

The Longest Voyage of the Vikings: New Zealand – a Remote Alternative to America

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New Zealand

New Zealand is located in the Pacific, midway between the Equator and the South Pole, approximately 1,600 km east of Australia. With a land area of 268,105 kilometres, New Zealand is similar in size to Britain, Italy or Japan. There are two main islands separated by Cook Strait. The country is 1,600 km from its northern tip to the southern extremity, with no part more than 120 km from the surrounding Ocean.

The land is generally hilly and the terrain broken; a third is unsuitable for human habitation. The spectacular Southern Alps of the South Island, which rise amid permanent snowfields and glaciers, include 19 peaks exceeding 3,000 metres. A special feature of the North Island is the central volcanic region with three active volcanoes and thermal activity featuring hot springs, geysers and boiling mud pools.

Lying within the Southern Temperate Zone, New Zealand has an oceanic climate without pronounced extremes of heat or cold. The average temperature is 15°C on the North Island and 10°C on the South Island. The country enjoys ample sunshine and rainfall, although the weather is quite changeable. Seasons are the reverse of the Northern hemisphere.

Because of its isolation, many species of animals never reached New Zealand, e.g. snakes and poisonous insects. In the absence of predatory animals, some bird species became flightless. The moa is now extinct, and the kiwi has been adopted as the national symbol.

The Early People of New Zealand

New Zealand's earliest pre-European history cannot be reconstructed with certainty. The islands, thinly inhabited by people called Moriori, were discovered and settled more than a thousand years ago by the Maori, a Polynesian people, who migrated from the South Pacific more than a thousand years ago. According to Maori history, the Great Migration - a fleet of canoes, probably from the Society Islands - is supposed to have occurred from about 1350. The number of the Maori population before the arrival of Europeans may have been about 200,000.

The first documented Europeans to see the land later called New Zealand were the Dutch navigator Abel Tasman in 1642 and the English explorer James Cook in 1769. Maori culture remained virtually unchanged by European contact until the early 19th century, when traders, whalers and sealers exposed Maoris to superior material civilization, and Christian missionaries introduced new spiritual concepts. The introduction of rum, diseases, and the use of muskets in intertribal wars took a terrible toll. In 1800 the European population was only about 50, mainly whalers, shipwrecked

sailors and escaped convicts from Australia, rising to some 200 in 1815 and up to 2,000 by the end of the 1830s.

British Colony

For Europeans, New Zealand was a wild and lawless land until 1840, when the Treaty of Waitangi, negotiated by William Hobson – the second Governor of New Zealand – and the leading Maori chiefs, ceded sovereignty to the British Crown. The Maories became British subjects and were guaranteed ownership of their land. New Zealand was made a part of New South Wales, but became a separate colony in 1841. By 1841 the European population was 5,000. This had increased to 22,000 by the middle of the century, much due to the efforts of the assisted immigration by the New Zealand Company initiated by Edward Wakefield.¹

First Scandinavians in New Zealand Waters

The crews of Abel Tasman's ships, the Heemskerck and the Zeeahan, who visited New Zealand briefly in 1642, included Peter Pieterzoon from Copenhagen, Henrik Pieterzon, first mate, and Franz Jacobzoon, carpenter. Other typical Scandinavian names can be found in the crew rolls. In the 17th century, a large number of Scandinavian sailors were employed in the Dutch mercantile marine.²

When Captain James Cook in 1768 began his renown voyage to the Pacific, he was accompanied by a notable Swedish botanist, Carl Solander, a disciple of the famous Linnaeus. The scientific retinue of Joseph Banks included also Herman Spöring, a secretary and draughtsman, whose father was the first professor of Medicine at the old University of Turku in Finland. Both Solander and Spöring were honoured by Cook's naming of two islands off the New Zealand coast after the two Scandinavians. On his second voyage to the Pacific in 1772-75, Captain Cook was accompanied by Anders Sparrman, another disciple of Linnaeus. Mount Sparrman in the South Island keeps his name alive.³

Cook's discoveries brought New Zealand and Australia to the notice of the European public at large. But the British Government did not take any immediate steps to establish British colonies in the Pacific. However, after the close of the American War of Independence, the problem of finding a convenient penal settlement led in 1788 to the founding of the Colony of New South Wales and later of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) and Norfolk Island.

