God’s Harvest

A Social and Agricultural History of the German Mission to the Aboriginal People of Moreton Bay

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Abstract

The thesis presents a historical study of Zion Hill, the first Aboriginal Mission in colonial Queensland, addressing the subject from an agricultural and social perspective. The Presbyterian clergyman Rev. Lang, a vocal critic of existing missions in the colony, founded the mission in 1838. Lang organised the establishment of a Moravian style mission settlement in convict Moreton Bay, administered by twenty Protestant volunteers from Germany. Upon arrival Lang’s missionaries took up a section of land seven miles to the north of the convict settlement, and cleared the area for farming and the construction of houses. The resulting settlement, Zion Hill, reflected the German origins of the missionaries in both design and arrangement of its fields and buildings.

The early years of the mission were marked by hardships and difficulties, including the absence of Lang from the colony, the subsequent neglect of the mission committee and Aboriginal raids on the crops. Lang’s return in 1842 revitalised the mission, with the Germans gaining farming equipment and additional livestock. An economic downturn resulted in the withdrawal of Government funding from all colonial missions and the Zion Hill community made the decision to support itself through market gardening. The strategy enjoyed immediate success, with the missionaries finding strong demand for their produce. The German missionaries consolidated their position in North Brisbane during the 1850s, with the purchase of freehold land, the expansion of agricultural production and the utilisation of hired labour. In the remaining decades of the 19th century, the missionaries made substantial contributions to the development of the pineapple, viticulture and dairying industries in colonial Queensland. The thesis presents the argument that skilled farming practice, personal qualities of industry, a communal settlement design and a strong group ethos of cooperation, enabled the missionaries to achieve an enduring legacy of agricultural achievement.
Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis has been a long journey. Over the course of the last three years numerous people have assisted me along the way, with their encouragement, advice and generosity for which I am genuinely grateful. I would like to especially thank the following people for the help they have provided; my supervisors Lynette Finch and Thom Blake for their guidance, fresh insights into the subject and willingness to share their knowledge and experience; my parents John and Judith Ford and girlfriend Stephanie Mills, for their emotional support, patience and invaluable proof reading skills; Jenny and Murray Henman for allowing me to use their computers, printers and scanners over the last three years; Bill Kitson from the Department of Natural Resources and Water Surveying Museum for his advice on early Queensland maps, surveying and title deeds; Frank Uhr for the kind lend of his personal copy of Colin Sheehan’s translated extracts of the Gossner Missionary Society journal Die Beine auf dem Missionfelde; Tony Jefferies for providing some useful leads and finally to the library staff and volunteers of the Nundah & Districts Historical Society, the Royal Historical Society of Queensland and the Fryer Library Collection, University of Queensland for their friendly and efficient service.
# List of Abbreviations Used

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>ADB</td>
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Introduction

In 1838 a Protestant mission to the Aboriginal people of Moreton Bay was established near the British convict settlement of Brisbane Town. Zion Hill, as it was named by its founders, was one of several missions which emerged in colonial New South Wales during the 1830s to ‘Christianise and civilise’ the Aboriginal inhabitants of the land. The majority of these missions, including those at Wellington Valley (on the western side of the Blue Mountains, some 400 kilometres northwest of Sydney) and Port Phillip Bay, east of Melbourne, were the work of English Protestant denominations and missionary societies. The Zion Hill Mission differed in this respect: its origins lay with the ambitious plans of the Scottish Presbyterian preacher Rev. John Dunmore Lang. Unable to find volunteers from his native Scotland, Lang recruited twenty missionaries from the German Gossner Missionary Society and the Swiss Basle Missionary Society to oversee his evangelistic project.¹

After a traumatic sea voyage, Lang’s volunteers arrived in Sydney to find an environment utterly different from their European homelands. Allocated a section of land by the colonial authorities in what is now the northeastern Brisbane suburb of Nundah, the Germans laboured in rudimentary conditions to establish houses and farms for their mission settlement. With little more than hand tools, the missionaries constructed a farming community following traditional German methods of agriculture, arranging the mission houses in a neat row and cultivating their crops on narrow acreages of sloping farmland. Their collective aim of creating a frontier mission settlement was not easily achieved and during the first years of Zion Hill the Germans found themselves dependent upon government rations for their survival.²

As they laboured to establish the mission settlement the Germans simultaneously worked to foster relations with the Aboriginal groups and clans of the North Brisbane area. Aboriginal men and women were encouraged to work on the mission farms and their children were taught English and given religious instructions. The missionaries also took the message of the Christian gospel beyond the North Brisbane area, preaching to

¹ J.D. Lang, *Reminiscences of My Life and Times*, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1972, p.141
Aboriginal groups on the Pine River, Deception Bay and Toorbal, (all north of Brisbane) and Durundur station, close to the present day town of Woodford. Despite the determined efforts of the missionaries, in June 1843 the New South Wales Government declared Lang’s project at Zion Hill an unsuccessful enterprise and withdrew all official support.3 The Zion Hill pioneers were undaunted; by that year agricultural production had made such significant gains that they were able to both support themselves through market gardening and supply Brisbane Town with fresh fruit and vegetables, dairy goods and poultry on a weekly basis.4 For a time the Germans continued their proselytising work with the local Aboriginal groups while also supporting their families through farming, but by 1846 all their missionary activity in the North Brisbane area had ceased.5

The men and women of the Zion Hill Mission were a group of hardy and determined pioneers who played a significant role in the story of European settlement of what is now the southeast corner of Queensland. For this reason, the German Mission to the Aboriginal People of Moreton Bay is the subject of numerous Australian and Queensland histories across a variety of disciplines. What is surprising, however, is that within this eclectic historiography, the majority of accounts of the Zion Hill Mission are brief, and only a handful of researchers have made detailed studies on the subject. These latter studies include journal articles, chapters in unpublished theses and a commemorative monograph published in 1938.6 The wider missionary movement in colonial New South Wales, of which the Zion Hill Mission was a part, has received greater attention from academic historians and been the focus of an evolving discourse over the past fifty years. In surveying the academic literature regarding missionary activity in early 19th century Australia, a distinct polarisation of opinion can be observed. Numerous Australian historians present the first missionaries as failures; pious individuals who did not realise their lofty spiritual ambitions in any shape or form. Challenging this view of failure are the arguments of writers who believe the early missionaries made significant contributions to colonial and Aboriginal society as pioneers, humanitarians and agents of social change.

3 Lang, Reminiscences of My Life and Times, p.143
4 Sydney Morning Herald, 18 April 1844, p.3
5 Moreton Bay Courier, 27 June 1846, p.2; Gunson, ‘The Nundah Missionaries’, pp.524-530
6 H.J.J. Sparkes, Queensland’s First Free Settlement 1838-1938, W.R. Smith & Patterson, Brisbane, 1938
The strong division of historical opinion regarding the 19th century missionaries is in part a reflection of the primary source material on which the histories are based. Colonial missionaries in the Victorian age of empire enjoyed considerable support from both the British Government and sections of the general public but they were often controversial figures, attracting criticism as much as praise. Historian Niel Gunson notes, in his study of South Pacific missions of the 19th century, those ‘who came in contact with the missionaries wrote glowing reports of their work or denounced them.’7 This trend can be observed in contemporary reports regarding the German Mission in Moreton Bay. The botanist and explorer Ludwig Leichhardt visited the Zion Hill settlement in 1843 and praised the missionaries as ‘good, zealous people’ who ‘dealt kindly and humanely with the Blacks.’8 Lieutenant Gorman, the last commandant of the Moreton Bay penal settlement, made a less favorable assessment of the mission. In a report made to Governor Gipps in 1841, Gorman listed the failings of the German Missionaries, concluding ‘the general opinion here is that they never will be able to render any benefit to the Blacks.’9 The polarisation of opinion in the contemporary debate shapes the historiography of the German Mission to Moreton Bay and plays a determining role in how Lang’s evangelistic project is contextualised in the academic and Queensland literature.

The academic debate about the value and effectiveness of the initial wave of colonial missionary activity in Australia did not commence until the 1960s. Anthropology was the first academic discipline to examine the process of interaction between Aboriginal and European racial groups on the Australian continent. Until the 1960s historians had little to say on the matter, an omission labeled the ‘Great Australian silence’ by the anthropologist W.E. Stanner.10 The first academic assessments of colonial missionaries and their work with Aboriginal people initially came from anthropologists rather than historians. Early figures in the development of Australian anthropology such

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7 N. Gunson, Messengers of Grace, Evangelical Missionaries in the South Seas, Oxford University Press, 1978, Melbourne, p.4
9 Letter, Lt. Gorman to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 8 February 1841, in J.G. Steele, (ed.) Brisbane Town in Convict Days, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1975, p.269
10 W.E. Stanner, After the Dreaming 1968 Boyer Lectures, Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1969, p.27
as Daisy Bates and A.P. Elkin identified the difficulties faced by missionaries in overcoming the tremendous cultural differences between the two races but in general were supportive of their work.\footnote{D. Bates, \textit{The Passing of the Aborigines}, Murray, London, 1944, pp.154-156 ; A.P. Elkin, \textit{The Australian Aborigines}, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1974, pp.191-194} Later Australian anthropologists who came to academic prominence in the 1950s and 1960s such as Ronald and Catherine Berndt and D.J. Mulvaney, viewed the Christian missions as an interfering, if not destructive, influence on traditional Aboriginal culture.\footnote{R. & C. Berndt, \textit{The World of the First Australians}, Ure Smith, Sydney, 1977, pp.498-499} Mulvaney identifies colonial missionary attitudes towards the Australian Aboriginal people as judgmental and based on fundamentalist interpretations of scripture.\footnote{D.J. Mulvaney, ‘The Australian Aboriginal People, 1606-1929 Part1’, in J.J. Eastwood & F.B. Smith (eds.) \textit{Historical Studies, Selected Articles}, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1964, p.21} The ‘gospel-mongering’ of the missionaries and their portrayal of Aboriginal men and women as debased sinners, according to Mulvaney instilled prejudice against them in colonial society, contributing to their decimation as a race.

