

## LARSEN FAMILY GENEALOGY

*THE IMMIGRATION STORY: NORWAY to NEW ZEALAND (1871-1874) – research by Liz Larsen 2002*

On 30 November 1871 Hans (the eldest son aged 32) and his wife Karen (31) and their now four children; Elisabet (8), Lauritz (5), Hans (4) and Carl (1) left the port of Christiania (now Oslo) for Hull, England aboard the steamship "S/S Oder". After a short but uncomfortable wait in Hull (England) they boarded the 853 ton sailing ship "England", commanded by Captain George Henry Harrington which set sail for Wellington, New Zealand on 8 December 1871. A very severe outbreak of smallpox and diarrhoea caused 16 deaths during the 90 day voyage and sadly we now know, baby Carl then aged 9 mths, passed away onboard 31 January 1872 (he died and was buried at sea southeast of Tristan da Cunha and Gough Island.) Lauritz aged 5 years later too passed away on 7 March 1872 (he was buried at sea in Cook Strait while the ship was becalmed.) They were so close to their destination. What a tremendously sad time it would have been for this family.

The ship finally arrived in the Port of Wellington on 9 March 1872, but not before the crew and passengers were all detained in specially built barracks, for quarantine purposes, on a small island in Wellington Harbour called Somes Island, after a 'suspected' outbreak of smallpox occurred. It is not known how long the quarantine lasted but two cases of smallpox were confirmed during that time (the quarantine expired on 30 March 1872.) It is hard to know if the family disembarked at Wellington or stayed on for the journey to Napier, although they were not marked for Napier in the passenger records (they actually did disembark in Wellington and made the weary trip to their new home on foot with many others from the same ship.)

The next to leave Norway's shores were eldest daughter Karen and her husband Jacob (not Ole) Isaksen (both aged 30) and young sons Ole (7) and Carl (5). Karen was also pregnant with Annie Mary at the time. They boarded the sailing ship "Høvding" on 13 August 1873 under the command of Captain Nordbye (Carl A. Nordby). It sailed from Christiania via Hamburg undertaking the long 109 day voyage to New Zealand, where they landed in Napier on 1 December 1873. It was a difficult crossing with provisions being of poor and inadequate standard contrary to Contract Conditions. Passengers numbered 209 with 11 children dying and 6 being born on the crossing. After the voyage all passengers signed a petition that was given to the Shipping Line and sent to Norway, consequently leading to Captain Nordbye's reliefment of his duty. Mary was born safe and well on 24 December 1873 in Napier.

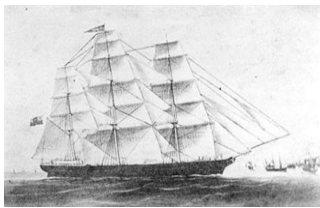
The remainder of the family, Eli Torkildsdatter (not Jorkelsdatter) now aged 58, along with children; Lars (20), Elisabet (16), Halvor (14) and Carl (12) also sailed from the port of Kristiania, on the 912 ton White Wing's ship "Invererne" departing 21 November 1873 under the command of Captain Foreman. Sailing via Gravesend, Kent, England the voyage was to last another 107 days. The ship carried 240 passengers, 16 children of whom mostly died from Scarlatina. They landed in Napier on 8 March 1874.

It is hoped that the now well settled families of Hans and Karen may have greeted mother Eli and their other siblings and that they all travelled back together to their new home in the "Forty Mile Bush" to join so many other Scandinavian families that braved that long and often painful voyage, hopeful of this new world and a better life.

### **SHIP/VOYAGE NOTES**

The main northern ports of departure were London, Hamburg and Christiania (later Oslo). Main arrival ports in New Zealand were Wellington (18 ships), Lyttelton (10), Napier (9), Otago (7), Auckland (4) and Nelson (2).

During 1873-1883 ships sailed to and from NZ non-stop via the Cape of Good Hope.