From the 1790s whaling and sealing ships with Scandinavian crew members began to frequent New Zealand waters. The most famous of these Scandinavians was Jørgen Jørgensen. In 1803 he was in charge of a sealer in the region of Dusky Sound. Jens Lyng calls Jørgensen "captain of a whaling vessel" and relates: We can imagine him taking an active part in the boisterous pleasures of the Kororareka settlement, the rendezvous of the whalers, with other light-hearted sailors frequenting the rum shops and seeking the company of Maori belles.⁴

In 1826, many years after his return to Europe and England, Jørgensen was transported to Van Diemen's Land as a convict for pawning his landlady's furniture to pay gambling debts. In Van Diemen's Land he was dubbed "King of Iceland" and the "Convict King".

Among the early convicts to Australia there were men of Scandinavian blood, a few being seamen sentenced to deportation after committing crimes in the United Kingdom. After their emancipation, some of those in Australia were attracted to New Zealand.

Scandinavian seamen worked mainly in British and American whaling ships. But as early as 1839, a Danish whaling ship, the Concordia, with a native of Aalborg, Captain Sødreg, at its helm, was hunting in New Zealand waters.⁵

The Pioneer Settlers

In addition to whales and seals, the value of New Zealand flax was soon realized. Among the early adventurers who took part in this trade was Philip Tapsell, originally Hans Homman Falk, who was born in Copenhagen in 1777. After a career in the Danish and British navies, where he took the name "Topsail" he joined in the Pacific whaling, finally becoming a trader between the Bay of Islands and Port Jackson (Sydney), exchanging muskets and powder for flax and gum. When in 1828 Tapsell finally settled among the Te Arawa tribe at Maketu near Tauranga, he was given as his bride the virtuous Hineiturama, sister of the head chief and ninth in direct descent from Hinemoa. Tapsell of the Minerva was perhaps the first whaling officer to officially marry a highborn Maori girl – shipping her slaves as crew. The union - legalized by Rev. Samuel Marsden in 1830 - was not successful, but Tapsell married twice more - each time a Maori girl. Tapsell spoke Maori fluently and had a significant impact on the surrounding Maori tribes. He died in 1873 at the age of 94 as a patriarch of a very large family of descendants.⁶

But there were other Scandinavians among the early Europeans to New Zealand. According to Aminoff, the first known Swede to New Zealand was Sven Sjögren who landed at Akaroa, Banks Peninsula about 1829. Later he returned to Sweden with his Maori fiancée – who, however, soon died there of smallpox. Sea Captain Charles Suisted, born in 1810 in Värmland, came to New Zealand from Tasmania with his English wife in 1842.⁷ He had arrived in Tasmania in 1836.⁸ There were also a few Norwegian and Finnish seamen in New Zealand before the middle of the 18th century.

Scandinavians on the Goldfields

The presence of gold in New Zealand was known from the beginning of European colonization. Small quantities had been found by whalers in 1842 in the Coromandel district in the North Island. In 1852 - as an echo of the Californian and Victorian gold rushes - some Auckland citizens offered 100 Pounds for a gold discovery. Some gold was found on both the islands, resulting in only minor rushes. Then in 1861 Gabriel Read, a miner with Californian and Australian experience, discovered gold in Otago, on the South Island. After two months there were 2,000 miners in Gabriel's Gully. Within a few months Otago's population rose from 13,000 to over 30,000 - more than half of the

arrivals coming from Australia. Other rushes followed, and in 1863 no fewer than 45,730 people arrived in New Zealand. From 1864 the rich goldfields of the West Coast were the main attraction, and two years later there was a restless population of some 40,000 to 50,000 people, spread along 180 miles of gold-bearing country. For some years gold was New Zealand's major export. In this period, New Zealand experienced her most rapid population growth. Whereas in 1861 the total population, exclusive of Maoris and military personnel, had been 98,000, according to the Census of 1867 it was 218,888 persons. But already in 1868 the West Coast's alluvial gold deposits had been exhausted. Transition from gold to coal began gradually, combined with the development of the railway system.⁹