The history and social influence of organised religion in Australia was another area of study slow to be taken up by Australian historians. The publication in 1962 of the first volume of Manning Clark’s \textit{A History of Australia} brought this neglected area to the forefront of Australian historical writing.\footnote{C.M.H. Clark, \textit{A History of Australia Vol. III, The Beginning of an Australian Civilisation 1824-1851}, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1973} The central theme of Clark’s epic series is the meeting and interaction of Catholicism, Protestantism and the secular philosophies of the European enlightenment within the foreign landscape of the Australian continent.\footnote{C.M.H. Clark, \textit{A Discovery of Australia 1976 Boyer Lectures}, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, 1976, p.29} Exploring this theme Clark examines the work of several Protestant and Catholic missionaries in his series, including L.E. Threlkeld, Bishop Salvado and the German Missionaries of Moreton Bay. Clark briefly describes the efforts made by the Germans to persuade the Aboriginal people of Moreton Bay to farm the land and adopt the trappings of European civilisation, as ‘preparation for preaching to them the gospel of everlasting life.’ Their work however was entirely in vain, as the Aboriginal People could not see the missionaries as ‘bearers of a special gift’ but only as ‘an invader who had shattered… the way of life of their people.’\footnote{Clark, \textit{A History of Australia, Vol. III}, pp.254-255} Commentators on Clark’s series note the recurring motif of
heroic individuals who are doomed to witness the destruction of everything they have worked to achieve. Clark’s view of 19th century missionary efforts as a well-meaning but futile gesture reinforces his ultimately pessimistic view of Australian history, namely the recurring failure of European civilisation to adapt to the harsh realities of the vast, ancient land.

Clark’s assessment of the colonial missionaries as failures has influenced numerous Australian historians. Jean Woolmington of the University of New England in particular has championed this view in an extensive body of work on the first missionaries in colonial New South Wales. Woolmington’s doctoral thesis Early Christian Missions to the Australian Aboriginal People: A Study in Failure presents the central argument that all mission work conducted in Australia during the first half of the 19th century was a complete failure. The total lack of success in Australia compared to other contemporary mission fields in the world is attributed by Woolmington to several factors. The most significant of these factors was the massive cultural divide between Europe and Aboriginal Australia. The two cultures possessed radically different viewpoints on spirituality, the use of land and resources, the nature of work and the role of the individual in society. Woolmington also argues many of the colonial missionaries in Australia, including the Germans of Moreton Bay, were poorly educated lay preachers who lacked the training and intellectual capacity to understand and appreciate foreign cultures different to their own. The colonial missionaries in her view were fundamentally incapable of breaching the cultural and spiritual divide which existed between Europe and Aboriginal Australia, dooming their quest for Christian converts to failure from the very start.

The failure of the first missionaries in Australia is also examined in R.H.W. Reece’s social history of colonial New South Wales, Aborigines and Colonists. Reece’s

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20 R.H.W. Reece, Aborigines and Colonists. Aborigines and Colonial Society in NSW in the 1830s and 1840s, Sydney University Press, 1974
study examines the attitudes and ideologies held by the European colonisers which shaped their treatment of the Aboriginal inhabitants of Australia and he identifies two distinct groups in colonial society, ‘the Improvers’ and ‘the Realists’. The ‘Improvers’, who as a group included the colonial missionaries, identified Aboriginal men and women as fellow human beings fully deserving of the message of the Christian gospels and the benefits of European civilisation. There was much disagreement within the ranks of the humanitarian ‘Improvers’ on the best way to proceed with the task of ‘Christianising and civilising’ the Aboriginal people of New South Wales, and pessimism and discouragement soon set in when setbacks were encountered. The ‘Realists’, whose ranks included the majority of pastoralists, regarded the Aboriginal people as an inferior or sub-human race. In their view, the process of civilisation could only be achieved by ‘pacifying’ Aboriginal men and women with superior force. While the British Government supported the humanitarian objectives of ‘the Improvers’ with well-meaning and belated efforts to assist the Aboriginal people of New South Wales, it was the destructive and racist attitudes of ‘the Realists’ which ultimately prevailed throughout the colony.21

A similar assessment of the colonial missionaries is also made in The Destruction of Aboriginal Society by C.D. Rowley.22 First published in 1970, Rowley’s work outlines the devastating impact made by European colonisation upon Aboriginal Australia. In Chapter Six Rowley reviews the efforts of European missionaries to ‘Christianise and civilise’ the Aboriginal people of Australia and concludes that the missionaries, although often courageous, were ‘generally ineffective’ in assisting Aboriginal groups in the face of detrimental government policies and commercial interests23 By the time the missionaries arrived in Australia, the Aboriginal people were ‘a collection of beaten tribal remnants.’ In Rowley’s opinion the reformist agenda of colonial missions to civilise the Aboriginal people closely resembled those of contemporary British workhouses for the poor, as so vividly portrayed in the novels of Charles Dickens. Workhouses and mission settlements were essentially artificial and controlled social environments which produced disharmony and resentment among the men and women forced to live within them. For a

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21 Reece, Aborigines and Colonists, pp.62-104
22 C.D. Rowley, The Destruction of Aboriginal Society, Australian National University, 1970
23 Rowley, The Destruction of Aboriginal Society, pp.86-107

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people to adapt and survive in a rapidly changing environment, Rowley identifies group autonomy as an essential requirement and the colonial missions in his opinion could not provide this for the Aboriginal people of Australia.\(^{24}\)

Many of the race relations historians who emerged in the 1970s were influenced by, and maintained, Rowley’s negative view of the colonial missionaries. Richard Broome, in *Aboriginal Australians, Black Responses to White Dominance* (a standard text in many Australian Aboriginal studies programs) also identifies the missionaries as failures.\(^ {25}\) The central reason for their failure, according to Broome, was the defiant rejection of their message by Aboriginal people ‘who did not care to become civilised Christians’, preferring instead their own freedom and spiritual beliefs.\(^ {26}\) Ray Evans, a historian of Queensland race relations, likewise describes the inability of the colonial missionaries to convert and assimilate Aboriginal groups into Christian communities.\(^ {27}\) In Evans’ view, Aboriginal people were ‘perfectly sustained by their own cultural and spiritual practices’ and could not see any reason to accept a new spiritual belief system and way of life. The prevailing attitude of the majority of European colonists, that Aboriginal men and women were inferior beings ‘fit only to perform the lowliest work and to experience the least rewarding of social relationships’, did not assist the efforts of the missionaries and provided little encouragement for Aboriginal people to embrace the Christian message of salvation.\(^ {28}\)

One historian also influenced by Rowley’s work, who has nevertheless presented a different perspective on the relationship between the colonial missionaries and Aboriginal Australians, is Henry Reynolds. In 1981 Reynolds published *The Other Side of the Frontier*, a history of the European colonisation of Australia which attempted to establish what Aboriginal people saw when they were first confronted by the British.\(^ {29}\) In this and later works, Reynolds praises the first missionaries as humanitarians and philanthropists who saw Aboriginal Australians as fellow human beings at a time when

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\(^{24}\) Rowley, *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society*, pp.125-126


\(^{26}\) Broome, *Aboriginal Australians*, p.33


\(^{28}\) Evans, ‘The Mogwi take Mian-jin’, p.26

commercial and government interests ruthlessly set about their extermination. Mission stations, according to Reynolds, provided places of sanctuary for Aboriginal people from white violence and depredations and were a source of desired European commodities including food, tobacco and steel axes. In his book *With the White People*, Reynolds argues that the assistance of Aboriginal people was crucial to the process of European settlement in colonial Australia and that without Aboriginal labour, skills and knowledge, many remote settlements including mission stations would not have prospered or survived.

Another Australian academic, whose research presents an alternative to the argument of missionary failure, is Niel Gunson. A specialist in the history of 19th century mission work in the South Pacific and colonial Australia, Gunson shares Reynolds’ view that the colonial missionaries acted as protectors to Aboriginal groups, but also makes the case they provided European society with the first linguistic and ethnographic studies of Aboriginal Australians. Rejecting the failure thesis as simplistic, Gunson argues that the first missionaries laid the foundations for Christian growth in Aboriginal communities across the continent. According to Gunson, the first colonial missionaries were agents of social change who ‘may not have made the converts they wanted but … provided the symbols and motifs of social transformation.’ Gunson is thus far the only academic to have published journal articles specifically addressing the history of the German Mission at Moreton Bay. His paper ‘The Nundah Missionaries’ published by the Royal Historical Society of Queensland in 1961 remains one of the best histories of the Zion Hill Mission, providing a detailed examination of the religious background of the German missionaries and the mission’s founder Rev. Lang.

