The Immigration of the Scandinavian People to Hawke's Bay

HØVDING 1873

Norma Keesing

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Norma Keesing

INTRODUCTION

For the purposes of this paper 'Scandinavia and its people' refers to Denmark, Sweden and Norway. There is much controversy as to what is meant by Scandinavia. Sometimes Finland is included - sometimes not. Sometimes the Faroe Islands and/or Iceland are referred to as being Scandinavian but few of these people emigrated to New Zealand so it does not affect the content of this book. Norway, Denmark and Sweden are the countries from whence came the majority of the new settlers from Scandinavia.

There were also a few Germans who came out on the same sailing ships which brought the Scandinavians to New Zealand. This caused many a fight on board ship and in the new settlements. After all Denmark and Germany had every so often throughout history been at war with each other and many of the Danes were veterans of these wars. Some were refugees from Slesvig (an area of Denmark taken over by Germany). Imagine being on a small sailing ship for three to four months with a person or persons from another country which you claimed to be an enemy. Tempers must have been easily frayed and short at the best of times but to have Germans in your midst! Well .... !

It is reported that the Danes went out of their way to infuriate the Germans, whom they detested. One enterprising captain wisely decreed that if the travellers had a dispute to settle, fights must be held in the evenings under proper rules so the combatants could settle their differences - at least for the time being - with their fists, the fisticuffs no doubt provided much needed entertainment as well.

Map of Scandinavia

WHY DID THE PEOPLE EMIGRATE FROM SCANDINAVIA?

The Scandinavian countries are beautiful countries. Why would thousands of people leave their homelands to go to far flung and unseen parts of the world?

Scandinavian people have always been adventurous seafaring wanderers who have felt the call of distant shores. Fishing has always been an important way of life but as life became dull and boring the young and not so young men took to the seaways in search of adventure.

The Vikings (early Scandinavians) whose exploits are legendary travelled far and wide from early times in history, settling in many countries including England, Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man, the Shetland Islands to as far away as the Mediterranean taking their language, culture and customs with them. The log cabin design used in patchwork is said to have originated from Scandinavia.

Assimilating into everyday life very quickly in their new countries the Vikings were no longer the invading foreigner but one of the locals.

AND WHY EMIGRATION IN THE 1870'S?

Life in the Scandinavian countries had, for many, become less than desirable. History shows a very complex situation between the countries with takeovers - voluntary and involuntary.

In 1905 when Norway began a rebirth by dissolving the union with Sweden a Danish prince was invited to ascend the throne as King Haakon the VII. Each country now has its own well respected monarch.

Norway has at various times been ruled by Sweden and/or

Denmark and in turn, Sweden by Denmark. Famine in parts of Scandinavia, difficult economic times, and an increased population had put much pressure on the available rescources. Only small areas of land were available for farming and as families grew, their farms couldn't support the increased numbers.

The result of a war between Denmark and Germany was good reason indeed to emigrate rather than to live under German rule.

> In the lost province of Slesvig thousands of Danes were under the repressive hand of an ancient enemy who now sought to extinguish both native tongue and national aspiration. [1]

The 'new world' must have seemed an attractive alternative and so the mass exodus of the Scandinavian people began.

WHERE DID THE SCANDINAVIAN PEOPLE EMIGRATE TO?

The North Americas (including Canada) received one third of the population of the Scandinavian countries and today there are more people of Scandinavian origin in the United States of America, most of whom are the descendants of the nineteenth century immigrants, than there are in Scandinavia. There are areas of the United States of America which are as much if not more Scandinavian than the countries from which the people came. Traditions, customs, architecture have all been carefully maintained in the areas in which the Scandinavians settled.

Australia was also to become home to many Scandinavian immigrants.

Before the main emigration in the 1870's there had been only a few Scandinavian people settle in New Zealand. There had

1 *Forest Homes, Scandinavian Settlements in New Zealand*, G C Petersen

been a few missionaries, whalers, merchants, adventurers and the inevitable sailor who had jumped ship perhaps because of the conditions on board or a more attractive figure on the shore.

During the 1950's and 1960's there was another much smaller intake of Scandinavian immigrants to New Zealand. Fletcher Holding, with the New Zealand government's approval and support, sought unmarried skilled and unskilled labourers from Scandinavia for general construction work and housing construction. Further immigrants were accepted through to the 1960's.

As this paper was first prepared for genealogy and historic purposes we will look into past history rather than for what to most of us is recent history.

HOW MANY PEOPLE EMIGRATED?

> It is not possible to give a precise number of Danes who immigrated from Scandinavia. The Danish Emigration Records do not include all the emigrants to New Zealand because the Allan-Line agent in Copenhagen often sold tickets to London only, and these were, therefore not recorded. From London the emigrants were sent on to the North Island by the general agent for New Zealand. It is possible, however, to obtain a fair estimate of the situation. From 1871 to 1875 the Danish Emigration Records list 1 521 emigrants to New Zealand. The unrecorded emigration which resulted from the Allan-Line's breaking the law is estimated to be an additional 500 to 1 000 persons. This means that between 2 000 and 2 500 Danes emigrated to New Zealand during this period.
> New Zealand immigrants statistics are not available prior to 1900. [1]

It is however, estimated that about 5 000 Scandinavians emigrated to New Zealand during the latter part of the 1800's

1 *Danish Emigration to New Zealand*, Danes Worldwide Archives

under Vogel's immigration programme. Unfortunately, not all shipping lines kept accurate records of the passengers carried nor of their final destination.

The Scandinavians on their arrival settled in many parts of New Zealand - Taranaki, Wellington, Manawatu, Canterbury, Otago and Auckland but mainly in Hawke's Bay and Wairarapa.

WHY DID NEW ZEALAND NEED THE IMMIGRANTS?

During the 1800's when the more easily accessible land was being taken up for sheep and cattle farming Julius Vogel, later to become Premier and to be knighted, had visions of more land being cleared for settlement; to increase the population from a quarter of a million to half a million; and for roads, railways and bridges to be built to improve conditions and to open up new areas.

To do this money was needed and although the country already owed eight million pounds Vogel was successful in persuading the government to proceed with his scheme. He needed 10 million pounds to achieve his aims and was sent to London to raise the necessary funds.

