

## Chapter 2

# The Neals and Buschs

Freda Neal, who appeared in the previous chapter married to Robert McPherson, was the G-granddaughter of William Neal and Amelia Matthews, who came out to New Zealand on the very first colonising boats to Nelson. Her grandfather, Thomas Nelson Neal, was reputedly the first pakeha baby born in Nelson, and the family quickly spread out to the Waimea, and over the hills east to the Wairau valley, Picton and Blenheim, where they remained. The Neals married into the Busch family (who arrived in Nelson in 1844) and the Norgrove family (Chapter 3), who arrived in Wellington in 1841, moving thence to Nelson, Picton and Blenheim. The Neals were sheep farmers and cricket players, and there were (and still are) enormous numbers of them. They bred like rabbits.

The definitive work on the Neal family of Nelson is the book by Brenda Carr, which she published herself in 1998 [19]. Carr is the perfect example of the other kind of genealogist.<sup>1</sup> In her book she traces all the myriad branches of Neals that have descended from Matthew and Amelia; there are lots of them. William and Amelia had thirteen children, just for example, while Thomas Nelson Neal had another dozen or so. At that rate of increase it doesn't take long before you have a lot of Neals, and Carr's book has them all; over 400 pages of Neal details, 150 years of them, complete with family photographs and anecdotes (none salacious, unfortunately). I even appear in it.<sup>2</sup>

There is a similar, and equally tome-like, book about the Busch family, called *The Busch Line*<sup>3</sup> [18]. Another 250-odd pages of Busch details this time, photographs and all. I remember when I was finally able to obtain a copy; I was sitting in my office at Auckland University, trawling off-hand through abebooks.com and there it was. Sitting in a shop in Takapuna, just across the bridge from me. I was so excited I rang them up immediately and asked them to put it aside. They did. I left work right then and went to pick it up. In the shop they looked at me rather strangely. I'm guessing that they didn't understand why a mature adult<sup>4</sup> would get so excited about such a boring book. Inside the front cover is the inscription "1987. To Alan; may you be proud of your origin". I'm guessing Alan wasn't particularly, and flogged it off cheap.

Even though both these books make excruciatingly dull reading (well, you can't actually *read* them in that sense at all), they are both really impressive pieces of work. Enormous effort went into them both, and I imagine there is very little more to be discovered about the early members of either family. So anybody who is lucky enough to be connected to both of these families has a treasure trove of family information just sitting there waiting to be mined.

New Zealand in the 1830's had a population of only around 2000 Pakeha. They were scattered over many parts of the country, but by far the greatest concentration was around the Bay of Islands and the Hokianga. They were a problem for Britain. Many of them were British subjects, and demanding the same standards of protection afforded to other British subjects around the world, a

---

<sup>1</sup> See the Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> On page 129, for those who care. I remember that Mum and Dad attended some Neal reunion that was part of the writing of Carr's book, and Dad came away complaining about how many Neals there were in the world, and all very worthy. He didn't mean this as a compliment, methinks.

<sup>3</sup> Dad has more complaints about this, as well. He is not very polite, my father.

<sup>4</sup> Well, relatively mature compared to my siblings.

feat almost impossible to accomplish without more formal intervention than had previously been the case. It was becoming increasingly clear that Britain was going to have to adopt a much more active policy. Of course, this was in many ways a self-fulfilling prophecy. As people began to believe that Britain was going to intervene and annex New Zealand as a formal colony, the sharks began to gather, thus making the demands for intervention even greater. Anybody who could nip over and ‘buy’ a few thousand acres for a musket did so in a hurry, to stake their claim before the government took over and regularised the matter.<sup>1</sup>

One of the biggest sharks, it seems to me, was the New Zealand Company. Formed in 1839, its avowed goal was to encourage the colonisation of New Zealand, but in a form particularly suitable for the Directors of the Company. It was the brain child of Edward Gibbon Wakefield who was clearly, for all the laudatory things said about him, a complete scoundrel.<sup>2</sup> The goals of the New Zealand Company were dressed up in all kinds of lovely language; the necessary rules for a happy, healthy, Utopia in which latter-day English Lords of the Estate could sit in high indolent style in New Zealand while their imported labourers (all very happy to be there, of course) would work on their plots of land to support them. Of course, you wouldn’t want to let the labourers have too much ability for self-improvement, so the rules tried to prevent this, but you had to let a little of this sort of thing happen or none of the working classes would want to go. And there had to be working classes; the gentry couldn’t possibly work their own land. That sort of thing just wasn’t done. The general plan seemed to be firstly to ‘buy’ as much Maori land as possible in a suitable spot; secondly, to resell this land to people in Britain at an obscene profit<sup>3</sup>, thereby paying for the whole exercise; thirdly, to recruit a bunch of willing labourers in Britain; and lastly, to ship them all off to New Zealand where they could work on the land (work and wages guaranteed by the rich settlers) to make estates for the new colonial gentry. It wasn’t quite put in these exact terms, but their underlying goals seem pretty clear.

There was a great deal of urgency. The British government was on the verge of annexing New Zealand as a formal colony, and the New Zealand Company had to get in first. After all, their ‘purchases’ had to be legal under British law, which they wouldn’t be if the Colonial Office got in first and set the rules. Hence the *Tory* expedition of May, 1839, led by Edward’s brother, William Wakefield. This preliminary expedition had the job of finding a suitable spot for a town, and ‘buying’ as much Maori land as it could. In September of that same year the first five immigrant ships, the *Adelaide*, *Aurora*, *Bengal Merchant*, *Duke of Roxburgh* and *Oriental* left from London; the *Aurora* was the first to arrive in Port Nicholson, on 21 January, 1840, with the others following some weeks later.<sup>4</sup>

Almost immediately plans were made to send out a second colony, under the command of Arthur Wakefield, another of the Wakefield brothers. Two preliminary ships, the *Will Watch* and the *Whitby* left England on the 27th of April, 1841, with 27 cabin passengers and 77 emigrants, and additional stores were sent on a faster ship, the *Arrow*, which left a few days later, on the 1st of May. The families of the preliminary party followed in the *Lloyds*, which sailed on the 11th of September, while the main immigrant party came in three ships, the *Mary Anne*, *Fifeshire* and *Lord Auckland*, which left around the 24th.

The site of the new colony was to become quite a bone of contention between the New Zealand Company (in the persons of William and Arthur Wakefield), and the crown (in the person of Gover-

<sup>1</sup>It is hardly necessary to add that the Maori were not consulted in any significant way. Nor, let me emphasise, was land ever purchased in any meaningful sense of the word. It was, quite simply, stolen from Maori who had necessarily only a very limited understanding of what was coming, or how their ‘sales’ were being interpreted by the Pakeha. Still, the various Neals and Norgroves are, of all people, the least culpable. Fleeing an unjust society in Britain, they can hardly be blamed for thinking more of their own survival and welfare than of Maori rights.

<sup>2</sup>One of his best-known escapades was the abduction, rape and forced marriage of a fifteen-year-old heiress, for which he was imprisoned in Newgate for three years. Charming.

<sup>3</sup>Just as an example, in 1838 William Wakefield ‘bought’ approximately 20 million acres of land at the northern end of the South Island, paying for it with goods estimated to be worth around £25. The plan was to sell on this land at £1 per acre, or thereabouts, leading to a theoretical profit of around 1 million %. Not bad for a bunch of disinterested capitalists who were only, as they continually assured people, only in it to benefit the British Empire and save England from the scourge of poverty. They were certainly intending to save themselves from the scourge of poverty, this much is clear. It didn’t quite work out that way, of course, as reality interfered.

<sup>4</sup>I suppose all this isn’t really directly relevant to the Neals, or even to the Norgroves, who didn’t arrive in Wellington until 1841, but it does set the scene, so bear with me.

nor Hobson, who, only a few months before, had signed the Treaty of Waitangi, investing all rights to purchase Maori land in the crown, not in private companies). Theoretically, the New Zealand Company could only found a colony where Governor Hobson said they were allowed to, and he wasn't too keen on new, practically independent colonies a long way from his power base in the Bay of Islands. He would much rather they settled up north, in the Mahurangi maybe, or close to Auckland. However, after weeks of negotiation, argument and exploration it was finally agreed that the settlement should be at the site of present-day Nelson. The nearby Waimea valley had about 60,000 acres of land that could probably be farmed; a lot less than what was needed, but Arthur Wakefield was quite confident of finding more in the interior.<sup>1</sup> It was not considered an ideal site, but between the demands of Governor Hobson on the one hand and local Maori on the other, the New Zealand Company was left with very little room to manoeuvre.