Gunson is also a strong advocate for the study of missionary writings as ethnographic source material. While recognising the inherent eurocentric bias and values of these primary sources, Gunson argues that missionary writings and texts contain valuable insights into traditional societies and cultures of Indigenous peoples across the South Pacific and Australia. To facilitate the availability of this source material for

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30 Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier*, pp.188-192
students and researchers, Gunson has edited and transcribed many colonial missionary texts, including a two-volume collection of the writings of the missionary L.E. Threlkeld and a field diary from the Zion Hill Mission recording an 1842 visit by the German missionaries to the Aboriginal people of Toorbal.34

The work of Bain Attwood, an academic specialist in the field of Aboriginal studies, also presents an alternative view to the argument of missionary failure. According to Attwood many previous studies ‘belittled and condemned’ the colonial missionaries more than they attempted to understand the process of 19th century evangelism in Australia. 35 Attwood agrees with the assessment of Reynolds and Gunson that many missionaries acted as protectors and humanitarians to Aboriginal men and women in colonial Australia, in some instances saving entire groups from extermination36 In 1989 Attwood published The Making of the Australian Aborigines, a social history examining the interaction between the Gippsland Aboriginal people and the Moravian missionaries at the Ramahyuck mission in Victoria. Influenced by the British social historian E.P Thomson’s studies of the English working class, Attwood uses the setting of the Ramahyuck mission to examine the role the Moravians played in shaping the local Aboriginal groups as a people and how they lived their lives together. Attwood’s model of the mission does not portray a simple dynamic of European colonisers and a defeated Aboriginal group. He instead argues that the Aboriginal people of Ramahyuck played a determining role in their own future and forced the missionaries, on many occasions, to compromise and make changes to their administration of the mission.37

In the last decade the academic Hilary Carey has sought to redress a neglected area of mission history, through her examination of the role played by European women on the colonial mission field. 38 Carey argues missionary women came to the missions initially to be ‘companions in the wilderness’ to their husbands but over time their role

34 N. Gunson, Australian Reminiscences & Papers of L.E. Threlkeld, Missionary to the Aboriginal People 1824-1859, Vols.1 & 2, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1974 ;
36 B. Attwood ‘Aboriginal Missions’ in The Oxford Companion to Australian History, p.8
37 Attwood, The Making of the Australian Aborigines, pp.30-31
expanded to encompass active participation in many areas of mission work including education and caring for the sick. In her research Carey documents the under-representation of women both in the mission literature of the period and in more recent histories. She also identifies differences in the way missionary women are represented in English and German source material. English missionary reports and correspondence from Lake Macquarie and Wellington Valley frequently describe and praise the efforts of the women at the mission settlements. The diaries and journals of the German missionaries at Moreton Bay, however, only provide brief mentions of the women at the Zion Hill settlement. Carey ascribes this to the protective attitude of the German missionaries stemming from their conservative, working class backgrounds. Regarding the question of the failure of the colonial missions, Carey takes a balanced position. While admitting missionary women were part of a destructive colonial process, Carey maintains they also played an important role ‘in mitigating some of its most violent consequences.’

The academic discourse regarding the colonial missionaries in Australia has seen a gradual shift away from the original argument of failure, delivered from a religious or race relations perspective, to more complex models exploring the social interaction between Aboriginal groups and Christian missionaries. The more positive assessments of the colonial missionaries made by historians such as Reynolds, Gunson and Attwood, although influential, are unlikely to overturn the argument of missionary failure. It remains an undeniable fact that not a single Aboriginal convert to Christianity was made between the years 1788 and 1850 and the inability of the missionaries to make Aboriginal converts significantly overshadows the social influence and additional contributions made by the missionaries to colonial society. Failure in the pages of Australian history and popular culture, whether sporting, military or political, often provokes an interest above and beyond stories of quiet achievement. For this reason it is likely many writers and historians will continue to judge the work of the colonial missionaries, only in terms of their lack of evangelistic success.

Reflecting the academic discourse on the first colonial missions, an examination of Queensland historical writing over the last 120 years reveals a similar polarisation of

39 Carey, ‘Companions in the Wilderness?’, p.245
opinion regarding the work of the German Missionaries in Moreton Bay. Historians of Queensland have either emphasised the fundamental failure of the Zion Hill Mission or alternatively honoured the achievements of the German missionaries as pioneers and free settlers. The first histories of Queensland written at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century display a patriotic British ideology celebrating the development of the young colony and its bountiful natural resources. The contributions to this process made by non-British settlers are rarely mentioned and the descriptions of the German missionaries in the early Queensland histories are uniformly brief. Acknowledgement of the Germans as the colony’s first missionaries or free settlers is typically followed by an opinionated assessment of their failure. William Coote, in *A History of the Colony of Queensland*, for example, blames the mission’s lack of success on the policies and administration of the New South Wales Governor, Sir George Gipps. \textsuperscript{40} Archibald Meston, in *Geographic History of Queensland*, advances a racial based argument stating ‘men fresh from Europe’ were fundamentally unsuitable for mission work in the tropics.\textsuperscript{41}

The negative assessments of the Zion Hill Mission made by the late Victorian era histories are repeated in twentieth-century regional histories of Brisbane and Queensland. In many instances modern Queensland historians are even more strident in their criticism of the German missionaries than their Victorian era counterparts, identifying the mission as ‘wholly ineffective’, ‘an unqualified disaster’ and ‘from first to last a miserable failure.’\textsuperscript{42} The negative portrayal of the German missionaries carries through to recent works in Queensland Aboriginal studies. Roslyn Kidd’s *The Way We Civilise*, an analysis of the Queensland Government’s Aboriginal policies, describes the German missionaries as objects of ‘laughter and mimicry’ to the Aboriginal people of North Brisbane. Kidd argues the local Aboriginal men and women exploited the Germans for food and showed no interest in their Christian message.\textsuperscript{43}

Many Queensland writers and historians present an alternative view to these accounts of failure, recognising instead the achievements of the Zion Hill Mission

\textsuperscript{40} W. Coote, *A History of the Colony of Queensland*, William Thorne, Brisbane, 1882, pp.40-41
\textsuperscript{41} A. Meston, *Geographic History of Queensland*, Government Printer, Brisbane, 1895, p.87
\textsuperscript{43} R. Kidd, *The Way We Civilise*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1997, pp.3-4
families as pioneer settlers of the North Brisbane region. The celebration of the German missionaries as pioneers first appears in the Queensland literature with the publication of reminiscences of friends and descendents of the mission families. These personal memoirs penned by writers such as the pastoralist Thomas Archer and the preacher J.H.L. Zillman began to appear in books and newspaper articles in the first years of the 20th century. Often nostalgic in tone, these accounts present the Germans as honest, hardworking, God-fearing men and women who, above all else, made good pioneers.44

Public interest in the German missionaries grew in the 1930s with the approach of the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Zion Hill settlement. During this period Brisbane newspapers published numerous articles and letters celebrating the lives of the missionaries and their descendents. The people of North Brisbane marked the centenary of Zion Hill in March 1938 with the unveiling of a memorial cairn, the holding of church services, concerts and a procession through the streets of Nundah in which an estimated 5000 people participated.45 The anniversary celebrations also saw the publication of the only book entirely devoted to the history of the Zion Hill Mission, *Queensland’s First Free Settlement*, by the Brisbane journalist H.J.J. Sparkes. Unlike many local histories from the 1930s, Sparkes’ monograph was professionally written, and effectively used citations from 19th century source material including government reports and missionary correspondence. The book was illustrated with original artwork (now lost) by the missionary Carl Gerler and turn-of-the-century photographs of the last surviving mission farm buildings. Despite its relative age as a secondary local history, *Queensland’s First Free Settlement* remains a useful starting point for researchers on the subject.46

Local Brisbane historical organisations such as the Nundah and Districts Historical Society continue to play an active role in maintaining the memory of the German Missionaries as pioneers of the North Brisbane region, and smaller anniversary celebrations commemorating the mission were held in Nundah in 1963 and 1988.47

45 The red granite memorial cairn stands at the junction of Sandgate Road and Bage Street in the Brisbane suburb of Nundah; *Nundah Centenary Committee Papers*, John Oxley Library, OM 64-8; *Centenary St. Paul’s Lutheran Church Nundah, 1863-1963*, p.5
46 Sparkes, *Queensland’s First Free Settlement*
47 *Courier Mail*, 8 November 1963, p.2; *Courier Mail*, 11 November 1963, p.8; *Northside Chronicle*, 16 March 1988, p.2; *The Sun*, 10 May 1988, p.41
missionaries and their families feature prominently in the literature produced by the North Brisbane historical societies, drawing on the shared research of local historians and genealogists. This information combined with the knowledge and memories of descendents of the missionaries informs much of the specific and unique content of these publications. Lutheran church histories also celebrate the contribution made by the German missionaries as religious pioneers. After 1848, many of the missionaries assisted in the foundation of Lutheran churches and congregations across Queensland, Victoria and South Australia. In 1981 Rev. L. Grope published ‘How Beauteous are their Feet’, a brief history of the Zion Hill Mission written from a Lutheran perspective. While exploring similar ground to Niel Gunson’s paper, Grope’s article is distinguished by being the first published research on the mission to make use of German primary source material, with the author translating and citing extracts from the Gossner Mission Society journal, Die Beine auf dem Missionsfelde.

The German Missionaries of Moreton Bay are also recognised as pioneers in many ethnic histories of the Germans in Australia. Individual Germans had visited Australia since the voyages of the first European explorers to the continent, but the Moreton Bay Missionaries were the first group of German immigrants to reach colonial New South Wales with a genuine intention to settle. Of the ethnic histories regarding the Germans in Australia, Alan Corkhill’s publication Queensland and German, provides the most detailed study of the German Missionaries in Moreton Bay, describing the history of Zion Hill, the work of the Germans in the development of the Lutheran Church in Queensland and the assistance provided by the missionaries to German immigrants throughout the 19th century.

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48 The most substantial local history publication produced by the North Brisbane historical societies is, M. Outridge, (ed.) 150 Years Nundah Families 1838 -1988, Nundah Historic Cemetery Preservation Association, Brisbane, 1989
The work of the German Missionaries as pioneer settlers and clergy is examined in more substantial detail by two postgraduate theses completed at the University of Queensland in the 1960s. Janette Nolan’s PH D. thesis, *Pastor J.G. Haussman, A Queensland Pioneer 1838-1901*, is a biographical treatment of the life of the German missionary Johannes Haussman. The thesis traces his career from when he was called to the mission field in Berlin to his final days ministering to the Lutheran community at Beenleigh.52 Biographies of colonial missionaries in Australia are a rarity and Nolan’s thesis remains the only substantial biographical treatment of any of the German Missionaries of Moreton Bay to have been completed. Elaine Roberts’ Masters thesis, *An Account of the Beginnings of Settlement at Nundah: and the development of the Suburb until 1890* takes a different approach to Nolan’s biographical treatment, examining the urban development of the Brisbane suburb of Nundah during the 19th century, emphasising the role of the German Mission in this process. Roberts’ thesis includes a detailed chapter on the history of the mission and discussed the involvement of the missionaries and their families in the growth of education, organised religion and agriculture in the North Brisbane area.53

It can be seen, therefore that the historiographical treatment of the Zion Hill Mission reflects the polarised nature of the broader academic discourse regarding missionary activity in colonial Australia. In both the broader field, and in the specific case of the Germans at Zion Hill, arguments have been presented which emphasise the fundamental failure of the missionaries to achieve their religious objectives. This failure thesis has been countered by the argument that the missionaries made positive humanitarian contributions to colonial society on a wider social level. In 1972 historian Henry Reynolds made the following observations regarding the historical discourse on colonial missionaries in Australia:

> Missionaries have played an extremely important role in the development of White–Aboriginal relations. Their activities have been subject to both uncritical

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praise and ill-informed animadversion, yet balanced historical assessment has scarcely begun.\textsuperscript{54}

Since Reynolds lamented this absence, new perspectives on the subject have been presented by academics and researchers, but many aspects of the work of colonial missions in 19\textsuperscript{th} century Australia have still not been investigated in any detail. Historical discussion and analysis has primarily focused on the work of the missions in terms of religion and race relations. The men and women of the colonial missions were not simply preachers; they were complex individuals with a wide range of skills and interests. Missionaries influenced colonial society in many areas outside their primary role on the mission field, making contributions to education, linguistics, ethnography and the development of primary industries.