Most countries of Continental Europe were represented on the goldfields, although names like German Gully and Scandinavian Hill in Westland may give rise to an exaggerated view of the number of non-British people in the gold rush. Obviously, on the goldfields, the foreign groups formed a proportionately larger group than generally in New Zealand. For example, in the province of Westland, Germans and Austrians made up 4.1% of the total, and those from the Scandinavian countries 3.5%, according to information from Westland hospital reports 1867-75.¹⁰ But this material is not very comprehensive and representative. Foreigners, especially if they did not have a command of the English language, were obviously not eager to seek medical services.

According to Aminoff (1988) there were from 4,000 to 5,000 Scandinavians on the South Island during the peak period 1863-66, the majority being Swedes, and most of these Scandinavians left New Zealand after 1867. Of the Swedes, about 700 (or 30 per cent) remained in the country. For a miner, New Zealand, because of its climate, was a better place than Australia to settle." 4,000 to 5,000 Scandinavians on the South Island in 1863-64 may be an overestimate, as according to the Census of 1867, there were 2,283 Germans, 553 Frenchmen and 2,196 other Europeans in the whole of New Zealand. It is also difficult to believe that the majority of the gold rush Scandinavians were Swedes. On the Australian goldfields, nearly half of the Scandinavians were Danes, especially after the Schleswig-Holstein wars in 1848 and 1863. According to Australian Naturalization Records, in 1851-69 there were nearly twice as many Danes as Swedes. In the Victorian Census of 1871, of 2,254 Scandinavians in the Colony, 45% were Danes, 37.5% Swedes and 17.5% Norwegians.¹² As a great proportion of the Scandinavian goldminers in New Zealand came from Victoria, the proportions in New Zealand were obviously approximately the same - the proportion of the Danes probably being slightly smaller, as the Danes, more often than Swedes and Norwegians, settled on land and remained in Australia.

According to Lyng (1939), the number of Scandinavians in New Zealand in 1867 may be estimated at about 500.¹³ This may be an underestimate, especially as the early colonial censuses in New Zealand (or elsewhere) were not very accurate - at least as far as the mobile gold-digger population was concerned.

Consequently, it is also difficult to ascertain the number of Finns in gold-rush New Zealand. On the Australian goldfields in 1851-69 there were about 200 Finnish goldminers.¹⁴ Many of these argonauts continued their search for gold in New Zealand. Estimating that every fifth Finnish goldminer in Australia tried his luck on the other side of the Tasman Sea - and also including seamen deserting their ships or coming directly from Finland or America - there were probably some 50 Finns in New Zealand in the 1860s, some having arrived in the 1850s. This estimate is supported by the Census of New Zealand in 1871, enumerating 109 persons born in Russia or her possessions. Of these only 13 were females.

In conclusion, regarding the Scandinavians in gold-rush New Zealand before 1871, it can be estimated that a couple of thousand gold miners from the Nordic countries tried their luck on the

New Zealand goldfields for a shorter or longer period. To understand why so many of them left the country later it is important to emphasize that the Californian, Australian and New Zealand goldfields were all part of one international gold rush. And in each country some of the miners remained permanently, contributing to the further development of their new adopted home lands.

Assisted Passages 1871-75

Explorers, seamen, whalers and gold-diggers were the first Scandinavians to discover New Zealand - the furthest corner of the world. Some of them settled permanently in the Colony, sometimes sending letters of invitation to their compatriots to join them. Many returned to Scandinavia and in their home district spread knowledge of the islands faraway in the south and about the prospects of success there.

For clearing land and farming, New Zealand needed ordinary immigrants. As early as 1863 there was a scheme for organized migration from Denmark. The object was to settle some 150 Danes in the military settlements of Waikato. The outbreak of the war between Denmark and Germany over Schleswig-Holstein in 1864, however, prevented the establishment of the scheme as young men were not allowed to emigrate.¹⁵

The first group emigration from Denmark took place in 1865 when, as a result of the Prussian-Danish war, Bishop Monrad (who had been Premier of Denmark) left for New Zealand with his family and a group of young Danes, including a Norwegian servant girl.

