

Upper Moutere (Weblink Upper Moutere)

Colonel William Wakefield offered the *St Pauli* folk land in Upper Moutere, rent-free for three years, with the option of later purchase. The New Zealand Company would employ them on building roads for four days of the week, leaving them time to break in their land on the other days. They were given rations from the New Zealand Company stores as payment. Eight families and two single men went to settle on Section 63, which was the land adjacent to Lutheran Missionaries Section 155. The village was called "Paulidorf" and the valley "Schachtstal" after the ship and its Captain. The land had to be abandoned a year later due to constant flooding and it was to take a few more years before the German settlers returned. In later years there became a strong German community in the Moutere Valley.

George and his family took up the offer from Colonel WAKEFIELD to go to Upper Moutere. The first evidence of their departure was an article in the "Nelson Evening Mail" on the 08 June 1954 by Jane A BOND. The article read:

Thirty years after the arrival of the *St Pauli* at Nelson in June 1943, a member of this first expedition contributed an article to the Nelson Colonist on his experiences as a lad. Some extracts from this will no doubt interest your readers. He wrote under the initials C.H.M. This was Charles Henry MARTIN the son from Johanna's first marriage and the stepson of our ancestor George MANSSSEN.

About 30 years have passed since the first adventurers slowly wound their way up the Moutere hills with hearts as heavy as the burdens on their backs, shoes worn off their feet and the dresses of the fair sex torn into tatters. [Note: No date was given of the time the trampers left Nelson township but it must have been shortly after they arrived].

One Vast Wilderness

When reaching the top of the range (which was named by us "Der Gelbenberg" i.e. Yellow Hill), whence a good view could be obtained of the surrounding country, nothing could be seen but one vast wilderness, whether looking over the Waimea Plain or down the long Moutere Valley the centre of which was our destination... Hope had already received a sever shock to our first landing. The news of the Wairau Massacre June 1843, reached Nelson a few days after our arrival and our march from Nelson up to this point had not implanted in us better courage. Some of us lost the track and got in the Richmond swamp, where we had to remain till nearly daylight and this, too, on a sharp frosty night. Towards morning we got to a house, the only dwelling house Richmond could boast of. [Note: There were huts along the route possibly made by the surveyors under Mr J.W. Barnicoat and Mr T.J. Thompson who were responsible for the survey of the Waimea]. Here we obtained shelter and a fire was kindled to thaw our frozen limbs and dry our clothes ... the fireplace was too small for the number seeking the warm blaze of the fire.

Pinning for the Fatherland

Pinning now, however, for our dear Vaterland and the happy home left behind was of no use ... and onwards must go the march, up hill and down dale, through fern, flax and swamp. Across some of the largest swamps, saplings had been thrown but some of the trampers lost their balance and fell into the mire. The Upper Moutere where the German Village is now located is a spot where the English made a stand for the first time. Our destination lay about three or four miles down the valley. Just as the shades of evening were closing o'er us we arrived at the spot which would

have been better adapted for the breeding of trout ... With limbs stiff from the long rough journey we sat down and quietly partook of the meal which had been prepared for us ... then we retired to the huts which had been built by the advanced party. [The beds were on the ground and were made of fern (bracken) and manuka and the new settlers had carried their bedding on their backs. Owing to heavy rain flooding the ground they had to seek the shelter of other huts before morning].

Constant Companions

Floods did not trouble us again for some time and after a few months patches of land had been bought under cultivation. Thus portions of our time were occupied with these needful occupations and in the making of roads; one to the landing place (Motueka) 11 miles from here ... Hardships and troubles were our constant companions ... Some time, day after day, was spent in travelling to the beach (Motueka) seeking the arrival of provisions but some times in vain ... [Note: The settlers were engaged mostly in making big drains and roads for the New Zealand Company also in felling trees to build their future homes. Those built on the flat had to have high piles on account of the floodwater. Once C.H.M. saw a settler carrying his wife on his back to safety, while another walked closely behind him in case the former stumbled. The men took advantage of moonlit nights to dig their gardens so as to give time to their work for the Company. The settlers had to make household goods too as their boxes could not be taken on the march and had to be left in the township of Nelson. They availed themselves of the huts by leaving some of their luggage along the track to Moutere. When green food was scarce they did as the British settlers had done – made use of the sow thistle and native greens. Of the trails of these settlers, so homesick and suffering hardships. C.H.M. wrote of letters back to Germany. “The truth we could not write and falsehood we would not.” The British settlers at that time suffered also from lack of letters and news from their homeland as correspondence took at least six months each way].