The influence of colonial missions on regional economies through the establishment of primary industries, in particular agriculture, is a subject which remains largely unexamined by Australian historians. In much of the Queensland literature the German Missionaries of Moreton Bay are recognised as early pioneers, but the question of how they achieved this status has not been explored by researchers. The early years of the Zion Hill Mission were marked by hunger and dependence on government supplied rations and yet, by 1843, this situation had been effectively turned around with the missionaries identified by contemporary reports as successful market gardeners providing Brisbane Town with a range of fresh produce.\textsuperscript{55} This initial success continued throughout the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, with the missionary families purchasing land holdings across the North Brisbane area, employing immigrant labourers and introducing culturally distinct methods of farming to Queensland.

Gunson argues that in assessing the work of the colonial missionaries a historian must examine ‘their management of the problems arising from their contact with other peoples and other ways of life. He must before all record change’.\textsuperscript{56} In keeping with

\textsuperscript{54} H. Reynolds, \textit{Aboriginal People and Settlers The Australian Experience 1788-1939}, Cassell Australia, North Melbourne, 1972, p.132


\textsuperscript{56} Gunson, \textit{Messengers of Grace}, p.1
Gunson’s assertion, this thesis on the Zion Hill Mission seeks to examine how Australia’s first group of German immigrants faced the challenge of creating a settlement at the edge of convict Brisbane, a remote frontier environment far removed from their European backgrounds. It will address the sequence of change which occurred at Zion Hill from an agricultural and social perspective. Its primary task is to provide analysis of how the natural landscape of the area was transformed by the Germans into a communal agricultural settlement, using methods which at times differed significantly from those employed by the British settlers of New South Wales. This emphasis on market gardening, agricultural production and food distribution means that, along with the works on race relations and histories of missionary work, the thesis also engages with the body of work devoted to histories of agriculture in the region.

Agricultural history in Australia is something of a hybrid discipline combining historical narrative with elements of economics, geography and the biological sciences. Primary industries have been of crucial importance to the Australian economy since their inception, but the history of these industries remains an undeveloped field of research, with a literature dominated by general texts and smaller regional and localised studies. General histories of Australian farming and the development of agricultural technology such as Land Settlement in Australia by S.H. Roberts and B.R. Davidson’s European Farming in Australia identify the difficulties faced by the first primary producers in the colonial era and the economic conditions necessary for agriculture to develop and prosper in the new settlements.57 The related discipline of environmental history documents the wider impact of European settlement and primary production on the Australian landscape and its ecological systems. Works such as Spoils and Spoilers by Geoffrey Bolton; William Lines’ Taming the Great Southern Land and Hunters and Collectors, by Tom Griffiths, provide detailed studies of the environmental damage created by colonial land use practices.58

The focus of Australian agricultural and environmental historical studies has concentrated on land use in the southern regions of Australia, with primary production in colonial Queensland receiving little or no attention. While a select number of Queensland agricultural histories have been written, these titles pass over the development of farming in the decade prior to separation from New South Wales, with scant discussion or analysis of the agricultural methods employed by the convicts and first free settlers. The Queensland literature instead concentrates on the large-scale methods of cultivation developed in the second half of the 19th century when marketable cash crops such as sugar, cotton and wheat powered a booming regional economy.

A recent exception to this trend has been the work of Bill Thorpe. In *Colonial Queensland*, a historiographical analysis of Queensland’s colonial history, Thorpe advocates a social-material approach emphasising consideration of the natural-material world and how human beings have sought to change this world to suit their ends. Thorpe implements this historical approach in chapter three of his book, examining the exploitation and marketing of natural resources in Queensland throughout the 19th century from both environmental, political and economic perspectives.59

Another area of agricultural history which has been neglected by both Australian and Queensland researchers is the contribution of non-British immigrants to the development of small-scale farming in Australia. The contribution of ethnic groups, such as the Chinese, Germans and Italians, to Australian farming and horticulture has been a substantial yet only recently recognised achievement. Since the first decades of the 19th century, non-British immigrants have brought their own methods of cultivation to the Australian landscape, adapting the traditional techniques of their rural homelands to earn a living from unfamiliar soils and seasons.

This trend can be clearly seen in the agricultural systems brought by 19th century German immigrants to the areas of colonial Australia in which they settled. On a cultural level, German immigrants shared more in common with British settlers than their Chinese or Italian counterparts but German methods of farming were still recognisably different from those employed by British agriculturists. The most detailed study of traditional

German farming methods in Australia was undertaken in the 1980s by the geographer Gordon Young as part of a five-year study for the National Trust. Working with architects and historians, Young coordinated a field survey of 19th century German farming settlements in the Barossa Valley and Hahndorf districts of South Australia, identifying and recording distinctly German characteristics of architecture and design in surviving 19th century farm buildings. A common feature of South Australian German communities was the practice of farming thin, sloping blocks of land, with the farm buildings arranged in a neat row above the fields. Young identifies this pattern of land use as the hufendorf method of farming, a typically German system of village agriculture. The linear arrangements of hufendorf farming used by the first German settlers were a culturally distinct system of land use, completely different to the square allotments favoured by the British settlers in South Australia.

Although nothing has been attempted on the scale of Young’s survey in Queensland, there is a small body of local and regional studies on the history of German settlement in the colony. In particular, the German settlers of the Logan River and Bethania districts who arrived in Queensland in the 1860s are the subject of several well researched studies. Alexander Yarwood and Brian Hedges have written articles examining the origins and development of the first German settlements in the Logan region. Hedges’ article outlines the methods of intensive small-scale farming used by the new arrivals, including the cultivation of a wide range of crops and the running of small dairies and herds of cattle. This practice of multi-cropping, according to Hedges, enabled the Germans to survive the harsh economic conditions of the 1890s which bankrupted many of their British neighbours farming monoculture crops such as sugar cane.62

The most detailed study of 19th century German settlement in colonial Queensland is Ray Holzheimer’s Masters thesis ‘The Bethania Germans’. These people were neither

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60 G. Young, ‘Early German Settlements in South Australia’ Australian Historical Geography, Vol.2, 1981, pp.45-69
61 A. Yarwood, ‘The German Community of the Logan Region’ in M. Jurgensen & A. Corkhill (eds.) The German Presence in Queensland, Department of German, University of Queensland, 1988, pp.125-146
missionaries nor religious refugees, but they fit within the historiography which informs studies of the Moreton Bay mission, because of the assistance provided to them by the Zion Hill missionary, J.G. Haussman. The missionary helped the new immigrants to select and purchase land on the Logan River and his advice to the wealthier families to purchase blocks and subdivide the land to ‘assist their fellows’ became the guiding principle for land use and distribution among the German settlements on the Logan. Holzheimer addresses three questions in his thesis: Why did the Bethania Germans choose to migrate to Queensland and settle on the Logan River?; how did they sustain themselves as distinct German communities for over a half a century?; and how did the German element eventually decline and become absorbed into the broader community?

Like Holzheimer’s study of the Bethania Germans, this thesis seeks to address and explore a series of related questions; namely, what were the origins of the Zion Hill Mission and how did these circumstances differ from contemporary mission settlements in colonial New South Wales? By what process did the Germans of Zion Hill make their successful transition from being missionaries to becoming Moreton Bay’s first market gardeners and pioneer farmers of the North Brisbane area? Finally, what factors enabled the missionary families to leave a significant legacy of agricultural and pioneering achievement, unlike contemporary colonial missions of the 1830s such as Lake Macquarie, south of the present day city of Newcastle, and Wellington Valley in the western Blue Mountains.

Following the introduction and literature review, the first chapter of the thesis explores the origins of the Zion Hill Mission. The chapter examines the motivations of its founder Rev. Lang, his design for the mission project and how this design differed from contemporary missions in colonial New South Wales. The chapter also addresses the religious and social factors which compelled twenty young German men and women from Protestant missionary societies to leave their homes and families in Europe, to establish a mission settlement on the other side of the world. Chapter two centres on the foundation of the Zion Hill Mission in convict Moreton Bay in 1838, identifying the challenges faced by the new settlers and the methods used to establish houses and farms on the land allocated to them in North Brisbane. The initial years of the mission were
marked by hard labour, hunger and a dependency on government supplied rations. Chapter three examines the factors which caused this adverse situation and how the men and women of the mission addressed these hardships. The fourth chapter documents the reversal of this situation in the 1840s and investigates the successful transition of the German families of Zion Hill from missionaries to market gardeners. Chapter five surveys the continued success of the German missionary families as pioneer farmers of the North Brisbane area through the 1850s and 1860s, examining their purchase of freehold land, employment of immigrant labour and gradual increase in involvement with the wider North Brisbane community. The sixth chapter focuses on the specific contribution made by the German missionaries to the development of three primary industries in 19th century Queensland, namely pineapple production, viticulture and dairying.

