

Education of the MANSSEN family in New Zealand

(Weblink MA Education for the Manssen Family)

Education for the Germans began aboard the ship "St Pauli" on the voyage from Germany to New Zealand. The teachers were the Lutheran missionaries. Caroline was too young to take lessons on the voyage, but Johann was 10 years old so he probably took lessons from the ministers. On arrival in Nelson, the ministers went to Upper Moutere, and as you all know by now, our Manssen family followed them. While there the Lutheran ministers continued to give the children lessons although they would not have been on a regular basis due to the missionaries trying to break in their land to survive along with the other German settlers. When the floods came the Lutheran ministers and German settlers returned to Nelson.

The Karsten family had been neighbours of the Manssen in Upper Moutere. Johanna M.C. Karsten wrote later in her life of her experiences as a young child returning to Nelson.

I went to school for in April 1844 the Nelson School Society opened the old brick school both for religious and secular education. All the children of Nelson in those days went to the school and learned to read and write.

This led me to suppose that Johann and Caroline also attended this school. I have also read that the Rev Heine took some of the German children for lessons while residing in Nelson. In 1853, when the family moved to Wakapuaka, there is some evidence of a school existing in the area. The book "Early Tide to Wakapuaka: by P and N Wastney deals with some of the history of the early Wakapuaka schools.

Clifton Terrace School

According to the old records of the Nelson Education board of Education Clifton Terrace School was in existence in 1856, but I believe it existed before this date. The early Anglican dioceses records state that a church service was held at the Clifton Terrace School in 1854. But the most interesting find was in the 1849 Nelson Census for Suburban North. It recorded:

There are no schools in Wakapuaka district. A wooden building nearly finished to be used for a Sunday and day school.

It is thus likely that the Clifton Terrace School began either late 1849 or early 1850. Clifton Terrace School, along with the Hillside School, provided much of the education for our ancestors and many of their spouses and descendants. The earliest record of a Manssen forbear attending school was at the Clifton Terrace School. ON the 1st February 1858 the two schools in the Suburban North district had examinations and Charles Frederick Henry Manssen got a 2nd class prize for Clifton Terrace School. The Suburban North Committee of Education Minutes Book from 1856-77 recorded on the 7th March 1859 that Mary Elizabeth Manssen also won a 2nd class prize for Clifton Terrace School. Charles and Mary's teacher was Mr Carswell.

George Manssen, our pioneer settler, was on the Education Board for the Suburban district and his home was the collecting place for the Education Tax. The Suburban North Education Board meeting held on 7th December 1857 records:

A letter was read out from Dr Greenwood, secretary to the central board of Education, dated 14th, referring to the appointment of a collector of the "Education Rate" when Mr MANSSEN agreed to undertake that Office having held it on a previous occasion.

Charles Henry Martin, the son by Johanna's first marriage was a most generous man to the school. He gave many prizes and after his death he left money to continue the funding of prizes. All of Caroline and Williams Page's 12 children attended the Clifton Terrace School, but only a few of Charles and Emma Manssen's children attended. Many descendants thereafter involved themselves with the running of the School and served on the school committees. The last school reunion was organised by a great-great grandson of George and Johanna Manssen, Graeme McConnell.

Stoke School

The first school on Stoke was opened 28th December 1845. About 1850-51 the school was moved near to St Barnabas Church. Then in 1859 it was rebuilt on its present site. The building was made of cob and whitewashed. It was later replaced by a wooden building. In 1930 a new building was erected and is still in existence today. Charles and Emma Manssen's children went to Stoke School from 1885 to 1898. Unfortunately, most of the early Stoke School records were lost in a fire. Those that survived are held at the Nelson Museum, but cover later years of the school after Charles and Emma's children would have attended. John Harold Manssen kept his N.Z. Education Department Standard Certificate, which stated that he went to Stoke School. The school held a jubilee in 1970 and a booklet was published. I was also told there was an earlier centennial publication. I have not sighted either of these publications.

Toi Toi Girls School

I have not researched the history of Toi Toi Girls School. The youngest surviving daughter of Charles and Emma Manssen was Hilda Jane Manssen and she attended this school from 26th October to 19 November 1898. Records state that she previously attended Stoke School. Nelson Museum had some school rolls and this is where I obtained this information.

Hampden Street School

The Hampden Street School opened for lessons at the beginning of 1868. This was another of the early schools in Nelson that had its records destroyed in a fire. So again there are no school rolls bearing the family name. One of Charles and Emma Manssen's sons John Harold Manssen attended this school where he passed his first standard in 1884 as shown on his N.Z. Education Certificate, which has survived, amongst his descendants. John S Marris wrote a very interesting history on the Hampden Street for the reunion in 1980. John and myself are both great-great grandchildren of William Marris who was Emma's Elisabeth Manssen's father. William Marris had another daughter, Miss Francis Elizabeth Marris, who was a teacher at Hampden Street School from 1883 to 1885. Late in 1885 Miss F E Marris went to teach at Toi Toi School.