Slave Work

[C.H.M.'s narrative states that after a few months of cultivation the settlers had grown a plentiful supply of vegetables, and goats and pigs had been added to their stock. Speaking of toil indeed he writes:] “We called it Sclavenarbeit” (slave work) for most of us were utterly unfit for this kind of labour. Some had enjoyed all the comforts and ease, which good circumstances in life and large cities provide ... often did we pine for the land of our birth, as floods were now our constant visitors. Our friends had strongly advised us against coming here and warned us that we should not find pigeons roasted flying about and coming to our table when required. Heavy rains had now set in and floods increased accordingly and matters were getting worse and worse.” [The worst happened and C.H.M. wrote:] “Nothing left only yellow clay. ‘ {P.S. Mr Charles Henry Martin (C.H.M.) was a highly respected resident of Nelson for many years. He opened the green gravel quarry at Martin’s Point Wakapuaka, where he lived on a farmlet.]

I have searched and searched for the original article and as yet I have not located it. NOTE: A friend located the article many years ago and I will be transcribing it all later.

The second account of the family going to Upper Moutere came from the autobiography by J.M.C. (BISLEY) KARSTEN. She writes about arriving in Nelson on the St Pail staying at the Company Barracks, then a few days later moving to Upper Moutere with eight other families. The journey was much as C.H.M. described until the floods. J.M.C. KARSTEN writes:

In February 1844 a big flood came and washed everything away except our whare. Our next neighbour had taken the tops off four large pine trees and built a sort of house on them and when it rained he took his family, wife and two children and a goat up and pulled the ladder up and was safe. His name was MAUSON. He was a gardener.

The KARSTEN family had been in Moutere for seven months when they abandoned the land and moved back to Nelson.

The last find was harder and took me many days searching. The New Zealand Company employed the Germans and I decided there must have been accounts for the wages or lists of rations they received. To my delight I found records of all the Germans that were employed in Upper Moutere and also in Waimea and Nelson district. The Germans in Moutere were: ASSMAN – BECKMAN – STADE – MULLER – HAASE – SCHNEIDER – KARSTEN - JAENSCH and our George MANSSSEN. One other single man, who first went to Upper Moutere, had been returned to Nelson in poor health. He was FRIEKE. Now we have the names of the eight families and two single men who took up the offer from William WAKEFIELD to go to Upper Moutere.

I also found accounts for payment of boat hire that conveyed the German immigrants, their luggage and provisions to Upper Moutere. Another find was an account to the New Zealand Company on 23 September 1843 part of which reads:

Surveying Colonial Reserve Section 63 Moutere dividing land into 5-acre allotments, and furnishing plans of same, paid two pounds 10 shillings.

A report made to the New Zealand Company from Nelson on the 07 November 1843 Reads as follows:

On a Colonial Section adjoining that of the missionaries, eight families of Germans and two single men are living. They have section on terms of purchase having been placed upon it by Col Wakefield when here. I am at present employing them on the Public Works in their neighbourhood. They have considerable difficulties to contend with and having been only about three months on the land have not yet done much towards its cultivation, but they are industrious, frugal and contented and I think will from a valuable body of settlers when they are fairly established.

I have noted in date order the movements of the Germans settlers in Upper Moutere hoping it will help tell you more on our MANSSSEN family living here.

1843

June 16	German families went to stay in Company Barracks
July 26	Lutheran minister Rev WOHLER, HEINE and ULRICH left for Moutere
July 29	Ministers hired ULRICH to help at Moutere
August 07	Rev WOHLER went back to Nelson to help bring the German families to Moutere
August 11	WOHLER and TROST returned from Nelson
August 15	German men arrived in Moutere to build shelters for their families
August 21	Husbands bought their wives and families to Moutere
August 22	Rev RIEMENSCHNEIDER arrived at Moutere
September 02	Two accounts paid for boat hire to take luggage and Germans settlers to Upper Moutere
September 08	HAASE ill with dysentery
September 10	HEINE went to village "St Paulidorf" to visit Mr F.W. HAASE who was sick

September 15	Account paid for boat hire taking provisions and remainder of luggage for German families
September 18	Mr THOMPSON came to subdivide Section 63 for the German families
October 07	HAASE better now FRIEKE sick with dysentery
October 15	Company boat arrives with rations for Germans families
October 16	Account paid for boat hire taking provisions to German immigrants in Moutere
October 29	Ministers baptised STADE baby who was born on the 20 th . Service was held in KARSTEN whare
November 17	FRIEKE is lame with gout, was carried to boat which took him back to Nelson
November 21	Rev RIEMENSCHNEIDER began school lessons for the German children

1844

January 27	N.Z.C. pays German for work in rations & cash
February	Flooding began and some families left Moutere
February 27	N.Z.C. German workmen and document names of all the men
March 14	Mr FOX and Mr THOMPSON visit the German families
Sunday	Floods came held bible classes in afternoon
April 10	Ministers employed a boy to look after their cows
April 27	Postponed service several times so only three came to service
April 28	Most Germans came to service, children had bible classes in afternoon
April 30	End of WOHLER diary
June	Foundations stone laid for the first Lutheran Chapel in Moutere
July 6 & 7	Great floods at Upper Moutere
August	Rev RIEMENSCHNEIDER left Nelson and went to Taranaki
August 31	Last payment to Germans for work carried out at Moutere. Men's names all listed
October	Upper Moutere was deserted. The missionaries and German families had all abandoned the land.