Dismissed by many historians as failures, the German missionaries of Zion Hill made numerous contributions to the social development of colonial Queensland in the areas of education, organised religion and the provision of assistance to German immigrants. Their achievements as farmers and market gardeners, however, were even more significant as it was this success that gave them the sound economic footing to make these contributions to Queensland society. This thesis examines the process through which this hard-earned success was achieved.
Chapter One

The Origins of the Zion Hill Mission

The Christian conversion of the Aboriginal people of Australia was not a priority of the first British colonisers. Early convict settlements in colonial New South Wales were essentially secular institutions in nature. The chaplains who accompanied the convicts and their military overseers were expected only to serve as ‘guardians of public morality’ and there was little concern on the part of the British authorities for the salvation of convict souls. The Christianisation of the Aboriginal inhabitants of the vast continent now claimed by the British was even less of a consideration to the colonisers. The first efforts at missionary outreach to the Aboriginal people of colonial New South Wales did not come from government initiatives but through the individual actions of concerned Christians living in the newly established convict settlements.

The initial efforts to convert the Aboriginal people of New South Wales were largely motivated by the evangelical theology of the British Protestant revival movements of the 18th century. The British Protestant revival, as championed by charismatic preachers such as John Wesley and William Carey, emphasised a personal experience of Christian salvation, the provision of social welfare to the poor and needy and the preaching of the Gospel message at every level and station of society. Inspired by these teachings, members of Protestant organisations such as the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the Church Missionary Society (CMS) began the task of taking the Christian Gospel to mission fields across the world including Britain’s expanding foreign dominions and territories. At the beginning of the 19th century, Australia was not rated a significant mission field by the English mission societies. J.D. Bollen’s study of the English mission societies in colonial Australia identifies several reasons for this apparent

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lack of interest. These included the physical isolation of the continent and the expense of sending missionaries to so remote a location. Bollen argues that in the first years of the 19th century Australia remained an unknown land in Britain and the continent could not capture the imagination of mission society supporters in the same way as exotic, established locations in Africa, Asia and the Americas. To the English mission societies Australia was ‘a land without myth, unindicated by prophecy, standing outside Christian lore.’

While the English mission societies held no immediate interest in establishing missions in New South Wales, a former member of the LMS, William Shelley, began the colony’s first missionary enterprise on his own selection of land in December 1814. The Parramatta ‘Native Institution’, with the assistance of Governor Lachlan Macquarie’s more progressive colonial administration, provided instruction to approximately twenty to thirty Aboriginal children at its peak, teaching them skills such as reading, writing and farming, as well as the Christian catechism. A second missionary project emerged from Sydney during the years of the Parramatta ‘Native Institution’ but its energies were aimed at the Maori of New Zealand rather than the Aboriginal people of Australia. Rev. Samuel Marsden, the evangelical Anglican chaplain of Sydney, made seven voyages to New Zealand between 1814 and 1837, establishing schools and churches on the North Island, encouraging Maori men and women to take up trades and learn English. Marsden’s own attitude towards the Christian conversion of the Aboriginal people of Australia was pessimistic, but in September 1824 the Anglican chaplain played an active role in facilitating meetings between the first LMS delegation to visit Australia and the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Thomas Brisbane. A series of negotiations between the two parties took place and in January 1825 an agreement was reached. Ten thousand acres of land were officially reserved by the New South Wales Government for the establishment of an LMS mission at ‘Reid’s Mistake’ near Lake Macquarie south of Newcastle.

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4 N. Gunson (ed.), *Australian Reminiscences & Papers of L.E. Threlkeld, Missionary to the Aborigines 1824-1859*, Vol.1, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1974, pp.11-12
Rev. L.E. Threlkeld, an LMS missionary with several years experience in the South Pacific, was appointed administrator of the Lake Macquarie mission. A small settlement including several cottages, a school and a chapel was established at the location with the assistance of paid servants and an agricultural superintendent employed to supervise local Aboriginal men and women in the cultivation of maize and wheat. A dispute between Threlkeld and the LMS regarding the expenses accrued by the mission resulted in the society abandoning Lake Macquarie in 1828 and the dismissal of the missionary from his position of administrator. Threlkeld, however, was not so easily removed and successfully negotiated arrangements with the New South Wales Government to continue his work at Lake Macquarie, supported by an official salary of £200 a year. To further meet the expenses of running the mission, Threlkeld also ran sheep and cattle on the pastoral land surrounding the mission.  

The pastoral design of Lake Macquarie influenced the next wave of mission settlements which emerged soon after in New South Wales during the 1830s. Sizable land grants were offered by the colonial authorities to the CMS at Wellington Valley and to the Wesleyan missionaries at Buntingdale, near the present day Victorian town of Colac. Both missions followed the example of Lake Macquarie, with the establishment of mission settlements featuring cottages, schools and gardens surrounded by large runs of pastoral land. Alongside the Wellington Valley and Buntingdale missions during the 1830s, the colonial authorities also established an Aboriginal Protectorate at Flinders Island in Bass Strait under the supervision of George August Robinson. Robinson’s protectorate pursued an agenda similar to that of the Protestant missions, namely the ‘Christianisation and civilisation’ of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. The remnant Indigenous survivors of the Tasmanian frontier conflict were brought together by Robinson and settled in the controlled environment of a small European-style settlement surrounded by pastoral land.

Standing as a critical observer of these missionary endeavours was Rev. John Dunmore Lang, the colony’s first Presbyterian minister. Of all the clergymen and priests

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8 Gunson, Australian Reminiscences & Papers of L.E. Threlkeld, Vol.1, pp.25-26
who served in 19th century New South Wales, few were as ambitious or controversial as Lang. In *A History of Australia*, Manning Clark introduces Lang as a hardened Glasgow Presbyterian, nurtured at the feet of fire and brimstone preachers who ‘accepted the poverty and filth’ of the dark, crowded slums. According to Clark, the Calvinistic doctrine of pre-destination which ran through Scottish Presbyterianism allowed no ‘hope of better things for mankind’ or of ‘liberation from gaolers and their oppressors’.9 The reality of Lang’s early years as a student in Glasgow is more complex than the simplistic portrait provided by Clark. Lang’s biographer, D.W.A Baker, identifies the Rev. Dr. Thomas Chalmers of Glasgow’s Tron Church as Lang’s chief mentor in his formative years. A celebrated author, academic and preacher, Chalmers was strongly influenced by the evangelical theology of the British Protestant revival movements of the 18th century and organised welfare programs from the Tron church, dispensing charity and relief in the slums of Glasgow’s Gorbals district.10 Calvinism did not preclude Chalmers and his young protégé Lang from working to make a better society; rather it fueled them with the conviction and unshakable certainty that their course of action was not only correct but part of a greater divine plan.

Like his mentor Chalmers, Lang’s passions and interests extended far beyond the concerns of his local parish in Sydney. During the 1830s Lang’s numerous projects included: the establishment of the Australia College, the colony’s first non-government school; the active promotion of Scottish immigration to New South Wales; the writing of a seemingly endless stream of books, pamphlets, articles and letters; and the publication of his own newspaper *The Colonist*. Another enterprise which lay close to Lang’s heart was an ambitious plan to establish his own mission to the Aboriginal people of New South Wales.

Independent and autocratic by nature, Lang made no attempt to cooperate or work with the existing missions in New South Wales, but rather condemned them at every opportunity when he disagreed with their methods. Much of Lang’s disapproval stemmed from the clergyman’s theological position on the accepted two-fold purpose of

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colonial mission work, namely the ‘Christianisation and civilisation’ of ‘heathen’ peoples. During the 1830s there was considerable debate within evangelical circles as to which should be implemented first, the provision of the benefits of European civilisation to ‘heathens’ or the obtaining of their Christian conversion. In the mission fields of New South Wales, the actual practice at settlements such as Lake Macquarie was to engage in both tasks simultaneously, but in Lang’s view seeking to educate and civilise Aboriginal men and women, before bringing them to Christ was a fundamentally flawed method of evangelism. The benefits of European civilisation, according to Lang, could not be appreciated by Aboriginal Australians until they had firstly gained knowledge of Christianity and achieved a genuine understanding of the ‘glorious truths’ of the Gospels. Once the Aboriginal people of New South Wales accepted the message of Christianity and became devout believers of the faith, Lang reasoned civilisation would soon follow as a matter of course.

Lang also directed strident criticism at the credentials of the administrators of the New South Wales missions. The English Protestant missionary societies of the early 19th century looked favorably upon pious lay preachers from the trades or from agricultural backgrounds. These highly regarded volunteers, given the label of ‘Godly mechanics’, were thought by many to make better recruits than those who had completed a degree at a college or university. The ‘Godly mechanic’ it was popularly believed, was better able to establish rapport with men and women of the ‘primitive races’ encountered in the mission field. In the eyes of the colonial authorities, skilled tradesmen were also a welcome addition in any new settlement or trading station in the British Empire. A further benefit was the ‘Godly mechanic’, when necessary, could shoulder the cost of the mission’s upkeep through their own labours, lessening the burden on the missionary societies for their financial support.

Lang would accept none of this. The ‘Godly mechanic’, in his view, was ‘a counterfeit missionary’ lacking the necessary theological training to preach God’s word

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12 R.H.W. Reece, Aborigines and Colonists, Aborigines and Colonial Society in New South Wales in the 1830s and 1840s, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1974, pp.73-74 ; Baker, Days of Wrath, pp.113-114
with genuine conviction. Rev. Threlkeld of the Lake Macquarie mission was singled out by the Scottish minister as the worst of the missionary pretenders in the colony. Prior to joining the LMS, Threlkeld earned a living as a tradesman and theatre actor and received little more than a year’s training in theology and basic medicine before his departure to the mission fields of the South Pacific. In a series of public attacks Lang poured scorn on Threlkeld and the other ‘Godly mechanics’ of New South Wales. According to Lang ‘taking ‘Tom, Dick and Harry…and transforming them all at once into Rev. Mr. Thomas, Rev. Mr. Richard and Rev. Mr. Henry’ and sending them into the mission field, created a situation where unqualified missionaries abused their ‘station in society.’ Lang accused Threlkeld of being greedy and extravagant in his expenditure of money donated to the mission and was also dismissive of Threlkeld’s detailed linguistic studies of the Awabakal Aboriginal people of Lake Macquarie, casting doubt on the missionary’s level of ‘literary attainments.’