Monrad settled on the banks of the Manawatu River near present-day Palmerston North. After a few years, Monrad returned to Denmark but some of his family remained in New Zealand, becoming pioneers of the New Zealand dairying industry. Of the young men who accompanied the Monrad family to New Zealand, a man named Kornerup was clubbed death by a Maori.¹⁶ Maori skirmishes raged on the North Island up till 1870. The fate of the young Dane reminds us of the life of Scandinavian pioneer settlers in the North American West during the Indian wars of about the same time.

As a prelude to later Government assistance, some Scandinavian lumberers were introduced into New Zealand by a sawmill owner at Le Bon's Bay, Banks Peninsula, where they afterwards acquired a large area of land.¹⁷ By the early 1870s, the idea of Scandinavian immigration to New Zealand was not a new one.

After 1867 there was a marked decline in European immigration to New Zealand, partly resulting from the decline of the gold rushes and the Maori wars on the North Island. But the major factor preventing the large influx of people to the colony was that it was a small and an isolated country, 2-3 months distant from Europe, and undeveloped. In the 1850s the cost of passage to New Zealand varied from 20 to 42 Pounds. The greatest problem on the ships was sickness and disease. Poor food and bad water were frequently the cause of ill-health during the voyage.¹⁸

To the European emigrant, North America appeared a much more attractive place to go. It was closer to Europe and thus cheaper to reach. The longer voyage to New Zealand by sailing ship also had its effect, particularly as the majority of emigrants to North America were transported by steamship. The entry of the steamship into the immigrant trade dates from the early 1850s, when Inman Line steamships began carrying steerage passengers from Liverpool to Philadelphia. But the

bulk of the trade remained in the hands of American sailing packets until the Civil War. Seizing this opportunity, British and German ship-owners built a great quantity of steamship tonnage designed for carrying passengers.¹⁹

For a European emigrant, North America offered many more opportunities than New Zealand, which still preferred agricultural labourers. North America could employ the merchant and industrial classes as well as farm workers. North American emigrant and shipping agents were also well organized and active in Europe.²⁰

The only way New Zealand and Australia could compete with North America was with the offer of assisted passages. In 1870 the Immigration and Public Works Act of Julius Vogel was passed by the New Zealand Parliament to promote immigration and settlement in the country. When New Zealand emigration agents were sent to Europe, they were naturally attracted to Northern Europe, and they confined their attention to this area for many years. In September 1870 after a visit to Norway and Sweden, the agents, Mr Bell and Dr. Featherston, furnished a report of these countries as sources of emigration. They found that the average annual number of emigrants from Norway was about 12,000 and from Sweden no less than 25,000, most of them emigrating to the United States, and wrote:

These people who moved "in whole church congregations" were chiefly agricultural labourers and small farmers, who, owing to the suspension of all agricultural operations for many months in the year, were skilled in all kinds of trades and were particularly expert lumberers, fishermen and sailors. These emigrants were reported to be honest, frugal and industrious, and although the percentage emigrating from the towns was very small, they were all more or less educated, for education in Scandinavia was compulsory.²¹

In order to secure a stream of emigration to faraway New Zealand, it was decided to send out a few young couples from each of a number of different districts, the New Zealand Government to defray the whole cost of their passage. If these colonists were pleased with their new surroundings, the wide circulation of their reports throughout their home provinces would be sufficient to create a stream of emigration to New Zealand. Accordingly, contracts were made with a shipping company in Christiania and with another company in Gothenburg. In Denmark, Bishop Monrad had returned from New Zealand a couple of years earlier, and his son entered warmly into the scheme, volunteering to select the Danish emigrants.

The first expedition of fifty-one souls, chiefly Norwegians, left Christiania before the end of 1870, arriving in Wellington on board the Celaeno on February 5, 1871. The newcomers wanted to settle at Palmerston North near a small Scandinavian community there, formed under the auspices of Bishop Monrad. Consequently, forty acres of land was reserved for each family for two years.