**THE ENGLAND**

- from 'The Lyttelton Times' July 24th 1874

The ship England, after a fair passage from London, which port she left on the 8th December, arrived in port this afternoon 90 days out. The following is the report of the ship England, from London, with a general cargo, and 30 families of Scandinavian passengers, numbering 30 adults and 34 children, 6 single men Scandinavians; 4 do., British; 8 single women, Scandinavians; 9 do., British; also two cabin passengers, Mr Badland and Mr McGrath, besides the captain's family. She left Gravesend on the 8th December; had contrary winds in the Channel, and took her departure from the Lizard on the 15th; had contrary winds from thence to Madeira, which island was passed on the 26th; from thence had fair trades, and crossed the Equator in 27 30 W., on the 7th January; passed the meridian of the Cape of Good Hope on the 5th February; had steady winds from thence, passed south of Kerguelans Land, and passed the longitude of Cape Lewen on 23rd February; passed Vandiemans Land on the 28th, and arrived off the entrance to Cook's Straits on Monday last, since which time she has been detained by light airs and calms, thus making the passage from the Lizard to Cook's Straits in 80 days, and completing the voyage from Gravesend to this port in 90 days. We regret to learn that there has been a very severe outbreak of smallpox commencing among the children of the Scandinavians, and also severe diarrhoea, in consequence of which there has been 16 deaths during the voyage - viz., 3 adults and 2 children of measles and 11 children of diarrhoea.



### **THE HOVDING** (meaning Chieftain)

The ship Høvdning was built at A. B. Bull (J. Jensen) shipyard in Tønsberg, Norway in 1868. Tonnage was 778 tons gross, 739 net. She was the biggest ship ever built in the district at the time, and was considered to be one of the very best sailing ships in Norway. It once sailed the distance from Chicotini in Canada to London in 21 days. She was first ship rigged but was later bark rigged. She was used as a guano ship, but in 1872 and 1873 sailed with emigrants from Norway to New Zealand.

Sailed Hamburg Christiania (Oslo) August 13th 1873 - arrived Napier December 1st 1873  
Captain C.A. Nordby, Surgeon Superintendent Peter Mogstad  
- from the *Hawkes Bay Times*

### ACTUAL LETTER OF COMPLAINT FROM THE HOVDING PASSENGERS...

*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 conscientiously hear all complaints and deal with us accordingly; but about six days after coming on board when lying off a small Town 4 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 is that we have never got - and what 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&1/2 lb per day, but for a long time we only got 5lb 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 1/2lb per man have we, many of us not got more than about two ounces and no one has got the full weight - the salt beef that has been served out to us has been quite rotten - that no one could eat it - and this he tried to give us on Sundays - the only days we should have fresh meat. Puddings we did not get till we were several weeks at sea and then only once a week. When 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 the 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. Two 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 grown up people could hardly eat. We had 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 for 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 that 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 Govt. has sent on board have been kept - no order of discipline. The Master has never held Church service 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 that Mate Olassen as a straight forward honest conscientious man who has treated the people with the greatest kindness and as a man who our country men can safely trust if he should be in command of a vessel and we shall advise our country men not to ship on board any vessel, Capt. Nordby commands. We the undersigned testify on honor and conscience to the truth of this and that we have not been persuaded to sign it by anyone but have done it spontaneously. We beg that the Government if they intend to send more of our Country men will take every precaution in order that they may be spared similar sufferings. A copy of this complaint is to be sent to Norway - 1st December 1873 Signed E. Greiner & 78 heads of families, single men & single women.*

### **THE INVERERNE**

- Built for Francis Banfield & Sons, Ship Owners and Agents, St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly, Cornwall, England in 1865
- Iron construction, 744 tons gross, poop 48 ton
- 188.5ft long by 31.5 feet maximum beam and 19.2 ft deep (the depth of 19.2 feet, is the depth of the main hold at midships (not, as is commonly thought, the draft of the ship)

Her original name was "*Anne Laity Banfield*" after the wife of John Banfield (a brother to Francis Banfield), under which name she came to grief and was condemned and sold. Her new owner, however, carried out extensive repairs and remaned his craft the Invererne. Under her new name, the ship made three voyages to New Zealand, all under the command of Captain Foreman. The first was to Napier, where she arrived on March 8 1874, bringing 240 immigrants, 107 days from London. There was a lot of sickness aboard during the trip and 16 children died, the chief trouble being scarlatina.

- Ship was partly destroyed about 1871-72 and rebuilt in London
- Owners J and R Grant
- Registered London.Lloyds number 5319
- Made 3 trips to New Zealand with migrants - 1874 to Napier, 1875 to Auckland, 1876 to Lyttelton.

