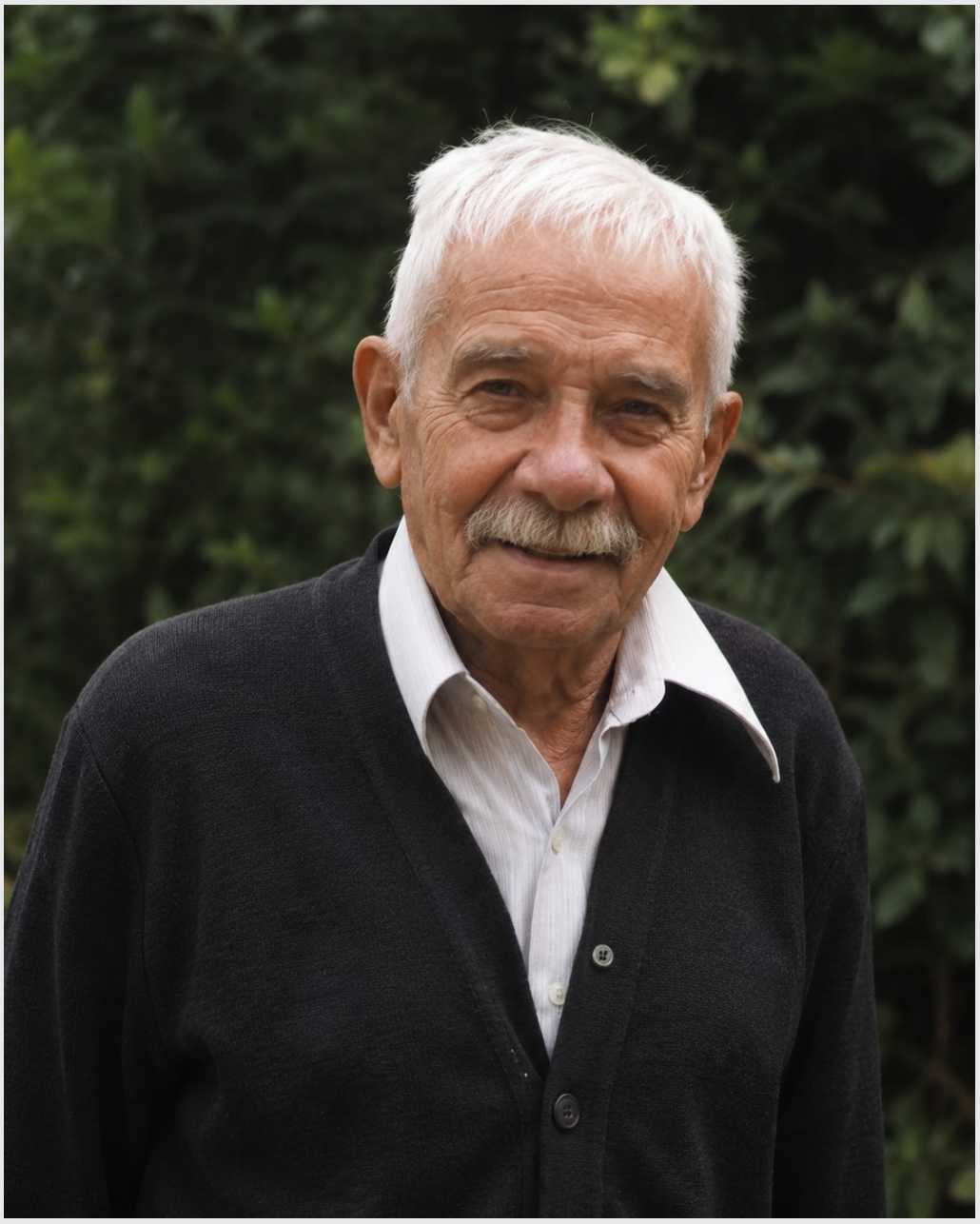
1. Sonny P. Crawford
2. Michaella S Crawford

iv. Thomas P. Hehir married and divorced Annette Lees. Anette later had the Children:
    1. Logan Hehir
    2. Chelsea Hehir
    3. Paige Hehir

v. Shane Hehir married Sarah Abbott:
    1. May Hehir
    2. Mack Hehir

vi. Robin J. Hehir married to Susie Carroll:
    1. Prue Hehir
    2. Finn Hehir

Neil Patrick "Paddy" Bernard (*28 February 1898 – †11 January 1991).



Neil Patrick "Paddy" Bernard. AI restored photo from a newspaper (inserted below). Neil was probably more scarred in his face from his wounds in WW1 and the AI-restored photo may understate the facial scarring from his WWI wounds. He wrote from the hospital in a letter to his father: "*only half my nose is left and no roof in my mouth yet, but the doctors say they can fix me up. I am also practically blind in the left eye*".

Neil Patrick “Paddy” Bernard. It is not unlikely that Neil was named after Theodores father, Niels. Neil was born in Chiltern and attended Chiltern State School, where he took part in Empire Day sports in 1907. In 1916, at barely eighteen years of age, he enlisted in the First World War and joined the 2nd Pioneer Battalion. In France, during an assault on German trenches, he was severely wounded – at it was all reported in the local newspaper in Chiltern:

Federal Standard – Chiltern Newspaper 8. December 1916:

Mr T. Bernard, of Melbourne Road, Chiltern, received the following message on Wednesday from the Defence Department: “Melbourne, December 5. I regret to advise you that information has been received to the effect that No. 1658, Private N. P. Bernard, was admitted to King George’s Hospital, London, on 19/11/16, suffering from severe wounds. ”Private Neil Patrick Bernard, who is only 18 years of age, belonged to the Second Australian Pioneer Battalion.

Federal Standard – Chiltern Newspaper 19. January 1917

On Monday, Mr T. Bernard, of Chiltern, received a very nice letter from Mrs A. A. Varley, of London, who was a constant visitor to see his son, Private Neil Bernard, at the King George Hospital. Mrs Varley says that Neil was wounded by a sniper. The bullet entered the top of his nose and came out through his cheek, fortunately escaping his eyes. The sisters and nurses were all very kind and attentive, and he was being attended by the best doctors. Mrs Varley is an Australian, hailing from Adelaide, South Australia.

Federal Standard - Chiltern Newspaper, Friday 2 March 1917:

Writing from the No 2 Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Southall, England to his father, Mr Bernard of Chiltern, Private Neil Bernard says: — I am now getting on well and have been transferred to this Australian hospital. I am now able to step up all day and walk about. I was before the Medical Board a day or two ago, and the verdict was that I was unfit for further active service. Since then I have been told that I am on the books to return to Australia and will leave here about the beginning of February. I am terribly disfigured from the wounds. Only half my nose is left and no roof in my mouth yet, but the doctors say they can fix me up. I am also practically blind in the left eye. The doctors told me it was only one in twenty that would live with wounds like mine. When I first got out of bed the Red Cross ladies used to wheel me out in the street in a chair and take me to the picture theatres. When I got wounded we were charging Fritz's first two trenches and just got to the first when I got knocked out. A lot of our poor lads fell that morning. Two of the Maffersoni’s from No. 2 got wounded in the same charge.

Federal Standard – Chiltern Newspaper, Friday 20 April 1917: Private Neil Bernard, who belonged to the 2nd Pioneer Battalion, returned home from the front on Monday night. The young hero, who is a son of Mr T. Bernard, of Black Dog Creek, Chiltern, enlisted less than twelve months ago, when he was barely 18 years of age, and went into camp at Wangaratta. After being in training tor only seven weeks he was despatched to the front where he took part in some stirring engagements in France. In one of those encounters he was severely wounded and his face was badly damaged. For several months he had been an inmate of a London hospital, where, he states, he was treated splendidly. Although his face is much disfigured Neil appears to be quite happy and cheerful. A few of the youths of Chiltern were on the platform at the railway station when the returned lad stepped out of the train, and they gave him a hearty cheer. He died in 1991, in Prahran, Victoria, Australia, at the age of 93.



Theodore died half a year later the 23 November 1917. Neil married Irene Myrtle Shobbrook (*~1902–†1999) in 1921 at South Yarra. Their children were:

a. Aileen Bernard (*27 May 1921 – †12 January 2023), who married Wallace Jukes in 1945 and later Norman James O'Callaghan. Aileen lived to 101, becoming one of the longest-lived members of the family. With Wallace she had one daughter:
    i. Laureen Dorothy Jukes (*1947-1948)



b. Alan Lindsay Bernard (*1922–†1943), who died young. He died in 1943, in Oakleigh, Victoria, Australia, at the age of 21.

Madeline Cecilia Bernard (*~1900 – †18 September 1981)

Madeline Cecilia Bernard was born in Chiltern, though her birth registration has not been found. She married Eric Benjamin (*23 June 1896 – †1971) in Sydney in 1938.

The very young Madeline wrote an open letter to Aunt Connie that was published Weekly Times, Melbourne 23 November 1912. Aunt Connie is the editor of "Our Letter Box" in the newspaper – and the newspaper illustrated her letter:

THE DISTRICT OF CHILTERN. **Madeline Bernard**, who lives at Bridge Street, Chiltern, writes.

Dear Aunt

Come READY FOR WORK. I hope you will accept me as one of your new nieces. I will take for my subject "The District I Live In." Chiltern used to be noted for its gold mines. There are three schools in Chiltern. I go to St. Joseph's Primary School. I live about half a mile from the town, and about a quarter of a mile from the school.

There are going to be sports up here on October 30; a procession in the morning, and sports to follow in the afternoon. It is a pleasure to go for a walk on the hills now, as the flowers are all out, and they smell so nice and sweet. Many people like to go out and hunt for rabbits in the bush. I have two rabbits, one white and the other all yellow. My father brought them home for me.

All the fruit trees are coming out in bloom now. We have a lot of young fruit trees. I think we will need some rain very shortly, as everything is getting so dry. We had some very frosty mornings about a week ago, and it burnt a lot of young plants down. There is not much work up here now, as the mines are closed. I have four sisters and four brothers. I am 12 years and 1 month old and am in the 7th grade at school.

Please may I write again?

[Yes, Madeline, I shall be pleased to hear from you again.—Aunt Connie.]



Madeline is mentioned almost ten years later in the **The Sun** 10. October 1921 in Sydney under the headline:

Plucky Housemaid:

Masked Man Tackled. Madeline Bernard, employed by the home of Henry Pamphilon, St. Kilda. A bookmaker surprised four masked men who were ransacking the house. She grappled with one of them, but all escaped, taking with them a fur coat.

The story was reported in several newspapers on the day. Warwick Daily News had a more detailed account of the story:

Raid on Bookmaker's House.

Madeline Bernard, a maid employed by Mr. Henry Pamphilon, bookmaker, of 148 St. Kilda-road, Melbourne, had a sensational experience with burglars on Saturday night, according to the story told to the police. Mr. and Mrs. Pamphilon had left the house at 7.50 p.m., and the maid went out shortly afterwards.

The latter returned at about 10.55 p.m. As she approached the front entrance she noticed that the door was open and the front rooms were lighted. As she entered she was set upon by a young man, who had a black handkerchief over his face. He put his hand over her mouth and threw her to the ground. There were three other men, two of whom wore masks. The man who attacked her held her while his companions made their escape.



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Crime does not pay – and the thief was caught just three days later as reported by The Herald on 13 October 1921 in Melbourne:

CRIME IN ST. KILDA ROAD SUSPECT REMANDED

Details of an alleged attempt to rob the home of a well-known bookmaker, at 148 St. Kilda road, on the night of October 8, when a maid named Madeline Bernard was said to have been ill-treated, were related at the City Court today.

James Charles William Lock, a tall, well-dressed young man, was charged with having broken into the dwelling house of Henry Pamphilon, and stolen a mink fur valued at £50. On the application of Detective W. P. Jones, Lock was remanded till October 21.

Detective Jones stated that on the night mentioned Bernard arrived home shortly before 11 o'clock. Through the open door she observed a man smoking a cigar, and on going in she was immediately seized and held. The screams of the girl attracted the attention of a man and woman in the street. They entered the house, but before they did so, the maid saw three men leave the house, who were joined by the man who had attacked her.

It was subsequently discovered that all the rooms had been ransacked, and a large iron safe had been dragged from its position near the wall. At the watch house Lock was pointed out by Bernard as the man who had held her.

During the Second World War, Eric Benjamin enlisted in the Australian Army on 21 July 1942 in Townsville. Serving as a Private under service number Q218137, he was posted to the 16th Battalion, Volunteer Defence Corps (Queensland). The Volunteer Defence Corps was a home-defence force in Australia during the Second World War, made up largely of older men, veterans of the First World War, and men not eligible or not yet called for full-time service.

The 16th Battalion VDC (Queensland) would have served in Queensland, not in New Guinea, North Africa, Europe or the Pacific islands. Its role was to defend local areas in case of Japanese raids or invasion, especially after Japan entered the war in late 1941 and northern Australia came under threat.

Eric Benjamin completed his military service on 14 August 1944.

Madeline died on 18. September 1981, in Prahran, Victoria, Australia, at the age of 81, and was buried in Williamstown, Victoria, Australia.

John James Vincent Bernard (*2 June 1902 – †1976)

John James Vincent Bernard (*2 June 1902 – †1976) was born in Chiltern and later known as James or John. He married Vina Myrtle Burford (*1906–†1994) in 1932 and lived in Geelong.

Vina Myrtle was daughter and the fifth of twelve children of Robert Burford (*1874-†1965) and Mary Evangeline Gilbert (*1871-†1945). Robert and Mary Burford were born, lived and died in Ballarat, Victoria.