The arrival of the group coincided with the height of the mosquito season, and the Scandinavians were delayed for a while in Wellington. Although aware of the discomfort of the season, the Government wished to place the settlers on their land as soon as possible. On 21 March, 1871, the second immigrant ship, the England, arrived with 50 Danish farmers and maid-servants and 23 Swedish farm-labourers, and almost all settled in the same area, the Manawatu region. Their first experience of their new land was unfortunate, as heavy floods submerged many of their holdings.²²

The Palmerston North settlement was more or less an experiment, and the Wellington authorities were satisfied with the calibre of immigrants. Although they understood little English, they were considered intelligent, well-educated, robust and familiar with hard work, making them desirable members of colonial society as lumbermen and farmers. An acquaintance with the use of the axe

and the adze was seen as essential to success in the rigours of frontier life, where bush work was a necessary preliminary to agricultural operations.²³

For the Colonial Government, Seventy-Mile Bush between Wellington and Napier was the first attempt to establish special settlements for a limited number of immigrant families, with land set apart for them to buy on deferred payments. The idea was to provide employment at nearby public works - or with private employers - while the land was being cleared for cultivation. Many of the state schemes failed because of the isolation of the settlements, the ruggedness of terrain, the lack of regular supplies etc. People drifted away from such isolated areas to places with better opportunities for success. Seventy-Mile Bush was bought from the Maoris in 1870, and here Scandinavians, Dutchmen and Scottish Highlanders proved to be the most successful of state-sponsored settlers.²⁴ The Hawkes Bay district was heavily timbered and this was considered a serious barrier to the success of colonists who had come straight from the open fields of England. The Government had tried in vain to encourage British immigrants to settle there. Scandinavians, used to woods and forests at home, were regarded as the most suitable settlers for such a wilderness.

When a Swede by the name of Bror Friberg, who had been in New Zealand since 1867, advocated the introduction of Scandinavians to Hawkes Bay, the proposal was willingly accepted, and Mr. Friberg was despatched to Scandinavia to superintend the selection of colonists. In 1872 contracts were signed for the transport of 3,000 adults from Norway and Sweden, 2,000 from North Germany and 1,000 from Denmark. Each emigrant was to receive a free passage to New Zealand, but each emigrant had to pay 8 Pounds for food during the voyage. On arrival, the immigrant was to be allowed 40 acres of land at the cost of one Pound per acre in easy instalments. To open up roads to new settlements and to establish themselves in the new colony, the settlers were to be employed for the first few months on roadwork at about five shillings a day.²⁵

The first contingent, consisting of nearly 300 immigrants, 170 from Germany, 58 from Denmark and 59 from Norway, arrived on the Friedeburg on August 31, 1872 at Lyttleton, South Island. In Canterbury, the Scandinavians were quickly scattered throughout the province as domestic servants and general and agricultural labourers.²⁶

Seventy-Mile Bush had been purchased from the Maoris in 1870. Six Scandinavian settlements were designed along the planned road and railways - Dannevirke, Norsewood, Ormondville, Mauriceville, Eketahuna (Mellemskov) and Makaretu. On 15 September, 1872, the Høvding from Christiania with 376 immigrants, all of whom were Norwegians and Swedes, and the Ballarat with 206 immigrants, including 66 Danes, arrived in Napier. Most of the immigrants had been selected by Mr. Friberg who accompanied the Høvding and was in charge of the party. Most of the single women and men found employment amongst the settlers and tradesmen, and 10 single men were employed at the railway works. After five days in the barracks, the men of Scandinavian families left for Seventy-Mile Bush where 150 sections were surveyed for selection.

The majority of them were intended to take up land in the proposed settlement of Norsewood. The ballot for sections took place immediately, and the settlers began to build homes for themselves. The group included 47 Norwegian, 13 Swedish and three Danish families. For many of the men disillusionment and despair replaced the highest of hopes when they saw the land - a dense entanglement of shrubs and vines growing beneath giant trees. To the women, who arrived soon after with their children, the shock was even more severe. Some wept when they saw the forest, others became hysterical. But early despair gave way to a determination to succeed. The first houses of Norsewood were built of slabs roughly hewn from trees just felled or of the boles of tree ferns. Twenty-one families, 13 Danish, six Norwegian and two Swedish, were taken 14 miles

further into the bush to found the settlement of Dannevirke. When the huts were completed, the men began to work for three or four days a week on the roads for the Government to keep their families from starvation. The rest of the time they worked on their holdings, and soon potatoes and cabbages were grown from seed provided by the Government²⁷

