

Conditions In Nelson

(Weblink MA Conditions in Nelson)

The Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle page 283

When the ship arrived in Nelson the passengers sent a letter to the editor that read:

To The Editor of the Nelson Examiner

Sir – We, the undersigned, Emigrants by the ship St Pauli, beg that you will allow us through the medium of your paper, to return our thanks to Captain Schacht for the kindness we received from him throughout the voyage, and also to express our gratitude to his excellent lady for her care of our sick and children.

(list transcribed from left side of column then continued down the right side)

J H A Spanhake	G H C Mansen	L Subritsky
H Dickman	B Benseman	F C G Hembel
H Korber	J Stade	H Schuler
H Mohr	C Pahl	D Meyer
F W Hase	P D Schneider and wife	J C M Karstens
J Schieb	A Adams	F Beckman & wife
G Scheucher	C Lange & Sisters [sic]	A Assmann & wife
J D T Muller and family	F Schumacher and wife	P J Eisemann
W Pahl	F E Rahdel	D Fricke
Hutter	Trost	Heine
Jung	Ooye	Th. Barth
A Hasenbein	F Jacnsth	P Ahrens
A Trebau	B Ollerich	

To the Editor of the Nelson Examiner

Sir – We testify that Captain P Schacht of the St Pauli, has a very good reputation among his countrymen in Hamburg, both as captain and as private man, and we declare that on the whole voyage we were treated by him in a most kind and honourable manner, as clergymen and medical gentlemen may require to be.

We remain sir,
Your most obedient servants,
Rev T.F.H. Wohlers
Rev. F.T. ReimenSchneider,
T.F. Goeders, M.D.

Nelson, July 13

(We have been compelled to omit a portion of the above letter, as it contains matter which if inserted would compel us to give other parties an opportunity to reply – Ed.)

(Reference National Library NZ Alexander Turnbull library newspaper section The Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle page 283)

Shelter for the family

When all the settlers were ashore the first problem was finding shelter for their families. Most used the Company Barracks while others made their own arrangements. As it was mid-winter, this would have been George MANSSSEN's first duty as head of the fairly. I believe they stayed at the New Zealand Company Barracks like most of the German immigrants. Some settlers had bought over either wooden cottages or tents to be erected, while quite a few settled for raupo huts that were built locally. The portable wooden cottages could be erected in a few days with help from other settlers. The local Maoris built raupo whares for the settlers in exchange for gifts of clothes and blankets. As there was an abundance of raupo toetoe and tussock with which to make and/or thatch roofs, the raupo whare were very common amongst the poorer early Nelson Immigrants, which would have included some of the Germans. Cob cottages, with their large plastered chimneys, were also popular. A cob cottage still stands to this day in Brightwater, Nelson. "Broadgreen" in Stoke,

a house built of boxed cob, is well worth a visit. There are a few wooden cottages still in existence today around the Nelson Streets.

Wairau Tragedy

On the 17th June 1843, the day after the German settlers stepped ashore, the Wairau tragedy took place. The news did not reach the settlement until 10 days later. The whole town was stunned by the deaths of their leader Captain Arthur WAKEFIELD, town officials, and other settlers. Nelson was left without any leaders. The New Zealand Company had sold more land than they had available to them and required the land in Wairau to make up the shortfall in rural land. They had started to survey the Wairau Valley before purchasing the land. This and other factors, led to the tragedy. It was the only major confrontation with the local Maoris in the Nelson area. If you wish to know more I recommend the book "*Nelson, A History of Early Settlement*" by Ruth Allen. This publication not only gives an account of the Wairau tragedy but also has an excellent chapter on the early German settlers.

The New Zealand Company Housing Plan

In the housing plan of the New Zealand Company a settler paid £300 for which he received an allotment town section of one acre, a suburban section of 50 acres and rural land of 150 acres. The New Zealand Company started to advertise in Germany in December 1839. De Chapeaurouge and Company organised the purchase of allotments with the New Zealand Company. BEIT purchased five allotments in Nelson and the Northern German Missionary Society purchased one. This was to help establish a Lutheran mission in New Zealand. BEIT was given money in Germany by nine fellow passengers for land to be issued on arrival in Nelson, but it took many years for the settlers to get their land or their money back. The nine were BECKMANN, DECKMANN, JAENSCH, LANGE, OUYE, SCHIEB, SCHNEIDER, SPANHAKE and TIETJEN. The New Zealand Company sold land to many absentee landowners whose land lay unoccupied at a time when many immigrants were looking for work. Times were hard with very little employment for all the settlers, especially the newly arrived German immigrants.

The Wairau tragedy put the town into a state of shock. Without Town Officials, the Germans were left to fend for themselves and got no help from their agent BEIT. He ignored their plight and refused to accept any responsibility as their agent in New Zealand. He was too busy looking after his own affairs. The missionaries did what they could to help. Some of the immigrants who had the means, travelled to Australia. Many more followed a year later, hoping for better times.

Why did the Germans Emigrate?