A final offence leveled at Threlkeld by Lang was the missionary’s practice of wearing his ‘apostolic coat’ one day and taking it off the next to become ‘a mere sheep and cattle man.’ In Lang’s view this was ‘a perfect abomination’ and a practice all too ‘numerously represented in this colony.’ Throughout the 19th century Lang was an active and vocal opponent of the pastoral industry. Despite the central importance of wool exports to the New South Wales economy, Lang believed pastoralism was a primitive industry which did nothing to improve the land or advance the process of settlement in the colony. Lang instead favoured the traditional yeoman ideal of land ownership, with individuals possessing and farming their own blocks of land to support themselves and their families. Lang’s own family were proud landowners and tradesmen from Greenock, Scotland and it was this yeoman ideal of land ownership which the clergyman held up as the model of land use which would see the creation of a new and improved society in New South Wales. It is also possible contemporary events in Scotland may have shaped Lang’s antipathy towards the pastoral industry. In the first decades of the 19th century, while Lang studied at the University of Glasgow, thousands

14 Baker, *Days of Wrath*, p.114
15 *The Colonist*, 12 November 1835, p.362
16 *The Colonist*, 19 November 1835, p.370
17 *The Colonist*, 12 November 1835, p.362
of Scottish men, women and children were forcibly removed from their villages and farms in the first of the Highland clearances to make way for the sheep of English landlords. While it cannot be proven that the tragedy of the Highland clearances influenced Lang, it is clear the practice of Protestant missions supporting themselves through the running of cattle and sheep on thousands of acres of land completely ran against Lang’s passionate views on land use in colonial New South Wales.

Lang’s personal vision for a new Aboriginal mission differed from the existing missions and Aboriginal Protectorates on several counts. His mission would be administered by ‘regularly ordained clergymen’ with a settlement ‘conducted somewhat on the principles of the Moravian missionary settlements in Greenland, South Africa and the Nicobar Island in the East Indies.’ The Moravians were a small but highly influential German Protestant fellowship whose message endorsed a life of ‘evangelical purity, simplicity and grace.’ Moravian missionaries were renowned for their work in extreme physical environments and caring for the oppressed peoples of the world including the plantation slaves of Surinam and the West Indies. In the mission field, Moravians provided for themselves, taking up jobs where available and establishing self-supporting communities. The sociologist Max Weber, in his essay on the Protestant work ethic argues, argues pietist groups such as the Moravians established close, self-sufficient communities to live a life ‘freed from the temptations of the world.’ This desire to separate from the world could ‘with a strong emotional intensity lead to a sort of monastic, community life of half-communistic character.’

While the Moravians aimed at a self-sufficient, communal ideal of working together for the common good, this did not mean they ruled out producing a surplus. As the historian J.C.S. Mason argues: ‘their practice of communal piety did not mean they lacked material incentives. All who could were required to earn their own bread.’ It was this model of mission work that Lang sought to replicate in colonial New South Wales. His missionaries would be devout believers with theological training equivalent to

19 *The Colonist*, 10 March 1838, p.2
that of a clergymen but also able to support themselves in the field working as tradesmen and farming the land. Grazing establishments ‘kept under the pretext of their being kept up for the benefit of the natives’ had no place in Lang’s proposed design.23

The Scottish clergymen held no illusions that bringing the Christian message to the Australian Aboriginal people would be an easy task. The only way it could be successfully achieved, he theorised, was to find truly zealous Christians like the Moravians who were prepared to live with the Aboriginal people in their own environment, joining with them as they hunted, crossing lakes in their bark canoes and attending as they sang and danced at their corroborees. Lang believed Christian men and women who were prepared to make this sacrifice would eventually win the trust and confidence of Aboriginal people and, with this first step, lead them towards the light of Christ.24

Lang’s concern for the Aboriginal people of Australia stemmed in part from a genuine interest in their languages and culture. Entire chapters devoted to the Aboriginal people of Australia can be found in many of Lang’s books.25 Much of his writing on the subject was influenced by popular theories of the time exploring the question of racial origin. Unlike many contemporary thinkers, Lang regarded the Aboriginal men and women as fellow human beings who like Europeans were ‘bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh – formed originally after the image of God.’26 Impressed by the ability of Aboriginal children to read and write and the remarkable skills and keen intelligence of Aboriginal hunters, the clergymen judged Aboriginal Australians to be in no way intellectually inferior to other racial groups. Lang also recognised they were being decimated by the relentless march of European settlement and pastoralism across the continent. Their only hope of survival as a people, he believed, lay in their spiritual conversion to the Christian faith.27

Adamant in his belief that the mission would provide a lifeline to an oppressed people, Lang also argued his proposal would also benefit the wellbeing of the colony.

23 The Colonist, 10 March 1838, p.2
24 The Colonist, 5 November 1835, pp.353-354 ; Baker, Days of Wrath, pp.113-114
26 J.D. Lang, National Sins the Causes and Precursors of National Judgements, Sydney, 1838, p.15
27 Baker, Days of Wrath, p.112
While previous missions had been established in central New South Wales and Victoria, Lang looked further north to the frontier penal settlement of Moreton Bay for the location of his mission. Ever the ambitious visionary, Lang believed his mission would only be the first of many such institutions to come, dotting the remote northern coastlines of the continent, offering a safe haven to shipwrecked castaways washed up on wild Australian shores. While the notion of a haven for castaways may seem quaint and melodramatic to modern eyes, shipwrecks on the coastal sea routes to New South Wales were not uncommon events during the 19th century. The clergyman’s own father, William Lang, was lost at sea in 1830 when the small coastal vessel in which he was traveling from Newcastle to Sydney capsized during a storm. No trace of his body or any of the other passengers was ever found, a personal loss which deeply affected Lang. The clergyman also knew the Captain and crew of the Scottish vessel the Stirling Castle, wrecked off the Queensland coast in May 1836. The ordeals of the Stirling Castle’s most famous survivor Eliza Fraser captured the imagination of the British and New South Wales public and the role of the mission as a safe haven for lost castaways in the Australian wilderness became a key selling point in Lang’s numerous appeals for financial contributions towards the mission project.

The main obstacle encountered by Lang in transforming his designs into reality was the problem of finding men and women prepared to commit to his project. During the 1830s Lang made three separate unsuccessful attempts to recruit missionary volunteers in his native Scotland. While he was able to attract Scottish clergy and tradesmen to work in the established areas of New South Wales, Lang’s calls for missionaries willing to endure the hardships of the Australian frontier went unanswered. The clergyman’s fortune changed for the better during his fourth return voyage to Britain in 1836. Arriving in England in late November, Lang commenced a winter tour of Scotland, promoting New South Wales as a land of opportunity and organised the passage of large numbers of Scottish immigrants to the colony. Then in the European spring of 1837 Lang found the first volunteers for his mission project.

28 Lang traveled on the Stirling Castle on his third voyage from Britain to New South Wales with approximately 140 Scottish immigrants in 1831; Baker, Days of Wrath, pp.80; 83-85
29 J.D. Lang, Appeal to the Friends of the German Mission to Aborigines of New South Wales, Sydney 1839, p.1
30 Lang, Cooksland, p.464
In London Lang was introduced to two German graduates of the Swiss Basel Missionary Society, Christopher Eipper and Gottlieb Schreiner. Both men were intent on serving in foreign missionary fields and, to achieve this goal, were completing additional training with the CMS in London. Lang discussed his plans for the mission with the two men and on 30 March 1837 Eipper and Schreiner confirmed they would accept his proposal to serve in New South Wales. Schreiner’s enthusiasm for the project soon cooled after the meeting and the young German instead pursued a missionary career in South Africa. Eipper remained committed to Lang’s proposal and in June 1837 he completed his studies with the CMS and was ordained a minister of religion, in a small evangelical Lutheran ceremony in London. Proud of his German heritage, Eipper insisted on being ordained a Lutheran minister, categorically refusing to become an Anglican priest.

In the same month Eipper was married to Harriet Gyles in a wedding ceremony held at Shoreditch, London. Harriet was the daughter of John Gyles, a missionary agriculturist who had served with the CMS in the West Indies and the South Pacific. Hilary Carey argues in her article ‘Companions in the Wilderness’ that Protestant missionary societies in the early 19th century strongly encouraged single male volunteers to marry before venturing into the mission field. Many believed a single man in a foreign environment would be more likely to yield ‘to the temptations held out to him by the Natives’ than his married counterpart. It was therefore common practice for weddings to be arranged for missionaries shortly before their departure, matching them with eligible young women from evangelical Protestant families.