Although more Scandinavians arrived later, the settlements in Seventy-Mile Bush progressed slowly. The wet summer and autumn of 1872-73 made it impossible to burn the fallen bush, and work on the road restricted the clearing. Within a year many families had left the settlements. But by 1876 Seventy-Mile Bush was gradually being mastered. Five major Scandinavian settlements were established at Mauriceville, Eketahuna, Woodville, Dannevirke and Norsewood, with smaller camps at Opaki and Makaretu. But there were also Scandinavians in other parts of New Zealand, including Stewart Island, and even the Chathams. The Scandinavian strongholds in Hawkes Bay became a popular area of settlement also for Britons, Germans and some Poles. The intermingling of these people - it is recorded - encouraged acceptance and tolerance of different national groups.²⁸

The scheme to introduce immigrants from Scandinavia was planned to end in 1875. A major reason was the economic depression in North America which began in 1873 and which discouraged many of the British emigrants from going there. They were encouraged instead to go to colonies within the Empire. Also the poor harvest in Britain in 1874 caused an influx of British immigrants to New Zealand. The increased immigration from Great Britain and a decreased emigration from Scandinavia brought to an end the Scandinavian migration scheme. The Colony had to limit the number of immigrants in order to avoid a saturated labour market. After the Scandinavian scheme was abandoned, a colony of Danes, consisting of about 55 families who had gone to New Brunswick, Canada, wished to emigrate to New Zealand in 1877 in order to avoid the rigours of the Canadian winter. But by this time the New Zealand Government had decided to stop all foreign immigration²⁹

Altogether between 1871 and 1878, almost 4,000 Norwegians, Danes and Swedes were introduced into New Zealand, either as assisted or nominated immigrants. In 1878 the total Scandinavian population was 4,600; 2,225 Danes, 1,213 Norwegians, and 1,162 Swedes.

Scandinavians comprised 7% of the population of Hawkes Bay and 2.5% of that of Wellington, but never more than 1.25% of the whole Colony.³⁰ In addition, there were a number of persons from Finland, but probably no more than 100, mainly seamen in New Zealand waters and harbours.

What was then the value of these settlers to New Zealand? The Scandinavians made a contribution far exceeding their numbers. The Scandinavian axmen and farmers opened up the bush in the interior of Hawkes Bay and Wellington, essential to the future development of the provinces. According to Borrie they provided ideal settlers and he continues:

Accustomed to the rigours of a Scandinavian winter, they were content to settle in their new homes without complaint even in the coldest season ... in the solitudes of Hawkes Bay... Their frugality and capacity for steady toil made them admirable settlers for small farms.³⁰ The Norwegians especially were considered industrious and hardworking. Early reports of the untidiness of the Danes were often justified, but became less frequent as the settlement grew. While the Norwegians were reported to be exceptional, the Danes also proved themselves excellent settlers.³¹

After some years' experience of the Scandinavian colonists, Mr. A.F. Halcombe, Immigration Agent for the North Island, placed the Norwegians first as bushmen, the Swedes second and the

Danes third. The Norwegians, he said, would in fact compare favourably with the Canadians.³² The challenge and opportunities offered to Scandinavian immigrants created a pioneering - and frontier - experience with many parallels to the settlement of North America.³³

The small Scandinavian farms became important in the development of the New Zealand agricultural and dairying industries.

Pastor Ries, who came to the Colony in the 1880s, built the first butter and cheese factory in Norsewood.³⁴ Scandinavian immigrants also provided the farm labourers, shepherds, carpenters, tradesmen, general labourers, and servants necessary for an agricultural community. In seafaring, fishing and boat building the Scandinavian contribution was also remarkable.