John James enlisted in the Australian Army on 12 July 1940 at Royal Park in Victoria and served throughout the Second World War. During his service, he held the rank of corporal and was recorded under the service number V4341. He completed his military career with a posting at the Land Headquarters Australian Army Service Corps School and was discharged on 17 October 1945.

John and Vina lived in Geelong, Victoria. John died in 1976, in Geelong, Victoria, Australia, at the age of 74.

Francis Robert Bernard (*26 August 1904 – †December 1984)

Francis Robert Bernard (*26 August 1904 – †December 1984) was born in Chiltern Valley and married Helena May Schram (*1909–†1992) on 30 June 1935 in Victoria, Australia.

Helena May was born in Deans Marsh in the Surf Coast Shire, Victoria. Her parents were farmer Ernest Alfred Schram (*1882-†1954) and Sophia Parker (*1887-†1948). Helena was the eldest of 6 siblings. Her father Ernest died in 1954 after a bull attack:

"**Bull Killed Pearcedale Man Who Saved It From Being Shot**.

A Pearcedale farmer who pursuaded his son not to shoot a vicious bull after it had at tacked him, was later killed by the bull when it savagely attacked him on January 4th, as they were about to truck it for sale at the Dandenong-Market. Mr. Burke, City Coroner, was told this last Thursday, when enquiring' into the death; ten days after the attack, of Ernest Alfred Schram, 73-year-old farmer. Leslie Colin Schram, farmer, of East Rd., Pearcedale, said the bull had attacked him six days before it attacked his father. His father had then dissuaded him from destroying the bull, suggesting that they sell it the following week. On January 4 his father went to let the bull from the paddock into the yard, to be trucked to Dandenong Market. The bull rushed at his father. Leslie Schram got a gun and shot the bull as it stood over its unconscious victim. After the first attack he had been in the habit of carrying a gun around the farm in case the animal escaped, Schram jnr. stated. Mr. Burke, Coroner, said the attack accelerated the death of Schram. He had five ribs fractured. Mr. Burke found that Schram died of a heart complaint and recorded a finding of accidental death"[52].

Francis and Helena lived in Victoria and Francis died on 6 December 1984, in Bentleigh, Victoria, Australia, at the age of 80, and was buried in Springvale Botanical Cemetery, Springvale, Victoria, Australia.



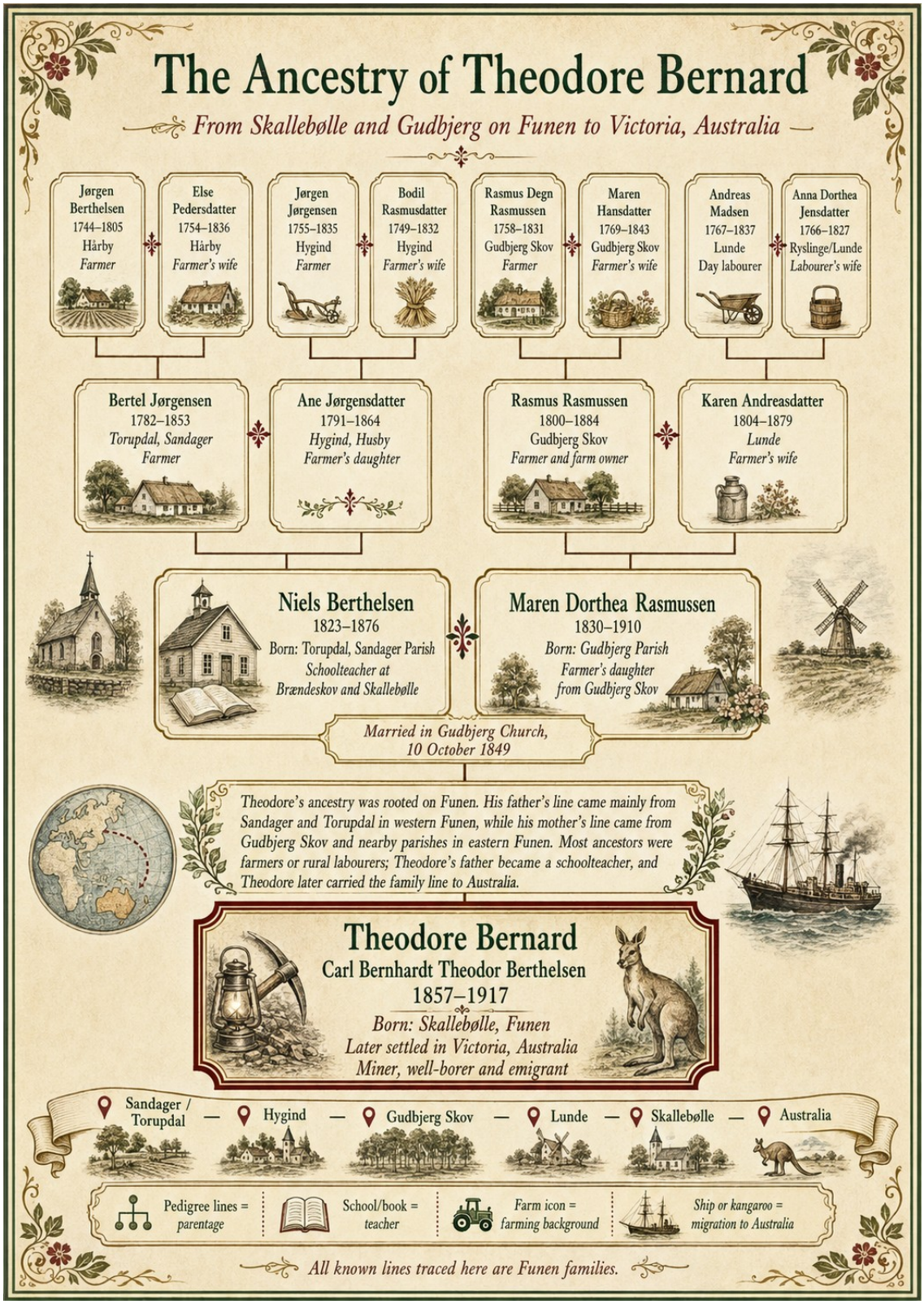


[52] https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/218508031

Stillborn Bernard 1908

The final child, born in 1908, was stillborn and is buried in Chiltern New Cemetery.

Danish ancestors of Theodore



Theodore Bernard was born in Skallebølle near Odense in Denmark in 1857 as Carl Bernhardt Theodor Berthelsen[53]. Theodore's father was teacher Niels Berthelsen (*1823-†1876) and his mother was Maren Dorthea Rasmussen (*1830-†1910). They had married on 10 October 1849 in Gudbjerg Church in Gudbjerg, Funen.

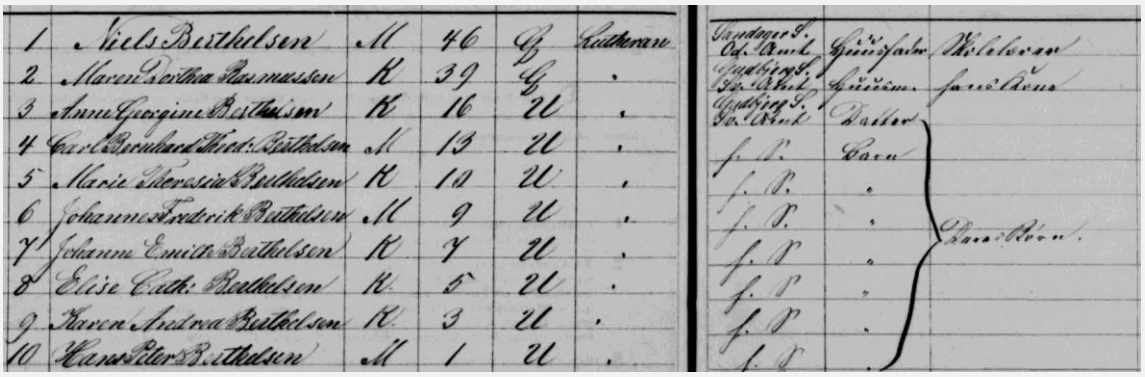


Photo of the census in Skallebølle from 1870 where the household of Niels Berthelsen and Maren Dorthea is counted. Theodore is number four in the list.

Theodores family lived in Skallebølle. The name **Skallebølle** is very old. Old, recorded forms include **Skollebøl** around 1500 and **Skallebølle** a little later. The ending **-bølle** is a Danish place-name ending connected with settlement or village, and it is related to the verb "to dwell" or "to live." The first part of the name is less certain, so the safest explanation is that Skallebølle is an old settlement name whose exact first element is uncertain today.

People from Funen (Fyn in Danish) are called "Fynboer" in Danish, and Theodores family was all "Fynboer", at least the 4-6 generations back in time from that I have traced. Niels Berthelsen's family came from the area around Sandager just northeast of Assens. Maren Dorthea Rasmussens family was primarily from Gudbjerg in the west of Funen. Before 1850, most people on Funen lived very local lives[54]. Thus, the generations before Niels Berthelsen and Maren Dorthea Rasmussen did not move much about. Therefore, the ancestors of Niels are found around Sandager and Maren Dorthea's family is found around Gudbjerg.

They were usually born in one parish, worked there, married there, and often died there too. Travel was slow, costly, and difficult for ordinary people. Roads were poor, and most transport was by foot, horse, or cart. Most families depended on local farms, local employers, the parish church, and nearby relatives. For that reason, people often stayed where they were born. Young men in the countryside were also restricted by the Danish *stavnsbånd* system in the eighteenth

[53] If you wish to follow the genealogical tree in further depths, you can do so at the free genealogical website familysearch.org. Theodore Bernard / Carl Bernhardt Theodor Berthelsen ID is **LB8L-2D9**. FamilySearch is a free, collaborative website like Wikipedia. Everybody can add, edit, connect or link information.
[54] The little introductions to Sandager and Gudbjerg with initial help of AI

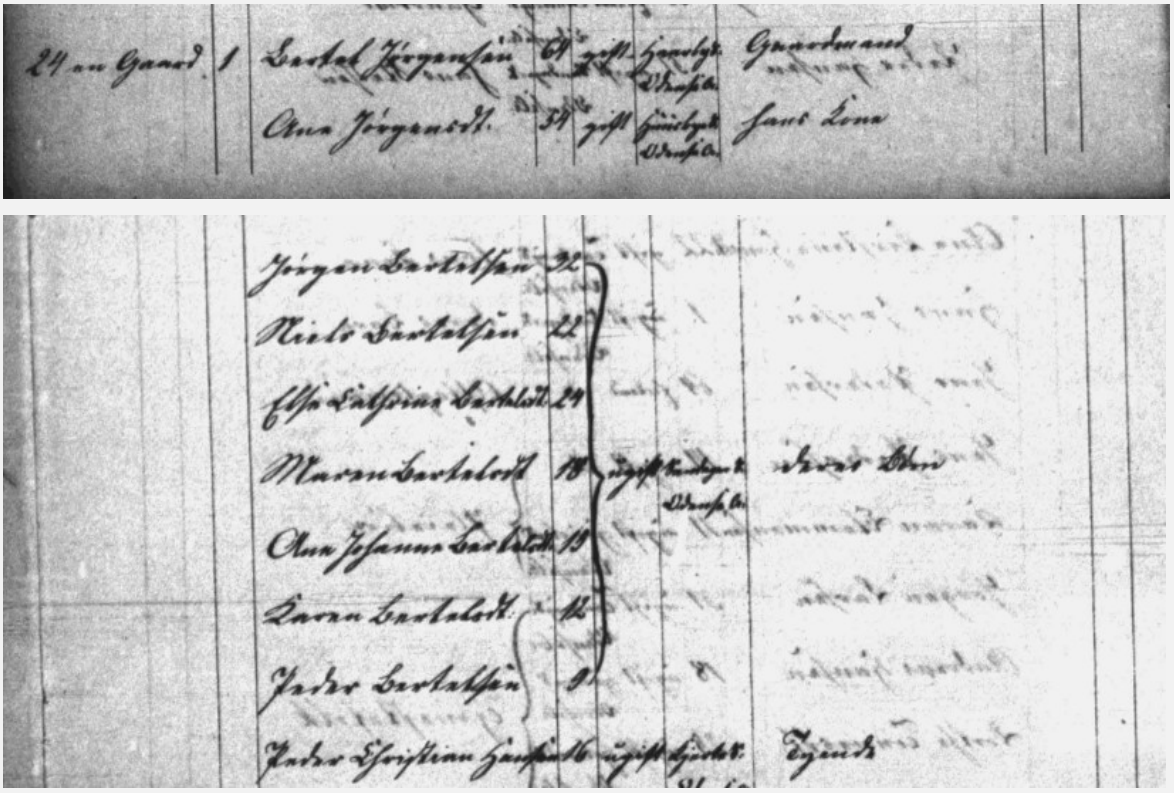
century, which tied many of them to the estate where they were born. Even after that system ended, many people still stayed local because their work, family, and daily life were there.



Skallebølle on maps from 1862 – 1899. The red arrow shows where to find the school. From https://gst.dk/data-og-kort/historiske-kort

Torup

Niels Berthelsen's parents were Bertel Jørgensen (*1782-†1853) and Ane Jørgensdatter (*1791-†1864).



Screen dump from the census in Torup, Sandager from 1845. The household of farmer Bertel Jørgensen and Ane Jørgensdatter: Seven of the eleven children lived at home: Jørgen, Niels, Else Cathrine, Maren, Ane Johanne, Karen and Peder, plus one servant: Peder Christian Hansen.