As a side note, it's fascinating to observe (from a distance) the contortions necessary to justify the land purchases, both to the local Maori and to Governor Hobson. In 1839, William Wakefield had 'purchased' huge tracts of land in the Nelson and Marlborough areas, as part of the *Tory* expedition. The difficulty was that the local Maori hadn't actually been consulted (fancy that!), and all negotiations had been done with Te Rauparaha, who was quite happy to sell off other peoples' lands as long as he could get a bunch of guns. So when the ships arrived at the site of their new colony at Nelson the local Maori demanded payment for their land, quite rejecting the idea that it had already been sold by Te Rauparaha. The obvious solution, one might think, would be to buy it again; after all, the whole 20 million acres could probably be had for a few guns and blankets. Hardly overpriced. But Arthur Wakefield was not now legally allowed to buy Maori land, since this had been expressly forbidden by the Treaty of Waitangi. Thus, all legal claim to the land had to be based on the 1839 purchases of William Wakefield. Eventually, Arthur Wakefield was able to persuade the local Maori to accept gifts; not for purchase of their land, no, no, not that, purely in the spirit of good will and fellowship, as long as they were then to let the colonists live there.

## Arrival in New Zealand; William Neal and Amelia Matthews

William Neal was born in Alton, a town in Hampshire, in June, 1810. His ancestry can be traced for a few generations, as can that of Amelia Matthews, whom he married on the 25th of January, 1834.<sup>2</sup> However, if anything more is known about their ancestors, Brenda Carr doesn't say, and since I haven't done any research myself, I can only conclude, with reasonable probability, that they were all poor, leaving nothing but their names in the parish record.

William was a bricklayer, poor and desperate enough to be tempted by the offers from the New Zealand Company, who signed him up for £1 8s a week (14s to Matthew and 14s to Amelia, until she sailed to New Zealand in the *Lloyds*). He was recruited by Mr. A. Crowley, the Alton agent for the New Zealand Company, who judged William to be "of sound mind, of good character, and willing to work." William Neal sailed on the *Will Watch*, which arrived in Port Nicholson<sup>3</sup> on the 8th of September; the *Whitby*, with Arthur Wakefield on board, arrived ten days later. They must have sat at Port Nicholson twiddling their thumbs for a few weeks while the site for the new colony was discussed, but eventually they set sail again for the South Island, leaving for Tasman Bay on the 30th of September. Another month of exploration followed before the specific site for the colony was decided upon, and it was not until the 4th of November that the three ships arrived at their new home in Nelson.

The first order of the day was to unload the ships and set up the prefabricated barracks that had been packed for the voyage. Once that was done, by the 18th of November, a shilling a day was deducted from every man's pay, to pay for their provisions.<sup>4</sup> The labourers were then allowed to build, in their own time, places for themselves to live. Typically, they built them with scant regard for the theoretical distribution of allotments, which led to no inconsiderable conflict when the real owners finally arrived. Indeed, right from the very beginning of the settlement, the labourers were,

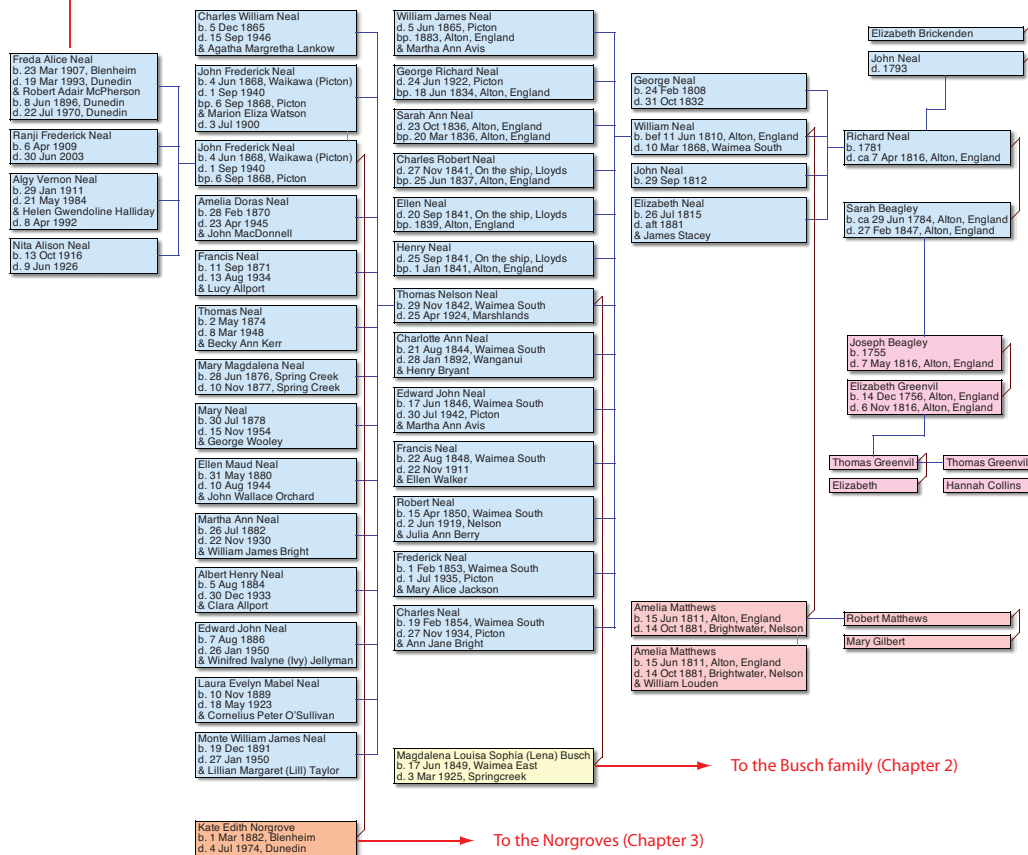
<sup>1</sup>A belief that led to Arthur's own death a few years later in the Wairau Massacre.

<sup>2</sup>Brenda Carr's book shows a copy of their marriage certificate.

<sup>3</sup>They couldn't sail to Nelson, of course, because it hadn't been founded yet.

<sup>4</sup>Why do I suspect that the value of the daily provisions was much less than a shilling? Must be my cynical nature.

To the McPhersons (Chapter 1)



The Neals.

in the words of Ruth Allan [2], “less submissive than their leaders expected.” Quite so. And rightly so.

There must have been enormous worry when the first of the other ships to arrive was not the *Lloyds*, with all their families on board, but the *Fifeshire*, which had left Gravesend three weeks later, arriving in Nelson on the 1st of February, 1842. Next to arrive was the *Mary Ann*, on the 5th of February, and finally the *Lloyds* arrived on the 15th, with Amelia Matthews on board. It cannot have been a happy reunion. This trip of the *Lloyds* is infamous for its utter lack of proper organisation, and a callous disregard for the health and safety of its passengers [12]. No proper provisions were included for the large number of small children, the sanitary facilities were completely inadequate for the number of women and children on board, and the ship’s doctor was incompetent, or worse. To ensure the trip was abusive as well as unhealthy, the ship’s captain, William Green, started sleeping with one of the wives, and allowed his crew members to do the same. One wonders just how many of the wives were forced into such relationships, either out of fear, or from a wish to obtain food for their children. Under the circumstances, they were hardly likely all to be voluntary. The inevitable tragedy followed. A family with whooping cough had been allowed to board the vessel, and the disease ran rampant. Scurvy raised its ugly head but no proper provisions were made to combat it, even when the opportunity presented itself when the vessel put into the Cape of Good Hope, by which time 58 children had already died. Seven more were to die before the *Lloyds* reached New

Zealand.<sup>1</sup>

Amelia Matthews had begun the trip with five children; William was 9, George was 7, Charles was 4, Ellen was 3 and Henry was 1. Another daughter, Sarah Ann, had died previously in 1836. The first to die on board was Ellen, who died on the 20th of September followed by Henry on the 25th, and Charles on the 7th of November. Of her first six children, poor Amelia was left with only two. It cannot have been an entirely happy reunion with William.

Over the next few years the Nelson colonists, in their eternal search for more land, spread out over the Waimea valley, and then headed east over the hills to the Wairau valley, Picton and Blenheim, movements which are mirrored in the movements of the Neal family.