The attitudes of New Zealanders toward the influx of Scandinavians ranged from the hostile to the very favourable. From 1871 until the beginning of large-scale immigration from Great Britain at the end of 1873, the population who were of British stock showed considerable hostility towards the Northern Europeans, mainly of an economic nature and coming mostly from the labouring sector of the society. Many wished to retain in the Colony an essentially British character. Immigrants, it appeared, were being sought from Scandinavia before any real attempt was made in the mother country. The change in attitudes came with the realization that the Scandinavians were only a small minority and with their success in the bush areas. Efforts were begun to educate their children like the rest of the Colony's children, to teach them English and to allow them to participate in political life. At the same time, the Scandinavians showed their willingness to accept this new country as their home.³⁵

It has been claimed that the Scandinavians of the 1870s quickly adopted the culture and outlook of their British cousins. According to Grigg (1973) the rapid assimilation of the Scandinavians emphasized the desire of the Colony to remain British.³⁶

According to another writer "within one generation they stripped away their Scandinavian culture and successfully incorporated themselves into a new society while effectively contributing to a revitalized economy".³⁷ And in 1929 a Norwegian pioneer wrote from Norsewood: "*The Norwegian language is dying out here. Even the children do not understand it. Only a few of us are left to take an interest in Norway and anything Norwegian.*" Borrie emphasizes the rapidity of the assimilation of Scandinavians. Even by 1880 inter-marriage with those of British stock was common, becoming more marked as the ties with their homeland gradually weakened with the cessation of immigration. Even attempts to establish national schools and Lutheran churches met with only limited success.³⁸ Lochore described (1951) the integration of the Scandinavians as follows:

Such are the Scandinavians: not by any means a typical alien group, but on the contrary the least alien of aliens, melting away into the British population like snow on Wellington hills.³⁹ A detailed study might reveal, however, that the Scandinavians did not assimilate so quickly - whatever this term means. In the isolated group settlements of Hawkes Bay, Scandinavian traditions and language were kept alive for decades. The Lutheran church represented the most determined effort to maintain their old identity. With the help of the Danish Church, eight churches were built and seven pastors provided. By 1896 there were fifteen churches. Contacts with the original culture were kept also through Scandinavian clubs and magazines; though most were short-lived.⁴⁰ Even today there is strong Scandinavian heritage to be found, especially in Dannevirke and Norsewood, as I noticed when visiting there in 1988 and 1992. In Dannevirke, for example, there is a Mr.

Selwyn Nicolaison whose hobby is wood carving, including excellent Viking figures. His father Peter sailed with his parents on board the Fritz Reuter from Hamburg to Napier in 1874. In 1878 Peter married Charlotte Andersen and became a farmer, first in Matamau and from 1892 in Norsewood. In 1986 the Nicolaison family had a reunion with a large number of descendants.

From Group Migration to Individual Arrivals

As a result of the assisted passages of the 1870s, the arrival of Scandinavian immigrants to join relatives and friends already in New Zealand continued until 1890 before tapering off. The Census of 1881 gives, for the first time, information on the Scandinavians in counties and local communities. The Scandinavians, 4,600 persons, made up about 1% of the population of New Zealand. But being concentrated, they comprised nearly 13% of Waiwapa county, and were less numerous in towns, the highest percentage being in Palmerston North, with a Scandinavian population of 6.4%, followed by Napier with 2.6%,⁴¹

The number of Scandinavians brought out under Vogel's scheme in the 1870s probably did not exceed 5,000, while total Scandinavian immigration to New Zealand up till World War II may be estimated at double that number.⁴²

After World War II, Scandinavian emigration to New Zealand has been insignificant, as appears from Table I. The majority have been Danes, but some Finns were recruited by the new paper mills of Tokoroa and Kawerau in the 1950s. These Finns were pioneers of New Zealand's paper and pulp industry. Many of the "new Scandinavians" to New Zealand have been persons married to New Zealanders.

Conclusion

Scandinavian emigration to New Zealand consisted of only just over 10,000 persons up till the Depression of the 1930s. It was quite insignificant compared to the huge exodus of emigrants to North America. Of the Scandinavians to New Zealand, about half were Danes, and Swedes and Norwegians made up 25% each. According to Aminoff (1988), 3,300 Swedes went to New Zealand before 1940, the number of their descendants being 10,000. The number of Finns to New Zealand before WW II was about 1,000. Altogether, to date, about 20,000 people from the Nordic countries have emigrated to New Zealand. Taking into account their children and grandchildren, over 60,000 New Zealanders - or 2% of the New Zealand population - could claim to be of Scandinavian origin.