Niels' parents in Torup, Bertel and Ane had eleven children between 1811 and 1836. Not all lived. Niels had an older brother in 1820, also called Niels, who died the same year. Some of the children were named after a sister or brother:

Jørgen (*1813-†1892), Ane Dorthe (*1815-†1898), Bodil (*1817-†1837), Niels (*1820-†1820), Else Cathrine (*1821-†1880), **Niels** (*1823-†1876), Hans (*1826-†1906), Maren (*1827-†1893)[55], Ane Johanne (*1830-†1901), Karen (*1833-†1905) and Peder (*1836-†1901).

[55] The story of Maren Bertelsdatter is found here at p. 14: https://annefrederiksen.dk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Slaegtsbog5Far.pdf



Torupdal on maps from 1862 – 1899. The red arrow shows where to find Torupdal. From https://gst.dk/data-og-kort/historiske-kort

Bertel and Ane were farmers in Torup near Sandager about 22 kilometres southwest of Skallebølle. Sandager, in western Funen, was a small rural parish in an agricultural landscape. Archaeologists have found remains of early medieval farms in Sandager Parish, especially at Torup Bakkegård. These buildings have been dated to about the years 1000–1200. This shows that the area had settled farming communities long before modern transport made movement easier. For people in a place like Sandager, the village and the parish were the centre of life.

In 1831 according to census, Torupdal was the home of a large and well-established farming household. Bertel Jørgensen, aged fifty-three, was listed as a *gaardmand*, while his wife, Ane Jørgensdatter, aged forty-three, was still raising a very large family. Nine children lived at home, ranging from the adult son Jørgen, aged twenty-one, to the youngest daughter Karen, only one year old. This meant that the household contained several layers of labour and dependency at once: adult and adolescent children who could contribute to the work of the farm, alongside small children who still required care. The family also employed a nineteen-year-old farmhand, Niels Pedersen, which suggests that the farm required labour beyond that supplied by the family itself. With no maidservant listed, the older daughters probably carried much of the domestic and dairy work. Overall, the household appears to have belonged to the solid rural farming class:

not elite, but economically substantial, land-based, and centred on the daily work of a productive farm. Theodore never knew his grandfather, but he might have had memories of grandma Ane, who died when Theodore was 7 years old.



Torupdal, 1834. AI-generated picture – how Bertel Jørgensen (*1782-†1853) and Ane Jørgensdatter (*1791-†1864) *might* have looked in front of their farm in Torupdal in 1834. From left: Ane Dorthe, Bodil, Else Cathrine, **Niels**, Bertel, Hans, Ane with infant Karen, Maren, Jørgen, Ane Johanne, and the farmhand Niels Pedersen.

Bertel Jørgensen's ancestors

Bertel was the third child of his father's, Jørgen Berthelsen (*1744-†1805) second marriage. His father's first wife, Kirsten Jørgensdatter (*1715-†1776), had died shortly after giving birth to their first child, who also lived for less than a year. In 18. December 1776, Berthel's father married Else Pedersdatter (*1754-†1836) in Hårby, Bertel's mother. In this second marriage, they had another ten children between 1777 and 1798. Sadly, only four of the children survived into adulthood, and Bertel was the only boy who lived to grow up[56].

[56] See p. 30, https://annefrederiksen.dk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Slaegtsbog6Far.pdf

In 1787 according to census, the household in Hårby was that of an established farming family headed by Jørgen Bertelsen, aged forty-four. He is described as "Husbonde, Bonde og Gaardbeboer" — master of the household, farmer, and occupier of a farm. This places him among the settled rural farming class, above landless labourers and cottagers.

His wife, Else Pedersdatter, aged thirty-three, is listed as madmoder, the mistress of the household. That term is significant: she was not only his wife, but the woman responsible for managing the domestic side of the farm household, including food, dairy work, servants, textiles, children, and the everyday running of the home.

They had three young children at home: Maren Jørgensdatter, aged eight; Bertel Jørgensen, aged five; and Dorthe Jørgensdatter, aged one. The children were still too young to provide much labour, though Maren may already have helped with small household tasks. Since the family's children were not yet old enough to work seriously on the farm, the household depended on hired labour.

The farm employed two servants: Niels Bertelsen (not to be confused), aged thirty-two, and Kirsten Hansdatter, aged fourteen. Niels was an adult male servant and would likely have been central to the heavier farm work: field labour, animals, stables, carts, and seasonal agricultural tasks. Kirsten, though only fourteen, would have helped Else with domestic work, childcare, dairy tasks, poultry, cleaning, spinning, and other household duties.

A notable feature of the household is Peder Ellegaard aged seventy-four, a widower and Else's father. He is described as "Konens Fader nyder Aftægt" — the wife's father, receiving *aftægt*. This means he had likely transferred property, rights, or support obligations to the younger generation and was now maintained by the household in old age. His presence points to a common rural arrangement in which elderly parents remained connected to the farm through a formal or informal retirement provision. His wife, Elses mother, Maren Jakobsdatter (*1724-†1759) died years before.

Overall, this was a substantial, multi-generational farm household. It included a farming couple, small children, two servants, and an elderly father on *aftægt*. The household was not aristocratic, but it was clearly respectable and economically stable.

Jørgen Berthelsen's parent's were Berthel Nielsen (*1703-†1792) and Dorthe Jensdatter (*1715-†1796) both from Torup.

Else Pedersdatter's parents were Peder Rasmussen Ellegaard (*1715-†1794) and Maren Jakobsdatter (*1724-†1759). Peder Rasmusen Ellegaard was son of Rasmus Rasmussen Ellegaard (*1674-†1748) and Else Findsdatter (*1686-†1752) who lived in Hårby. Maren Jakobsdatter was daughter of Jakob Henriksen (*1685-†1755) and Karen Jørgensdatter (*1690-†1747) who lived in Vantinge.

Ane Jørgensdatter's ancestors

Ane's parents in Hygind were farmer Jørgen Jørgensen (*1755-†1835) and Bodil Rasmusdatter (*1749 –†1832). †The family can be traced in the 1801 census for Husby, where they are living in Hygind, a small locality between Føns and Husby on western Funen, in Odense County – 10 kilometers northwest of Torup. In 1801, the household was headed by Jørgen Jørgensen, aged forty-six, who was described as *Husbonde, Bonde og Gaardbeboer* — master of the household, farmer, and occupier of a farm. He lived with his wife, Bodil Rasmusdatter, aged fifty-two, and their three children: Johanne, aged fourteen, Jørgen, aged twelve, and Ane, aged nine. Also present was Rasmus Hansen, aged twenty-two, described as Bodil's son, probably from an earlier relationship or marriage. His presence would have added valuable adult male labour to the farm. The household further included two servants, Karen Kristoffersdatter and Hans Jensen, showing that the farm was large enough to require hired help. Taken together, the household appears to have belonged to the solid rural farming class: economically stable, land-based, and organised around the work of a productive farm. The family had lived on a farm called Hvidensand. The exact identification of this farm is not completely certain, but the most likely present-day location appears to be Hygindvej 14, corresponding to cadastral no. Hygind Torp 1b.

The census records also reveal something about Ane's mother's earlier life. Bodil Rasmusdatter had apparently been married before she married Jørgen Jørgensen. Her first husband is only known as Hans, with no confirmed surname. This earlier marriage is suggested by the presence of at least three children with the patronymic Hansen: Morten Hansen, Maren Hansen and Rasmus Hansen. Since they are called Hansen, their father have very likely been named Hans. These children were also connected with Husby. In family-history terms, Ane came from a blended rural household in western Funen. Her mother had children from a first marriage before forming a new family with Jørgen Jørgensen. Ane herself later married Bertel Jørgensen, a farmer in Torup by Sandager, and survived him as his widow[57].

We do not have information much further back in time other than Jørgen Jørgensen's parents were Jørgen Jørgensen (yes, same name) and Maria Pedersdatter. Maria's father was probably Peder.

[57] See p. 32, https://annefrederiksen.dk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Slaegtsbog6Far.pdf

Gudbjerg Skov

Maren Dorthea Rasmussen's parents were farmers Rasmus Rasmussen (*1800-†1884) and Karen Andreasdatter (*1804-†1879). Rasmus and Karen married 10. November 1827 in Gudbjerg Church. Theodore must have known is maternal grandparents.



Screen dump from the census in Gudbjerg from 1845. The household of farmer Rasmus Rasmussen and Karen Andersdatter: Nine of the 12 children live at home: Gjertrud, Maren Dorthea, Andreasine, Karoline, Niels, Rasmus, Jens, Jørgen and Peder. The census indicates that Rasmus was born in 1797, but most other sources say 1800. Inger, Hanne, Peder were probably dead and Johanne wasn't born until 1848. "Rasmussen" was a common name in the parish with 92 people named Rasmussen and 64 named Rasmusdatter.

Rasmus and Karen had 12 children between 1825 and 1849. Maren Dorthea was sibling number three. They lived in Gudbjerg Skov all their lives, 39 kilometres from Skallebølle. They had the children:

Giertrud Marie (*1825-†1885), Niels (*1828-†1895), **Maren Dorthea** (*1830-†1910), Andresine (*1832-†1886), Rasmus (*1834-1900), Jens (*1836-†?), Jørgen (*1838-†?), Hanne Berthine (*1838-†?), Karoline Anne Cathtrine (*1839-†1888), Peder (*1841-†1841), Peder (*1842-†1926), Johanne Bertoline (*1848-†1934)[58].

In 1834, Rasmus Rasmussen's household in Gudbjerg Skov on Funen was that of an established farming family according to the census. Rasmus, aged thirty-four, is listed as a *gaardmand*, meaning that he occupied and operated a proper farm rather than merely a smallholding. He lived with his wife, Karen Andersdatter, aged twenty-nine, their four young children, and his widowed mother, Maren Hansdatter, aged sixty-seven, who was supported by him. The household also included two unmarried servants: Ane Dorthea Nielsen, a seventeen-year-old maidservant, and Hans Jørgensen, a twenty-one-year-old farmhand. Their presence suggests that the farm was

[58] Is also registered as Hanne Caroline in the census for 1870. The pastor had an almost ineligible handwriting.

large enough to require labour beyond the immediate family. Since the children were still young, the daily work of the farm would have depended heavily on Rasmus, Karen, and the two servants.



Gudbjerg Skov, 1834. AI-generated picture – how Rasmus Rasmussen (*1800-†1884) and Karen Andreasdatter (*1804-†1879) *might* have looked in front of their house in Gudbjerg Skov in 1834. From left to right: Hans Jørgensen, the farmhand; Maren Hansdatter, Rasmus's widowed mother; Gjertrud Marie Rasmusdatter; Rasmus Rasmussen; Niels Rasmussen; Karen Andersdatter holding Andersine Rasmussen; Maren Dorthea Rasmussen; and Ane Dorthea Nielsen, the maidservant.

This household structure points to a relatively secure and respectable position within rural society. The family was not part of the landed elite, but they clearly stood above landless labourers, cottagers, and poor smallholders. They had enough economic strength to employ servants and to support an elderly widowed parent.

Their way of life would have centred on the farm as both home and workplace. Rasmus would have overseen the agricultural work, probably including fields, livestock, and the management of hired labour. Karen, as a farmer's wife, would have had responsibility for the household, food preparation, children, dairy work, textiles, poultry, and much of the domestic economy. The

maidservant would have assisted with household and farm-related tasks, while the farmhand would have worked in the fields, stables, and with the animals.

By 1860 according to census, the household had entered a later stage in its development. Rasmus Rasmussen, now sixty years old, was listed as head of household and *gårdejer*, or farm owner, while Karen, aged fifty-five, remained his wife. Their household no longer included Rasmus' widowed mother or hired servants. Instead, five unmarried children were still living at home: Niels, Jørgen, Peder, Caroline Anne Cathrine, and Hanne Bartholine. This change suggests that the labour needs of the farm were now largely met by the family itself. The young children of 1834 had become adult or near-adult workers, capable of replacing the farmhand and maidservant who had lived with the family earlier. The family therefore appears to have remained part of the solid, respectable farming class of Funen, with the 1860 designation *gårdejer* pointing to a secure position as landholding farmers.

Rasmus Rasmussen's ancestors

Rasmus' parents were Rasmus Degn Rasmussen (*1758–†1831) and Maren Hansdatter (*1769-†1843). In 1801 according to census, the household in Gudbjerg Skov was headed by Rasmus Degn, aged forty-three, who was described as *Bonde og Gaardbeboer* — a farmer and occupier of a farm. He lived with his wife, Maren Hansdatter, aged thirty-two, and their two children, Christiane Rasmusdatter, aged eight, and the infant Rasmus Rasmussen, aged one. The household also included a thirteen-year-old servant girl, Anne Jensdatter. Although small, the household was clearly that of an established farming family rather than a poor or landless one. The presence of a servant girl suggests that the farm required outside help, especially as Maren was caring for a baby and a young child. This household represents an earlier generation of the same farming line: the infant Rasmus Rasmussen later took over the same farm in Gudbjerg Skov and by 1834 then supporting his widowed mother and heading a larger, more complex farm household.

Rasmus Degn Rasmussen was born in Gudbjerg as the son of Rasmus Nielsen Degn (*1729-†1799) and Susanne Rasmusdatter (*1724-†1789).

Maren Hansdatter was born in in Gudbjerg as the daughter of Hans Jespersen (*1735 - ?) and Anne Marie Pedersdatter (*1749 -?). Hans Jespersen's father was Jesper Pedersen (*1696-†1760) and his mother were Johanne Nielsdatter from Gudbjerg. Anne Marie's father was Peder Hansen Dyhr (*1711-†1769) and her mother were Sidsel Hansdatter (†1711-1776), also from Gudbjerg.