There are many reasons why the German emigrated. King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia created a single official State church in 1813 with a new order of service called the "*Agende*". The term Lutheran was abolished in 1823 and in 1830 the new order of service was made compulsory in all churches. The Prussia government began to enforce its "Union Church". The Lutheran faith went underground. It was at this time that many Lutherans left for America and Australia where they could freely follow their faith. In 1840 King Friedrich Wilhelm III died and his son succeeded him. King Wilhelm IV abolished the laws, enabling the Lutherans to continue practising their religion, but this did not stop the flow of emigration. The aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars was a turbulent time and the political climate persuaded many to leave Germany. Poverty, near famine and overcrowding in Europe, and the hope of freedom of faith and improving their standard of living, motivated many German families to emigrate. What made George decide to emigrate we will never know. One story is that George's father was a Lieutenant Corporal in the Prussian Army and George who did not want to follow in his father's footsteps decided to immigrate to New Zealand. If his father forgave him, again we will never know. Another story is that George's father was born in

Switzerland but went to Germany as a soldier. It was there that he married and George Heinrich Conrad MANSSEN was born.

Report to the New Zealand Company

Frederick TUCKETT was put in charge of the Nelson settlement under the orders of William WAKEFIELD (Arthur Wakefield's brother) and he made many report to W. WAKEFIELD concerning the German immigrants. William WAKEFIELD visited Nelson and more reports between WAKEFIELD and W FOX and J WARD (N.Z.C. Officials) can be found at Archives New Zealand Wellington Office giving us more insight into the lives of the early German immigrants. Here are some of these reports.

15 July 1843 W. Wakefield to Ward

You are right in concluding that the German Immigrants have no claim for maintenance or employment out of the immigration fund of the settlement. At the same time it is advisable that they should not be induced to leave Nelson for want of employment or to fall into destitution. I hope that the selection of the rural section, which has fallen to the German Company, will be able to induce those who have the means of self-support to commence their contemplated operations on the land.

10 September 1843 W. Wakefield to Ward

I regret to be obliged to inform you that I found the German immigrants by the St Pauli in the highest state of dissatisfaction at their treatment during the voyage and with their prospect after landing. Mr Beit the Agent, if able, was quite unwilling to employ them except at very inadequate wages. Some who were purchasers of proportions of land from him and M.M. Chapeaurouge could not obtain a location from him upon any of the sections already delivered and having no written obligation from him s to the number of the section from which they were to receive their land, were offered it out of his inferior choices or were told they must wait till the rural sections were given out. The majority of them remained in the Immigration Depot in a despondent state and would have removed from the settlement if they had possessed the means of so doing. After several interviews with Mt Beit I induced him to issue to them the difference of rations between the scale of the dietary table and the actual issued during the voyage and adjusted and put to rest some little differences which not uncommonly occur in emigrant ships. Failing, however, to induce Mr Beit to assist in employing these men, as I understand he was engaged to do. I proposed to them, through their pastor, to place them on a Colonial section of accommodation land at the Moutere, rent-free for three years, with the option of purchase for 150 pounds at the end of that term and made them a loan of rations from the Company stores for three months. I am happy to say that these measures speedily removed the discontent that had prevailed amongst them and that before I left Nelson they were located on the land. The section is in the neighbourhood of two or three other Colonial or Company sections, which I hope may be occupied by future arrivals from Germany. Some families had rented land in the Waimea from a settler and a few mechanics remained in the town. Mr Beit appeared to me to be so wholly occupied with his own mercantile transactions as to have no time to attend to his countrymen's interests, although in this instance the disputes consequent on a long voyage together seemed to have disinclined him to succour this particular body of them. He condemned them as a very badly selected body, but I could not discover with what justice he did so and having some experience of Germans of their description. I am of opinion that they will set the same example of Frugality and sobriety that I have always remarked amongst their countrymen. I am happy to sat

that their Pastor Mr RIEMENSCHNEIDER undertook to pay every attention to their welfare in is power.

Alexander MACSHANE an Immigration Agent in Nelson prepared a statement showing the total amount of ordinary rations to which the emigrants of *St Pauli* were entitled during their voyage from Hamburg to Nelson. It shows the quantities fro their use according to the superintendent's accounts, and the excess or deficiency, giving more proof on the character of BEIT. Here is a list of the deficiencies:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Quantity required fro the whole voyage lbs</i>	<i>Amount used in voyage lbs</i>	<i>Deficiency lbs</i>
Biscuits	12,540	11,000	1,540
Soup	1,749	900	849
Fresh meat	3,491	3,480	11
Suet	320 ³ / ₄	318	2 ¹ / ₄
Potatoes	9,785	5,000	4,785
Sauerkraut	2,430	1,800	630
Plums	855	800	55
Coffee	222 ¹ / ₂	200	22 ¹ / ₂
Chocolate	296 ³ / ₄	250	46 ¹ / ₄
Sugar	1,781 ¹ / ₄	1,600	181 ¹ / ₄
Butter	1,187 ¹ / ₂	1,048	139 ¹ / ₂
Vinegar	1,187 ¹ / ₂	480	707 ¹ / ₂

Some items were handed out in excess as follows:

			<i>Excess</i>
Salt Beef	2,430	3,040	610
Salt Pork	2,430	2,700	270
Flour	3,077 ¹ / ₂	3,600	522 ¹ / ₂
Raisins	862	900	38
Peas	1,710	2,000	290
Rice Barley	1,822 ¹ / ₂	2,300	477 ¹ / ₂
Tea	74 ¹ / ₄	80	5 ³ / ₄

In a letter dated 04 June 1844 to W WAKEFIELD, Mr FOX informed him that he had terminated Mr J BEIT's position of Immigration Agent for Germany, as he could no longer communicate with him on any matters relating to the German Settlers. There would have been very few German settlers sadden by this news.