For a small country this was a very ambitious programme but within the space of about ten years most of his plans had come to fruition. He had however, borrowed 20 million pounds to make it all happen.

It would seem that no thought had been given to the possibility of the bad times which inevitably follow the good. In the 1880's as a result of worldwide monetary difficulties; a downturn in the prices received for wool and meat and having to meet the loan repayments, New Zealand experienced a 'slump'. With no social security scheme life was indeed harsh for most New Zealanders.

MORE PEOPLE WERE NEEDED TO SETTLE IN NEW ZEALAND BUT WHERE WERE THEY TO COME FROM?

Bishop D G Monrad had been Prime Minister and Minister of War for Denmark during the unhappy war in 1864 with Prussia and Austria in which they were defeated. After its conclusion he was politically unpopular and left his native land to settle in New Zealand accompanied by his wife and family and a number of young men who proved to be readily adaptable to the pioneering conditions.

He arrived in New Zealand in 1866 and at the suggestion of the Governor, Sir George Grey, took up a block of bush land in the Upper Manawatu district which was then being opened up for settlement.

The development of Palmerston (as it was then known - the North being added later) which had been surveyed on a natural clearing in the forest, was being delayed because it could not attract settlers until a road had been cut through the dense bush separating it from the west coast port of Foxton.

BUT WHO WAS TO CLEAR THE BUSH?

Britain had already given up most of the eligible migrants after recruitment drives there. Canadians had also been considered.

The government had been impressed with the great success of the young men, who had accompanied Monrad, with the work of clearing the bush and then actively farming the land. (The scarcity of land in their own countries had forced the Scandinavians to be frugal and the climate had made them hardy making them ideal immigrants for the task in a new land).

Monrad was asked to influence his fellow countrymen to emigrate to New Zealand to do the work. He returned to Denmark in 1869 to do this. The first of the immigrants for the

Manawatu area arrived in Wellington early in 1871 where they were then sent via Foxton to their destination. The bush was cleared and access was at last possible for the first settlers to Palmerston.

Vogel and the government were again impressed with the results and renewed their efforts to entice others to migrate as there were still vast areas of bush to be cleared.

A Mr Bror Erik Friberg, a Norwegian who had lived in New Zealand for many years was sent back to Norway to recruit his fellow country men to emigrate.

Friberg toured Norway and as a result of his talks the first ship named the *Hovding* sailed from Christiania (now Oslo) bound for Napier on the 30 May 1872 with 365 Norwegians and 11 Danes on board.

Leaving London in company with the *Ballarat* which had 71 Danes on board. The two ships arrived in Napier harbour within hours of each other on 15 September 1872 where little or no preparations had been made for the new settlers' arrival.

(There were two separate ships with the name *Hovding*, the first being condemned as unseaworthy on the completion of the return trip to Norway. The second ship which left Christiania on the 24 August 1873 arrived in Napier on the 1 December 1873. Renamed the *Kelat* it was used as a coal hulk around Western Australia eventually being sunk by the Japanese during the Second World War.)

As with future landings the agents who had been so encouraging at the beginning of the journey were now nowhere to be seen.

The tactics used to persuade the people to emigrate were doubtful in the extreme but the glowing reports of New Zealand - gold was said to be there for the taking - and the promise of owning their own farms which was an unattainable dream in their homelands inspired the emigrants to leave their homes and make the arduous journey.

ON BOARD SHIP

The conditions would have been vastly different for people migrating in the 1800's compared to present times. The emigrants didn't as a rule know where they were actually headed for. New Zealand? Where was that? Even to be told 'across the other side of the world' would have meant very little to the average person. There were few atlases or maps available to the ordinary person - even if they were capable of reading them - and of course with no television or radio the emigrants probably had not the faintest idea of where New Zealand was.

The captains of the ships and their agents needed as many people on board as they could safely (?) get away with. Tales are told of prospective travellers inquiring for a particular ship and being put on another ship altogether in order to make up that ship's complement. So instead of sailing for America they would find themselves in New Zealand. Families were split up because of this, with brothers/sisters/parents never meeting up again. Language difficulties also added to the confusion, with many a shady and dishonest agent or captain taking advantage of less wordly wise and less educated travellers.

> Ignorance of the English language was a great handicap and occasionally rendered the foreigners a prey to the unscrupulous. Immigrants whose passages were assisted were entitled to purchase a block of forty acres at 1 pound per acre while those who had paid their passage money in full were to have a similar block free. The latter were issued by the immigration agents with papers evidencing their right to the privilege. It is recounted that a group of Swedish settlers were the victims of a cruel hoax in this respect. When their ship reached London it was boarded by a person who asked for their papers and in return gave them what he said were "land certificates". The Swedes had no knowledge whatever of English, written or spoken, and unsuspectingly handed over their papers. When

> they arrived in Wellington and presented their "certificates" they were informed that all they held was the menu of a London hotel, and that if they wanted land they would have to pay for it on the same terms as the assisted settlers. [1]

The conditions once on board were not good on the best of ships and absolutely appalling on the others with many of the ships not even being seaworthy. On one occasion a ship lost its mast in a storm only days out of port and had to return for repairs. Some of the passengers were so frightened they disembarked never to make the journey. Others brave or foolhardy enough, completed the journey once repairs had been made, or went by another vessel.

Heavy seas would swamp the ships drenching everything and everyone on board. To be left with wet bedding, clothing, food and living quarters with small children in cramped conditions must have made life very difficult especially as the journey took from three to four months.

(Preference had been given to family groups rather than single men who 'were apt to seek employment wherever there was most inducement rather than to stay in the special settlements'.)

With such primitive conditions there was much sickness and ill health with scarlet fever, typhoid fever, and measles among other illnesses taking their toll of the passengers. There were many deaths with the bodies being buried at sea.

Not all the ships had a doctor on board and at least one ship had a doctor who was described as being 'drunken and incompetent'. Another stood trial in Wellington for cruelty and neglect.

One ship destined for Wellington had an outbreak of smallpox and on arrival the passengers were taken to a hastily erected quarantine station on Somes Island in that harbour. Much of their personal possessions and baggage was burned on the beach.

GENEALOGY NOTE: After the death of a baby, child or in some cases adult children, later offspring were often named after

1 *Forest Homes: Scandinavian Settlements in New Zealand* , G C Petersen

the deceased which presents difficulties when researching one's family tree. The same name may have been used several times until at last one child survived with that name.