Karen Andreasdatter's ancestors

Karen's parents were Andreas Madsen (*1767-†1837) and Anna Dorthea Jensdatter (*1766-†1827). They lived in Lunde some 8-10 kilometers west of Gudbjerg Skov. In 1801 according to census, the household in Lunde was headed by Andreas Madsen, aged thirty-three, who was described as an *indsidder* and day labourer. Unlike a farmer or farm occupier, he did not hold a full farm of his own, but lived in dependent or rented accommodation and earned his living by

working for daily wages. He lived with his wife, Anne Dorthe Jensdatter, aged thirty-four, and their three young children: Mads, aged five, Mette Marie, aged three, and Jens, aged one. With all the children still very small, the family had little internal labour power and would have depended mainly on Andreas's ability to find paid work. Compared with the farming households of Gudbjerg Skov or Torupdal, this was a poorer and more vulnerable rural household, belonging to the landless or near-landless labouring class rather than to the established farming class.

Andreas Madsen was the son of Mads Jensen (*1724-†1815) and Marie Pedersdatter (*1727-†1797) from Skalkendrup. The family lived in Aunslev near Vindinge.

Anna Dorthea Jensdatter was the daughter of Jens Frandsen (*1738-†1814) born in Stenstrup near Svendborg and Mette Jørgensdatter Flygge (*1738-†1807) born in Løjtved by Egebjerg. The family lived in Ryslinge at the farm Rosenlund. Jens Frandsen's father Frands Jensen (*1709-) and mother, Anne Rasmusdatter (*1705), who lived in Løjtved.



AI-generated picture – how Andreas Madsen (*1767-†1837) and Anna Dorthea Jensdatter (*1766-†1827) in Lunde *might* have looked in front of their house in Lunde in 1801. Karen was born in 1804. Andreas and Anna had at least 6 children before 1808. From left to right: Andreas Madsen, the day labourer and head of household; Anne Dorthe Jensdatter, his wife; Mads Andreassen, aged five; Mette Marie Andreasdatter, aged three; and Jens Andreassen, aged one.

Gudbjerg Skov where Rasmus and Karen lived is adjacent to the Gudbjerg village and part of Gudbjerg Parish. is first mentioned in 1423 in the form Guberre. The name Gudbjerg seems to contain the old word for "god" and the word "bjerg", meaning a hill. Gudbjerg Church stands in the village today, and its oldest parts are Romanesque, showing that the place had an organised local community in the High Middle Ages.

Gudbjerg's deeper history is especially interesting because it lies in the wider Gudme area, one of the most important ancient power centres in Denmark. The National Museum writes that Gudme on southeast Funen was one of Denmark's largest and richest Iron Age settlements from the 3rd to the 7th centuries AD. It had a magnate's farm, many smaller farms, a trading place at Lundeborg, and strong religious importance. The museum also says that Gudme shows an early power structure that later came to characterise both the Iron Age and Viking Age. So, when writing about Gudbjerg "back to the Vikings," it is fair to say that Gudbjerg belonged to a region with very deep roots in elite power, religion, and trade long before and into the period that shaped Viking society.

Gudbjerg Church itself is not Viking, but it is medieval. Its oldest stone parts are Romanesque, and later in the late Middle Ages the church was enlarged with a tower and porch. That tells us that Gudbjerg was already a stable and important local settlement after Christianity had become established in Denmark. Today in Odense a living 1800-centry village "Den Fynske Landsby[59]" can be visited to get an impression of the life and living conditions of Theodore's Ancestors.

I have traced ancestry for both Niels and Maren back to 1600's and they seem all to be "Fynboer". Notice how the father's name becomes the surname of his children. Niels Berthelsen's father was Bertel Jørgensen, who was son of Jørgen Berthelsen (*1744-†1805) who was son of Bertel Nielsen (*1703-†1792) who was probably son of Niels (1600?). Due to fires, mismanagement, unreadable handwriting not all historical records have survived.

Finally, a genealogical map of Theodores ancestors. The map is generated by the free genealogical website **familysearch.org**. Theodore has the **ID LB8L-2D9** and with that the family tree can be studied in more depth, and details on Theodore, his ancestors and descendants, can be freely added and edited by anyone. Edits are welcome!

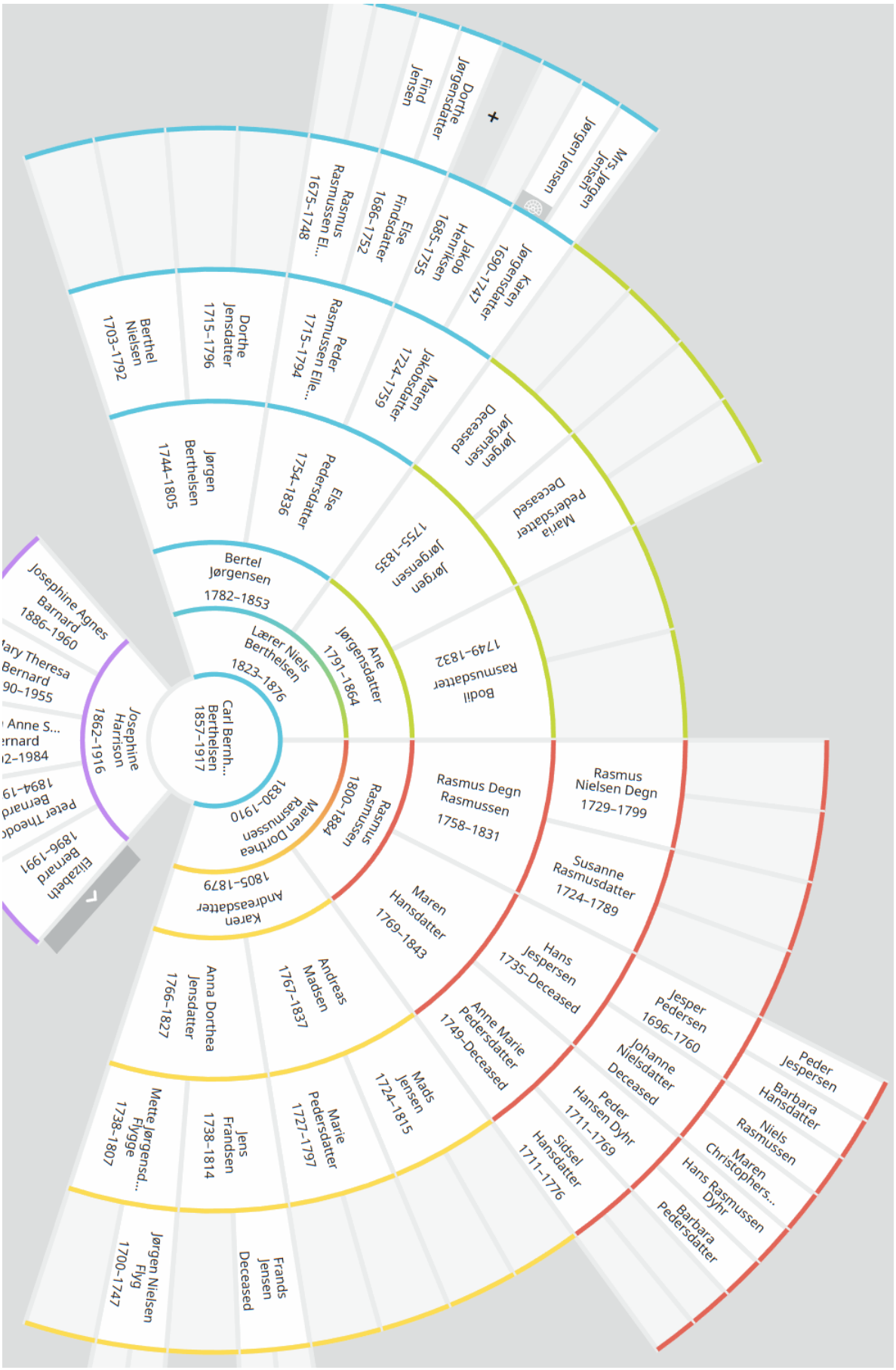
[59] https://denfynskelandsby.dk/en/



Map of Funen with locations where family has lived. It is from an online, interactive map, that you can open at http://t.ly/u7R3k. You can zoom in on induvial places and a click on the little red dots will show you who lived there. You may also scroll to the USA or to Australia to see for your selves “Who lived where”?



The tombstone [No longer there]. for Theodors parents at the graveyard in Vissenbjerg. Photo by Birthe Folmer Berthelsen. Inscription: Teacher Niels Berthelsen *18/10 1823 – †3/10 1876 and spouse Maren Dorthea Rasmussen *15/9 1830 – †16/7 1910 and daughter Marie Theresia Berthelsen *19/4 1855 – †16/3 1858. "O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever." Psalm 118:29.


Carl Bernh... Berthelsen 1857–1917
Josephine Harrison 1862–1916
Lærer Niels Berthelsen 1823–1876
Maren Dorthea Rasmussen 1830–1910
Ane Jørgensdatter 1791–1864
Rasmus Rasmussen 1800–1884
Karen Andreasdatter 1805–1879
Bertel Jørgensen 1782–1853
Jørgen Jørgensen 1755–1835
Bodil Rasmusdatter 1749–1832
Josephine Agnes Barnard 1886–1960
Elizabeth Bernard 1896–1991
Jørgen Berthelsen 1744–1805
Else Pedersdatter 1754–1836
Jørgen Jørgensen Deceased
Maria Pedersdatter Deceased
Berthel Nielsen 1703–1792
Dorthe Jensdatter 1715–1796
Peder Rasmussen Elle... 1715–1794
Maren Jakobsdatter 1724–1759
Rasmus Degn Rasmussen 1758–1831
Rasmus Nielsen Degn 1729–1799
Maren Hansdatter 1769–1843
Susanne Rasmusdatter 1724–1789
Andreas Madsen 1767–1837
Hans Jespersen 1735–Deceased
Anna Dorthea Jensdatter 1766–1827
Anne Marie Pedersdatter 1749–Deceased
Jesper Pedersen 1696–1760
Peder Jespersen
Barbara Hansdatter
Mads Jensen 1724–1815
Johanne Nielsdatter Deceased
Niels Rasmussen
Marie Pedersdatter 1727–1797
Peder Hansen Dyhr 1711–1769
Maren Christophers...
Mette Jørgensd... Flygge 1738–1807
Jens Frandsen 1738–1814
Sidsel Hansdatter 1711–1776
Hans Rasmussen Dyhr
Barbara Pedersdatter
Jørgen Nielsen Flyg 1700–1747
Frands Jensen Deceased
Jørgen Jensen
Mrs. Jørgen Jensen
Dorthe Jørgensdatter
Find Jensen
Karen Jørgensdatter 1690–1747
Jakob Henriksen 1685–1755
Else Findsdatter 1686–1752
Rasmus Rasmussen El... 1675–1748

Annex 1 Hans Peter Berthelsen 1869-1956

Hans Peter Berthelsen, or HP, was a Danish-American Lutheran pastor between Funen, the frontier mission field, and the Danish immigrant church. Hans Peter Berthelsen was a younger brother of Theodore. The story below is written on the basis on the file on Hans Peter Berthelsen the file "Berthelsen, Hans Peter 1869-1956.pdf" from Danish American Archives http://danishamericanarchive.net/ as well as a number of obituaries. See t.ly/s7RV5



Hans Peter Berthelsen. Portrait created by AI from a newspaper photo.

Childhood in Denmark

Hans Peter Berthelsen was born on 6 January 1869 at Skallebølle School near Vissenbjerg on the island of Funen. His father, Niels Berthelsen, was a teacher at Skallebølle School, and his mother was Maren Dorthea Rasmussen. He was baptised in Vissenbjerg Church and confirmed in Ejby Church by Pastor Henry Sabro.

That Danish beginning remained important throughout his life. Although almost all of his adult work took place in America, the documents show that he continued to belong to a Danish-speaking and Danish-American church culture. His later work among Danish immigrants, his editorial work on *Dansk Almanak*, his role in organising links to Denmark, and his eventual decoration by the Danish king all point back to the world from which he came.

Emigration and theological training

In the spring of 1889, Hans Peter Berthelsen emigrated to the United States. He was about twenty years old and came as a young theological student with the ministry as his goal. He studied at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, and then continued his theological education at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. The biographical questionnaire and obituary material both place his ordination in 1894.

During the summer months of his seminary years, Hans taught Daily Vacation Bible School in Lee, Illinois. This detail is important because Lee became personally decisive for him. It was there that he met Gunhild Prestegaard (*1869-†1953), whom he later married. The documents give the marriage date as either 13 or 14 August 1894, while agreeing that the marriage took place shortly before his ordination on 4 September 1894.



Hans and Gunhild at their marriage in august,1894. AI recreated from black and white photo. Courtesy of Timothy Carroll, USA.

Meeting the Prestegaard family in Lee county, Illinois, USA

Gunhild Prestegaard was born in Lee, Illinois, on 19 October 1869, the eldest of thirteen children of Ole J. Prestegaard and Jorund Peterson Makkestad. Gunhilds father, Ole J. Prestegaard, had been born in Odda, Hardanger, in the Bergen diocese of Norway, on 23 April 1841 as the son of Jørgen O. Olsen (*1800-†1883) and Gunhild Buer (*1815-†1906).