By 1844 William Neal was living at Waimea South (now called Spring Grove; this was to remain his main residence for the rest of his life), with his occupation listed as a sawyer. Waimea South was covered in forests at that time, and one supposes that William Neal, in search of work, went to chop down trees. In 1845 he had been demoted to a simple labourer (i.e., unskilled), but was back to bricklayer in 1859. Almost certainly he did whatever he could to survive, and so these formally listed occupations are unlikely to be accurate descriptions of the actual things he did. This would have been true for all the colonists. No matter their profession back in England, in Nelson they had to eat. In the 1849 Census we see a

William Neale [sic]

Occupation; Bricklayer

Religion; Church of England

Children; 6

3 males, 1 female – can read and write

2 males – cannot read or write

5 acres fenced; 5 acres cleared and cultivated, 2 wheat 3 barley; tenant of land. Wood house, shingle roof; 5 cattle, 1 pig.

Clearly William was doing a bit of farming as well, at least to generate food for his own family, although he was not yet a landowner. This was to come later. In 1859 he bought section 51 at Richmond, in Waimea East, paying £150 for 50 acres (without any buildings on it).<sup>2</sup> William built a house there, as he was listed as a householder in Richmond in the 1866 Electoral roll.

William and Amelia had thirteen children.

**William** (1833–1865) married Martha Ann Avis in 1857 and they moved out to Marlborough where they had two sons and two daughters, all listed in [19]. One son and one daughter died very young. William died of dropsy only a few years after (in 1865), at the age of only 32, leaving two children, George and Clara. Interestingly, his widow remarried his brother, Edward Neal. Apparently, on his death bed William begged Ted to take care of his wife and children. Martha died in 1912, after having another five children with brother Ted.

**George** (1834–1922), the other survivor, had a lifelong disability resulting from an injury to his knee when he was young. He never married and worked as a bootmaker. He lived for many years with his brother Ted, and was buried in Picton.

**The next four** children, Sarah, Charles, Ellen and Henry, all died young, the later three on board the *Lloyds*, Sarah in Alton where she was born.

**Thomas Nelson** (1842–1924) was the the next son and my GGG-grandfather, so I'll write more about him shortly.

<sup>1</sup>The New Zealand Company instituted an enquiry which, of course, concluded that the expedition had been provided with all that could possibly have been expected, and that nobody was at fault, the tragedy being the result of Divine Providence, which nobody could have foreseen or prevented. How typical. Arthur Wakefield, to his credit, insisted on a proper investigation, which pointed the finger appropriately.

<sup>2</sup>Brenda Carr's book is not entirely clear on this point. William may have purchased another section 51, of 50 acres in Clover Road, Brightwater, this time with outbuildings, and for £100. However, I suspect that he only bought one lot of land, and that the accounts are a bit muddled.

**Charlotte Anne** (1844–1892). She married a sawyer, Henry Bryant, lived at Waimea East and had eight children. Or maybe nine. She died when only 47 of “heart disease and paralysis for two years”. Goodness knows what that was.

**Edward John** (1846–1942). He’s the one who married Martha Ann Avis, his brother’s widow, and had another five children with her. Lots of descendants. Apparently, he met his first GG-granddaughter just before he died.

**Francis**, or Frank (1848–1911). He married Ellen Walker, and apparently had a sense of humour. Well, for practical jokes, anyway. Lived in Nelson, had a bunch of descendants. Usual story.

**Robert** (1850–1919). Married Julia Anne Berry and had seven children. Lived in Nelson. The place must have been crawling with Neals.

**Frederick** (1853–1935). Followed his brothers to Marlborough and there married Mary Alice Jackson (daughter of Captain James Jackson, a well known pioneer and whaler). They had five children.

**Charles** (1854–1934). He got no schooling, and couldn’t read or write. He went off to Marlborough also, and married Ann Jane Bright. Nine or so children.

William Neal died on the 10th of March, 1868, at his residence in Waimea South. He was 57 years old. The official cause of death was carditis, and William’s official occupation was “farmer”. Amelia remarried William Loudon on the 8th of September, 1874, and died at Brightwater in 1881, from “Senile Decay and Exhaustion”.

I have often wondered whether or not people like William and Amelia were happy with the choice they made. I suspect so. Would it have been possible for a poor bricklayer to end up with his own 50 acre block in England, and for his children to own, as they did in their turn, extensive tracts of land? I doubt it. I suspect that, once the initial hardships were over (and there were certainly many of those, as supply ships failed to arrive, the New Zealand Company went bankrupt, and the colony of Nelson suffered from a drastic shortage of capital), William and Amelia found themselves in a relatively comfortable position, and could have looked forward to a life for their children quite different from their own.

## Thomas Nelson Neal and Selina Busch

Thomas Nelson was the first child of William and Sarah to be born in Nelson; he was born nine months and 20 days after the arrival of the *Lloyds*, and is claimed to have been one of the first pakeha children, if not the first, to be born in Nelson. At the very least there can have been few born sooner, particularly if they were the sons of the initial party, and not the offspring of the sailors on the *Lloyds*.

He was born in Waimea South, where William was renting a section, and must have spent the early part of his life in learning how to run a farm. On the 6th of July, 1866, Thomas Nelson married Magdalena Louisa Sophia Busch (usually called Selina). She was the fifth daughter of German immigrants about whom more shortly (page 50). The Busch family lived out in Waimea East, in Aniseed Valley, and this is where Thomas and Selina spent their first few years of married life. Probably spurred by the death of William in 1868, Thomas and Selina, with three Clydesdale horses, left Nelson in 1868 to join the settlers heading east over the mountains to the new lands around Picton and Blenheim.

After working on a farm for a few years at Waikawa, close to Picton, in 1872 Thomas and Selina purchased a property, known as *Burnlea*, at Spring Creek. Initially the purchase was jointly with Thomas’s brother-in-law, William James Kinzett, but on the 20th of July, 1877, Thomas bought Kinzett out to become the sole owner. The property was about 150 acres on the banks of Spring Creek. By 1898, Thomas had done well enough to purchase another 200 acres of the Marshlands estate (between Spring Creek and the sea) and grew a lot of flax on the property, as well as running cows and growing oats and wheat. He and Selina moved out to Marshlands to live, where they

remained for the rest of Thomas' life (another 26 years or so). His second son, John Frederick (my G-grandfather) stayed on at Burnlea for another 20 years, in partnership with his brother, Frank.

All told, Thomas and Selina had thirteen children,<sup>1</sup> of whom twelve survived<sup>2</sup> to be photographed with Thomas and Selina on their 50th wedding anniversary. The only exception was the first Mary who was drowned in Spring Creek, in 1877, when she was only 17 months old. Her older brother, Charles, noticed her playing outside in the garden just before midday. Later, Selina asked where she was and a search began. Charles found her in the creek near the house. She had been in the habit of going to the creek to collect water in a tin and must have slipped in and drowned. I remember my G-grandmother Kate (Edith Norgrove) often talking about the little girl who drowned in Spring Creek. This must have been whom she was talking about. It was her husband's little sister. Actually, in Kate's stories the girl in Spring Creek was very useful, as she died from a number of different causes, depending on how we were being naughty at the time. She didn't cut her meat into small pieces and choked, or she went swimming right after eating lunch and drowned from getting cramps; these are the two I remember clearly.

Anyway, just for the record, here they are.

**Charles William** was born in Aniseed Valley in 1865 but went to Marlborough with his parents. In 1888 he married Agatha Margretha Lankow, the daughter of immigrants who came to Nelson on the *Skiold* (page 50). They had a bunch of children, as the Neals tended to do, and pages of descendants in Carr's book [19].

**John Frederick.** My G-grandfather, so he appears in more detail below.

**Amelia Doras** was born in 1870, and married John McDonnell, the son of Irish immigrants. They farmed at Tua Marina for a few years before going out to Ikamatua, on the West Coast, later moving up to Gisborne and then to Opotiki. They ran sheep.

**Francis (Frank)** was born in Waikawa, and attained the eminent position of dux of Rapaura school. A keen cricket player. He married Lucy Allport (and her sister Clara married Frank's brother, Albert). He spent his life farming at *Seaview*, near Rarangi. Lots of descendants.

**Thomas.** Born in 1874 at Spring Creek, he was a keen rugby player, and married Becky Ann Kerr. They first farmed at Clifford Bay, in the Awatere, but later at a section near Cape Campbell.

**Mary Magdalena,** who died young as described above.

**Mary.** The second Mary, named after her recently dead sister of course. She was a 'first day' pupil of the Marshlands school in 1891. She married George Woolley of Tua Marina, a flax cutter and scutcher. They purchased land around Tua Marina and farmed it. Seven daughters, five sons – fairly typical.