The journey was particularly stressful for the babies and children with no fresh food or milk available and the water being rationed. The bill of fare was very monotonous with coffee, bread and butter or biscuits for breakfast, soup, beef, fish or pork for dinner and for supper, tea and bread or biscuits.

The following is a report about the conditions on board the second ship called the *Hovding*:

> The complaints of the passengers on arrival were so serious that the "Hawke's Bay Herald", early in December, 1873, , reported that the Immigration Commissioners in Napier were holding an inquiry. As a result it was decided to prosecute Captain Nordbye and he was to have appeared before the Resident Magistrate the next day. The case, however, did not come before the court, as it was discovered that, owing to the fact that the captain, ship and passengers were foreigners, the New Zealand Court had no jurisdiction and the matter was dropped. [1 2]

In modern terminology this was probably a classic case of 'passing the buck'. Having survived the rigours of the journey which were extreme the ship eventually made landfall. The poor travellers must have been very pleased to see land and yet .....

There was worse to come.

1 *75th Jubilee Norsewood School 1874-1949*

2 See also reports in the appendix.

ARRIVAL IN NEW ZEALAND

The difficult sea journey over, the passengers came ashore at Napier at a place now called Corunna Bay. From here they walked up the hill (now Hospital Hill) to military barracks (previously erected and used by troops during the Maori Land Wars) where the women and children stayed (perhaps for up to two weeks) before proceeding to join the men and older boys who had gone on ahead to the new settlements to be named Norsewood and Dannevirke.

All the gear - rations, clothing, possessions - were loaded on two five-horse-drawn wagons while the new immigrants made their way on foot which must have been a difficult journey after being confined on board ship for so many weeks.

The first night was spent at Te Aute; the second in stables at the Tavistock Hotel, Waipukurau and the third night at the Railway Hotel five or six miles north of where Norsewood is today. The horse-drawn wagons could go no further and so bullock wagons were used to complete the journey.

(It was originally intended that the railway would go west of Norsewood and continue south near the foot of the Ruahine Ranges passing the Railway Hotel on the way. The railway was however, taken through Takapau, Kopua and on to Dannevirke serving a wider area - generally agreed to be a wise decision but a great disappointment to the people of Norsewood.)

Soon after the men arrived at Te Whiti (a mile north of Norsewood) a ballot was held for the allottment of the promised forty acres.

THE REALITY - THE DISILLUSIONMENT

The settlers had been promised a farm of forty acres. What they hadn't been told was that it was covered in dense virgin bush

with huge trees towering over it that had to be cleared before the land could be farmed or homes built. They had also been told that they wouldn't need many clothes as the climate was so warm and that fruit grew everywhere in abundance.

They had also been told that they were coming to a sub-tropical paradise which may have been so if they had settled in the Bay of Islands but Norsewood in winter hardly resembles the northern region of New Zealand.

Ngamoko, which was once a little settlement near the foothills of the Ruahines was known as 'Little Siberia' because it was so cold and windy. There are reports of horses being blown off their feet in the high winds which were notorious for their ferocity.

A sub-tropical paradise? Frost killed the peaches on a tree one of the settlers had carefully and lovingly nurtured.

For some the promise of a new life free from the rule of a foreign power made life in a new land seem very attractive. Little did they know when they left the shores of Scandinavia what lay ahead.

A new life in a new land? The conditions here were not at all what had been promised. The government had not provided for them as they should have done.

Many tears were shed. The promises which had been made to them before they left their homelands had been misleading to say the least.

The unrelenting struggle, the heartache, disillusionment, isolation, loneliness, a new language and a scarcity of food was more than they could be expected to cope with. What utter despair. What was to be done? There was no going back. There was only one way to cope and that was to accept that they had been misled in what to expect in this new land and to make the best of it.

And make the best of it they did.

FIRST REQUIREMENT - HOUSING

Once the land was allotted the men went to their respective sections to build a shelter for their families who, when they arrived from Napier some days later stayed at the Te Whiti clearing until the shelters were built. The barracks there were similar to the ones in Napier, having been built for the same purpose but were much smaller in size.

> The building was not large enough for all of them so some (women) with the older children had to sleep out in the open. This continued for almost a week while the men who had gone to Norsewood were doing their best to build at least a shelter for their families to live in. [1]

The families who were to settle in Dannevirke (most of whom were Danes) had a further two day trek in front of them. (The distance between Norsewood and Dannevirke on modern roads takes 20 minutes by car.) The conditions were perhaps less harsh in Dannevirke than in Norsewood.

> Houses were erected more quickly than in Norsewood, because of the bush being less dense, there was less labour in clearing it, and because of the abundance of totara made it easy to find good timber. [2]

Within six weeks nearly all the families had been located on their own respective sections, and in some cases, in very neat homes.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOMES

> After the men had a space cleared in the bush on which to erect their huts or whares they felled large trees out of which they split rough slabs of timber to construct the crudest type of dwelling place. These were often rough and unattractive

1 and 2 *Norsewood The Centennial Story* A L Andersen

> looking but served the immediate purpose of providing a home. Little wonder many of the women sat down and wept at the first sight of their new homes, momentarily contrasting them with the homes they had left behind in Norway.[1]

The huts which were usually of two rooms - one for sleeping, the other for living. As the family grew a lean-to would be added for extra sleeping accomodation.

The walls of the huts were of split slabs fastened to a frame of adzed saplings, the floor of either rammed earth or smooth planks and the roof was covered with split shingles. A wide chimney of slabs lined on the inside with stones set in clay was where all the cooking was done. Pots were suspended on a series of wire hooks hanging from a bar set across the chimney or from an iron bracket with a swinging arm. Bread was baked in a round camp oven or in a colonial oven once these items became available and the women became accustomed to using them.

The ovens sat in the fireplace with the hot embers heaped around and over them. Beautiful, tasty meals were produced in this manner but it was hard back breaking work.

While their husbands toiled hard to complete these urgent homes the women had to carry all the supplies from Te Whiti to the new sections. To struggle through the bush carrying a hundred pound bag of flour with little children clinging to their skirts was not an uncommon experience for these brave hearted women of the pioneer settlement.