At the age of thirteen Ole left Norway on the *Victor Immanuel*, arriving in Chicago five weeks later in 1864. After working briefly in a lumber yard in Chicago, he came to Lee County, Illinois, where he began as a harvest labourer earning two dollars a day.

Ole Prestegaard soon became one of the early settlers and builders of Lee. In 1865 he bought his first land, and in 1868 he built a frame house on it. That same year, on 23 December, he married Jorund Peterson Maakestad, who came from the same Norwegian community and had crossed the Atlantic on the same ship. Because there was not yet a town of Lee when they settled on the farm, the family belonged to the pioneer generation that helped shape the community. Prestegaard and another early settler, Christopher, built a small warehouse where farmers could bring eggs and other produce for shipment by train; from this grew a little store, remembered as the first building in Lee where anyone ever slept. The family moved into Lee in 1871, where Ole engaged for sixteen years in the lumber, coal, and grain business before returning to the farm in 1887.

Ole J. and Jorund Prestegaard raised a large family of thirteen children in Lee, Illinois: Their first child, Gunhild (*1869–†1953), married into the Berthelsen family and lived a long life, anchoring a key branch of the family tree. She was followed by Lars O. (*1871–†1966), also known as Lewis, who became the longest-lived sibling, passing away at the age of 95. The couple's third child, Jorgen (*1873–†1941), remained a part of the local community throughout his adult years. Tragedy first struck the household with their fourth child, Annie Sarah (*1875–†1876), who passed away as an infant at sea. Grief returned shortly after when their fifth child, Peder Olai (*1877–†1879), died just after his second birthday.

The family line continued with Sarah (*1879–†1958), who later married Lewis Oleson. In keeping with traditional naming customs, Ole and Jorund honored their deceased toddler by naming their next son Peder Olai (*1881–†1906); this second Peder survived to early adulthood, passing away at age 25. Olaf Gerhard (*1883–†1922) followed, living a relatively short adult life. Their ninth child, Anna Josephine (*1885–†1918), had her life tragically cut short at age 33 when she passed away during the height of the global influenza pandemic.

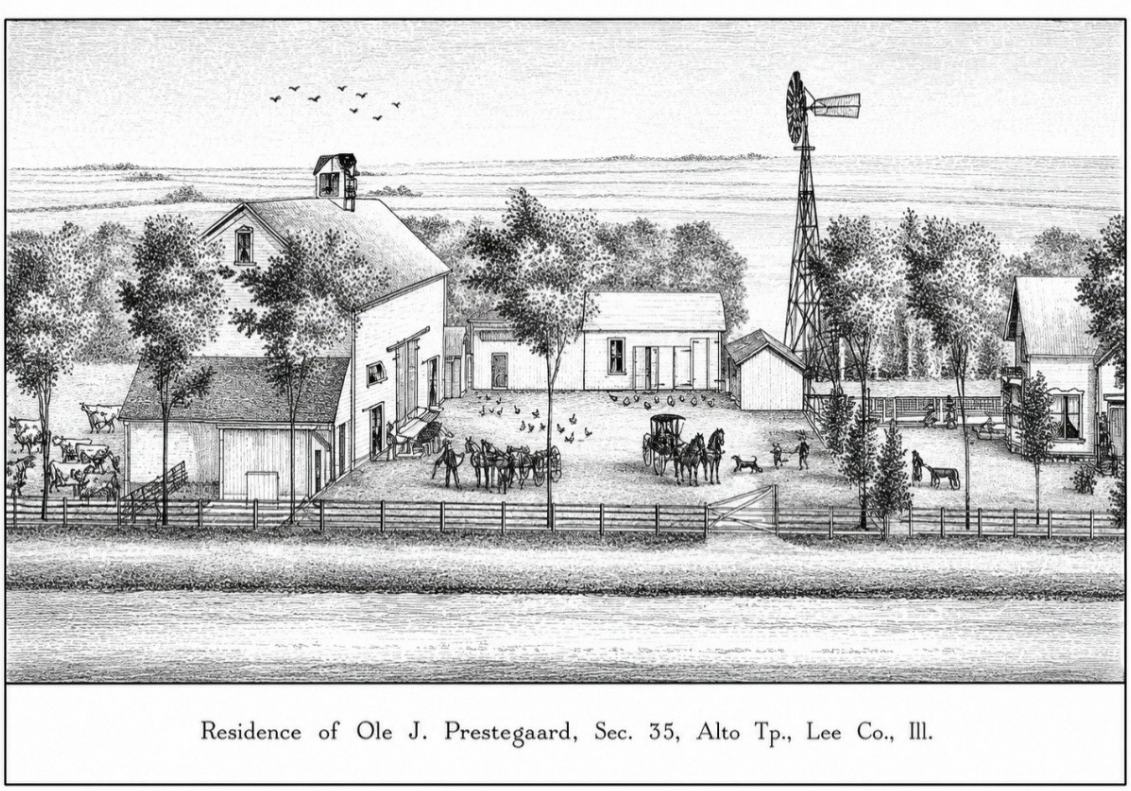
In the spring of 1888, the same year Ole constructed the family's landmark brick homestead, Jorund gave birth to twins: Odmund (*1888–†1888) and Berent (*1888–†1972). While Odmund died a few months later in infancy, his twin brother Berent thrived and lived a full life into his eighties. The couple honoured their lost twin with the birth of Henry Odmund (*1890–†1940),

who lived in Lee until his death at age 50. Finally, the large household was completed by the youngest child, Joachim (*1892–†1960), who served his country in World War I.

Family memory preserved the rhythm of their household life: during the winter months they lived in the village of Lee, while in the summer they returned to the farm. This seasonal movement reflected both Ole Prestegaard's business life in town and the family's continued attachment to the land on which they had first established themselves.

By the time Hans met Gunhild, she came from a family deeply rooted in the Norwegian-American Lutheran and civic life of Lee.

Ole Prestegaard owned more than a thousand acres in Lee County, served as a school director and trustee, was a deacon and trustee of the Lutheran Church, and was a stockholder and director of the Lee State Bank.



Residence of Ole J. Prestegaard, Sec. 35, Alto Tp., Lee Co., Ill.

The drawing and the story of Gunhilds parents was found in historic archives of Skallebølle School in Vissenbjerg and is from "Lee then and Now", 1974 – by The Committee on History for the Lee Centennial Observance.

Thus, Hans's connection with Lee was not merely a summer assignment from his seminary years; through his marriage to Gunhild, he entered a prominent Norwegian immigrant family whose history was closely intertwined with the founding and development of the community itself. And it turns out that (it's rumoured that) the Prestegaards ancestors may be followed all the back to the Vikings – and even to the first European child born in North America, in Vinland in the year 1003: Snorri Thorfinsson. That story was traced back through time by Breta Carol Espe Soldat in a book which should now be in the National Museum in Oslo, Norway[60].

The obituary written after Gunhilds death makes clear that she was not merely the pastor's wife in a passive sense. She served with him for more than forty years in Danish Lutheran churches. For twenty-two years she was church organist, and she was also a Sunday School teacher and active in women's organisations. Another clipping says that she "kept step all the way" with her husband and took a leading role in church work.

The first mission: Lead, South Dakota, and the Black Hills

Hans Peter Berthelsen's first ministry was not in a settled, comfortable parish, but in a mission field in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The Danish obituary describes this as a call "out in the wild Black Hills", with work in the gold-mining town of Lead, South Dakota, and in Little Falls, Montana. The English obituary gives the same picture: after his ordination, his first mission was at Lead, in the gold-mining section of the Black Hills, and at Little Falls, Montana[61].

This was a demanding frontier ministry. The Danish obituary says that he and Gunhild had "an exhausting field to plough" for three years. The English article adds a concrete detail: his church work covered 105 miles, and the young minister travelled the route on horseback.

This gives a strong picture of the conditions under which he began his work. His ministry was scattered over great distances. He served pioneer immigrants from Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and his task was to bring church life, preaching, pastoral care and community to people living far from the older Lutheran centres. He was in the western mission world: mining settlements, long distances, horseback travel and Scandinavian immigrant communities still in the process of becoming organised congregations.

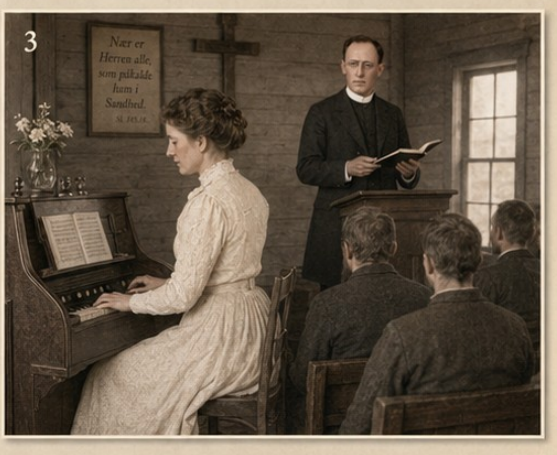
[60] The Espe and Prestegaard Families of Norway, two volumes, hardcover, 917 pages. work includes artistic sketches, illustrations, maps, charts, and a collection of photos that doubles as a family album.
[61] Hard to find – probably is Little Falls, Minesota.

Hans Peter Berthelsen and Gunhild O. Prestegaard in the mission field, 1897–1905

Lead, South Dakota and Little Falls, Montana









AI generated illustration of Hans and Gunhild on missionary work in 1897 -1905. Their wedding photo used as model for the illustrations. (1) Hans Peter preaching in a simple wooden Danish-Lutheran mission church among miners and immigrant families; (2) Hans Peter in frontier pastoral travel or visitation in a mining-town / prairie landscape; (3) Gunhild serving as church organist at a small reed organ in a modest church interior; (4) Gunhild teaching Sunday School or leading women's church work.

From frontier mission to established congregations

After three years in the Black Hills and Montana mission field, Hans Peter and Gunhild Berthelsen moved to a group of Norwegian-Danish congregations in Illinois: Momence, Kankakee and Clifton. They served there from 1897 to 1905. One later newspaper article states that church buildings in Momence and Clifton stood as memorials to his work among Danish immigrants in the West.

From Illinois they moved to Trinity Lutheran Church in Indianapolis, Indiana, where he served for ten years, from 1905 to 1915. The congregation originally belonged to the Norwegian Synod. In 1914, together with Pastor Berthelsen, it decided to transfer to the United Danish Church, and the congregation was received at the annual meeting in Greenville, Michigan.

In 1915 he accepted a call to Pella Church in Omaha, Nebraska, where he served until 1920. He then served for two years in Rolfe-Callender, Iowa. From 1922 to 1927 he was connected with St. John's Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and St. Paul's Church in Plainfield, New Jersey. His last regular pastorate was St. Paul's Church in Penn Yan, New York, where he served from 1927 until his retirement in 1936 or 1937at the age of about sixty-eight.

Family life and children

Hans Peter and Gunhild Berthelsen's family life was closely tied to the ministry. They moved from one church field to another over many decades, and Gunhild's obituary makes clear that she shared the work in the congregations. She was organist, Sunday School teacher and active in women's organisations, while he served as pastor. Their marriage lasted almost fifty-nine years, from August 1894 until her death in June 1953.

They had nine children. And at the time of Hans Peter's death in 1956, the family also included sixteen grandchildren and twenty great-grandchildren.



Gunhild Prestegaard and Hans Peter Berthelsen. Courtesy of Timothy Carroll. AI generated colouring.

Danish connections across the Atlantic

Hans Peter Berthelsen's life remained connected to Denmark. He had left Denmark as a young man, but he continued to work among Danes in America and helped preserve Danish-language Lutheran culture. His long editorial work on *Dansk Almanak* was part of that work. He was also chairman of the Denmark Committee from 1929 to 1935, and one English article notes that in 1929 he was one of the leaders of a church tour to Denmark.

In 1949 Hans Peter and Gunhild travelled back to Denmark.

The newspaper clipping says that this was the same year in which they celebrated their fifty-fifth wedding anniversary. This return journey, late in life, gives a concrete example of the transatlantic connection that had shaped his work: he had become an American pastor, but his identity and service were still deeply linked to Denmark and Danish immigrant life.

Hans Peter Berthelsen was not only a parish pastor. He also held several offices in the church. He served as secretary of the Atlantic District from 1923 to 1928. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Lutheran Publishing House in Blair from 1916 to 1932 and served as chairman of that board for fifteen years. He was chairman of the Denmark Committee from 1929 to 1935.

His best-known cultural and editorial work was probably his long service as editor of *Dansk Almanak*, the annual publication of the Lutheran Publishing House. One letter from his son N. O. Berthelsen specifies that he edited *Dansk Almanak* from 1921 to 1946 inclusive.

Decoration by the Danish king

Hans Peter Berthelsen's most important decoration was the Order of the Dannebrog. In 1934 he was honoured by King Christian X of Denmark and made Knight of the Dannebrog. The newspaper clipping states that this was for his continued and outstanding work among Danish immigrants, and that the honour marked forty years of work among his countrymen. The Dannebrog honour stands as the principal formal recognition of his life's work. It also confirms that his ministry was seen not merely as local church service, but as a contribution to Danish life abroad.

Character and how he was remembered

His grandson, Pastor Robert O. Berthelsen, described him as "a faithful servant of our Church" when asking that a memorial article be prepared. The Danish obituary describes him as a man with a kindly disposition, a warm Christian witness and a good portion of sound common sense. It ends with the striking judgement that to know him was to love him.

He was remembered both as doctrinally serious and personally generous. These descriptions are, of course, memorial language, written by church people and family members after his death. But within the document they are consistent. He appears as a faithful, practical, warm-hearted pastor: serious about Lutheran faith, committed to Danish immigrant church life, and remembered with affection by those who had known him.

