

A summary of the founding of the Swiss Clubs in N.Z. and other related events [continued]

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bad for our health!

To my mind we must bear the little word 'BUT' in mind together with a preparedness to re-adapt. There are many staggeringly and shinningly examples of what victories the human mind can achieve in overcoming adversities in ill-health.

There are groups of trained people, their aim to assist with our specific problem. There are many societies where we can find understanding and companionship. There are groups 'in the wings of life' as it were, which also can give a meaning to our problems and constructiveness.

The word BUT need not be printed large, but, in small letters should be tucked away in a corner of our minds not negatively but to make it easier to adapt. The saying that "you cannot teach new tricks to old dogs" is wrong. Old dogs CAN still teach themselves!

A Summary of the Founding of the Swiss Clubs in N.Z. and Other Related Events.

By Walter Risi

(Continued from January)

Before going on with the Manaia Golden Jubilee Festival in 1932 I would like to mention an outstanding event which took place toward the end of 1913 when 17 new arrivals from Central Switzerland arrived and enlivened the scene of the colony. The people who arrived were: Arnold Engelberger, Remigi Niederberger, Alois Kaeslin, Werner Frank, Franz Odermatt, Louis Mathis, Jack Scheuber, Paul Zimmermann, Fidel Zimmermann, who came from Nidwalden; Marie Schuler, who became Mrs Alex Kaelin, Johanna Schorne, Mrs Paul Zimmermann, Joe Tschuemperlin (Joe Chamberlain) from Kt. Schwyz and Bahny Brunold, Joe Fischer and Jakob Ruetimann, from other parts of Switzerland. Marty Beeler was on a visit to Switzerland and acted as the group leader on the journey. Kaspar Hermann arrived on his own a year earlier.

Five years before, Fred Sattler arrived and enticed his widowed mother and five sisters to come out and they became Mrs Rosa Engelbeger, Mrs Josphine Werder, Mrs Emilie Corkill, Mrs Paulin Rogers (now Mrs Byrne). Kathrina died single at an early age. Fred Sattler married Miss Mary Byrne, eldest daughter of Mr Jim Byrne, one of the early settlers from Ireland.

It was really the war years which stopped the flow of immigrants temporarily but in 1919 Len Chamberlain arrived to be with his brothers Dominik who came as early as 1905 with Xaver Holdener and his other brother Joe, who arrived in 1913.

On 20th August, 1920 a new group arrived, only to enforce the earlier arrivals. Miss Anna Blattler, who married John Schumacher,

Meinrad Kalin, Arthur Kuriger, Xaver Nolly, Alphons Kalin, Joe Kaiser, Miss Josy Zimmermann, now Mrs Joe Kaiser, and brothers Joe and Loui Zimmermann. Mrs Kaiser now relates that she was horrified when looking out of the window of the train going through Taumarunui when she saw the white frozen countryside with the brown patches where the cattle had been camping overnight.

A considerable number of Swiss from the Kt. Graubunden were the earliest settlers from Switzerland. They had been enticed to come here by Felix Hunger, who arrived the first time in Normanby in 1867 where he conducted a blacksmith-shop. He went home in 1875 and brought 24 compatriots with him on the *Halcione* which arrived in New Plymouth in September, 1875 and further arrivals in the 70's and 80's swelled the number of Graubunden born Swiss to a considerable number. Among them we find Alleman, Hunger, Meuli, Melesi, Giacometti, Schneller and Stampa, Padrut Ruesli and Linsli the best known. I personally knew Mr Christ Hunger, a nephew of Felix Hunger, blacksmith in Manaia in 1940 when I got the horses shod by him. He had almost forgotten his mother-tongue by then.

*Swiss Participation in the Manaia Golden Jubilee of the Settlement
of the Waimate Plains in June, 1932*

South Taranaki got wild to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of this event and numerous floats were presented to mark the occasion. The Swiss also had their float, depicting events of Swiss history, custom as well as export items produced in Switzerland.

The Hawera Star writes about this event: "The Jubilee of Manaia, which is being celebrated this week with festivities appropriate to the occasion, is an anniversary of importance to the whole of South Taranaki for the little town of the plains played an important part in the settlement of the southern portion of the province.

"Manaia and Hawera have much in common. The two towns have a common ancestry, both having their origin in a military outpost. Hawera growing up around the famous blockhouse and the settlement of Manaia centring upon the fortress erected as a protection against Maori aggression. Hawera had the advantage of ten years' seniority and was able to render a great deal of assistance to the Plains settlers in their agitation for the recognition of the potentialities and claims for their promising, but undeveloped area."

The festivities were continued in the evening until 5 o'clock in the morning—a memorable event, where the Swiss Consul for New Zealand, Mr A. Blau, was present and secured an enthusiastic reception from the Swiss people and representatives of the Town Board and County Council, together with the general public of the district.