The iron ship Invererne, from London, arrived in harbour yesterday afternoon. She brings a general cargo and 208 Government immigrants. They have all arrived in good health. The Health Officer, Dr. Philson, is to proceed on board this morning, at 9 o'clock, to examine the passengers, and they are to be landed this afternoon. Owing to the Health Officer not visiting the ship yesterday on her arrival, we are unable to furnish our readers with an extended report of the vessel's passage. From Captain Foreman we, however, learn that the Invererne left Falmouth on November 1 and passed the meridian of the Cape of Good Hope on December 30.

Strong winds from the westward prevailed. Sighted the Three Kings on January 25, and had baffling winds and calms up the coast. The passage throughout has been of a most pleasant description. There were three deaths (children), and five births during the passage.

- from 'The Hawkes Bay Times' of 10th March 1874

The New Zealand Shipping Company's fine iron ship Invererne, 743 tons, Capt. Foreman, arrived in Hawkes Bay at 6 o'clock on Sunday evening, after a good passage of 107 days. She left Gravesend on the 22nd November, but meeting bad weather, was forced to lie for a week in the Downs ; went down the Channel, but the rough weather continuing, put into Dungeness, where she lay two days ; had light variable winds to the 5th December, when she landed her pilot. Made a passage of 29 days to the line, which she crossed on the 3rd January. Passed the meridian of the Cape on the 28th January, and from thence had moderate weather to New Zealand. Sighted Stewart's Island on the 28th February; met with light contrary winds along the coast until Friday, when off the entrance of Cook's Straits, when it increased to a fierce gale, the direction of which changed to the south on Saturday at about 8 p.m. bringing the ship rapidly up the bay, which was entered on Sunday afternoon. Anchored off the Town of Napier at about 6 p.m and was shortly afterwards boarded by the Pilot, the Board of Health, and a number of visitors, who went off in the steam launch Bella. She was removed to the western anchorage yesterday morning. The Invererne brings 270 passengers, including a large proportion of Scandinavians. They all speak highly of the accommodation on board the ship, and the uniform kindness of the officers. There were two births on the passage ; two marriages (of Scandinavians) on Christmas day ; and sixteen deaths - all children, the oldest being six years of age. The causes of death were scarlatina, bronchitis, and measles, and the last case occurred about six or seven weeks before the arrival of the vessel in port. One passenger - a Scandinavian woman - suffering from congestion of the lungs was removed to the Provincial hospital.

- Sank after dropping of the 3rd lot of migrants at Lyttleton – sailed to Newcastle, Australia to pick up coal for delivery to Java but nearing Java struck a reef and sank.

### OTHER REFERENCE PHOTOS



S/S ODER Steamship – Taken between Christiania and Hull to board sailing ships to New Zealand



Wellington Harbour in the 1870's



Somes Island Quarantine Station (which was closed after WW1)



The '70 Mile Bush' where so many Scandinavians families worked & made their homes

## **WHY NEW ZEALAND?**

In 1870, New Zealand's Colonial Treasurer Julius Vogel introduced a public works and assisted immigration scheme, under which suitable immigrants would be settled along the projected lines of the road and railway. The idea was that the construction work for this infrastructure would support the settlers until they could develop farms on the blocks of land allotted to them. At this time, the Manawatu and western Hawkes Bay were still largely undeveloped, in most part covered in dense impenetrable forest. For these areas, Vogel was keen to recruit settlers from Scandinavia, who were reputed for their skill as foresters and axemen. It also appears that he may have also been influenced by an earlier and rather illustrious settler in the Manawatu – Bishop Ditlev Gothard Monrad, former premier of Denmark. Monrad had immigrated to New Zealand, along with his family back in 1866, in a kind of self-imposed exile. Clearly not afraid of hard work, he found a small clearing on the banks of the Manawatu River and using timber from the surrounding thick forest, built a home and then went on to develop a farm in Karere.

In 1870 New Zealand's agent general, Isaac Featherston, toured Norway, Sweden and Denmark recruiting settlers. Prospective migrants were promised free passage and 10 acres of land. In 1871 the first government-assisted Scandinavian immigrants arrived in Wellington aboard the *Celaeno*. The 18 families settled on 40-acre sections between Palmerston and Foxton, opening a road and tramway through the bush that gave settlers access to Palmerston.