Retirement, illness and final years

After retirement, Hans Peter and Gunhild lived at Indian Pines near Penn Yan, New York. In January 1952, because of his illness, they moved to Havertown, Pennsylvania, to be with their daughter and son-in-law, the Vagn Ewaldsen's. In the spring of 1953, they moved to Pleasant View Lutheran Home in Ottawa, Illinois. Gunhild died there on 20 June 1953.

A letter from their son N. O. Berthelsen in August 1954 gives a personal glimpse of Hans Peter's last years. The son explains that he had not sent the biographical questionnaire back to his father for signature because it was doubtful whether his father could see well enough to sign it. He writes that his father was then a guest or patient at Jensen Nursing Home in Geneva, New York, and that the family wanted to make his last days as pleasant as possible. The same letter adds, with sadness, that old pastors often become forgotten by many of their friends, "but not all".

Hans Peter Berthelsen died on 27 April 1956 at the age of eighty-seven. His funeral was held on 30 April 1956 in Lee, Illinois, the community where Gunhild had been born and where they had first met. Pastor Robert O. Berthelsen, his grandson, brought a message on behalf of the family.

The Children of
Hans Peter Berthelsen and Gunhild O. Prestegaard

From Skallebølle, Funen, to Danish-American church life in the United States



Hans Peter Berthelsen
1869–1956

Born at Skallebølle School, Vissenbjerg Parish, Funen, Denmark
Lutheran pastor, missionary and Danish-American church leader

and

Gunhild O. Prestegaard
1869–1953

Of Norwegian-American background
Wife of Hans Peter Berthelsen and
mother of a large Danish-American family



Married in 1894. Their nine children were born as the family moved through South Dakota, Illinois, Indiana and New York.



1. Jørgen Christian Berthelsen, Sr.
1895–1968

- Born: Lead, South Dakota
- Later lived: Winnipeg; Brooklyn, New York
- Spouse: Anne Thomasine Petersen (1894–1957), born in Nebraska
- Children: Dorthea M.; Jørgen Christian Berthelsen Jr. (1922–2001)
- Note: Worked for the Scandinavian-American Steamship Company and the Swedish American Steamship Line; drafted in the First World War.

2. Niels Olaf Berthelsen
1897–1986

- Born: Momence, Illinois
- Later lived: Chicago, Illinois
- Spouse: Martha D. Petersen, married Omaha, Nebraska, 1919; later possibly also May A. Jensen
- Children: Robert Olaf Berthelsen (1921–2007); Marjorie Ann Berthelsen Madsen (1927–2020)
- Note: Drafted in both World War I and World War II.

Robert Olaf Berthelsen – pastor; married Audrey; children: Jim, Debra Ann, Barbara Jean.

Marjorie Ann Berthelsen Madsen – married Clarence Charles "Chuck" Madsen; children: William Charles "Bill" Madsen and Judy Madsen.

3. Dorothea Jorund Petersen, née Berthelsen
1899–1994

- Born: Momence, Illinois
- Later lived: Batavia, New York
- Spouse: Svend Aage Emil Hertz Petersen, married Pennsylvania, 1923
- Children: Ralph Arthur Petersen (1925–2005); Jean Petersen Paparella Boss (1926–2020)
- Note: One of the New York branches of the family.

Ralph later married Kathleen Jane Murray, and after her death Jean Mullen Petersen. Jean married Dr. Jerome Paparella, later Hollis Boss.

4. Andrea Marie "Marie" Ewaldsen, née Berthelsen
1901–1974

- Later lived: Havertown, Pennsylvania
- Spouse: Vagn Ewaldsen (1899–1977), born in Vaabensted, Lolland, Denmark
- Children: Harold Ewaldsen
- Note: Hans Peter and Gunhild lived near Marie and Vagn in their later years.

Harold married Joan O. Ewaldsen; their daughters: Karen, Rebecca, Andrea, Kristine.

5. Hans Berthelsen
1903–1905

Died as a child in Clifton, Illinois

Note: Child of Hans Peter and Gunhild who died young.



6. Esther Elizabeth Christensen, née Berthelsen
1904–1995

- Later lived: Geneva, New York; later Liverpool, New York
- Spouse: James C. Christensen
- Children: Gunhild Christensen; James W. Christensen (1931–2022); Hans Christensen; David Christensen (1943–2021)
- Note: A substantial New York branch; buried with family at St. Paul's Lutheran Church area in Penn Yan.

Gunhild married Mr. Carroll. James W. married Donna Nielson. David later lived in Rochester, New York.

7. Viggo Axel Berthelsen
1906–1990

- Later lived: Chicago, Illinois
- Spouse: Helen Simcox
- Children: Robert Eugene; Dorothy Marie
- Note: Maintained the Chicago branch of the family.

8. Hans Adolph Berthelsen
1909–1953

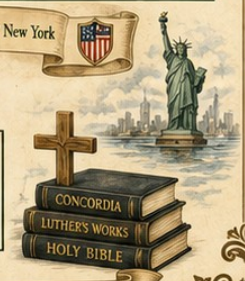
- Later lived: Geneva and Dresden, New York; died in Japan
- Spouse: Gwendolyn Waters Berthelsen, of Mobile, Alabama
- Children: None
- Note: Career Air Force man, known as Master Sergeant A. F. "Slim" Berthelsen; died in Japan after influenza complications.

9. Ruth Christensen, née Berthelsen
1914–1973

- Later lived: New Hartford, New York
- Spouse: Ivan Christensen, married at St. Paul's Danish Lutheran Church, Penn Yan, New York, 1935
- Children: No known children
- Note: Represents one of the later New York branches.

Skallebølle → Lead, SD → Momence, IL → Omaha, NE → Pennsylvania / New York

Hans Peter and Gunhild's family became part of the Danish-American religious and immigrant world of the Midwest and Northeast.



Legend

- Solid line = child of Hans Peter Berthelsen and Gunhild O. Prestegaard
- Small names below = children of that branch
- Flower or star = child who died young
- Cross or Bible = pastor / church connection
- Ship = migration and Danish-American connection
- Map pins = important towns and family locations
- Dates shown as birth–death years

Skallebølle / Lead / Momence / Omaha / Chicago / Batavia / Havertown / Geneva / Penn Yan / New Hartford

The nine children were born in different places as the family moved between South Dakota, Illinois, Indiana and New York – and they all married Danish descendants in the US:

1. **Jørgen Christian Berthelsen, Sr (*1895–†1968)**
   Jørgen Christian was the first son, born in Lead, South Dakota. He was drafted in the United States during the First World War. Jørgen Christian worked for the Scandinavian-American Steamship Company and the Swedish American Steamship Line, lived for a time in Winnipeg, and was later listed in Brooklyn, New York. Jørgen Christian, Senior was named after Hans Peters and Theodores younger brother (see Annex 2). He married Anne Thomasine Petersen, born in Nebraska in 1894 and died in 1957 in Brooklyn, NY. They had:
   1.1 Dorthea M. we do not know much about. Sometimes spelled Dorothea.
   1.2 Jørgen Christian Jr. (*1922-†2001) in Atlanta, Georgia
      1.2.1 Jørgen Christian Berthelsen III.
         1.2.1.1 Jørgen Christian Berthelsen IV who is an active Entertainment & Sports Law Attorney in Los Angeles, practicing for over 10 years with ties to the Pacific Palisades area.

2. **Niels Olaf Berthelsen (*1897-†1986)**
   Niels Olaf was born in Moemence, Illinois and lived in Chicago, Illinois. He was married first to Martha D. Petersen in 1919 in Omaha, Nebraska. They had two children, Robert Olaf (*1921-†2007) and Marjorie Ann. Later Niels Olaf was (maybe) also married to May A. Jensen. Niels Olaf was drafted for both WW1 and WW2.
   2.1. Niels Olaf's son, Pastor Robert Olaf Berthelsen (*1921–†2007), was born in Omaha and built a distinguished career in the ministry after graduating from Dana Lutheran College and Trinity Seminary. He was ordained in 1949 and shared his life with his wife, Audrey, Pastor R.O. Berthelsen spent his life serving various communities, including a vital nine-year tenure from 1953 to 1962 at Kingo Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he orchestrated a massive church building expansion. He later served congregations in Nebraska and Colorado before concluding his career as an Assistant to the Bishop (from obituary). Robert Olaf and Audrey had three children:
      - 2.1.1. Jim Berthelsen in San Mateo, CA.
      - 2.1.2. Debra Ann (*1958-†2019) who married Bruce Aldag and lived in Schleswig, Iowa. Debra Ann graduated from Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, where she met her husband, Bruce Aldag. They married on May 18, 1979. She worked locally as a dental assistant and later spent 18 years as an intensive case manager for the local department of human services. Debra and Bruce had the children 2.1.2.1. Joshuar, 2.1.2.2. Nathan, 2.1.2.3. Erika, 2.1.2.4 Alyssa and the grandsons Ian and Mason (Obituaries).
      - 2.1.3 Barbara Jean (*1946-†2000) married Roger Anderson in Long Beach, CA. They had the children 2.1.3.1. Todd and 2.1.3.2. Amy. Amy married Brian Ballard and they had a daughter, 2.1.3.2.1 Morgan.

2.2. Marjorie Ann Berthelsen Madsen (*1927–†2020) and Clarence Charles "Chuck" Madsen (*1925–†1991) built a vibrant, mid-century life together that beautifully bridged corporate ambition, deep civic leadership, and a close-knit family network spanning the American Midwest to the Florida coast. Marjorie, born in Omaha, Nebraska, to Danish-American parents, grew up in Chicago and entered the professional world at the prestigious consulting firm Booz, Allen & Hamilton. Her life shifted permanently when she met Chuck Madsen at a church youth camp. The couple married in 1952, and a year later, they made the pivotal decision to relocate west of the city to the rapidly expanding suburb of Wheaton, Illinois. Though Marjorie initially joked that the new development felt like the edge of civilization compared to metropolitan Chicago, the couple quickly became pillars of the DuPage County community. Throughout their nearly four decades together in Wheaton, Chuck built his career while Marjorie balanced a busy household with civic engagement: She became a driving force in the local Junior League, community dance clubs, and parent-teacher organizations, later returning to professional work as an administrative assistant at the Wheaton Medical Clinic. Following Chuck's passing in 1991, Marjorie spent her later years wintering on the Gulf of Mexico before permanently retiring to Fort Walton Beach, Florida, where she lived until her peaceful passing at the age of 93. Together, they raised two children,

2.2.1. William Charles Madsen (*1954–†2023) "Bill", moved to Massachusetts and dedicated his life to clinical psychology, family therapy, and social justice. He became a renowned author and consultant, founding the Family-Centered Services Project to help multi-stressed families. He raised two children, 2.2.1.1. Arlyn Madsen-Bond and 2.2.1.2. Erik Madsen-Bond, and became a grandfather to Kayla, spending his free hours hiking and kayaking before his peaceful passing in Watertown.

2.2.2. Judy Madsen (*1956–Living), built her adult life anchored in the American heartland. She married Bruce McDonald and the couple eventually settled along the Mississippi River in Keokuk, Iow

3. Dorothea Jorund Petersen, née Berthelsen (*1899-†1994)

Dorothea was born in Moemence, Illinois and married Svend Aage Emil Hertz Petersen in Pennsylvania, 1923. They lived in Batavia, New York. They had

3.1 Ralph Arthur Petersen (1925 – 2005) Ralph married **Kathleen Jane Murray** on December 17, 1949, in Erie, Pennsylvania. Kathleen was born on November 30, 1925, in Altoona, Pennsylvania, and tragically passed away relatively young on February 13, 1978, in Birmingham, Alabama. Together, Ralph and Kathleen raised five children:

3.1.1. Robert John Petersen: *1952 (Lynchburg, Virginia) – †2010 (Wimberley, Texas).

3.1.2. Michael Arthur Petersen: *February 23, 1957 (Altoona, Pennsylvania) – He went primarily by Arthur Petersen later in life, settling in Franklin, Kentucky.

3.1.3 Peter Petersen: Living (Residing in Sherman Oaks, California).

3.1.4. Jeannie Petersen: Married Mr. Smith; living (Residing in Bastrop, Texas).
3.1.5. Karen Petersen: Married Mr. Cochran; living (Residing in Chino Hills, California).
Following the death of his first wife, Ralph remarried in 1981 to Jean Mullen Petersen. They shared 24 years of marriage together in Alabama until his passing in 2005. Through this marriage, Ralph became a stepfather to her four children: Patrick, John, Kathleen, and Monica.