Nelson Girls College

The Nelson Girls College was established in 1882. The school was opened on 2nd February 1883 with a roll of 67 pupils. I have been unable to get any more information on this college. I do not know if any of the first three generations went there, but I know that many of the following generations attended Nelson Girls College, one being my Aunt Olive Margaret Lessels, who also attended one of the college reunions.

Nelson Boys College

Nelson Boys College was perhaps one of the earliest colleges in New Zealand. The Nelson College began on Monday 7th April 1856 in Manuka Street Nelson. The first headmaster was Rev J.C. Bagshaw, M.A. The following list of Manssen descendants, including some of their spouses, is taken from the Old Boys' Register of 1956.

Barnes Barry Wilson, 1945-47, Farmer, Appleby, R.M.D. Richmond

Barnes David John, 1955
 Barnes John Thomas, 1952
 Barnes Laurence John, 1941-45, Teacher, The School, Marahau, R.D. Motueka. House Prefect 1945
 Barnes Thomas William Stanley, 1938-40, Farmer, Appleby, R.M.D. Richmond
 Bartlett Barry Ronald, 1954
 Bartlett Graham Kenneth, 1955
 Brown Peter Wallace, 1953
 Close Philip Norman, 1930-34, Farmer, Wakefield.
 Dobson Patrick Arthur, 1942-44, Shop Assistant, 413 Trafalgar Street, Nelson
 Diserens Eric, 1954
 Flower Noelan Hemi, 1938, Farmer Whanagamao
 Frost Anthony Thomas, 1955
 Frost Lawrence Gerald, 1944-45, Milk Roundsman, Lud Valley Hira, Nelson
 Frost William Bevan, 1949
 Frost Donald Rex, 1950-51 C/- L.C. Frost, Hira, R.M.D., Nelson
 Frost Maurice Rex, 1943, Hira, Nelson
 Gay Sydney Milton, 1935. Staff Post Office, Nelson. (16 Arapiki Road, Stoke)
 Gill Francis Henry, 1910-11, Diary Framer, Wakapuaka, Nelson member Waimea County Council, Past President, Wakapuaka Framers Union
 Gill John Thomas, 1938-39, Shop Assistant, Atawhai, Nelson
 Gill Vernon George, 1938-39, Sheep Farmer, Blackwater Valley, Murchison
 Gill Reginald William, 1938-39. Diary Farmer, Hira Nelson, Rigby rep. Nelson 1947. World War II R.N.Z.Navy
 Hart Baden Clifford, 1946-47. Cabinetmaker, 24 Parkers Road, Tahunanui
 Kain Maurice Geoffrey, 1939-45. Farmer Atawhai Nelson
 Kerr Allen Carol, 1935-37. Aircraft worker, 39 The Ridgeway, Wakatu Nelson
 Kerr Brian Daniel, 1943. Welder, 66 Milton Street, Nelson
 Lessels Alex Neil, 1930-32. Master Painter, 72 Weka Street, Nelson. Executive Master Painters Assn. Nelson World War II 2 N.Z.E.F. P.O.W. 3½ years
 Lessels Alexander Louis, 1915-16. Formerly Painter Nelson, died Nelson 1953
 Lessels Bevan Malcolm, 1955
 Lessels James Bertie, 1926-27, Painter, Mcleavey Road Ohau, Wellington
 Manssen Cuthbert Maurice, 1930-34, Diary Proprietor, 30a Motueka Street, Nelson, World War II No 2 G.R. Squadron, R.N.Z.A.F.
 Manssen Norman Bernard, 1929-35, Project engineer, N.Z. Forest Products, Tokoroa. House Prefect: XV, 1935, Athletic champion, 1935; shooting champion 1933 and 1935. Athletic rep. Nelson and Canterbury. B.E. (Elect. Civil), Hons. 1940; A.M.I.E.E. World War II 2 N.Z. E.F., Lieut. Dept of Sc. & Ind. Research, N.Z., 1942-45; a senior scientific officer, Ministry of Supply, England, 1945-48; electrical engineer, Christchurch, 1948-54
 Ruffell Harold Charles, 1922-23. Grocer, Wakapuaka Road, Nelson
 Ruffell Ian Charles, 1950-54. Assistant, Hospital Laboratory, Nelson (Atawhai)
 Ruffel Rodney Brian, 1943-45. Clerk, Kenning & Horlor, Nelson (Bay View. Wakapuaka Road)
 Simpson Walter, 1939-38. Telegraphist, Post office, Richmond (White's Road, Hope)
 Simpson Brian Noël 1947-49. Electrician, Tomlinson & Glifford Nelson (99 Kawai Street)

Nelson College had produced many prominent New Zealanders, including some Prime Ministers. I have listed the College Old Boys' Register (where my information came from) as many of you may want to read them for yourself.

Nelson Old Boy's Registers = First Edition 1900 by J.H.Moore, Second Edition 1909 by J.H. Moore & C.H. Broad, Third Edition 1925 by W Devenish and Forth Edition 1956 by J.G. MCKAY and H.F. Allan