**Ellen Maude.** Another 'first day' pupil at Marshlands. She married John Wallace Orchard, the son of a surgical instrument maker from Christchurch. John's father made the first glass top for an operating theatre in Christchurch Public Hospital. They bought land in Kenepuru Sound, using money borrowed from Ellen's mother, and farmed it. Of course, John went off to the war in 1916 leaving his wife to do all the work. She succeeded very well at it, it seems. He didn't. He was gassed in the war, and had a nasty cough for the rest of his life. Bunch of children.

**Martha Ann** was yet another 'first day' pupil at Marshlands. She married William James Bright, a flax cutter at Marshlands and had eight children. She died young, when only 48, while feeding her hens. They found her dead beside them, with a half-full basket of eggs. Jim Bright was one of the founding directors of the Koromiko Dairy Company, and later became Chairman of Directors, so he must have done pretty well for himself.

---

<sup>1</sup>Poor Selina.

<sup>2</sup>Lucky Selina.

**Albert Henry.** He's the one who married Clara Allport, the sister of his brother's wife Lucy. Farmed at *Burnlea* and bred pedigree Clydesdale horses. He died when only 49, from a heart attack after a dance at the Band Rotunda in Blenheim.

**Edward John.** A farmer and flax cutter, he married Winifrid Ivalyne Jellyman<sup>1</sup> and had four sons and a daughter. Keen rugby and cricket player.

**Laura Evelyn Mabel.** Married Cornelius Peter O'Sullivan, and they milked cows on a property in Redwood Street, Blenheim. Three daughters, two sons, all born in Blenheim.

**Monte William James,** the youngest, was born in 1892 and grew up at Marshlands. He started off farming at Marshlands, but later bought an orchard near Blenheim where he grew fruit and vegetables. He married Lillian Margaret Taylor, and had six sons. Apparently, he was an excellent sportsman, representing Marlborough in rugby from 1913 to 1928, and in cricket from when he was 17 until he was 53. My word, imagine still representing your province at the age of 53. Not bad.

To accommodate their enormous family, Thomas and Selina built a house with nine bedrooms in Marshlands, and then a second home sometime later, with hot and cold running water, and a water toilet. Thomas was a very keen cricket player, and represented Nelson against Marlborough in what was thought to be the first interprovincial cricket match<sup>2</sup>. This must have been before he headed over the hills to Waikawa. His fascination with cricket remained, and 24 members of the Neal family played for the Marshlands club. Indeed, so many Neals played that they made up their own team, and played against Picton. This is another thing my G-grandmother Kate used to talk about; the Neal cricket team. I never knew what she meant before I read Brenda Carr's book. Interestingly, a number of Neals (Thomas, Robert and Francis) played against William Norgrove, another ancestor, in the 1873 Spring Creek versus Blenheim showdown; an account of this exciting match (in which the Neals were rather undistinguished it must be said) can be found on page 65.

Thomas Nelson's granddaughter<sup>3</sup>, quoted in [18], remembers him as follows<sup>4</sup>:

I remember grandfather, Thomas Neal, as a very quiet loving person. He was very deaf. When I was 12, he and Uncle Monte (Thomas' youngest son) were staying with us for a holiday at St. Omar and grandfather gave me half a crown. I can tell you I thought I was made. I had never owned that much money before. I didn't have much to do with my grandparents, but grandmother was a very strict woman and always had everyone working.

I remember grandfather bought an overland car when I was 16 (1919). Uncle Monte used to drive it, and he took Mum and I and grandfather for a drive around Spring Creek, and grandfather told me that the land there was selling for ten pounds an acre, which he thought was a very high price.

They first lived in an old house at Marshlands, on their farm there. Uncle Monte and his wife lived in the old house afterwards which has since been burnt. But they built a nice new place with conveniences, hot and cold water and a water lav. on one end of the verandah.

Grandmother was a wonderful worker and tried to make everyone keep up with her. Right up till the time when grandad died she used to milk a couple of cows. She would leave him to get up and light the fire in the range and get the breakfast ready. The morning he died, she went out to his bedroom off the verandah to see why he wasn't up and found he had died in his sleep.

Apparently for a year Thomas farmed Burnlea (Spring Creek property) and Marshlands for one harvest together. Between the two farms was the old Ferry Hotel, and he usually

<sup>1</sup>Now *that* is a *real* name!

<sup>2</sup>It wasn't. Well, not the first in New Zealand anyway. Maybe it was the first between Nelson and Marlborough.

<sup>3</sup>Agatha Violet, daughter of Charles William Neal.

<sup>4</sup>Somewhat shortened by me.



stopped on the way home for a drink. Being harvest time and six o'clock closing, it usually went after hours. One night the police came in and were busy taking names and Grandad didn't see them and being deaf didn't hear them, so when they took him by the shoulder and said "What's yours?", of course his answer was "another long one please".

Thomas liked to go out and shoot pigeons, but being deaf he would take one of the children to point them out to him as he couldn't hear them.

Lena was not happy if Thomas didn't turn up after a visit to the hotel, and she often got into the gig and went to get him. One night as they drove home from the hotel, Thomas was smoking his pipe, and a spark fell into Lena's lap and set her dress alight.



Thomas Nelson Neal and Selina Busch with their children on their Golden Wedding anniversary. In the back row, from left to right, are Edward, Monte, John, Charles, Frank, Albert and Tom. In the front row, left to right, are Martha, Ellen, Thomas, Selina, Millie, Mary and Laura. Copied from [18].

Thomas and Selina celebrated their 40th and 50th wedding anniversaries in great style, surrounded by large numbers of family, before Thomas finally died of heart failure in 1924, closely followed by Selina in 1925. They left 75 grandchildren and 18 G-grandchildren. Not a bad effort. The obituary in the Marlborough Express read:

A very well known and highly respected settler Mr. Thomas Nelson Neal passed away peacefully in his sleep at his residence at Marshlands yesterday morning. He was apparently in his usual robust health on Thursday night but was found dead in bed yesterday morning.

The late Mr. Neal who was one of the first generation of native born New Zealanders was in his 82nd year and was wont to claim that he was one of the first three white children to be born at Nelson. His father was a member of the expeditionary force sent out to Nelson from the old country, and he was joined there later by his wife whom he had left in England. The late Mr. Neal spent his boyhood in a young settlement of Nelson and followed various occupations, chiefly farming. He was prominent in the sporting and athletic field and had the honour of representing Nelson against Marlborough in what was probably the first interprovincial cricket match. In his later years he was a very familiar figure as a spectator on the football fields of Marlborough always taking a keen interest in the national game.



Thomas Nelson Neal and Selina Busch on their Golden Wedding anniversary. Copied from [18].

The late Mr. Neal found his way into Wairau in 1868 and for about five years worked on a farm at Waikawa. He then purchased his well known property at Spring Creek. At first he was in partnership with his brother-in-law Mr. W. Kinzett, but Mr. Kinzett later dropped out of the partnership and one of Mr. Neal's sons now owns his portion of the property. In 1883 the late Mr. Neal purchased a part of the Marshlands estate when it went on the market and a few years later he established his home at Marshlands where he had resided since. Mr. Neal passed over the Maungatapu on the day following the murders there but he knew nothing of the tragedy at the time. The late Mr. Neal enjoyed extraordinary health and in the last fifty years his family do not remember him spending a day in bed. He is survived by Mrs. Neal now in her 75th year and there is a surviving family of seven sons and four daughters, with a total of 75 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren. The sons are: Messrs Charles Wm. Neal, Fabians Valley; John Frederick Neal, 'Lucknow', Seddon; Francis Neal, Marshlands; Thomas Neal, Seddon; Albert Henry Neal, Spring Creek; Edward John Neal, Marshlands; Montague William James Neal, Marshlands. The daughters are, Mesdames J. McDonnell<sup>1</sup>, Opotiki; G. Woolley, Tua Marina; J. Orchard, St. Omer, Kenepuru; and the late Mrs C. O'Sullivan, Redwoodtown. Three brothers still living are, Messrs E. Neal, Waikawa Road, Picton; F. Neal, Groveton, and C. Neal in the Poverty Bay District.

After Thomas died his lands at Marshlands and Spring Creek were split up and sold in a number of separate lots. The real estate agents and auctioneers were the same then as now, and waxed lyrical about the many advantages of such wonderful pieces of land. "The auctioneer desires to emphasise the completeness of the residence and confidently asserts that it offers an opportunity of securing a house in the country with all the advantages of a town residence (and none of its disabilities in the shape of heavy rates)." Doesn't that just sound typical?