3.2 Jean Petersen Paparella Boss (*1926–†2020) married Dr. Jerome Paparella in Batavia, New York. Jean became a registered nurse, a community leader, and notably the first woman elected to the Batavia City Council. She also started a local chapter of the Association for Research of Childhood Cancer (AROCC) after the death of her youngest son, Lance, Jean worked for the American Cancer Society and Hospice Buffalo. Jean married Hollis Boss of Grand Island, N.Y. in 1981. They resided in Grand Island before retiring to Ormond Beach, Fla. where they resided for over 20 years. Jean enjoyed playing golf with family and friends, traveled extensively and for many years was an active hospice volunteer. She was a member of Faith Lutheran Church in Ormond Beach. Jean and Hollis moved to St. Augustine, Fla. in 2016. Jean had a loving heart, winning smile and beautiful blue eyes She was a devoted wife, mother and friend. Her life overflowed with joy and her sorrows taught her much. She believed there is only one book in life that tells it all, and that is the BIBLE. Jean and Jerome had children[62]:
3.2.1 Lance Paparella (*1952 – †1964)
3.2.2 Bruce Paparella (*1954 – †before 2020)
3.2.3 Kathie Paparella (*1956 -) married Jim Graesart. They had children:
3.2.3.1 Jennifer,
3.2.3.2 Steve
3.2.3.3 Colleen
3.2.4 Gerri Paparella (*1961 -)

4 Andrea Marie ”Marie” Ewaldsen, née Berthelsen (*1901-†1974)

Marie married Vagn Ewaldsen (*1899-†1977) and lived in Havertown, Pennsylvania. Hans Peter and Gunhild moved to Philadelphia/Havertown in their later years to be near their daughter and son-in-law, the Vagn Ewaldsens. Vagn was born in Vaabensted on the island of Lolland, Denmark. Possessing a passion for horticulture and botany, he secured formal training in his homeland and worked as a salaried assistant at the prestigious Botanical Garden of Copenhagen (*Botanisk Have*) from 1912 to 1922. Seeking new opportunities in his field, Vagn immigrated to the United States in 1922 and quickly established himself within the American landscape industry. By 1924, his elite European training earned him a position as the Lead Superintendent for Thomas W. Sears, a highly celebrated landscape architect in Philadelphia. In this role, Vagn spent decades managing the physical installation

[62] source: Obituary, The daily News Online.

and development of massive, high-end gardens and estate grounds for the wealthy elite across the greater Philadelphia region. Marie and Vagn established a permanent household at 521 Virginia Avenue in Havertown, Pennsylvania. Together, Vagn and Marie raised a family that included their son, Harold Ewaldsen. Vagn's career provided financial and domestic stability, allowing the couple to welcome Marie's aging parents.

4.1 Harold married Joan O. Ewaldsen (née Altoona), a highly accomplished woman who added a unique legacy to the family tree. Joan started her career as a schoolteacher and later founded a specialized private school for children with learning disabilities. Later in life, Joan felt a profound spiritual calling that mirrored the path of Harold's grandfather, Reverend Hans Peter Berthelsen. She was formally ordained as a Pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). She served congregations both locally in the greater Philadelphia area and eventually in Arkansas. Joan was also a passionate writer and published multiple books before her passing in May 2018 at the age of 91, They had four daughters:

4.1.1. Karen – married to Jerry Foley,

4.1.2 Rebecca married to Jeffrey Munroe,

4.1.3 Andrea married to Chad Delargy. The Delargy family runs a martial arts club called "Delargys Mighty Warriors Karate for Christ" in Mammoth Spring, Arkansas.

4.1.3 Kristine Ewaldsen, not married.

5 Hans Berthelsen (*1903-†1905)

Died as a child in Clifton, Illinois.

6 Esther Elizabeth Christensen, née Berthelsen (*1904 –† 1995)

Esther Christensen lived in Geneva, New York. She and her husband, James C. Christensen, raised their family in the Finger Lakes region of Geneva, New York. Following James's passing in 1956, she lived for many years as a widow in Geneva, eventually moving to Liverpool, New York, near Syracuse in her final years. She is buried alongside her family at the St. Paul's Lutheran Church registry area in Penn Yan, New York. They had the children

6.1 Gunhild (*1929-) married Mr. Caroll. Ester and James' daughter Gunhild Christensen is the mother of

6.1.1. Timothy "Tim" Carroll (*~1957-)

6.2. James W (1931-†2002) schoolteacher in Ballston Spa, NY. He married Donna Nielson, and they had:

6.2.1. Kathleen (*~1958-) married Gary Weinhold, San Antonio, Texas

6.2.2. Jeannine (*~1960-) married Alan Van Nostrand, Tampa, Florida.

6.2.3. Andrea (*~1963-) married Randy Koleda, Saratoga Springs, New York

6.2.4 Elizabeth (*~1966-) – lives in Syracuse, New York

6.2.5 Hans Carl (*~1968-), married Deborah, living in New Jersey.

6.3 Hans Christensen (~*1935-) in Penn Yan, NY

6.4 David (*1943-†2021) who settled in Rochester, NY.

7 Viggo Axel Berthelsen (*1906-†1990)

Viggo A. Berthelsen married Helen, née Simcox, and lived in Chicago. They had 6.1. Robert Eugene and 6.2 Dorothy Marie.

8 Hans Adolph Berthelsen (*1909–†1953)

Master Sergeant A. F. “Slim” Berthelsen, son of Rev. Hans Peter Berthelsen and Gunhild Berthelsen, died in Japan on 2 January 1953, aged 43, from complications after influenza. Before joining the Air Force, he had worked for the New York State Electric & Gas Corporation in Geneva and Dresden, NY. He made the Air Force his career, serving in the Quartermaster Corps and travelling from Japan to Korea to supervise the distribution of supplies. At the height of his military career, he contracted a severe strain of influenza while stationed overseas. He suffered critical medical complications from the illness and passed away in Japan on January 2, 1953, at the age of 43. His wife was Gwendolyn, née Waters Berthelsen of Mobile, Alabama. They had no children.

9 Ruth Christensen, née Berthelsen (*1914-†1973)

Ruth married Ivan Christensen and lived in New Hartford, New York. Historical newspaper archives confirm that Miss Ruth Berthelsen married Ivan Christensen on Thanksgiving Day in 1935. Their wedding took place at St. Paul's Danish Lutheran Church in Penn Yan, New York. Ruth's sister, Marie Ewaldsen of Philadelphia, played the wedding march, and her young niece, Dorothea Berthelsen of Chicago, served as her bridal attendant. Ruth and Ivan had no known children.

Annex 2 Jørgen Christian Berthelsen 1872-1957

Theodore's younger brother, Jørgen Christian Berthelsen became a Danish pastor, family father and Inner Mission leader. The text below is based on the document on Hans Peter Berthelsen as well as the book "Family Notes" by Stig Yding Sørensen available from blurb.com.

A childhood marked by loss

Jørgen Christian Berthelsen was born on 21 January 1872 in Skallebølle, Vissenbjerg, on Funen. He was the son of the schoolteacher Niels Berthelsen and Maren Dorthea Rasmussen, and the younger brother of Theodore.

His childhood was deeply affected by his father's early death. Niels Berthelsen died on 3 October 1876, when Jørgen Christian was only four years old. After the father's death, the children were divided among family and friends. Jørgen Christian was cared for a time by his uncle Hans Berthelsen, who inherited the family farm Torupdal near Assens. Hans and his wife Ane Nielsdatter (*1826-†1902) had no children of their own.

He never really knew his father. Later, in 1880, Jørgen Christian was again living with his mother Maren Dorthea in Vissenbjerg, together with Karen Andrea and Hans Peter. He attended the youngest class in Skallebølle School in 1880.

Things only began to improve after he successfully passed his lower secondary examination in Assens, while again living with his uncle Hans Berthelsen, after which he continued his studies in the capital. There, Berthelsen graduated from upper secondary school and then chose to devote himself to the theology at the University of Copenhagen. In Copenhagen he lived at Valkendorfs Kollegium which was, and still is, a historic student residence in central Copenhagen; the University of Copenhagen describes it as Denmark's oldest student college, founded in 1588 and officially inaugurated in 1589.

This early family history matters because it seems to echo through Jørgen Christian's later life. The family notes explicitly suggest that childhood and family were important to him because his own childhood had not been happy. After Mathilde's death in 1917, he did not dissolve his household, even though he was left with many children. Instead, he kept the home together.





Jørgen Christian Berthelsen – portrait of the pastor in Harboøre and his wife Mathilde Ammentorp "Titte". AI based portraits from the family photo, 1917.

Education, secret romance and the road to the ministry

In 1891 Jørgen Christian was studying theology at the University of Copenhagen. During his student years he lived in several places in Copenhagen, including Nansensgade, Rømersgade and St. Pederstræde. He became a student in 1891 and a theological candidate seven years later. His first church appointment was as assistant pastor in Pjedsted near Vejle from 1899 to 1901[63]. His fiancée, Mathilde Ammentorp, lived just across from Vejle Fjord with her clerical family in Barrit. They had met through a mutual friend who spent summer holidays at the parsonage in Barrit. Mathilde's father, Christian Michael Ammentorp, was the pastor of the Barrit-Vrigsted parish from 1892 to 1912.

According to Mathilde Ammentorp's sister Karen, entering a romantic relationship would have put Jørgen Christian at risk of losing the financial support he received for his studies — even though Mathilde herself came from a distinguished Danish clerical family. We do not know who supported Jørgen financially, but a plausible candidate is his father's brother, Hans Berthelsen

[63] https://www.fredericiashistorie.dk/html/kirker/pjedsted/Sognepraesterne_i_Pjedsted.html

at Torupdal, who himself remained childless. Or is there a relation back to his brother Hans Peter and the mission, that we do not know?

The relationship therefore had to be kept secret, and the couple were only able to marry once Jørgen Christian obtained his first post as a pastor in 1902. Karen Ammentorp's memoirs give the impression that there was both giggling and whispering among the Ammentorp siblings about the relationship. Yet secret it remained.

In 1901 he was called as parish pastor in Harboøre-Engbjerg, a post he held until 1923. Harboøre was a remote fishing community on the North Sea coast, with rough living conditions and a strong religious culture. Harboøre was a place where the Inner Mission revival had become powerful in the 1880s and 1890s. Jørgen Christian followed the controversial pastor Carl Julius Moe[64], whose preaching had marked the community deeply. Jørgen Christian was also part of Inner Mission, but his style and attitude were less harsh and confrontational than Moe's.

Harboøre: pastor in a demanding fishermans parish

Harboøre became the place where Jørgen Christian's life as pastor, husband and father took its decisive form. He arrived there in 1901 and the following year, on 21 January 1902 — his birthday — he married Mathilde Ammentorp in Barrit Church near Juelsminde. Mathilde came from a family with many pastors and doctors. She was born in 1874 in the catechist's house in Lemvig, where her father Christian Michael Ammentorp was then serving.

The family fitted well into the fishing community. There was great respect for Jørgen Christian, who was even informally referred to as "sognekonge" — "king of the parish". Mathilde, called "Titte", is described in a pamphlet on Fredehjem as cheerful, happy and open-minded. She also led the Sunday school at the church, even while managing a very large household.

The parsonage stood right by the church, with the church wall functioning as the garden fence. The household became very busy. Jørgen Christian and Mathilde had ten children, and from 1911 they also took in Ane Marie Iversen as a foster child. The family notes describe the home as one without electricity, refrigeration, telephones or running water; heating came from animals in the house, coal or wood, and much had to be produced at home. The 1921 census, after Mathilde's death, shows that the household included children, a housekeeper, a servant and a teacher.

[64] In November 1893, a violent storm struck the west coast of Jutland. At Harboøre alone, 26 fishermen drowned, leaving many widows and children behind. At the funeral on 27 November, the Inner Mission preacher Carl Julius Moe delivered a sermon that became nationally notorious. He did not literally say that the drowned men were "to blame" for their own deaths, but he interpreted the catastrophe within a stern revivalist framework of sin, unbelief, judgement and conversion. Moe said that among those who had perished there were people who did not belong to Christ, and his most often cited line was: "Every human being who dies without faith is lost." In Danish, the sentence was: "ethvert Menneske, som dør uden i Tro, han er fortabt." The feeling among Inner Mission circles was that they had been misrepresented by the secular press which contributed directly to the founding of Kristeligt Dagblad (The Christian Daily) three years later, in 1896. That paper is still published daily.



Jørgen Christian Berthelsen in front of their home in Harboøre. Around Jørgen Christian are five of his children, and an educated guess is that the photo is from the summer 1914. Left to right it is (probably) Mia, Ulla, Rese, Jørgen Christian with Anders and then Cok – behind in the grass is probably baby Christian. The old black and white photo has been cleaned and coloured with AI assistance.

The children were Ulrikka Dorthea “Ulla”; Niels; Karen Andrea; Johannes Michael; Constance Jakobine; Maria Theresia “Rese”; Theodora “Dora”; Anders Christian Ditlev; Christian Harbo; and Sara Elise. Ane Marie Iversen lived with the family from 1911 and was counted by Jørgen Christian as one of his own children.

Photographs show Jørgen Christian with the children, Mathilde with the children in the garden, family gatherings in Harboøre, and later Jørgen Christian surrounded by his children at his seventieth birthday. One image from around 1920 places him in the middle of the children, with a portrait of Mathilde on the wall. These are not just illustrations; they support the written picture of a home that remained centred around the father after Mathilde’s death.

Mathilde's death and the widower with eleven children

Mathilde died in 1917 from peritonitis from a burst appendix. She was transported by special train from Harboøre to the hospital in Lemvig for surgery, but too late to save her. Her sister Karen Sand described the final farewell, where the children came in two by two, the oldest first and the youngest with the servant girl and sang a hymn their mother had taught them.

Her death left Jørgen Christian alone with a household of children aged roughly from three to sixteen. The family notes call it "quite a mouthful", and the obituary material says he was left with ten children who had not yet been confirmed plus Ane Marie Iversen. He hired help for the household and a private teacher, and the home functioned partly as a school for his own children and some children in the parish. Ulla later remembered that the children went to school at home until third class, and that it must have been sufficient because they later received good education and training.



Jørgen Christian Berthelsen with all his Children. The photo is taken after Mathildes death in 1917, so Mathilde to the right is pasted into the photo. The photo has been cleaned and colorised by AI. We do not know if they were all wearing blue on the day.