With one ordained volunteer secured for the project, Lang’s good fortune continued. During a meeting with Samuel Jackson, the manager of the Union Bank of Australia in London, the banker mentioned to Lang the work of a German friend based in Berlin, Rev. Johannes Gossner. The head of the Bethlehem evangelical Lutheran church,

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31 Christopher Eipper was born on 20 August 1813 in Esslingen, Wuerttemberg. He studied theology at the Basel Missionary Society in Switzerland from 1832 to 1836, before commencing additional training with the CMS in London in September 1836; N. Gunson, ‘Eipper, Christopher’ in ADB, 1788 – 1850, pp.351-352
32 N. Gunson, Messengers of Grace: Evangelical Missionaries in the South Seas, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1978, p.40; 347
Gossner had recently established a Protestant missionary society and reportedly had several young volunteers eager to serve in mission fields across the world. In his best German, Lang wrote to Gossner, outlining the design of his proposed mission and requested volunteers for the project.34

Rev. Gossner was Lang’s senior by several years but the two men shared many qualities.35 Both clergymen were ambitious, had strong personalities and were no strangers to controversy. Unlike Lang, Gossner’s religious career began in the Roman Catholic Church. After studying at Dillingen and Ingelstadt Universities, he was appointed priest of a small village in the southern German principality of Suabia. As Jane Austen observed in her contemporary novels, the prospects of career advancement for young clergymen and priests in late 18th and early 19th century Europe largely depended on their ability to secure influential patrons within the ranks of the nobility. At this task Gossner far surpassed the efforts of the fictional Mr. Collins of *Pride and Prejudice*; his first significant patron was the Prime Minister of Bavaria, Count Mongelas. Later, while living in Saint Petersburg he was able to win favour with members of the Russian aristocracy and after renouncing Catholicism in 1826 to become a Protestant, Gossner secured the patronage of one of the most powerful men in Europe, the Crown Prince of Prussia.36

Through the influence of his patron the Crown Prince, Gossner became pastor of the Bethlehem Church in Berlin. His evangelical Lutheran theology reflected that of the Lutheran State Church of Prussia, but Gossner carefully maintained the independence of the Bethlehem Church from this religious body. Strongly influenced by the theology and mission work of the Moravians, Gossner established numerous social welfare projects in Berlin, including programs for the care of the poor and nurseries and orphanages for

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34 Lang claimed to have taught himself German during his first voyage to New South Wales in 1822 by reading seven chapters of Martin Luther’s German translation of the Bible every day ; J.D. Lang, *Reminiscences of My Life and Time both in Church and State for Upwards of Fifty Years*, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1972, pp.31-32
35 Johannes Gossner was born on 14 December 1773 in Hausen a small village in Bavaria and consecrated into Catholic priesthood on 9 October 1796 ; H.J.J. Sparkes, *Queensland’s First Free Settlement 1838-1938*, W.R. Smith & Patterson, Brisbane, 1938, p.10
36 Sparkes, *Queensland’s First Free Settlement*, p.11
disadvantaged children. In 1837 he founded the Elizabeth Hospital, encouraging women from the Bethlehem Church to serve as nurses and hospital administrators.37

Gossner, like Lang, held a passionate interest in mission work and in 1831 he was appointed director of the evangelical Lutheran, Berlin Missionary Society. He served five years with the organisation but personal disagreement with the Society about the training of their missionaries led to his resignation in 1836 and the establishment of his own missionary society, the Gossnerische Missionsgesellschaft [hereafter the Gossner Missionary Society]. The Berlin Missionary Society emphasised a solid course of academic and theological training for its students. Gossner, like the LMS and CMS in England, was a firm believer in the missionary ideal of the ‘Godly mechanic.’ Influenced by the pious, self-reliant example of the Moravians, Gossner believed missionaries preparing for the mission field needed a practical course of training and encouraged missionary volunteers with a vocational background in trades, handicraft and agriculture. Members of the Gossner Missionary Society supported themselves during their years of training and service. Once in the field they were not to expect regular wages or funds from Berlin, as is evident in the proclamation from Gossner to members of his society: ‘I promise you nothing; you must go in faith, and if you cannot go in faith you had better not go at all’.38

The first volunteers to accept this challenge were six young German men who approached the clergyman outside his residence on a cold winter’s day in December 1836. The men told Gossner that his preaching had inspired them to take the message of the Gospels to foreign mission fields, and they asked the clergymen to prepare them for this task and train them as missionaries. Among this initial group of six volunteers was Johannes Gottfried Haussman, the son of a Yeoman farmer from a small Prussian village.39 Over the next few months the ranks of the Gossner Missionary Society grew. By the time Lang’s request for volunteers reached Berlin, in the spring of 1837, Gossner

37 I. Ludophy ‘Gossner, Johannes Evangelista’ in J. Bodensiek (ed.) The Encyclopaedia of the Lutheran Church, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota 1965, pp.944-945
had eleven missionaries ready to leave Berlin and accept their calling overseas. Gossner was enthusiastic about Lang’s proposal for a ‘Moravian style’ mission in New South Wales and in July 1837 he replied to the Scottish clergyman, confirming he had eighteen young men and women prepared to make the long journey to New South Wales. Johannes Haussman was the only member of the original six volunteers included in the group.

These eighteen men and women from the Gossner Missionary Society were citizens of a Germany far removed from the powerful nation states of the 20th century. In the 1830s Germany was a loose conglomeration of thirty-nine principalities, many still recovering from the devastation of the Napoleonic wars. A united German nation in any political sense was still a distant dream and, in this turbulent environment, it was the German language combined with religious belief which provided social cohesion across the numerous, and often changing, state boundaries. The Gossner missionaries came from a number of German states and principalities, including Prussia, Bavaria and Pomerania. Some, like J.G. Haussman, were the children of country villages and hamlets whose names no longer appear on modern maps of Germany, while others hailed from major urban and cultural centres including Berlin, Leipzig and Brandenburg. [See Appendices, Tables One & Two, pp.148-149]

For many Germans the 1830s was a time of poverty and social upheaval. Those in the lowest strata of society, including the peasants and farmers of small land-holdings, were among the worst affected. High levels of population growth occurred across Germany during the decade, especially in rural areas. While the new farming methods and technology of the European agrarian revolution meant food production more than kept pace with the demands of the growing population, the large agricultural surpluses produced by these innovations led to a reduction both in commodity prices and the wages of agricultural workers and farmers. A decline in demand for consumer goods in regional areas soon followed, and the downturn began to engulf tradesmen and rural land-holders, resulting in severe economic recession across the German principalities.

The majority of the male Gossner Society volunteers were tradesmen. While large-scale industrialisation was occurring in many European urban centres, the

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41 C. Clark ‘Germany 1815-1848’, pp.56-59
traditional guild system of master, journeyman and apprentice survived intact for the majority of young German men entering trades. Between them the Gossner Missionary Society volunteers could boast a blacksmith, bricklayer and stonemason, cabinet maker, tailor, weaver and two shoemakers. There is a paucity of source material regarding the lives of the young volunteers before they joined the Gossner Missionary Society, but a testimonial written in unpolished low German by one of the Australia-bound volunteers, J.L. Zillman, provides a brief autobiographical account of his childhood years and time spent as an apprentice and journeyman blacksmith.

Like Haussman, Zillman grew up in rural Prussia. His father was a tailor, but took up a small land-holding at ‘Christophswalde near Landsberg on Werthe’ when Zillman was six or seven years old. It was Zillman’s responsibility as a child to tend the family cows in the field. Too poor to afford shoes, he recalled keeping his feet warm on cold mornings by standing in the fresh steaming cowpats. Once during his watch, one of the family cows fell into a creek. His mother organised a team of helpers to haul the animal back onto dry ground, after which Zillman was severely disciplined. After leaving home, he served half a year as a farm labourer, enduring hunger and minimal wages before taking up an apprenticeship as a blacksmith. While he enjoyed learning the trade, the workload expected of the young apprentice ‘got heavier and heavier and sometimes I had not enough to eat.’ Another of the Gossner volunteers, Franz August Rode, also recalled the harsh conditions of his apprenticeship to a cabinet maker in Breslau. In five years of service Rode claimed to have never received a farthing in wages from his employers, working shifts which in winter started at five o’clock in the morning and continued through to ten o’clock at night.

Evangelical Protestant organisations in 1830s Germany, such as those administered by Rev. Gossner, drew heavily on the support of tradesmen. The social welfare and outreach programs of the evangelical Protestants were often conducted

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42 Hobsbawm, *Age of Revolution*, pp.173-175
43 The document was discovered by Anthony Powell, a descendent of Zillman, during a visit to Berlin while conducting research into his family history; Zillman Papers, JOL, OM 91-72; M. Outridge (ed.), *150 Years of Nundah Families, 1838-1988*, Nundah Historic Cemetery Preservation Association, Brisbane, 1989, pp.23-25
44 Zillman Papers, JOL, OM 91-72
45 T. W.H. Leavitt, (ed.) *Australian Representative Men*, Wells & Leavitt, Melbourne, 1887, p.86
46 Leavitt, (ed.) *Australian Representative Men*, p.86

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outside the traditional confines and strictures of the established churches and valued the contributions of lay preachers and volunteers irrespective of class or educational background. Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm argues that the ‘gaunt implacable theology’ of evangelical preachers, such as Rev. Gossner and John Wesley, was attractive:

> to men who lived harsh lives in a harsh environment, to frontiersmen and seamen, to small individual cultivators and miners, to exploited craftsmen. The [evangelical Protestant] sect could easily turn into a democratic egalitarian assembly of the faithful without social or religious hierarchy and thus appealed to the common man.\(^47\)

In regional areas of Germany small evangelical groups were regularly led by ‘pious master artisans.’\(^48\) The ‘Godly mechanic’ ideal espoused by many of the Protestant missionary organisations attracted tradesmen by giving them a greater sense of spiritual purpose to their lives and also providing them with some measure of social mobility in 19th century society.

Not all the Gossner missionaries however came from this class. The group also included a young medical student, Moritz Schneider, and an ordained minister of religion, the Rev. C.W. Schmidt. Before studying to become a missionary under the tutelage of the Gossner Missionary Society, Schmidt had served as a minister with the Lutheran State Church of Prussia and completed theological studies at the Universities of Halle and Berlin. Lang, who had previously attacked the ‘Godly mechanics’ of the New South Wales missions with unrestrained fervor, accepted the large numbers of hastily trained tradesmen from the Gossner Missionary Society without reservation. He was satisfied in his own mind that the inclusion of two ordained ministers, Schmidt and Eipper, in the group of volunteers would provide the necessary spiritual leadership and guidance for his mission project.