<sup>1</sup>Note how the girls aren't even given their own names, but only their husband's initial! This is just so damned irritating.

## John Frederick Neal and Kate Norgrove

If you recall, Thomas Nelson Neal and Selina Busch had thirteen children, of whom the second son was John Frederick Neal, my G-grandfather. He was born at Waikawa, just after Thomas and Selina had left Aniseed Valley to head east. He was a farmer in Marlborough his entire life; early on he was a keen shearer apparently, and his love of sheep farming was evident throughout his entire life. His first land was his father's old property, *Burnlea*, at Spring Creek, which he purchased with his brother Frank in 1898, but in 1918 he sold up to his brother, Albert, and purchased *Lucknow*, 740 acres of tussock land at Seddon, south across the hills from Blenheim.<sup>1</sup> *Burnlea* was threatened by floods and John and Kate wanted a bigger place. *Lucknow* was advertised on Wednesday, and they bought it on Saturday.

John Frederick's first wife was Marion Eliza Watson, from whom came Uncle Norman of Wisconsin (and popcorn, see page 23) fame, but after she died of pneumonia on the 3rd of July, 1900, he remarried Kate Edith Norgrove, with whom our story is more closely concerned.

Kate was born in Blenheim on the 1st of March, 1882, from a family that had been around Wellington, Picton and Blenheim since 1840, as long as the Neals had been in Nelson. However, they weren't rich; not like the Neals. Quite the reverse, as we shall see in the next chapter. Kate had very little formal schooling, leaving school when she was only 12 in order to help her parents around the house (she was paid 5s a week). At 16 she also learned dressmaking from Mrs. Bunnicliff. She must have become independent very young, as when she was 16, a pregnant Mrs. Sturtevant paid her passage to Dunedin so that Kate could help her look after her children. Kate was down in Dunedin for another four months – living at Esther Crescent and then at St. Clair – at some later date (that I don't know) to help Mrs. Sturtevant again; apparently her brother was coming out from England and extra help was needed.

It seems that Kate worked as a housemaid, or lady's maid, or nanny for much of her early life. By the time she was 24 she was in Spring Creek, teaching at the Rapaura Sunday School and looking after the little girl of a friend<sup>2</sup>, and this is where she met John Frederick, who was also teaching at the Sunday School. Romance blossomed, one imagines, although with Kate it takes quite a stretch for one's imagination to get there.<sup>3</sup>

For their honeymoon, John and Kate went to Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide. As their boat left Wellington, going round Cape Palliser, at the very southernmost tip of the North Island<sup>4</sup>, the swells were so bad that it stood on its end twice. Kate remembers having her first motor ride in Australia, at Duncan and Fraser's. It's typical that she would remember such a thing; she was always very keen on having new things, modern things, fancy things. They paid a sovereign to a salesman for taking them up Mt. Lofty. Hans Busch, that miserly old bugger<sup>5</sup>, would have had a fit had he known.

On their way back to New Zealand they called at Hobart and Mt. Wellington, before sailing to Bluff and continuing overland, staying at Temuka with Adam Gibson<sup>6</sup> so that John could buy a sprayer for his potatoes. Finally, they sailed from Lyttleton to the Picton Ferry, and thence home.

Given the poverty of Kate's early life, it must have been quite an experience for her.

John and Kate bought their first car, a four-seater, in Spring Creek when Algy was 14 months old; at that time there were only two others.<sup>7</sup> It was, we are told, dove grey with a lot of brass, and the cricketers dropped their bats and ran to see the car go past Redwood St. ground. Curtains were

<sup>1</sup>The name *Lucknow* apparently had nothing to do with India, but came from the original purchaser's exclamation when the land was won in a lottery: "We're in luck now!" I'm not entirely sure I believe this story, but it's so corny it might just be true. At any rate I've included in an appendix (page 245) a description of *Lucknow* written by my mother, who stayed there a lot as a child, and loved it greatly.

<sup>2</sup>Well, it was a friend's little girl according to what Kate herself told my mother, but I suspect it was more likely to be another sort of housemaid/nanny position. I'm quite sure that Kate did this for whoever paid her, and then tried to save face later in life by calling them her friends.

<sup>3</sup>Even Mum, who knew her so well, suspected that Kate was more interested in the farm than the man. Who knows, though? She was certainly a good-looking woman, as you can tell from surviving photographs.

<sup>4</sup>I have no idea why a boat from Wellington to Australia would go around Cape Palliser, but that's what Kate said.

<sup>5</sup>And John Frederick's grandfather, as described in the next section.

<sup>6</sup>I have no idea at all who Adam Gibson is, but stay with him they did, according to Kate herself.

<sup>7</sup>For those who care, they belonged to Aberhart, the greengrocers, who had a black Ford, and Dr. Redmond who had a little two-seater.



John Frederick Neal. The top left is him and Kate Norgrove on, one presumes, their wedding day. Bottom left is John Neal and Kate in the middle, Algy on the left and Ranji on the right, with *Lucknow* in the background.



John Frederick Neal working on the farm.



John Frederick Neal's children, from two marriages. Back row, from left: Marion, Lena, Norman supporting Algy. In front, Freda and Ranji.

pulled aside all the way down Grove Rd. When the children were older, they even had electricity installed in *Lucknow*!

Kate came late to the good things in life. She remembered the holidays, the cars, the electricity. They were important status symbols, and she would never take them for granted. Not her.

John and Kate's eldest child was my grandmother, Freda, who married Robert McPherson (see Chapter 1), and they had three other children, Ranji Frederick (1909–2003; named after a famous Indian cricketer, Ranji Singh), Algy Vernon (1911–1984; named after two famous Australian cricketers, Algy Gears and Vernon Ransford), and Nita Allison (1916–1926). All the children were born while the family was living at *Burnlea*; Freda would have been about 11 when they moved to *Lucknow*.

I can't remember ever having met Ranji. He had two daughters, Mavis and Janice, and two wives [19], but I never met any of them, either. Ranji lived all his life farming in Marlborough. When he was 95 he died when his pajamas caught fire from a paper that fell from a log burner. He was discovered later by a relative and died the following day in the Blenheim hospital. I'm sure Mum could tell all kinds of stories about him, but Mum isn't writing this, and at any rate my goal is not to describe all the side branches but to concentrate on my direct ancestors.

About the only thing I can remember about Uncle Algy is the way he ate leeks in white sauce. I thought they were such disgusting things, absolutely vile, but he sat at Kate's table in her wee flat along Forbury Rd., slurping them up with great enthusiasm. I just couldn't understand how he could do it, and remember sitting and watching him, enthralled. Clearly it made a great impression on me. He was a large man, very strong, with a deep voice, sort of burry as I remember. Algy married Helen Gwendoline Halliday, and had two daughters and two sons; Helen, whom I think I met once, married Jack Davis, a farmer at Tarras (Long Acre Farm), and is now retired in Wanaka; Glenis married Tony Aubrey from a farming family at Omarama, and now lives in Nelson; John was the chaplain for the whole of the Defence Force, while his other son, Colin, still works for the Customs Department in the area of Biosecurity (at Christchurch)<sup>1</sup>.

The youngest was Nita, who died of septic pneumonia, followed by cardiac failure, when she was only nine years old. I have a copy of a photograph of Nita, on which is written in Kate's handwriting: "In loving memory of Little Petty who died ninth of June, 1926, aged 9 yrs and 9 mths". It's a sad photograph I always think.

It is with Kate that we first intersect my own memories. She died in 1974 when I was almost 12, and for the last few years of her life she lived in a flat by Forbury Corner, close to where we lived in St. Clair. I remember her clearly. My memories of her? Her walking around to our place, probably even in her nineties, always bringing a tin of something as a dinner contribution (she'd rest at the bus stops on the way); always having a cold bath every day; never believing that men landed on the moon ("The paper won't refuse the ink" I remember her saying); Dad teasing her gently about Billy Graham, I have no idea why; Mum crying when she died; those horrible old hats she used to wear; the musty smell of her tiny flat, which I never liked as a child; helping to clean her kitchen ceiling and walls; Algy eating leeks in white sauce with horrible gusto (see above); being served leeks in white sauce (no comment required). Nothing spectacular really, just the sorts of things that young children remember. Still, I'm lucky to have any memories of her at all, and I treasure the ones I have.

Mum loved Kate deeply, more so than her own mother I think. I'll leave her to speak for herself.<sup>2</sup>

---

**Grandma Kate**, by Rosalie Sneyd (i.e., Mum).

Picture this.