Jørgen Christian was a strong father. A family interview quoted in the notes says that he had "an iron will" and not only wanted his children to have a good education but also tried to direct them toward the paths he thought right. This strong direction may have been one reason why his son Niels later emigrated to Canada and sought his own life far away from his father's influence.

A serious Inner Mission pastor

Jørgen Christian's preaching and church life were deeply shaped by Inner Mission. His preaching was marked by seriousness and aimed at conversion and salvation. It also adds an important nuance: he emphasised that Inner Mission's full name was "*Kirkelig Forening for Indre Mission i Danmark"* — a churchly association — and he loved the Danish national church, seeing himself fully as a man of the Folk Church.

Berthelsen was remembered as a diligent and serious pastor, yet also as a richly nuanced and captivating personality. He had a special gift for guiding the large Inner Mission communities in his parishes, and people seem to have experienced him as steady, trustworthy and spiritually dependable. Christian Bartholdy, then chairman of Inner Mission, described him as having something "rock-solid" about him: one felt safe in his presence, and those around him placed deep confidence in him. Berthelsen emerges as a pastor of firmness, gravity and pastoral authority — a man whose strength lay not in charm alone, but in reliability, conviction and the trust he inspired.

Sara recalled the heavy devotional literature read in the home and remembered that Jørgen Christian spoke much about sin and could "thunder" in church. Yet the same notes also warn against reducing him to a rigid patriarch. They point to his care for his foster daughter, his wish to keep the family together after Mathilde's death, photographs of him kneeling to the level of his laughing children, and his work for vulnerable girls through Fredehjem.

He was a nationally known pastor and a close friend of Inner Mission. He did not take the ministry lightly, and that he was a pastor "in the best meaning of the word". He was also remembered as a speaker at many meetings. One of the most prominent traits mentioned about him was faithfulness: he did not forget his old parishes, returned often, and was always received with joy.

Fredehjem: his wider life's work

Outside his parish work, Jørgen Christian Berthelsen became especially known for his work for the Fredehjem movement. The work began after a meeting on 25 April 1906 at Skovtofte in Kongens Lyngby, where a small group gathered to discuss what could be done for young girls in difficult circumstances who could not manage on their own. A committee of nine was formed, and the idea was to establish suitable homes called Fredehjem[65]. Speaking of his considerable

[65] Fredehjem was born from a Christian social vision in Denmark around 1906: the belief that vulnerable women and children should not simply be condemned, institutionalised or abandoned, but protected, housed and given the possibility of a more dignified life. Ellen Schepelern began by seeking out homeless and prostituted women in the dark streets of Aarhus, while Pastor Jørgen Christian Berthelsen gave the movement

involvement in the Fredehjem cause, J. Chr. Berthelsen said: "*Yes, it was due not least to my wife that, from the very beginning, I agreed to take part in the work of Fredehjem. She has continually, and often, encouraged me and urged me not to fail, but to persevere in the work for the unfortunate women whom Fredehjem seeks to help*."

Jørgen Christian became the first secretary and chairman of this work, and as chairman he led it until 1950. He had to travel, write, awaken interest and raise the necessary starting capital — and he succeeded. From a beginning "with empty hands", the first home was opened in 1913, and by the time of the memorial note there were four large, well-kept homes.

Fredehjem was both homes and educational institutions for girls described in the source as "girls and young women with intellectual or social vulnerabilities", intended to care for, protect and help them toward a decent and proper life. Mathilde encouraged Jørgen Christian to put effort into the work. Pastor Berthelsen and the Fredehjem cause "belonged together", and he worked with tireless zeal and with "his whole great heart's love" until the end.

Skanderup: a new parish and a different world

In 1923 Jørgen Christian left Harboøre and became parish pastor in Skanderup, where he served until his retirement in 1942. The move was a major change. Harboøre had been a fishing community on the rough North Sea coast; Skanderup near Kolding was a farming parish. Ulla remembered the difference as "night and day", with rich farms visibly present in the local environment.

The Skanderup parsonage was large and newly built, with seventeen rooms and a garden of about 8,000 square metres, designed like a French park with long, straight paths. As in Harboøre, the house was close to the church. The garden required much work, and the children had to help. The move to Skanderup gave them better opportunities for education. Jørgen Christian remained a busy widower and never remarried, although the family notes say that serious offers were not lacking.

Jørgen Christians work in Skanderup was a good continuation of what had begun in Harboøre. He remained strongly connected to Inner Mission and served for twenty-one years on its board. Even after retirement, he continued for a time to speak and preach, including in his son's churches in Søndbjerg-Odby in Thy, and year after year he was a regular guest at the autumn meetings in Skanderup.

Final years and death

Jørgen Christian retired from the pastorate in 1942 and moved to Middelfart on Funen, where he lived until his death. Sara and Ulla lived at home with him and never married. The family notes include a photograph from a family visit in Denmark in 1955, showing Jørgen Christian with

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its defining language: "Let us protect these girls, so that they may be allowed to become human beings, as they were created to be." Together, these initiatives formed part of a wider movement of religiously inspired social care, which eventually developed into Jysk Børneforsorg/Fredehjem. See full story (in Danish) at https://jyskborneforsorg.dk/om-os/vores-historie/ or the book

Ulla and Niels, who had emigrated to Canada. This late image ties together the Danish and Canadian branches of the family.

Jørgen Christian Berthelsen died on 27 May 1957 at Strandvejen 65 in Middelfart. He was 85 years old. He remained mentally fresh and spiritually engaged until near the end; only three weeks before his death did his strength seriously begin to fail. He was buried from Harboøre Church on 1 June 1957 and laid to rest in Harboøre churchyard, where Mathilde was also buried.

The Children of Jørgen Christian Berthelsen and Mathilde Ammentorp

Ten children, one foster daughter, and the branches of a Danish family

Jørgen Christian Berthelsen and Mathilde Ammentorp

Parents of ten children and foster parents of Ane Marie Iversen

1. Ane Marie Iversen *"Mia"*
1901–1956

Foster daughter in the Harboøre pastor's household from 1911; nurse; married Hans Christian Johannes Hansen. No children.

Foster daughter, counted as one of his own.

2. Ulrikka Dorthea Berthelsen *"Ulla"*
1902–2000

Eldest daughter; cared for the family after Mathilde's death. Never married. Buried in Harbøøre.

3. Niels Berthelsen
1903–1992

Emigrated to Canada in 1928; settled in Calgary. Married Ingeborg Bonke. Children; Jørgen Arthur *"Jack"*, Eric Michael *"Mike"*, Dorothy *"Dot"*.

4. Karen Andrea Berthelsen *"Søster"*
1905–1980

Married pastor Karl Sørensen Hvas in Thorshavn in 1929; later lived at Vester Hjerm. Children: Kirsten Hvas, Jens Jørgen Hvas.

5. Johannes Michael Berthelsen *"Degnse"*
1906–1969

Paint and wallpaper dealer in Løgstør. Married Ellen Marie Sørensen in 1935. Children: Jens Jørgen, Birgit Mathilde, Ellen Margrethe, Hanne Marie.

6. Constance Jacobine Berthelsen *"Cok"*
1907–2000

Teacher; married Jens Jensen Graven in 1936; connected to Graven's nursery in Brønderslev. Children: Ole, Niels, Anders Graven.

7. Maria Theresia Berthelsen *"Rese"*
1908–1988

Social worker; unmarried. Continued her father's work on the board of Fredehjem. Buried in Harboøre.

8. Theodora Berthelsen *"Dora"*
1910–1988

Teacher; married Marius Kristian Julius Schjødt Essendrop in 1937; lived in Næstved. Children: Anne Birgitte, Karen Margrethe, Torkil.

9. Anders Christian Ditlev Berthelsen
1912–1997

Pastor; served in Vedersø, Søndbjerg and Odby; became provst in 1965. Married Gerda Karla Bøg Jensen. Children: Jens Christian, Elisabeth, Peter, Jørgen Christian.

10. Christian Harbo Berthelsen *"Christian"*
1913–2001

Gardener and nursery manager; Winter War volunteer and later active in the Danish resistance. Married Inger Margrethe *"Piadl" Beck Pinborg*. Children: Finn, Thomas.

11. Sara Elise Berthelsen *"Sara"*
1914–2008

Home economics teacher and later home consultant in Aarhus. Never married. Buried in Harboøre.

Legend

——— Solid line = biological child

····· Dotted line = foster child

Children are listed within each branch

Dates shown as birth–death years

Jørgen Christian Berthelsen and Mathilde Ammentorp had ten children, plus one foster child, Ane Marie Iversen, whom Jørgen Christian counted as one of his own[66]:

1. **Ane Marie Iversen "Mia" (*1901–†1956)**
   Ane Marie was not born a Berthelsen, but came into the pastor's household in Harboøre as a foster child in 1911 after her mother died and her father could not care for the children. She became a nurse and later married Hans Christian Johannes Hansen in Copenhagen. They had no children. She died in an accident in Copenhagen in 1956.
2. **Ulrikka Dorthea Berthelsen "Ulla" (*1902–†2000)**
   Ulla was the eldest daughter and took on a caring role in the family after Mathilde died in 1917. She looked after her father in Skanderup and Middelfart and appears to have been the housekeeper in his home rather than receiving formal training. She never married and later lived with her sister Maria Theresia. She is buried in Harboøre with her father and sisters.
3. **Niels Berthelsen (*1903–†1992)**
   Niels was the eldest son and, according to the family notes, may have been expected to follow his father into the clergy. Instead, after studies and work in Denmark, he emigrated to Canada in 1928. He settled first in Winnipeg, worked for a steamship company helping Danish immigrants, and married Ingeborg Bonke. They lived in Calgary, Alberta. They had three children — Jørgen Arthur ("Jack", Eric Michael "Mike" and Doroty "Dot" — and kept strong connections to Denmark through frequent visits and family contact.
4. **Karen Andrea Berthelsen "Søster" (*1905–†1980)**
   Karen married the pastor Karl Sørensen Hvas in Thorshavn in the Faroe Islands in 1929, while he was pastor in Fuglefjord. Later he became parish pastor in Vester Hjerm near Struer, where he served until retirement. Karen and Karl had two children, Kirsten Hvas, adopted in 1939, and Jens Jørgen Hvas. Karen and Karl are buried at Hjerm cemetery north of Holstebro.
5. **Johannes Michael Berthelsen "Dægnse" (*1906–†1969)**
   Johannes became a paint and wallpaper dealer in Løgstør. He married Ellen Marie Sørensen in Aarhus in 1935, and they had four children: Jens Jørgen, Birgit Mathilde, Ellen Margrethe and Hanne Marie. Johannes and Ellen are both buried in Løgstør cemetery. Jens Jørgen was Lone Folmer Berthelsen's father.
6. **Constance Jacobine Berthelsen "Cok" (*1907–†2000)**
   Constance trained as a teacher and married Jens Jensen Graven in Skanderup church in 1936. Jens was connected to Graven's nursery in Brønderslev, a family nursery that continued through several generations. Constance and Jens had three children: Ole, Niels and Anders Graven. She died in 2000 and is buried with Jens in Brønderslev cemetery.
7. **Maria Theresia Berthelsen "Rese" (*1908–†1988)**
   Rese became a social worker and did not marry. After her father's death in 1957, she replaced him on the board of Fredehjem. The notes also mention that she crossed borders in Ontario

[66] For a more detailed account of especially Niels Berthelsen and his descendants see: Sørensen, Stig Yding "Berthelsen, Bonke and de Coninck Smith - Family Notes" (2022) can be bought as print on demand at https://www.blurb.com/b/11312885-family-notes

by Niagara Falls in 1930 and New York in 1932, perhaps visiting Niels or considering emigration, but she returned to Denmark. She is buried in Harboøre with Ulla and Sara.

8. **Theodora Berthelsen "Dora" (*1910–†1988)**
   Dora trained as a teacher and married Marius Kristian Julius Schjødt Essendrop in 1937, with her father performing the wedding. Kristian became head teacher in Næstved and was active in Skt. Peter's Parish. Dora and Kristian had three children: Anne Birgitte, Karen Margrethe and Torkil. Dora and Kristian are buried in the Old Cemetery in Næstved.
9. **Anders Christian Ditlev Berthelsen (*1912–†1997)**
   Anders also became a pastor, first serving as auxiliary pastor for Kaj Munk in Vedersø in 1939–1940. From 1940 to 1979 he was pastor in Søndbjerg and Odby on Thyholm, and in 1965 he became provst. He married Gerda Karla Bøg Jensen and they had four children: Jens Christian, who died as a small child, Elisabeth, Peter and Jørgen Christian. Anders and Gerda are buried in Søndbjerg cemetery.
10. **Christian Harbo Berthelsen "Christian" (*1913–†2001)**
    Christian was named after King Christian X, who was visiting the church on the day of his baptism; the king became his godfather and sent him a silver cup as a gift. He became a gardener and nursery manager at Statsskovenes Planteavlsstation in Humlebæk. During the Winter War (1939–40), he volunteered on the Finnish side; later, during the German occupation, he joined the resistance and later joined the Danish resistance; after danger from the Gestapo, he and his wife fled to Sweden and returned with the Danish Brigade in May 1945. He married Inger Margrethe "Pindi" Bech Pinborg and had two sons, Finn and Thomas.
11. **Sara Elise Berthelsen "Sara" (1914–2008)**
    Sara became a home economics teacher in Aarhus. She later worked as a home consultant for Aarhus municipality, a role described as having the character of family counselling. She did not marry. She died in 2008 and was buried in Harboøre cemetery with her parents.