

Oldest photo of Swiss living in New Zealand

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Visit to the Maritime Museum in San Diego

Euterpe Star of India

A little over a year ago, on our way home from a well deserved Swiss holiday, we stopped over in America to visit friends and family. While in San Diego, we visited the Maritime Museum and came across a very interesting, old sailing ship – the Star of India. I was absolutely fascinated reading about the voyages she made across the world, especially since her main destination was New Zealand. From all the photographs and diary entries they exhibited, it must have been an incredibly hard and boring journey to immigrate in those days.

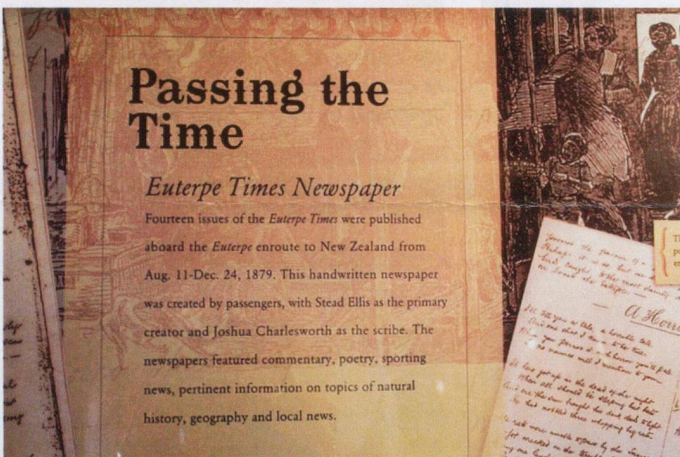
The Star of India is the world's oldest still active sailing ship. She began her life on the Isle of Man in 1863 and used to be called Euterpe. In 1871, she was purchased by the Shaw Savill Line of London and embarked on a quarter century of hauling emigrants to New Zealand, sometimes also touching Australia. She made 21 journeys from Hamburg and London to New Zealand. Her fastest trip took 100 days (one way!), the longest taking 143 days. It was rugged voyaging, with the ship battling through terrific gales.

The life aboard was especially hard on the emigrants cooped up in her tween deck, fed a terribly poor diet and subject to sea sickness and a lot of other illnesses (and rat infestations!). It is astonishing that their death rate was so low. They were a tough lot and most went on to prosper in New Zealand. Thousands of New Zealanders today are descended from the handful of gritty pioneers who braved the high seas on the Euterpe from 1872 – 1897.

- Chief cabin fare: 52-78 Pounds (1 pig, 1 sheep & 12 hens per passenger)
- Second class: 25 Pounds (soup, ham, fish, barley & cheese)
- Steerage Berth: 16-20 Pounds (left overs...)

Who knows, maybe one of your ancestors arrived in New Zealand on the Euterpe?

By Tanja Latham-Zurbruegg

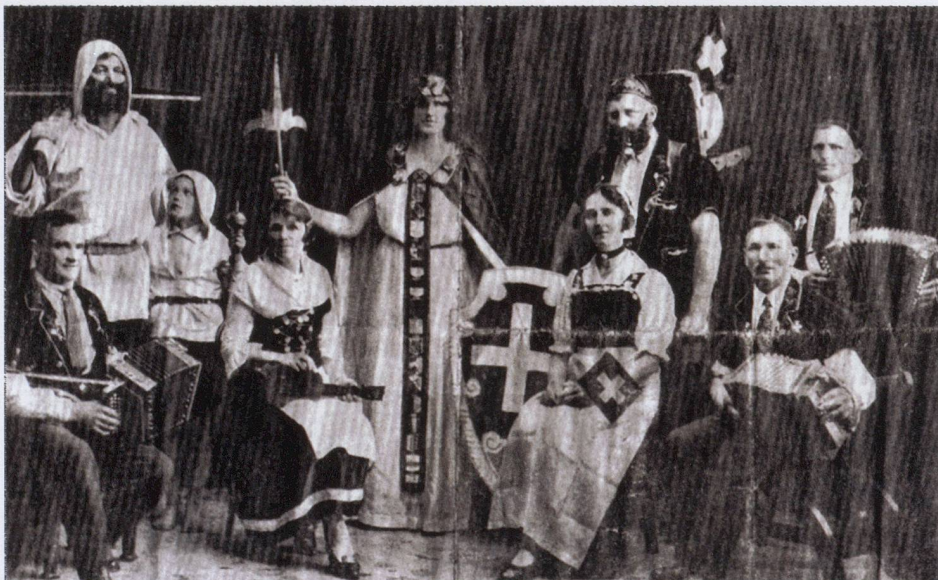


Passing the Time / Handwritten newspaper aboard the vessel
Photo by: Tanja Latham-Zurbruegg



Sleeping quarters directly over the cannons!
Photo by: Tanja Latham-Zurbruegg

Oldest photo of Swiss living in New Zealand



This is the oldest photo we could find of Swiss living in New Zealand. It's been taken in 1932 at a Swiss Ball in Kaponga. Ida Bernold is "Helvetia" in a play they performed in Taranaki. This photo was published in the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" on 31st July 1977 along with a double page article on Swiss in New Zealand to celebrate the 25th Jubilee of the Taranaki Swiss Club.

"Schweizerball" Swiss Ball in Kaponga in 1932 – „Neue Zürcher Zeitung“ July 1977