A tall well-made, handsome woman standing very straight with her head thrown back and a little to one side, flanked by her solid farmer husband and two strapping sons (my mother must have been away). They're standing at the top of wide steps, on the verandah of an imposing villa. Behind the house the hills of the farm in the distance. And there you have my grandmother. Quite a dame.

<sup>1</sup>Thanks to Auntie Valerie for this information about Algy's sons.

<sup>2</sup>The appendix on *Lucknow* (page 245) also written by Mum, has a lot to say about Kate also.



Kate Edith Norgrove. The picture on the left was taken by the Otago Daily Times, as I remember, not long before she died. It's with my sister Elizabeth. The picture on the right is in the garden at 9 Dillon St., Blenheim, (where my mother was brought up) in front of a big oleander tree (according to Auntie).



The first family in the valley to get a set of cutlery; the first to get electricity, the first to get a car. Secure of her status. It wasn't like that in her childhood when she'd be sent down to the store to ask for food on tick when the money ran out.

Her schooling finished when she was fourteen when she was employed as a nursemaid. Sometime later she taught Sunday School and there met a widower twenty years her senior. He said that if she married him he'd take her to Australia for a honeymoon. I never knew whether it was grandfather or the trip she fancied, or maybe it was his farm. Anyway they married and Kate, having come up in the world, raised her chin and enjoyed it.

Kate had standards. She always looked good, helped by the parcel of outfits that arrived on the farm on approval from Ballantynes in Christchurch each year. A lifelong habit, somewhat annoying in later years if I was waiting for her, was to change her clothes right down to the skin before going out in case she was run over and taken to hospital.

Always smelled good too. Not of perfume (Heaven Forbid!) but of soap from her daily cold bath. I never saw her wear lipstick but as she got older she would powder her ruddy, weatherbeaten nose by flapping a powder puff in that general direction.

I never heard her swear. The worst thing she would say about anyone was to call them a besom. This conjured up cart-loads of evil which was never specified. One up from being a besom was to be 'common'. I don't even remember her using the word sex. But having borne four children herself she must have practised it. Perish the thought. Nor did she say 'pregnant'. In those days a woman may be 'in the family way'.

Every Sunday she'd go to Church (Anglican, of course) and after the service, as a member of the inner circle, go to the vicarage for tea and cake. There was, I'm sure a social element but nevertheless her faith was firm and she knew she would join her husband and daughter in heaven. Maybe it was this that gave her no fear of death, about which she would talk openly. She didn't appear to fear anything.

Education had passed her by and she knew it but she did her best to educate herself from the Readers' Digest, the only book I saw her read. "They say" ushered in the latest wisdom from this, the second holiest book. "They say soap causes cancer". On the other hand she claimed superior knowledge of some things by virtue of her age. "You don't get to my age without learning something. Paper never refuses the ink," she'd say sagely referring to the reports of the moon landing which she never believed. There were also several pronunciations that she stuck to (I think she thought them refined) despite the evidence. Treefoil for tinfoil, remnant for remnant, nasturtium with two hard t's.

She claimed prescience but always after the event. She wrote 'lines' in which I, when quite small, had to put the 'stops'. She became very deaf in later years and in her reverence for propriety was tortured by the fear that she broke wind audibly. Once again I came to the rescue. "Did you hear that dear?"

No conception of science or my husband's research. "And what did you discover today?"

Whatever else Kate was, she was certainly strong. Tough of body and of mind. She'd walk miles over the farm with us as children and continued to walk in the city later. She never complained of being miserable; she would have considered it a sign of weakness, although long before my time when her fourth and youngest child died I understand that she didn't cope with it well. Her home was her castle and work in the house her forte. I can hear her say to herself when she was a little indisposed, "Well, the broom won't sweep itself, m'lady" and on she'd go. On the morning before she left for her final visit to hospital she cleaned all the outside drains in the block of flats where she lived.

Her house was always light and clean and airy with fresh flowers from the remnants of a once-beautiful garden and a rare calmness. Truly an oasis for me.

She was the best baker I know. Lashings of butter and cream on the farm helped. Her custard tarts are legend. When she was over ninety and living in the city she'd bake them and walk round with them to me if she knew I was having visitors. And they'd always be the worst she'd ever made – “Bad batch of flour, dear” – and delicious.

Good health was something she took for granted and didn't jeopardise it by going to the doctor.

Tough, ignorant, intolerant, even bigoted, wise, kind, snobbish, stoical, hospitable. All those things at times. But they're irrelevant to me; overshadowed as they are by the love between us.

## The Busch family

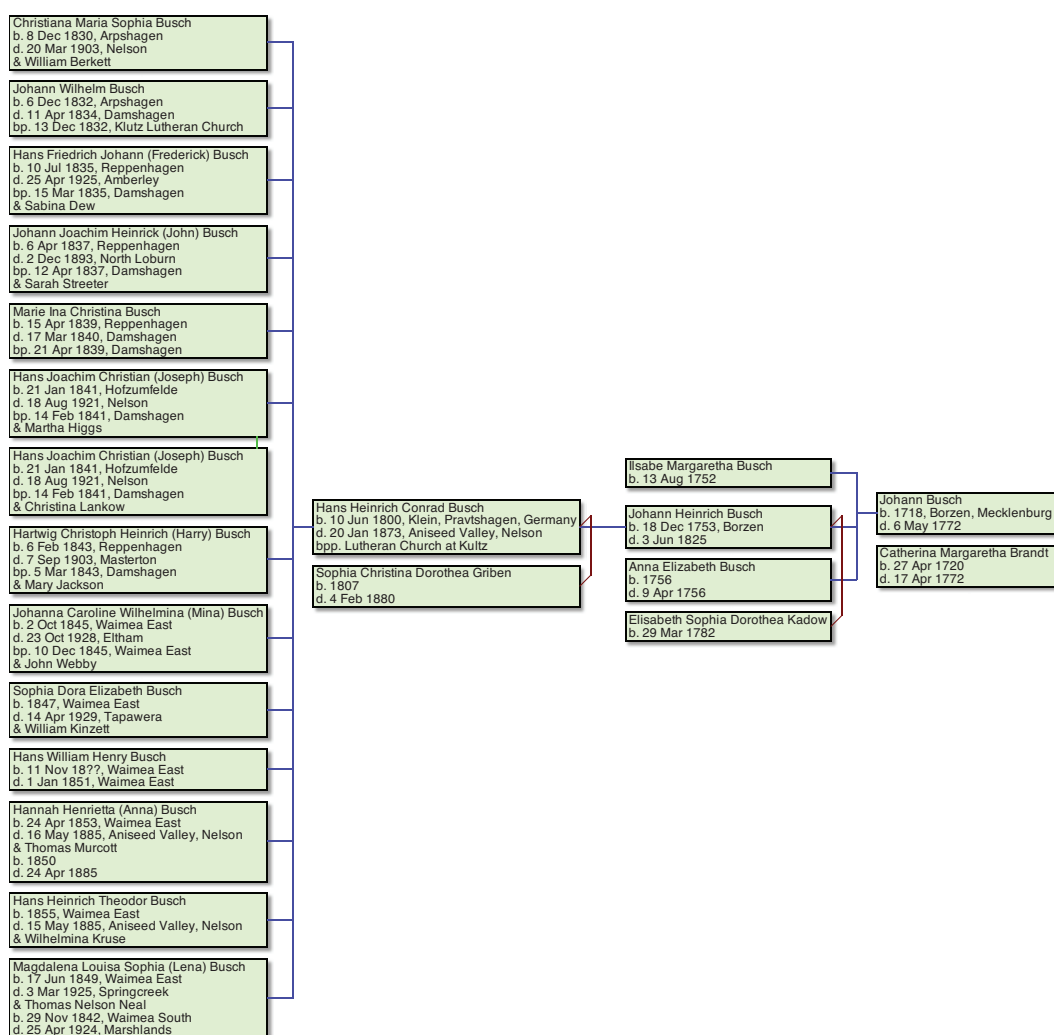
Thomas Nelson's wife, Selina Busch (page 38), had a rather interesting background herself. Her father had come to Auckland on one of two ships from Hamburg, an interesting chapter in the history of the New Zealand Company, which is worth a closer look<sup>1</sup> [2]. The New Zealand Company didn't just confine itself to recruiting labourers from Britain. It also sent a recruiting officer to Hamburg to try and put together a group to colonise the Chatham Islands. The Company thought that, since the Chathams hadn't yet been colonised officially by any European power, the field there was wide open. When they discovered what was going on, the Colonial Office promptly declared the purchase of the Chatham Islands illegal, threatened to revoke the Company's charter and claimed that the Chathams were now formally part of the British Empire. Unfortunately, preparations in Germany were already well advanced, and it was not going to be so easy just to forget the whole idea. So the German organisers were persuaded to divert their settlers to Nelson, and the first of the Hamburg ships, the *St. Pauli*, left Germany on the 26th of December, 1842. A diary entry from one of the wealthier passengers, the Reverend Wohlers, is telling: “Their courtesy towards one another went a little too far, for although they almost all belonged to the uncultivated classes, they called one another Mr., Madam and Miss. We gave them these titles with pleasure, and this awakened a self respect in them and paved the way to a good understanding.” Clearly, the German serfs (actually, most of this first lot were freemen rather than serfs, as opposed to the second ship) got uppity as soon as they left the dear shores of home.<sup>2</sup>

