

CONDITIONS IN NELSON FOR THE GERMAN SETTLERS

(Weblink SP 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)

The German emigrants find shelter

When all the German settlers were ashore the first problem was finding shelter. As it was mid winter this would have been a priority for most especially the men with families. Most used the New Zealand Company Barracks while others made their own arrangements.¹

The local Maori's 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 whares were very common amongst the steerage immigrants.²

¹ Alexander Turnbull Library Manuscripts & Archives Section Wellington MS papers 428 Wohler J item 1-2 and Archives of New Zealand Wellington NZC reports

² Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940 by Jeremy Salmond

Some earlier Nelson settlers had brought over either prefabricated wooden cottages or tents to erected. The Portable wooden cottages could be erected in a few days with help from other settlers. Later the Cobb cottages with their large plastered chimneys became popular, especially amongst the early German settlers.

One Cobb cottage and some of the early wooden cottages can still be found in Nelson.

Wairau Affray

On the 17th June 1843 the day after the German settlers stepped ashore in Nelson, the Wairau Affray took place but the news did not reach the Nelson settlement until 10 days later. The town was stunned by the deaths of their leader, Captain Arthur Wakefield, Town officials and other Settlers as Nelson was now 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 many other factors, led to the tragedy. It was the only major confrontation with local Maoris in the Nelson area.³ For more information about the Wairau I recommend reading chapter VIII "The Wairau Massacre" page 241 to 263 of Ruth M Allan's publication "Nelson A History of Early Settlement".

The Wairau Affray put the town into a state of shock. Without town officials the Germans were left to fend for themselves. They received no assistance from the German 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 New Zealand Company (NZC) records

The NZC records are a most valuable primary source collection and so important when researching not only the "St Pauli" passengers but also the early settlers and settlement of Nelson. They also contain valuable information about the early Wellington, New Plymouth and Otago Settlements. The original NZC records are house at two main repositories.

What is the difference between these two large collections you may ask? The first collection held in England covers the records relating to the management of the Company. The second collection held here in New Zealand are reports and correspondence between the NZC Employees and New Zealand Officials.

First NZC collection

The largest collection of New Zealand Company documents is housed at National Archives (formerly Public Records Office) in England. These records have been filmed and the microfilms are available from Archives New Zealand and Alexander Turnbull Library both in Wellington. They are also available from the Commonwealth National Library, Canberra and Mitchell Library in Sydney Australia.

One set of NZC papers held on microfilm ⁴ reads, "Papers relating to German emigrants" and is written in German. I cannot speak or read German so I was unable to read the film. Only a few of the documents have been translated. These papers only relate to the year 1840 not 1842-43. None of the St Pauli passengers appear to be recorded in these sets of documents. The film also records an alphabetical list of Emigrant Agents. BEIT is listed on only one page but his name had been then crossed out.

³ Publication "Nelson A History of Early Settlement" by Ruth Allan Chapter VIII "The Wairau" pages 241 -263 and Early Nelson Newspaper reports after the affair and NZC Documents and reports after the affair.

⁴ Archives of New Zealand Wellington Micro Z Reel 682 number 277 Schedule of papers relating to German Emigrants.

A full transcription list of the NZC microfilms and description of the records are located in [Appendix C1](#). I have highlighted and shaded the films that relate to the Nelson settlement.

Second NZC collection

Some original New Zealand Company documents never left New Zealand and these are housed at Archives New Zealand in Wellington. There are 8 East-Light folders recording the name of the Agency [NZC] New Zealand Company, access references such as series and item number etc. that will assist researchers to locate these valuable documents. You can also search for the references by using the search engine “Archway” on the Archives New Zealand’s website.

NZC reports regarding the Germans settlers

After the Wairau Affray, Frederick Tuckett was put in charge of the Nelson settlement under the orders of William Wakefield (Arthur Wakefield’s brother) who later visited Nelson. There are many reports between Wakefield and the NZC Officials (F Tuckett, W Fox and J Ward) amongst the NZC papers. These reports give us an insight into the lives of the German immigrants in the early Nelson settlement.

Frederick Tuckett wrote to Col W Wakefield the New Zealand Company Principal Agent in Wellington referring to conditions aboard ship and of the German immigrants after arriving in Nelson.⁵ In this report and another report he offers ten families, a lease with purchasing clause, of two colonial sections close to the section of the Lutheran missionaries in the Moutere district.⁶ Copies of the reports can be found in [Appendix C2](#).

Another report from Wakefield to Ward reads; *“You are right in concluding 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.”*⁷

A later report from Mr Fox informed Wakefield that he had terminated Mr Beit’s position of Immigration Agent for Germany as he could no longer communicate with him on any matters relating to the German settlers⁸. There would have been very few German settlers saddened by this news.

The Lutheran Missionaries did what they could to assist with the plight of the former St Pauli passengers. Rev Heine later translated the Bahia complaint document and included it in the report he made to the New Zealand Company date stamped 6 September 1847. He gives a full report about Beit, the voyage and the conditions of Germans in the Nelson settlement including reports of some Germans leaving Nelson.⁹ A transcription of the report is located in [Appendix V9](#).