> One can only imagine the burden and heart breaks carrying heavy loads along crude muddy bush tracks, scrambling over logs with undergrowth hanging low over the tracks with small children following behind.[2]

The windows of these crude huts were covered with oiled calico. It was many years before glass was obtainable. Furniture was simple and all home-made from the same rough timber.

1 and 2 *Norsewood The Centennial Story* A L Andersen

FOOD

Under these primitive conditions the family lived and expanded. Food, at least to begin with, was scarce and expensive as much of it had to be imported. The difficulty of bringing stores into the bush, especially before the road was completed, made prices high. The settlers shared what ever they had with each other.

Food and water were constant problems with no fresh milk until eventually the settlement was able to afford a cow with a calf. The milk was given to the children saving many a child's life. But it was still many years before the settlers were able to afford to buy a cow of their own which would then not only provide butter and cheese for their own use but also could be bartered for other commodities.

Once the land was cleared vegetables could be grown but these had to be securely fenced off to guard them from wandering stock and wild pigs, the latter being a very welcome addition to the diet as were the native pigeons (then not a protected bird), eels and wild honey.

With the cost of living being high as much food as possible was gathered locally. With flour at 30s per 100lbs and sugar at 6d per pound these became luxuries instead of necessities. Vegetables were grown - potatoes, cabbages, carrots - with seeds provided by the government and as the soil was very fertile the people were well rewarded for their efforts. A store was eventually opened in Norsewood with credit given but on low wages and the debt which had to be repaid to the government this was probably a very mixed blessing.

The supply of water was a big problem until wells were dug. Until then the washing was done in streams or springs which were often a long way from home. There were few receptacles in which to carry the water and nothing in which to boil the clothes.

Sheep were kept mainly for their wool which was used in the

home. The wool, because of the bush and scrub was full of biddibids and usually smoke and charcoal stained from the bush fires making it unsaleable.

There were fowls also once the settlement was established and the eggs must have been a very welcome addition to the diet.

CONDITIONS OF SETTLEMENT - AND THE COST

The new settlers had a considerable financial committment to meet. In the first place those who had not been able to pay in advance the cost of their passages to New Zealand, as was the case with nearly all, had signed promissory notes for the passage. This amounted to 7 pounds for each adult and 5 poundsfor each child up to three in number. Where there were more than three children in a family the remainder were carried free. If a death occurred during the voyage a half fare was charged.

There was also 1 pound to be paid for the 'cost of relocation' which was the cost of bringing the immigrants from Napier to the areas to be settled; the supply of rations and meals on the road and also the value of the tools supplied to the settlers for the use in their work. The amounts, payable within two years from the date of arrival in New Zealand, were met by monthly deductions from earnings on public works.

Free rations were provided for up to a fortnight while the sections were allocated and the huts built. The men then worked for the government for three or four days a week at a wage of 5/-a day for good workers, or less for poor workers. The remaining days would be left free to enable them to develop their own land.

No payment on account of land was required during the first two years as during this time the other debts had to be met.

One wonders how much of this had been explained to the

new settler before leaving the shores of his homeland with many of the immigrants believing that their passage at least was free.

> The terms under which the sections of land (the average area being forty acres) were granted to the immigrants were that the purchase price was to be 1pound per acre, payable by instalments spread over a period of three years. No payment on account of the land was required during the first two years, as during this time the settler was expected to pay the passage money for himself and his family, the amount he owed for rations and meals supplied from the time of landing until he commenced work, the cost of transport and the value of the tools supplied. He was also expected in that time to build a house on his section and to have improved at least five acres by felling and clearing it and either cropping that area or sowing it down in grass. The settlers were informed that 'any failure to make these payments or fulfil the conditions would result in the forfeiture of the land'.

The Immigration Department considered that:

> Thus by the end of five years after the arrival of the immigrant in the Colony he should be free of all debts to the Government and have made himself the owner of an improved freehold forty acres - a result which with hard work and strict economy should not be difficult to the industrious labourer supplied for some time with work by the Government.[1]

THE SEVENTY MILE BUSH

The Wellington and Hawkes Bay provinces were separated by a primeval forest which extended from north of Masterton in the south, to Makaretu and Takapau in the north; extending from the Ruahine Ranges in the west to the coast in the east. Sea transport between the two areas was the only link apart from a narrow bush track through the forest.

The Seventy Mile Bush as it was known, this being the

1 *Forest Homes: Scandinavian Settlements in New Zealand*, G C Petersen

From Petersen, G C, Forest Homes, Scandinavian Settlements in New Zealand, Reed, Wellington, 1956.

approximate length of the forest, was the barrier to communications, travel, settlement and development. The portion of the forest lying south of the Manawatu River was known as the Forty Mile Bush this being the approximate length.

The forest was so dense that looking upwards no sky could be seen between the trees. The track through part of the bush was described thus:

> ..... the track through the Seventy Mile Bush became narrow and tortuous because of the many giant trees standing in the way. In wet weather it was slippery and boggy, with floodwaters of numerous creeks and rivers causing many hazards. It was like a long tunnel which seemed to have no end and, because of the trees meeting overhead, it was quite dark and the sky could rarely be seen. At last, after more than twenty miles, the tunnel ended and they came out of the bush at the Makaretu River somewhere near Takapau. The young ones, delighted to be out of the bush and to see the sky again, dug in their spurs and set off at a gallop. [1]

> This forest, [recorded William Colenso] appeared to be the most primeval of any I have seen in New Zealand. The soil for many feet in depth was only composed of decayed vegetable matter, mostly leaves; and many of the trees were of immense size. The birds were very few - and a death-like silence reigned - not even broken by the solitary owl.[2]

Nowadays this forest would surely be classed as a priceless asset and one which any government would want to save rather than destroy.

The untouched forest consisted of matai, rata, maire, rimu, kahikatea and totara with ferns, shrubs and creepers as the undergrowth. This was very different from the beech forests of Denmark and the dark fir and pine forests of Norway and Sweden.

To clear the forest was rough, hard and dangerous work. The

1 *Petticoat Pioneers*, Miriam McGregor

2 *Forest Homes: Scandinavian Settlement in New Zealand*, G C Petersen

Photo: Hawke's Bay Museum

Norwegians and Swedes may have had experience in forestry but the Danes, most of whom were farm labourers found the task very severe and some could be seen working doggedly on with their hands wrapped in blood stained bandages.