A second ship, the *Skiold* from Hamburg, was arranged a year or so after the *St. Pauli*, leaving Hamburg on the 21st of April, 1844, arriving in Nelson in the 1st of September. Each settler, most of whom were illiterate, had to sign a detailed legal agreement, written in High German of the intricate legal variety – which they could not possibly have understood – agreeing to pay back their own fares (at £17 10s per adult), and agreeing to buy from the expedition ‘benefactor’, Count Rantzau, if they could, 10 to 20 acres of rural land, at £2 5s per acre. Which just happened to be three times what the Count had paid the New Zealand Company for it. No doubt the Count would have been an investment banker had he happened to live in 2008.

Count Rantzau didn't actually accompany the ships to Nelson, and in fact there were very few wealthy men on those ships. This created difficulties for the German immigrants. Although, according to their contract, they were to be provided with work upon arrival, there was almost nobody who could or would employ them. To make matters worse there was little land available for them, as large tracts of land were occupied by absentee British landlords and thus couldn't, theoretically, be used. Two of the cabin passengers on the *Skiold* (i.e., wealthier ones), the Kelling brothers, stepped into the breach. They bought 150 acres and hired as many labourers on this land as they could. The surplus Germans, of which there were many, were shipped off to Australia. A considerable German community arose on the Kelling's land, initially named Ranzau, after the Count, but later renamed to Hope.

<sup>1</sup>Well, I think it is. If you don't agree, don't read it.

<sup>2</sup>In lovely German fashion, Beit, the leader of the settlers, a “fat, arrogant man” to quote another of the settlers, tried to give orders to the captain about how to organise the ship. I would have liked to have been a fly on the wall at that meeting.



To the Neals

### The Busch family.

On the *Skiold* was Hans Heinrich Conrad Busch, my GGG-grandfather. His grandparents had been poor German serfs in Borzen, Mecklenburg<sup>1</sup>, tied to the land, unable to move. His parents appear not to have been serfs, as there is record of them working in a number of different places, but they were certainly poor. Hans Heinrich himself was born in Klein Pravtshagen in 1800 and was trained as a mason and a bricklayer. We know he worked at Arpshagen and Reppenhagen, and possibly other places also. In 1830 he married Sophia Christina Dorothea Grebin at the Lutheran church in Klutz; her occupation was listed as housemaid.<sup>2</sup> Their first two children were born in Arpshagen, and five more at Reppenhagen, where Hans was employed as a bricklayer and a labourer on a large estate. Two of their children died of tuberculosis in Reppenhagen.

Hans Heinrich must have been reasonably successful as he was one of only two steerage passen-

<sup>1</sup>Mecklenburg is in northeastern Germany, north of Berlin and east of Hamburg, on the Baltic coast.

<sup>2</sup>In the only photograph I've ever seen of Sophia (usually called Dorothea) she sits there, mouth drawn in a grim line, looking like a right old battleaxe. She bore 13 children. It's no wonder she looked like that.

gers on the *Skiold* who had any money of their own (the other was Friedrich Heinrich Tietjen) but I have to admit that he doesn't sound like a very pleasant man. He settled initially on the Kellings' land, where he helped to build mud huts for the immigrant Germans, but he clearly drove the Kellings up the wall. Firstly, he had a reputation as a terrible miser; in 1848 the local Lutheran pastor, J.W.C. Heine, complained [18]

[The family of] Hans Busch, are plainly speaking, great misers. They have seven children, who are compelled by the parents to labour night and day on Sundays, as well as in the week, although they already have about eighteen head of cattle and one hundred goats.

These children learn nothing of God and his words, the parents excuse themselves with their own ignorance and for the school they can spare no time.

Obviously, Hans Heinrich was entirely unbothered by his own illiteracy.<sup>1</sup> As Harold Busch points out, Hans' entire life had probably been a desperate struggle against starvation and destitution and he wasn't about to give up now, wasting resources by educating his children.

Secondly, he argued continually with the Kellings over his contractual rights. He refused to work for the Kellings, applying instead to Donald Sinclair, the local police magistrate to have his contract cancelled, but refused to leave the Kellings' land. It would have been difficult for Hans Heinrich to find land of his own to purchase, mind you, so it is possible that his squatting on the Kellings' land was a matter of necessity rather than of choice. This is certainly supported by a letter the Kelling brothers wrote to Governor Fitzroy on the 12th of September, 1845:

Dear Sirs,

Having heard that our man Busch had been asking for land, we allow us to request you not to refuse him, if it is possible and that he can get it.

The last week's paper says that we seem to be content here, and that is true we are, but if we could get rid of this man Busch our satisfaction and happiness would be boundless. Mr Cautley knows how bad and foolish he is.

The section on the river, number 179 is claimed up to 10 acres and these will be taken in the course of some years joyful for the eldest sons of the families there.

We beg you therefore instantly if possible to give to Busch in an other section, as we hear you had a section to divide in small parts near the great place on this side of the hills for the town, we believe that he would like that very well.

He wants first 10 acres and 10 acres more we believe he will go on, as he is very industrious, but only for his own sake and the assistance of his family will aid him.

We beg your pardon, as we give you trouble again, but getting rid of old Busch would spare us so much anger and trouble, that you will excuse us on that account,

We remain, Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

Kelling brothers.

So old Busch was being a real pain in the neck to the Kelling brothers, squatting on their land, being unhelpful to others while looking after his own in miserly fashion, turning his family into a source of cheap labour, and trying desperately to buy his own land to set up independently. I'm not sure with whom I sympathise more. By 1849 the Busch family was doing rather well, despite still not having their own land yet. Pastor Heine, from whom I quoted above, took a census of the German mission in 1848, which read:

Close to the Kellings dwells another German, called Hans Busch. Not being able to buy or rent land to his liking, he squats on several unused sections, as the suburban land is

<sup>1</sup>We know he and his wife were illiterate as they signed their wills only with their marks.

still without an owner. His place is near the hills which he calls ‘Schonhof’ (Beautiful Farm). He arrived with £50.0.0 and has farmed to such good purpose that he is now worth £300.0.0. He has under cultivation about 40 acres, which he cultivates with his wife and eight children, and which produces wheat, barley, rye, potatoes, etc. He has 4 sheep, 23 head of cattle, consisting of cows, bullocks and calves, 183 goats and 9 pigs. Of poultry he has 33 geese, 14 turkeys and 20 chickens.



Hans Heinrich Conrad Busch and his wife, Sophia Christina Dorothea Grebin.

It was not until 1851 that Hans Busch was able to purchase his own land. The New Zealand government finally lost patience with absentee landlords and changed the rules to let settlers purchase unused sections. Hans Busch bought the 45 acres on which he'd been squatting, together with three other blocks, for a total of 142 acres. Harold Busch informs us that the land (Pt. Section 60 in the Lands Register) was “at the top end of White’s Rd., Hope, where the road ends at the foot of the hills. Where the last house on the left now stands is the position of the original Busch mud home.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1854, tired of the marginal farming land he had bought close to the Kellings’ estate, Hans Busch bought 165 acres of much better land over the hills to the south, in the Aniseed Valley. Two of his sons, Frederick and John, managed the farm at Ranzau, while Hans and the rest of his family went to live in Aniseed Valley; the farm at Ranzau was later sold, around late 1863.

Frederick later had an argument with old Hans, some argument over money lent but not repaid, and was totally excluded from his parents’ wills. Old Hans must have been a vindictive old bugger as well as a stropky one. The more one learns about him the less one likes him. Actually, I doubt that Dorothea was much nicer. It’s her will that explicitly excludes Frederick; “excepting my son Frederick Busch who is to take no interest whatever under this my Will”. Hans’ will just doesn’t mention him at all. Instead he left £300 to Hannah, £130 to Hans Heinrich, another £30 each to three other daughters (one being Selina, whom he called Lena), as well as over 100 sheep, some horses and some cattle, divided between his children. Clearly, he didn’t die a poor man.