NZC plan for the German settlers at Moutere

NZC documents and reports can be found covering the conditions of Germans in Nelson and the offer of land rent-free for 3 years at Moutere.¹⁰ Eight families and two single men took up

⁵ Archives of New Zealand Wellington Agency [New Zealand Company] NZC Series 3 Item 13 pages 293-295 Nelson 12th August 1843

⁶ Archives of New Zealand Wellington Agency NZC Series 3 Item 13 265-268 10th September 1843

⁷ Archives of New Zealand Wellington Agency NZC 15th July 1843 W Wakefield to Ward

⁸ Archives of New Zealand Wellington Agency NZC 4th June 1844 to W Wakefield

⁹ Archives of New Zealand Wellington Agency NZC MS CO 208/88-89 Micro Z Reel 595 Page 36-45? Report by Rev Heine

¹⁰ Archives of New Zealand Wellington Agency NZC Series 3 Item 13 267

the offer. Tuckett reported to Wakefield on the Moutere offer to the German settlers is located in [Appendix C2](#).¹¹

Some German women, who had intended to stone Mr BEIT were stopped by Rev Riemenschneider. W WAKEFIELD wanted BEIT to give the German Immigrants land at Wakapuaka, but Beit refused saying the land was too good for them. Details from the document can be found in [Appendix C2](#).

Rev HEINE and Rev WOHLER went to their land in Moutere five weeks after they arrived in Nelson. Then two weeks later Rev Riemenschneider and the German families followed them to Moutere.

Diaries and memories regarding conditions in Nelson

Rev Wohler's diary records condition on arrival in Nelson, the German settlers settling in Nelson and the move to Moutere for the missionaries, 8 German families and 2 single men.¹²

JMC Bisley nee Karsten gives an interesting account of a child's memories of those first days in Nelson at the New Zealand Company Barracks and her family's journey to Moutere.¹³ Full details regarding her memories can be found in [Appendix V7](#).

I have read very little from Rev Heine's memories and diary regarding the arrival of the St Pauli passengers and the conditions in the early settlement of Nelson. I have now received some copies and will transcribe the documents at a later date.¹⁴

TRANSCRIBE Heine's memories from Nelson Museum at Isle Park Stoke Nelson.

Published material regarding the German Settlers arriving in Nelson

A valuable resource recording information about the German Settlers and the Nelson settlement can be found in the Early Nelson newspapers. This is a great resource for any research into the lives of the early German settlers in Nelson.¹⁵

After the "St Pauli" arrived in Nelson the newspapers published many reports and printed letters written by Beit, Rev Wohler, Rev Heine and the German Settlers regarding conditions aboard the ship and the early Nelson settlement.¹⁶

Letter to the Editor from the St Pauli steerage passengers in defence of an attack on the "St Pauli" Captain by Agent Beit make interesting reading. Many of the passengers recorded their names to the article.

SEARCH AGAIN Alexander Turnbull Library Newspaper Section "The Examiner" newspaper date etc.

Alexander WILSON boarded the St Pauli at Bahia for the voyage to NZ as a (cabin passenger) guest of BEIT. He was not listed on the arrival passenger list but he wrote an article to the Nelson newspaper, which confirmed he was aboard.

SEARCH AGAIN Alexander Turnbull Library Newspaper Section "The Examiner" newspaper date etc.

¹¹ Archives of New Zealand Wellington Agency NZC Series 3 Item 13, 295

¹² Alexander Turnbull Library Manuscript & Archives Section MS papers 428 Wohler J item 1-2

¹³ Nelson Provincial Museum Isle Park Stoke Nelson Reference Bisley JMK 1836-1917 Memoirs [Karsten]

¹⁴ Nelson Provincial Museum Isle Park Stoke Nelson Reference Rev Heine diary and Alexander Turnbull Library Manuscript & Archives Section Wellington Rev Heine's memories and Diary.

¹⁵ "Nelson A History of Early Settlement" by Ruth M Allan. Chapter X "The German Settlements" page 309-352.

¹⁶ Alexander Turnbull Library Newspaper Section "The Examiner" Nelson newspaper Shipping Intelligence & arrivals and 15 July 1843

German settlers remaining in Nelson

On arriving in Nelson Beit employed one German Immigrant Michael BUSCHL but around May 1844 he left Beit's employment with wages still owing. Beit also owed wages to other German Immigrants in Nelson for work they had previously done for him.¹⁷

Newspapers article headed Police Office, Nelson column 21 October 1843

*"Several Germans who had been recently in the employ of Mr Beit were charged by that gentleman with having detained some of his tools. The prisoners pleaded that there was an unsettled account between them selves and Mr Beit, and that they had detained the tools until their accounts were settled. On the tools being returned charges were withdrawn."*¹⁸

The New Zealand Company employed many of the Germans settlers making roads and bridges in and around Nelson. The NZC work documents and invoices record their names and information about payments. I have compiled the list of these work documents and they are located in Part 4 Appendix N2.

Survey Maps of Nelson

Early survey maps and plans of the Town of Nelson approved by Frederick Tuckett Chief Surveyor 28th April 1842 are housed in various repositories.¹⁹

I also located another map displaying the Boundaries of the Districts in the Province of Nelson showing Waimea and Moutere districts where some of the early German immigrants first settled.²⁰

¹⁷ Alexander Turnbull Library Manuscript & Archives Section MS papers 428 Wohler J item 1-2 and Archives of New Zealand Wellington Agency New Zealand Company papers.

¹⁸ Alexander Turnbull Library Newspaper Section Wellington "The Nelson Examiner" and New Zealand Chronicle Nelson October 21, 1843 " page 338

¹⁹ Alexander Turnbull Library Wellington Map of 834.1953a, Date 1842, Drawer Acc. 3045 and the Nelson Provincial Museum, Isle Park, Stoke, Nelson and Archives of New Zealand, Wellington under the Agency Lands & Survey and the Nelson City Council, Lands and Deeds department and I also located an early map from the New Zealand Defence Force Map Library.

²⁰ Archives of New Zealand Wellington reference AAFV 6038 n4