It is important to see Scandinavian emigration to the southern hemisphere in its broader context, as a part of an international migration movement. As Marcus Lee Hansen stated, although referring only to America: The years from the fall of Napoleon to the outbreak of the World War [I] spanned exactly one hundred seasons of migration in which a great flood of humanity rolled westward across the Atlantic and swept over the waiting continent. To that flood every nation, every province, almost every neighbourhood, contributed its stream.⁴³

In these migration flows, Scandinavian emigration to New Zealand was only a trickle. But against this global framework it is clearly apparent that the longest voyage of the descendants of the Vikings was made for reasons similar and in many ways parallel to those behind the huge exodus to America. At the same time, it was a phenomenon itself, dependent on New Zealand's geographic location and on the availability of assisted passages to New Zealand, the furthest edge of European emigration.

A comprehensive history of the integration and contribution of Scandinavians in New Zealand remains to be written. Lyng (1939) wrote what remains by far the best overall account. Aminoff's study (1988) covers Swedes up to World War II. On Danes there is a collection of articles published in 1990 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of New Zealand.⁴⁴ I am in the process of writing a history of Finns in New Zealand.⁴⁵ Least studied are the Norwegians in New Zealand - as well as in Australia. More generally, Scandinavians in New Zealand in the 20th century would make a fascinating - although a difficult - research topic. There are a lot of studies to be done.

Since the Melbourne Conference of 1988 commemorating the Australian Bicentenary, there have been discussions about founding a "Nordic Association of Oceanian Studies", which would cover not only migration research but would be an interdisciplinary and international forum for scholars interested generally in the collaboration of the "world down under" and of the "world on the top of Europe". Let it be done!

Notes

1. This general review of New Zealand and her history is based on An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, Vol. 2, ed. A.H. Lintock, Wellington, 1966; and Keith Sinclair, A History of New Zealand, Auckland, 1988; and The Oxford History of New Zealand, ed. W.H. Oliver and B.R. Williams, Wellington, 1981.

2. Jens Lyng, The Scandinavians in Australia, New Zealand and the Western Pacific, Melbourne, 1939, p. 157.

3. J.C. Beaglehole, The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery, Cambridge, 1955, and 1968; Olavi Koivukangas, Gold and Sugarcanes; Finns in Australia 1851-1947, Turku, 1986, p.,57; and Sten Aminoff, Svenskarna i Nya Zeeland (Swedes in N.Z.), Växjö, 1988, pp. 14-15.

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Table I: Scandinavians in New Zealand 1874 - 1986

Census	Persons born in				Total
	Denmark	Sweden	Norway	Finland	
1874	1,172	1,780			2,952
1878	2,225	1,162	538		3,925
1881	2,199	1,264	1,271		4,734
1886	2,178	1,439	1,338		4,955
1891	2,053	1,414	1,288		4,755
1896	2,125	2,775			4,900
1901	2,120	1,548	1,279		4,947
1906	2,277	1,618	1,396		5,291
1911	2,262	1,518	1,344		5,124
1916	2,244	1,391	1,233		4,868
1921	2,113	1,206	1,048	314	4,681
1936	1,451	723	650	239	3,063
1945	1,039	478	508	188	2,213
1951	1,191	389	516	201	2,297
1956	1,464	355	536	281	2,636
1961	1,715	342	450	256	2,763
1966	1,669	340	477	302	2,788
1971	1,481	341	413	262	2,497
1976	1,588	365	368	298	2,619
1981	1,377	363	285	246	2,271
1986	1,371	420	360	234	2,385
1991					

Note: Scandinavians to New Zealand have been predominantly males. In 1906, when the number of Scandinavian-born persons was highest, the sex ratio was for Danes: 2 males:1 female, for Swedes: 7 males:1 female, and for Norwegians: 3 males:1 female. Among the Finns in 1921 there were 9 males: 1 female.