As the progress of the work took the men further from the camp it became impracticable for them to return home each night and they lived in bush camps during the week, returning to their families only at the weekend, although sometimes they were away for weeks without returning.

FELLING THE BUSH

Although clearing the bush was essentially the work of the men and the older boys the women and girls did much of the clearing of the undergrowth. Usually this - the ferns and the vines - was cut away with slashers so that the men could get at the larger trees with their axes. A boy of ten was considered fit to wield a light axe or slasher while at 12 he was expected to use a heavy axe on the larger trees.

To speed up the felling of the bush a method known as 'driving' was used where suitable. It was often possible to clear from half to one acre of land at a time, in a good 'drive', especially on a hillside.

The bigger trees were not cut all the way through but were cut until they were weak enough to fall when struck by another tree. A large tree would be selected to start the drive and after deciding which way this tree would fall, an area in that direction would be decided upon as suitable for the drive. An appropriate scarf would then be put in all the trees in that group. By felling the large tree and letting it fall on the tree nearest to it, it would have a domino effect until all the trees in the pattern were down.

At intervals throughout the day during the winter and spring the sound of the 'drives' could be heard. Initially there would be a low rumble that grew in crescendo to a mighty roar which ended abruptly as the last great trunk hit the ground.

Fires were lit to burn the tangled mass of trunks and branches after being left to dry during the summer months. For all the care taken when lighting fires many a bush fire got out of hand and took everything in its path - houses, fences, stock - in which case the families had to begin all over again, their precious possessions lost forever.

Even with all the hard work and long hours it was many years before the land was cleared completely. The larger stumps could not be removed until the roots had decayed and so the crop or grass had to be planted around the tree stump making the harvesting a slow and difficult process. The hidden tree roots made ploughing a very hazardous procedure causing the plough to "fly up into the air after hitting one of them" reports a man of the older generation whose parents and uncles farmed at the end of Ngamoko Road at the foot of the Ruahine Ranges.

FIRE

Fire was a constant threat to the settlers. The worst fire was in 1888 when a terrifying bush fire driven by a heavy gale swept through the Norsewood settlement and township leaving it a smoking ruin and most of the settlers homeless and destitute.

The school, store, shops, dwellings, stables, sheds, barns full of oats and hay, cowsheds, pig styes, fences, stock, clothing, personal possessions had all been destroyed.

People from other districts subscribed money to help the victims restore their farms and other amenities.

There were other fires but none as disastrous as the 1888 fire.

Dannevirke also suffered from fire the most serious being in October 1917 when a large portion of the business section of the town was wiped out of existence in the space of a few hours.

> Although fires caused a tremendous amount of damage, they certainly cleared a big area of land. The ash from the fire fertilized the soil, and when the newly sown grass took root it provided some beautiful pastures. [1]

As the farmers gradually stumped and cleared the land the danger of bush fires became less and less much to the relief of all concerned.

STOCK

The women and children looked after the stock which was often lost in the thick dense bush. Not only did the mothers have to look for lost children but also cows if they went missing. Sad stories are told of mothers (and others) being lost in the bush.

In 1885 such a sad event occurred. Anna Jacobsen whose husband was away working was left with their three small children which was the usual situation. One winters evening after locking the children in the house so they wouldn't wander away and become lost in her absence she went to look for and milk the cow. Anna couldn't find the cow and became lost herself. When another settler called at the house several days later he found the children distressed and hungry. Eventually Anna's body was found just a few chains from the house. She had wandered round and round in circles until she collapsed through sheer exhaustion.

As well as looking after the stock, helping with most of the work on the farms, and clearing the bush the women also had the household chores to attend to and made bread, candles, soap and furniture under what must have been very trying circumstances.

1 *Norsewood Centennial Story*, A L Andersen

SCHOOLING, LANGUAGE AND OTHER OBSTACLES

For the new immigrant language was a problem and until the schools were built and the children made to speak English, only their native tongues were spoken making it difficult to converse with other nationalities. The Scandinavian languages - although different - were similar enough for the new immigrants to speak with one another until eventually English was the language spoken.

An extract from the book *75th Jubilee of Norsewood School* reports:

> ..... but the first attempts to convert the Scandinavian tongues to the English language appear to have had the development of commerce as their motive. Mrs Thomson, wife of a local storekeeper, in the belief that the quickest way to teach the settlers the English language sufficiently well to enable her husband better to understand their requests was to teach the children first, set about this task three days per week at South Norsewood and at Garfield alternatively. It is very likely that this action went a long way towards simplifying conditions for all concerned, the children probably appreciating the opportunity of - for once - tutoring their parents.

This however, didn't teach English in a very satisfactory manner and tales have been told of children teaching their parents very odd things indeed. The children were actively discouraged from speaking their native tongues at school and as the new generation grew up the languages were lost.

The early history and records of the Norsewood School were lost in the 1888 fire but it is known that a school was opened in Dannevirke in June 1873 and one in Norsewood a month later (although there may have been one earlier). The Dannevirke school was then closed for the whole of 1874 through the lack of a suitable teacher but reopened in 1875 when one was found.

Education was not free and compulsory until the Act of 1878

was passed. Previous to that year, parents had to pay so much per week for each child, sometimes a shilling.

This must have been a financial burden on the parents when they had so many other debts to clear.

Over the years other schools opened or closed in the Norsewood/Dannevirke areas. In 1927 approval was given by the Education Department for the establishment of a special class for Standard 7 with a permanent teacher at Norsewood School. This was the first move towards the establishment of the High School attached to the school which opened on 1 July 1933. However, the life of the Norsewood District High School was brief and was closed at the end of 1937 when the school was amalgamated with the Dannevirke High School.

The doctor in the event of accidents or illness came from Waipawa and charged 5 pound a visit - he had had to ride on horseback a distance of 60 miles over rough country. The settlers couldn't afford to pay this amount of money so arranged with the doctor's assistant to visit them once a week for half a crown a month from each settler. This scheme continued for awhile until the assistant wanted more money but the settlers couldn't pay it. Women helped other women at the time of childbirth and did the best they were able to do for each other.