<sup>1</sup>One of these days I will get to Nelson again, to visit all these places.

Following the move to Aniseed Valley, Hans Busch had a long and involved argument with the Roads Board over the road access to Aniseed Valley<sup>1</sup>; one had to be constructed, and Hans Busch applied to the Board for money to pay for it. For a start, the initial survey laid down the road over Hans Busch's land at Hope; he was too miserly to lose land to a mere road, so he nipped out at night and moved the survey pegs. Apparently this wasn't discovered until too late, which is why the road from Hope to Aniseed Valley still has a very steep section in it.<sup>2</sup> He then kept asking for advance payments from the Road Board to build the road, but doesn't seem to have done all that much building. Reading between the lines, I'm guessing that he asked for the largest advance payments he could possibly squeeze out of the Board, and then did the absolute minimum of work on the road that he could get away with. When the Road Board then refused to pay him all the contract price, he refused to pay his rates, was taken to court and fined £6. One part of the road lay on his property close to the river, with multiple river crossings, and was prone to flooding. When the Road Board refused to rebuild the road along higher ground, Hans Busch, that cantankerous old bugger, promptly built a barn right across the road. It was on his property, he argued, and he could build a barn just wherever the hell he damn well pleased. Since, by now, other families were settling in Aniseed Valley, and the Road Board therefore really needed a road, this was a problem. Another court battle ensued. Old Hans won, but agreed magnanimously to let foot traffic pass around the barn. The Road Board built another road, on higher ground.

By the time Hans Heinrich died in 1873 he owned 500 acres in the Aniseed Valley; his last request was to be buried on his own land, and he was. Sophia died seven years later, and was buried with him. Their grave, lovingly restored by Harold Busch, can still be seen in Aniseed Valley. There is also a Busch Reserve in Aniseed Valley but I don't know whether it's on the site of old Hans' land or not.

The first six of their children were born in Germany, but only five survived to make the trip in the *Skiold*. Seven more were born in New Zealand, only one of whom died young (although two more died within days of each other in the 1885 cholera epidemic). Just for completeness here are a few more details:

**Christina Maria Sophia** (1830–1903). Born in Germany, she came out to New Zealand with her parents, and married William Berkett in 1852. They first lived in the cob house which her father had built on the Ranzau farm, and were keen gardeners, with a large orchard. Harold Busch [18] says that 120 years later wild hops were still growing on the site of their garden. Cool. In 1863 they bought their own farm at Waimea East, and built a house that Harold Busch stayed at himself; the walls of the upper room were papered with newspapers, most from 1862/1863. Again, cool. Apparently it's still standing today, and one day I might even get to see it. It seems that William Berkett spent a large amount of time away from home, prospecting for gold, so he was most likely a bit of a loser. At any rate, Christina ran the farm herself, and very well too thank you. They had a bunch of children; the details are in [18].

**Johann Wilhelm August** (1832–1834). The dates say it all. The poor wee fellow didn't last long.

**Hans Johann Friedrich (Frederick)** (1835–1925). He was the one who tried to persuade old Hans to move to Canterbury, to get better farming land, but Hans wouldn't budge. But then he and his father had a huge argument over the purchase of some cattle to stock the Aniseed Valley farm. Hans claimed that he gave Frederick £100 to buy some cattle, which were never bought. I wonder what Frederick's side of the story is. So Frederick and his wife, Sabina Dew, buggered off to Spring Creek, where they reproduced with abandon. They even sent their children to school, possibly the first ever Busch children to receive a formal schooling. In 1877 they all moved down to Canterbury, where Frederick built a grand house *Belgrove*, on his property at Rangiora. From the photo in [18] it looks like a gorgeous old home, and Frederick can't have been hurting for cash. Clearly not, as by 1909 he was wealthy enough to purchase more than 1400 acres inland from Motunau Island, on the road through to Waikari.

<sup>1</sup>The actual entries of the Road Board are reproduced in Harold Busch's book.

<sup>2</sup>I hope this is true, as it's such a great story.

**Johann Joachim Heinrich (John)** (1837–1893). In 1857 he married Sarah Streeter, a widow with a young daughter. The daughter burned to death that same year when her nightdress caught fire (page 63). For a while after their marriage John continued to work on his father's farm; most likely, knowing Hans, he wasn't given much of an option, and wasn't paid either. When old Hans moved over the Aniseed Valley John continued to work on the original Ranzau farm, and managed it after his brother Frederick left for Marlborough. John and his brothers Joseph and Harry helped their father construct the road into Aniseed Valley, the same road over which old Hans had such lovely fights with the Road Board. His father, though, was too mean to pay decent wages, so in 1863 John and his family left for Canterbury, walking or riding all the way with a six-month old baby. They weren't soft, these pioneers. They lived first at Tai Tapu, then at Kaiapoi, then finally at North Loburn, close to Rangiora. Lots of descendants.

**Ina Christina** (1839–1840). Not much to say here. She didn't get much of a chance to leave her mark upon the world.

**Hans Joachim Christoph (Joseph)** (1841–1921). He tried to be a farmer, but had a drinking problem and never succeeded very well. To cap it off he was shot in the chest by an escaped patient from the Mental Home in Nelson<sup>1</sup> whom Joseph had found hiding in the Valley. By way of compensation Joseph was given the use of 100 acres in the Valley, near the top of the hills, where he lived for the rest of his life, keeping a few sheep and pigs. It is said he was fond of music, and was the leader of the Moutere band during the 1890s. He married Martha Mary Higgs first, and Christina Elizabeth Lankow second, and had six children.

**Hartwig Christoph Heinrich (Harry)** (1843–1903). Harry broke the mould by (a) becoming a fisherman instead of a farmer, and (b) having no children. He did a bit of farming work with his brothers initially, but later went over to Westport to become a fisherman. Then on to New Plymouth, to do more fishing, and finally to the Wairarapa, where he worked as a boat builder. He married Mary Jackson.

**Johanna Caroline Wilhelmina (Mina)** (1845–1928). She married John Webby and they went up to Taranaki and became dairy farmers. They lived there the rest of their lives and had two children.

**Sophia Dora Elisabeth** (1847–1929). She married William James Kinzett, a pony express rider between Nelson and the West Coast at the time of the gold rushes, and they farmed at Spring Creek in partnership with Thomas Neal (page 38). One of her sons drowned when only seventeen months old; Sophia was busy working with the flax harvest, and the wee fellow wandered off to the river. In 1883 they returned to Nelson where they bought a farm at Tapawera, where they spent the rest of their lives.

**Magdalena Louisa Sophia (Lena)** (1849–1925). She married Thomas Nelson Neal and so she's discussed in a lot more detail above (page 38).

**Hans William Henry** (1851?–1859?). [18] has the dates wrong, claiming that Hans was born in 1859 and died in 1851, but this would be difficult even for a Busch. I suspect the dates just got reversed.

**Hannah Henrietta (Anna)** (1853–1885). She married Thomas Murcott a year after her father's death, and they lived in a house which had been built on land she was given in her father's will. When this house was destroyed by fire she was badly burnt on the left arm and hand saving her children. In the cholera epidemic of 1885 her husband died on the 24th of April, her daughter Georgina on the 6th of May, her brother Hans on the 15th of May, and then she died herself on the 16th of May. She was 33. Four other children survived.

**Hans Heinrich Theodor** (1855–1885). He worked on his father's farm, and then until his mother died in 1880, he continued to work for her. He married Wilhelmina Sophia Elizabeth Kruse,

<sup>1</sup>Or so says [18]. I wonder what this Mental Home was. I didn't realise Nelson ever had one.

another German obviously, and his mother lived with them. I'm guessing a little tension here. Anyway, the cholera outbreak in 1885 got him. Hans and his sister Hannah died, and his wife was left with three young children, and one unborn. She couldn't manage the farm herself and so applied to the Supreme Court for release from the terms of the Will, so that she could sell the property. She then bought a cottage and fourteen acres at Hope.

I wondered whether William and Amelia Neal were happy with the choice they made to come to New Zealand. We don't have to wonder about old Hans Busch. Family tradition has it that, when one of his sons tried to persuade him to move to Canterbury to farm better land, he refused to move, saying that he was happy where he was, and much happier than he ever was in Germany. I find this oddly reassuring.