### **The Seventy Mile Bush**

Known to Māori as Tapere-nui-a-Whātonga, this forest stretched 70 miles from the Wairarapa to Hawke's Bay. A key part of Vogel's immigration and public works plans was to establish Scandinavian settlements along surveyed road and rail lines through the bush. So in 1871 the New Zealand government sent Swedish settler Bror Erik Friberg to recruit in Norway and Sweden. Agents like Friberg offered subsidised passage and 40 acres of land at £1 per acre, all of which could be paid off by working on road and rail construction. In May 1872 the ship *Høvdning* left Christiania (Oslo) for Napier with 365 Norwegians and 11 Danes. Meanwhile in London, the *Ballarat* (with 71 Danes aboard) also set sail for Napier.

By 1872 the government-named Scandinavian towns of Norsewood and Dannevirke were surveyed. Dannevirke's plans show evocative street names such as Gertrude, Dagmar, Christian and Hamlet. But these roads existed on paper only and the young immigrant families arrived to an expanse of dense forest.

As farms were drawn by ballot, nationalities were mixed throughout the region, although there were concentrations of Norwegians in Norsewood and Danes in Dannevirke. Families often shared crude punga and tōtara bark houses while 'slabs-hus' (slab huts) were built. Men laboured on roads and railways, often living away from home to pay debts. Women and children remained in rough forest homes growing cabbages, potatoes and carrots among the tree stumps. Fever claimed seven lives by January 1873. When the 1880s depression hit, some unemployed men felt betrayed by a government that had promised them work.

Bushfires helped clear the felled forest but many houses, barns and fences also went up in smoke. In 1888 a massive bushfire razed Norsewood and threatened to do the same to Ormondville until a timely thunderstorm extinguished it. During the 1880s the railway slowly progressed through the bush. Sawmilling began, and tree by tree the land was cleared to become productive farmland.

### **The Forty Mile Bush**

The portion of the Seventy Mile Bush south of the Manawatū River was known as the Forty Mile Bush. In 1872 the first southern Wairarapa settlers arrived in Wellington on the *England*. The ship's doctor was incompetent and an outbreak of measles claimed 14 Scandinavians, who were buried at sea. Crossing the Rimutaka Range proved a novel experience for plain-dwelling Danes. At Masterton the green-starved settlers gathered watercress for their evening meal. Intrigued Māori picked up on the often heard 'Ja, ja' (yes, yes), dubbing them 'Yaya'. After crossing the Ruamāhanga River they found 1,000-year-old trees looming up from a thicket of ferns, shrubs and supplejack – a far cry from the open silver birch and fir forests of their homelands. Crude huts were built at what was labelled 'the Scandinavian Camp'. Two towns were planned at Mauriceville and Eketāhuna, (Mellemskov – 'between woods' in Danish). By the end of 1873 most settlers were on their 40-acre plots. Because living costs were high, they supplemented sugar and flour with the forest's bounty – eels, honey, pigs, cattle and 'vild-duen' (wood pigeons).

During the early years of assisted migration (1871–76) there were 3,327 arrivals. In 1878 Scandinavians comprised just over 1% of the New Zealand population – the highest proportion they were ever to reach. For these Settlers this was as far as they could sail across the globe, on journeys lasting from three to four months. Government agents who had visited Norway, Denmark & Sweden had led them to expect they would find arable land and constant sunshine. Instead many were led inland until they reached the edge of towering rain forests, called 'native bush'. Here was their home, unbuilt. To get supplies they would have to ford dangerous rivers. On the first day they wept, on the second they started work. There could be no going back.

## **BOOKS OF INTEREST that involve the Larsen Family or Life in the 70 Mile Bush**

"The Larsen Family Booklet" by Arthur C Dawson – created in \*1954 for family (*which now contains errors after research*)  
Available here as PDF file = <http://qwerty.geek.nz/media/AndersenJarlov/LarsenHistory.pdf>

"Forest Homes" by George Conrad Petersen – published 1956 by A.H. & A.W. Reed

"Happiness is Sharing Your Heritage" By Malcolm (Mac) Richard Larsen – published 1976

"Gifts From The Past" by Cheryl Fletcher (Carterton) - published 1999

"Johanna's World" by Oystein Molstad Andresen - published 2001 by Harper Collins