NEW WORK

Following the completion of the government paid work of road and railway construction there was very little paid work in the area until sawmills and dairy co-operatives were established once dairy herds were increased. Many of the sons/daughters of the original immigrants left the area to find work and make a new start elsewhere. Many of the younger women worked as servants on some of the larger, established sheep stations in the area of Hawkes Bay.

SINCE THEN

During the Boer War and the First and the Second World Wars many of the sons and grandsons of those early pioneers were members of the Armed Forces of New Zealand - their parent's or grandparent's adopted country.

AND WHAT OF NORSEWOOD AND DANNEVIRKE TODAY?

Norsewood in keeping with most country settlements has over the years lost its police station; telephone exchange; and various other businesses have closed with now only the school, a general store, hotel, tearooms/craft shop, museum, and a woollen knitwear factory still operating. However, the spirit of the Norsewood people is still as indomitable as ever. Celebrations when they are held are always well organised and well attended. In February 1990, Norsewood for their contribution to the 1990 Commemorations held a street parade honouring not only the early settlers but modern times as well. This was followed by a dinner and dance at night and a church service on Sunday morning.

The main north-south highway cuts through the middle of Norsewood - it previously wound up and around Lower and Upper Norsewood - isolating the little town from the main flow of traffic.

Dannevirke, always the larger settlement of the two, has fared better and is a busy little provincial town. Two recent earthquakes removed or caused to be removed some of the older buildings, one of the best known being Andrew's Hotel. The locals are now very keen to get the Danish flavour back into the town and are planning new facades and names for the buildings.

Queen Margrethe II and Prince Henrik of Denmark visited the town for a few hours on 12 February 1987 amid much happiness and celebrations. A proud moment in history for all of Scandinavian descent and particularly those of Danish descent.

SCANDINAVIAN NAMES

As in many countries sons took their father's name with an addition to it in this instance 'son' or 'sson' or 'sen' the former usually Swedish and the 'sen' usually Danish or Norwegian. Datter or dotter means daughter ie Hansdatter.

Many of the names have been anglicised - Andersen becoming Anderson, Hansen - Hanson; Johansen - Johnston or Johnson being the more obvious ones.

It was sometimes the Scandinavian custom for sons to adopt as their surname their father's christian name with the suffix of sen or son added. This meant the sons had a different surname from their father eg Halvor Nielsen's son Thor would be known as Thor Halvorsen which could cause much confusion when researching your family tree.

There were five Andreas Olsens either on the same ship or living in Norsewood at the same time. To overcome the name problem each man was known by his trade. There was Carpenter Olsen, Painter Olsen, Tinsmith Olsen, Blacksmith Olsen and probably Baker Olsen.

Some of the immigrants took as their surnames the name of the farm, village or area from whence they came.

In Mauriceville many inhabitants were bestowed with nicknames usually descriptive but not always complimentary thus Big Peter, Little Peter, Black Peter, Fighting Peter, and Peter Everyday so named becaused he turned up for work everyday whatever the weather.

THE NAMES OF THE SCANDINAVIAN SETTLEMENTS

The areas settled by the Scandinavians in the Wairarapa were: Mellemskov meaning the Heart of the Forest and now called Eketahuna.

Mauriceville, not as well-known as Norsewood or Dannevirke, was more compact in size and perhaps the largest population wise of all the settlements being named after the then Minister of Immigration The Honourable George Maurice O'Rouke.

A German, Sven Dryer, who had lived in Scandinavia before coming to New Zealand at the start of the 1860's was naturalised in 1865. He had an excellent command of his own, the Scandinavian and the English languages and acted as interpreter for the Mauriceville camp. The area in which he lived became known as Dreyerto(w)n but is now known as Kopuranga.

Norsewood is so called because, being covered in bush it was reminiscent of the Norwegian forests.

The Work of the Danes or Danevirk is appropriate to the achievements of the early settlers to Dannevirke as well as being an historical and sentimental link with their homeland. Sometimes spelt Danevirke or Danevirk in the early years of settlement it commemorates a great wall erected in the ninth century across the neck of Slesvig as a defence against an attack from Germany. The corporation seal of the former borough of Dannevirke is a representation of the ancient Danevirk surmounted by the Danish flag.

APPENDIX 1: REPORTS FROM THE APPENDICES TO THE JOURNALS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (AJHR)

In early days much of the Government correspondence of the day was recorded in these volumes. Volume D refers to Public Works and Immigration and contains accounts of many voyages of immigrant ships.
The letter reprinted below refers to the use of the *Hovding* (referred to incorrectly as Hodvig) for bringing the Norwegians to New Zealand.

THE AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.
No. 244.
SIR,- 1st May, 1872.

I have the honour to inform you that I have arranged with the firm of Messrs. Galbraith, Stringer, and Co., for the despatch of a vessel from Christiania direct to Napier on or about the 1st of June, with Norwegian emigrants.

The ship, the Hodvig, capable of carrying 350 adults will, I understand, take out 325.

The Provincial Government of Hawke's Bay has requested me to send out, during the current emigration season, 300 Scandinavian families, equivalent in round numbers to at least 1,200 souls, with a view of forming a special settlement at the Rua Taniwha, or in the Seventy-Mile Bush.

Should I succeed in inducing Messrs. Galbraith, Stringer, and Co. to lay on two other vessels direct, I feel confident of being able to send out the number applied for ; but if I am obliged to bring them up to and finally embark them at London, the number may fall short of that desired, for the expense of the voyage to London is an important consideration with the Norwegian emigrants, and the Emigration Agents, if connected with the shipping, are naturally anxious to send them direct in vessels either owned by themselves or for loading which they obtain a commission, and therefore have not the same interest in procuring emigrants to be embarked at London.

The employment of foreign shipping for the conveyance of emigrants must be regarded as an experiment as far as New Zealand is concerned , which may or may not be successful. But it is worth trying for the following amongst other reasons:-

The emigrants themselves prefer embarking at a port in their own country, and in a ship belonging to their country and

manned by their own countrymen ; they like the diet provided for them by the emigration laws of their own country better than the dietary scale laid down in the Passengers Act of the Imperial Government; they save expense, and avoid the trouble and inconvenience of a second embarkation. A large portion of the emigration from Germany and Scandinavia to America has all along and is still being conducted in German and Scandinavian vessels, and I cannot ascertain that it has in any respect been less satisfactorily conducted than that conducted in ships from the United Kingdom.