The function was organised by Mrs A. Engelberger, Miss Ida Bernold, Mrs E. Gopperth and Mrs Sattler and reflected great credit on these ladies. The men's committee consisted of Messrs K. Hermann, E. Gopperth, A. Engelberger and C. Sattler, L. Hermann. The Swiss Orchestra consisted of Mrs E. Gopperth (piano), and Messrs A. Engelberger, F. Schuler and A. Meier.

At 10 o'clock the Swiss Consul arrived at the hall and was met by a committee of Swiss people and was escorted by Miss Bernold in the national Swiss costume "Helvetia". The Rev. Father Butler introduced the Consul and said that Manaia was honoured in having the first official visit of the Consul. The Swiss people, as well as other citizens of Manaia and district recognised his integrity in his official capacity and extended to Mr Blau a cordial welcome. He thanked the Consul for coming from Auckland to be present at this function. Father Butler paid a high tribute to the land of his adoption, New Zealand, under the great British flag, which all recognised as the flag of liberty. The evening would bring memories of the Homeland, Switzerland, to many present, not only to him who holds many tender sentiments towards the land of his birth. Hearty cheers were given for the Consul.

Mr L. C. Harrison, chairman of the Manaia Town Board, extended a cordial welcome on behalf of the citizens, and hoped that the Consul would enjoy his visit to the district.

The chairman of the Waimate West County Council, Mr E. Long, extended a welcome on behalf of the county residents, and mentioned that Swiss farmers were some of the most successful in the district.

Speaking as one of Swiss descent who had been born in New Zealand, Mr G. H. Meuli, chairman of directors of the Joll Co-op. Dairy

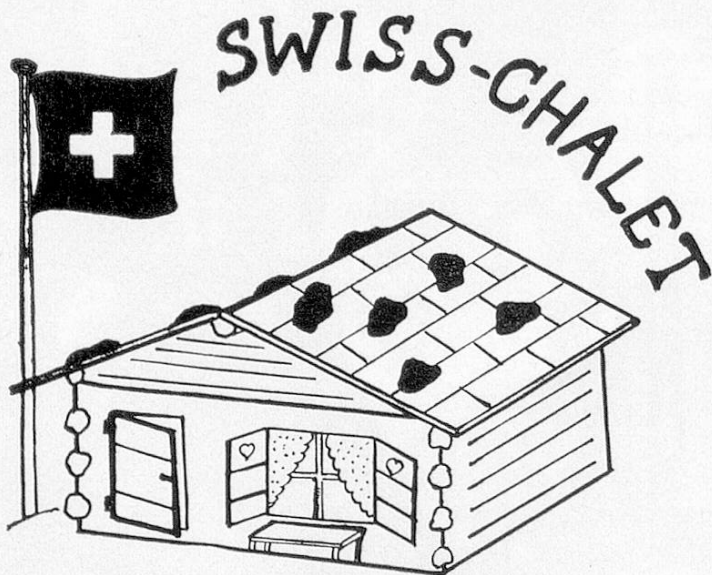


Picture (from left to right): Ch. Sattler as William Tell; Tell's boy, Ruedi Zimmermann; Helvetia, Miss Ida Bernold; typical Swiss farmer with cheese on "Trag-gabel", Fidel Zimmermann Swiss accordion player, Alf Meier. Front row: with Swiss accordion, F. Schuler; Mrs E. Gopperth and Mrs Schonbachler and A. Engelberger, third accordion player.

Co., welcomed the new Consul on behalf of the New Zealand born Swiss. Although now a full Britisher, he was quite proud of the fact that he had Swiss blood in his veins. Although Switzerland was a small country, its legislation had always been progressive and liberal, and it was the first country who gave free education to the masses. Switzerland had also given to the world that noble organisation, the Red Cross, which had done so much to alleviate the suffering of humanity, and had adopted as its emblem a Red Cross, which was the reverse of the Swiss flag, a white cross on a red ground. Owing to its impartiality Switzerland had been selected as the home of the League of Nations and the International Labour Bureau. Swiss character was always noted for its integrity and reliability, and it was an interesting fact that for centuries the Papal guards at the Vatican had always been composed of Swiss. He assured the Consul that the conduct of the Swiss people in New Zealand was exemplary, and they would be no worry to him in his capacity.

In reply Mr Blau said he was pleased of the opportunity to meeting so many of his fellow countrymen so soon after his arrival. He understood that there were about 500 Swiss in New Zealand, and that over half were in Taranaki. His service would always be at their disposal, and while he would be permanently stationed at Auckland he hoped to make frequent visits to Taranaki.

Acknowledgement: Information on the 1913 immigration have been kindly supplied by A. Engelberger and of the 20th August, 1920 by Mrs J. Kaiser and Miss Ida Bernold was kind enough to supply information on the Manaia Golden Jubilee of 1932, with picture.



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