The Queensland Government has expressed the highest satisfaction with the class of emigrants sent out to them from Germany, and with the manner in which the conveyance of emigrants has been carried out by the shipping firms to which it has been entrusted.

All the European Governments are so adverse to emigration, especially at the present time, that they have placed every obstacle in its way by passing and enforcing the most stringent emigration regulations.

An examination of the emigration laws of Germany and Scandinavia will satisfy any one that the most ample provision has been made for the well-being, comfort, and health of the emigrants, and for a proper inspection of the vessels.

These reasons will, I hope, satisfy you that while I admit there are some disadvantages and perhaps risks in the employment of foreign vessels, I have not entered into these engagements without having very carefully considered the question.

I have, &c.,

I. E. FEATHERSON, Agent-General.

London

The Hon. W. Gisborne, Wellington, New Zealand.

D.-2.

The Commissioners also beg to draw attention to the fact of a lunatic having been put on board as an emigrant, at Christiania.

I have,&c.,

G. T. FANNIN,

Secretary to Commissioners

His Honour the Superintendent, Napier

Meeting held on Tuesday, 2nd December, 1873, before the following Commissioners:-

Present -- Dr Hitchings, M. Tabuteau, G. T. Fannin.

THE complaint annexed was read to the complainants, and they entirely acquiesced in its correctness. A copy of the complaint was then furnished to the captain of the 'Hovding', with an intimation that proceedings would be taken upon the complaints against him for a breach of ''The Passengers Act, 1855.''

G. T. FANNIN,
Secretary to Commissioners

To the EMIGRATION BOARD, NAPIER

Remarks from the Emigrants on board of the Ship 'Hovding'.

WE contracted to go to New Zealand in this ship, bound to leave Christiania, Norway, the 5th August, 1873.

The contract states that we should be allowed good and substantial food : this we have not got. It is also mentioned in the rules that the master should conscientously hear all complaints, and deal with us accordingly; but about six days after coming on board, when lying off a small town four miles from Christiania, he stated that if any of the people complained he would put them under arrest. This was against the rules, and what use was it then to complain to him?

One of the emigrants got a list of food from him after some trouble. There is much to complain of in that itself; but what stands in that we have never got, and that we have got have we always been obliged to quarrel to get. Potatoes, as we should have had, have we not got, and no substitute.

Weights and measure have we also been deceived in; and for reason of the master not having shipped an emigrant cook, the miserable food we should have had has been for the most part spoiled and not eatable. Coffee we should have had about 7 and a half lbs. per day, but for a long time we got only 5 lbs. and more times less; in fact, such has been the case with all the rest of the food. Sunday, when we should have fresh meat half lb. per man, have we many of us not got more than about 2 ozs., and no one has got the full weight. The salt beef that has been served out to us has been quite rotten and that no one could eat it, and

this he tried to give us on Sunday, the only day we should have had meat. Puddings we did not get till we were several weeks at sea, and then only once a week. While in the tropics we should have had an extra allowance of water and lime juice, but we got none for several days, and then only on quarrelling for it, the captain maintaining we should have none. Several times he said when we came on shore in New Zealand we would be slaves and drove with a lash. For a long time we did not get the prescribed quantity of water for cooking, and also we received too small a quantity of water for drinking purposes.

Sick children lying in fever, and near death, crying for water, but there was none to give them. The stoves set up for the use of the emigrants were taken down by the master's orders, that the poor people should not get anything warmed or cooked for the children not able to eat the food that grownup people hardly could eat. We have been out a long time before any food was allowed for the children, and when it was given out one of the most unconscientious girls in the ship was appointed to serve it out,- one that stole, and used much of it herself. The treatment of the sick has been very bad, and no difference in the food has been made for them. When we were on shore it was told us everything necessary for sick people was sent on board, but shortly after we came out to sea, the doctor said there was nothing for them.

We should also have said when complaints were made to him about the food, that it was good enough for poorhouse people. None of the rules the Government sent on board have been kept - no order or discipline.

The master has never held church services, but only kicked up rows. He has been quite careless about the emigrants; in fact, we have been treated more like wild beasts than Christians. We beg to recommend the mate Olassen as a straightforward, honest, conscientious man, who has treated the people with the greatest kindness, &c., and as a man who our countrymen can safely trust only should be in command of a vessel, and we shall advise our countrymen not to ship on board any vessel Captain Nordby commands. We the undersigned testify on honour and conscience to the truth of this and that we have not been persuaded to sign it by any one, but have done it spontaneously. We trust that the Government, if they intend to send for more of our countrymen,

will take every precaution in order that they may be spared similar sufferings. A copy of this complaint is to be sent to Norway.

We have, &c.,
E. Greiner, and 78 heads of families, single men, and single women

1st December 1878

No. 19.
The Hon. Dr. POLLEN to the AGENT-GENERAL
No. 283

Immigration Office, Wellington, 18th December 1873

SIR-

I herewith forward copies of telegraphic and other correpondence with the Superintendent of Hawke's Bay relative to the ship 'Hovding', which arrived at Napier upon 1st December; also the report of the Immigration Commissioners and that of the Immigration Officer covering notes of a meeting of the immigrants held before the Commissioners; also a memorandum by the surgeon-superintendent, and extract from his diary.

From the correspondence with His Honour, you will observe the very great embarrassment under which the Government has been placed, owing to the want of information with regard to the arrangements under which the ship was despatched.

The Government received subsequently to the telegraphic correspondence referred to, a copy of the charter-party from the Immigration Officer, who it is to be presumed was allowed to copy it from the original in possession of the captain of the ship. I will defer my remarks upon the character of the contract until the next opportunity.

The reports of the Commissioners and Immigration Officer do not call for any special remarks : they will no doubt receive your careful consideration. I would observe, however, that a very defective system of management and inspection must be assumed when, amongst other irregularities, widows with children are shipped as single girls, and when a single girl is shipped

so far advanced in pregnancy as to have been confined on board three months after sailing.

I have, &c.
DANIEL POLLEN.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London

Enclosure in No. 19.
His Honour J. D. ORMOND to the Hon. J. VOGEL.
Superintendent's Office, Napier, 9th December 1873.
SIR,-

I have the honour to enclose letters connected with the immigrant ship ''Hovding,'' which arrived here on the 1st instant.

You will gather from the letter of complaints lodged by the immigrants that they considered the food supplied them insufficient, and short in some cases of the quantity to which they were entitled. As, however, it has been decided to take no steps against the ship, it is unnecessary for me to enter further into the case. From the extract made by Mr. Friberg from the doctor's journal, it appears that some of the children were not in a healthy state when they left Christiania, and it is entirely among the children that mortality has taken place. Generally the immigrants appeared in good health on their arrival here, and certainly had no appearance of having been badly or insufficiently fed.

I beg to call attention to that part of the journal of the doctor of the ship which refers to a lunatic being a passenger, and also to the report by Dr. Hitchings confirming this from observations here.

I also would ask you to remark what Mr Fannin reports as to women with children entering as single women, the children being temporarily adopted by married immigrants and brought in the vessel. The objection of course is that on arrival in the Colony the women have to take charge of their own children, and are unable to support them.

Taking altogether the immigrants by the 'Hovding', they are a good useful class of people, and have readily found employment. At the same time it is right to remark that there is more difficulty in placing in employment immigrants who cannot speak

a word of English, than would be met with in the case of our people.

I have, &c.,

J. D. ORMOND, Superintendent.

The Hon. the Minister for Immigration, Wellington.

Sub-Enclosure to Enclosure in No. 19.

COMMISIONERS' REPORT on Ship 'Hovding.'

Immigration Commissioners' Office, Napier, 9th December, 1873.

SIR,-

I have the honour to inform you that the 'Hovding', commander, Captain Nordby, arrived in the Ahuriri roadstead on Monday morning, the 1st December, after a passage of 110 days.

The Commissioners, whilst engaged in examining the provisions, &c., were informed that the passengers were desirous of laying a complaint against the captain for short and bad food supplied to them during the voyage. After listening to their complaint, the immigrants were directed to bring their grievance before the Commissioners, in writing, on the next day, in the immigration barracks.

On examining the provisions, the Commissioners found, generally speaking, that they were good, but the flour was bad and musty; some bread, however, which was tasted, seemed sweet.

The immigrants looked healthy and clean. Eleven deaths and five births occurred during the voyage ; the deaths were children between 1 month and 3 years, principally from dysentery.

The Commissioners, on the day following arrival of 'Hovding', having heard the complaint copy of which is herewith enclosed , directed the Immigration Officer to institute proceedings against the captain for breach of ''The Emigration Act, 1855.'' These proceedings the Commissioners regret that officer was unable to carry out, owing to no provision having been made to bring the captain under the jurisdiction of the Emigration Act, and would beg to suggest that the Agent-General be advised to have such a provision inserted in any future agreement or charter.

3-D. 2.

APPENDIX 2: THE NORSEWOOD PIONEER COTTAGE

Photo: Lillian Baker

The cottage which now houses the Norsewood museum was moved over twenty-five years ago to its present site in Coronation Street, the main street of Norsewood.

Standing behind the War Memorial Hall and the Scandi Craft Shoppe/ Hovding Tearooms the museum has been visited by many thousands of people from all over the world with nearly 100,000 visitors during the first six years. It is undoubtedly the prime attraction for visitors to Norsewood.

Built, probably, following the disastrous 1888 fire which swept through Norsewood, the cottage stood nestled in trees near Pedersen Road, south of Norsewood but as a result of the main road being rerouted, had to be moved.

At the same time the Norsewood Women's Division of Federated Farmers was looking for a worthwhile project and it was suggested that a cottage museum be established to house and preserve relics of the early settlers in the area. The members were very enthusiastic but decided to gauge community interest before proceeding.

At a public meeting held on 20 July 1964 the 57 people present wholeheartedly endorsed the concept and with support from the Historic Places Trust and other interested groups it was decided to proceed with the venture.

The meeting decided to offer the Commissioner of Crown Lands who had

acquired the cottage as a result of the roadworks, five pounds for the house and this was accepted.

The cost of moving and re-siting the cottage would be over 400 pounds but to allow for further costs during the development of the museum 500 pounds was to be the immediate target.

A great deal of work had to be done before the museum could be established but with a grant of 400 pounds from the Historic Places Trust and an appeal by circular to the residents of the district the necessary finance was raised together with generous assistance from local tradespeople and residents, the Hawkes Bay Art Gallery and the Napier Museum the project was underway.

Furnishings, wallpaper, photographs - everything necessary for the new museum was found and all exhibits are either original or an exact replica of those of yesteryear, having been donated or on permanent loan.

The museum was opened by Mrs Jane Brenkley, one of the (then) oldest living settlers, on the 11 December 1965.

On the 24 February 1968 a very successful Scandinavian Day was held to raise money to build a large addition to the back of gthe museum to house larger exhibits which include a forge, Scandi wheel, an old bicycle used for shop deliveries and saw-milling equipment.

An attendance of 500 people was expected at the Scandinavian Day but such was the interest that nearly 2 500 people attended including visitors from many parts of the North Island making it a very successful and happy occasion.

Among the many well known people who have visited the museum are Joh Beljke-Petersen and his wife who visited in 1982. The cottage, once owned by a Mr J A Hansen had also been the Lutheran Pastors' residence and home to Joh's grandfather in the early years.

The residents of Norsewood take a pride in the museum and many have helped with the project.

The 25th Anniversary celebrations were held in December 1991.

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75th Jubilee, Norsewood School, 1874-1949, Dannevirke Publishing Co Ltd *Danish Emigration to New Zealand,* Edited by Henning Bender and Birgit Larsen, Translations by Karen Veien, Published by the Danes Worldwide Archives.

Photo: Hawke's Bay Museum

This book describes the arrival of the Scandinavians from 1872, when the first immigrants arrived in Hawke's Bay, to the present day.

The author has been interested in her Norwegian ancestry for many years and has with success traced relatives in Norway.

Norma is a member of the Scandinavian Club of Hawke's Bay of which she has been President for the past six years. In this capacity she is able to foster closer links with Scandinavia and to make New Zealanders more aware of the Scandinavian countries.

Now retired, Norma is actively involved in many groups and has a wide range of interests from listening to classical and brass band music to playing scrabble; from gardening to writing short stories and other articles.

She is a founding member of two writers' groups and shares an interest in beekeeping and travel with her husband.

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