\(^{47}\) Hobsbawn, *Age of Revolution*, pp.226-227

\(^{48}\) Clark, ‘Germany 1815-1848’, p.61
Little information can be sourced regarding the backgrounds of the women of the mission. It is known Louise Lehman was born in the Kemberg province of Sachsen, and married the missionary J.G. Haussman in Berlin in 1837, suggesting efforts were made by the Gossner Missionary Society to provide at least some of the male missionaries with spouses before their departure.\textsuperscript{49} It is likely the eight women who agreed to accompany their new husbands to an unknown mission field on the other side of the world, came from evangelical Protestant families supportive of Gossner’s ministry. According to Zillman family documents the missionary Zillman’s wife, Louisa Laing, was an educated woman of Danish ancestry. An accomplished pianist, she spoke three languages fluently, suggesting a privileged, middle-class background in stark contrast to that of her ‘Godly mechanic’ husband.\textsuperscript{50}

On 9 July 1837, a special service was conducted in the Bethlehem Church in Berlin, in which the young German volunteers were officially designated as missionaries by Rev. Gossner. At the service each of the new missionaries was given a silver medallion. The design on the medal featured ‘a plough and altar, with an ox between and the inscribed message ‘Ready for Either.’\textsuperscript{51} The chosen eighteen were the first of many Gossner Missionaries to venture abroad from their homes and families. Between 1836 and 1856 the Gossner Mission Society trained and sent 140 missionaries to mission field destinations across the world including the Dutch East Indies, India, the South Pacific and North and South America.\textsuperscript{52} The first group of Gossner missionaries left Hamburg on 10 July 1837, traveling by steamer to the English port of Hull and then on to Leith in Scotland. A canal boat drawn by two horses brought them to Glasgow, with a small steamer completing the final leg of the journey down the River Clyde to Rev. Lang’s home town, the port city of Greenock.\textsuperscript{53} At Greenock the Gossner missionaries met the clergyman for the first time and the group was also joined by Rev. and Mrs. Eipper. Lang

\begin{footnotes}
\item[49] Queensland Pioneers Index, 1829-1889: Index to Births, Deaths and Marriages in Queensland, Register General, Department of Justice & Attorney-General, Brisbane, 2000 ; Nolan, Pastor J.G. Haussman A Queensland Pioneer 1838-1901, p.26
\item[50] Zillman Family Papers, JOL, OM 74-28
\item[51] Courier Mail, 17 July 1937, p.20
\item[52] One hundred and seventy years later Rev. Gossner’s legacy continues and missionaries trained by his society are actively engaged in evangelism and social welfare projects in Germany, Eastern Europe, India and Zambia. For information on the present day activities of the Gossner Mission Society see www.gossner-mission.de
\item[53] Leavitt, Australian Representative Men, p.86
\end{footnotes}
had obtained passage to Sydney for the missionaries on board the barque *Minerva*, raising the necessary funds for the voyage from the British Government and donations from Scottish Presbyterian congregations. On 13 September 1837 the group boarded the *Minerva* for the long voyage to New South Wales where a new life as missionaries awaited them in Moreton Bay.

With their departure, Lang’s long held dream of establishing a mission to the Aboriginal people of New South Wales had finally commenced. Characteristic of his projects, the mission was a bold, ambitious enterprise, driven by the clergyman’s passions and beliefs. A stubborn individualist, Lang’s mission was organised without the support or backing of the British Protestant societies or denominations of the period. The Moreton Bay mission therefore differed from its contemporaries on several counts. Lang rejected the design of a pastoral mission settlement as established by Rev. Threlkeld at Lake Macquarie mission in favour of a self-supporting Moravian style community, reflecting his advocacy of the yeoman ideal. While previous missions had been situated in settled, established districts of New South Wales; Lang’s proposed mission, was located at the very edge of the colonial frontier, on the northern limits of the Moreton Bay penal settlement. The numbers and cultural identity of the missionaries brought to the colony by Lang also differentiated his mission. Contemporary mission settlements in New South Wales were administered by small numbers of missionaries, the majority of whom were English. To establish his Moravian style mission Lang enlisted the help of twenty men and women, all of German descent with the exception of Harriet Eipper. Lang’s volunteers were a cohesive group sharing a common religious, linguistic and cultural heritage who had accepted the call to work together in a foreign, colonial environment. Lang’s mission to the Aboriginal people of Moreton Bay, although born out of individualistic ambitions, in essence was a collective enterprise in design.

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55 The *Minerva* was built in Bristol. Weighing 380 tonnes she possessed ‘a commodious poop and superior accommodation.’ Approximately 250 passengers traveled on the ship during her 1838 voyage from Greenock to Sydney; I. Nicholson, *Log of Logs*, Vol.1, Roebuck Society, Yaroomba, Queensland, 1990, pp.348-349
Chapter Two

1838: The Year of Foundation

After four months at sea, the Minerva sailed into Sydney Harbour on 23 January 1838. On board an outbreak of typhus fever had claimed the lives of sixteen people including the ship’s doctor and his entire family.1 Transmitted by lice carried by rats and human passengers, typhus was one of the deadliest ship-borne diseases during the age of sail. Those infected suffered severe headaches, fever, body rash and nausea.2 After the death of the Minerva’s doctor, the missionaries Schneider, Franz and Rev. Eipper took over medical duties, caring for the passengers infected by the contagion. By the time the Minerva reached Sydney, Schneider and Franz had contracted the disease themselves and both men were close to death. The ship was immediately placed under quarantine by the colonial authorities with all passengers removed from the vessel and treated at the Sydney Quarantine Station. Every article of clothing brought by the missionaries and their wives from Germany was taken by the Quarantine staff and burnt. Eighteen passengers, including Schneider, died at the Station. Tended by the Quarantine staff and the widowed Caroline Schneider, Franz pulled back from the brink of death to achieve a slow recovery.3

By the end of January 1838 the Quarantine staff had allowed the release of passengers unaffected by the disease. The Eipper and Schmidt husband and wife teams were the first to arrive in Sydney where they were greeted by the indomitable Lang.4 The clergymen had returned to New South Wales on a separate vessel, the Portland, but his voyage had been equally traumatic. Measles and scurvy struck the Portland at sea, killing twenty-five children on board. As the ship neared the West Australian coast, Lang ordered the Captain to make port at Albany and organised the setting up of a field

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1 The Colonist, 24 January 1838, p.2; Sydney Herald, 25 January 1838, p.2; H.J.J. Sparkes, Queensland’s First Free Settlement, 1838-1938, W.R. Smith & Patterson, Brisbane, 1938, p.16
3 Letter, Rev. Eipper to Mission Committee, 15 March 1839, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 219 ff.
4 Sydney Herald, 29 January 1838, p.2
hospital at the edge of town for the immediate treatment of the ship’s infected passengers.⁵

With the arrival of the German missionaries in Sydney, Lang actively promoted the Moreton Bay Aboriginal Mission in his newspaper *The Colonist*, publishing lengthy articles outlining the aims and objectives of the project and encouraging contributions from the Sydney public.⁶ At the same time the Scottish clergyman continued his negotiations with the colonial authorities to secure official support for the mission. On 16 March 1838, Lang wrote to the Colonial Secretary E. Deas Thomson, listing the benefits of the proposed mission to the people of New South Wales, also requesting the missionaries be allowed to travel to Moreton Bay on the government schooner *Isabella* once official support was granted. The newly appointed Governor of New South Wales, Sir George Gipps, reviewed Lang’s communication. A conscientious administrator with strong humanistic principles, Governor Gipps approved the clergyman’s request without delay.⁷

On 19 March 1838, the first party of German missionaries led by Eipper boarded the *Isabella* for Moreton Bay. The remainder of the group stayed in Sydney, to care for the missionary Franz still recovering from the effects of typhus, and to assist Lang with the task of promoting the mission and raising public subscriptions.⁸ After leaving Sydney, unfavourable winds hindered the progress of the *Isabella*. Gales made the ship’s course difficult as it entered the passage into Moreton Bay on 30 March 1838 and the captain was only able to anchor at the government pilot station on Stradbroke Island after much tacking. The missionaries were taken in stages from Stradbroke Island in the pilot’s boat across Moreton Bay to the convict settlement situated on the north bank of the Brisbane River. The Eippers were the first to arrive at the settlement, where they were greeted by the settlement’s Commandant Major Sydney Cotton and the government chaplain Rev.

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⁶ *The Colonist*, 7 March 1838, p.2 ; *The Colonist*, 10 March 1838, p.2
⁸ *Sydney Herald*, 22 March 1838, p.2 ; *The Colonist*, 12 May 1838, p.2 ; Sparkes, *Queensland’s First Free Settlement*, p.16
Johann Handt.\(^9\) The chaplain recorded his meeting with the missionaries in his journal. He wished them every success with their venture but also predicted:

> It will be many years before they find their labour crowned with success. I consider the civilisation and conversion of the Aboriginal people a work of time wherein particular patience and perseverance is required.\(^{10}\)

Major Cotton offered the Eippers temporary accommodation in the Surgeon’s house, while the other missionaries were provided with shelter in two empty wards of the convict hospital. On 11 April 1838 the squally conditions eased, allowing the *Isabella* to cross Moreton Bay and dock at the settlement. Johannes Haussman told the German 19th century researcher E. Muhling that a team of convicts unloaded the group’s luggage from the schooner, carrying it on their shoulders up the banks of the Brisbane River to the hospital.\(^11\)

The Moreton Bay penal settlement in 1838 held a convict population of 300. Despite repeated calls from the British Colonial Office to shut down the facility, the authorities in Sydney maintained the policy of a gradual decrease in convict numbers until it was determined the region was ready for free settlement. In his first letter reporting back to Lang in Sydney, Eipper recorded his impressions of the settlement. The township was well situated on the Brisbane River but the local water supply was poor and the houses had been placed at an angle so ‘as to prevent the sea breeze coming into the rooms.’ By contrast, he was impressed with the quality of the local soil, rating it among the richest he had seen and noted the climate of the region was ‘warm enough for the production of every tropical plant.’ The Government Gardens ‘once in a flourishing state’ were now ‘almost a wilderness for want of labour’ but the Commandant’s garden was

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\(^{10}\) *Journal of Rev. Handt, 31 March 1838, Church Missionary Society Records Relating to Australia 1799-1884*, Australian Joint Copying Project, 1959

\(^{11}\) Extract from E. Muhling, *Fuhrer Durch Queensland*, Brisbane, Nord-Australischen Zeitung, 1898, translated by Anita Stampletton, manuscript, JOL, p.2
kept in fine condition. After inspecting the settlement, Eipper concluded it would not be a suitable location for the mission. Major Cotton suggested to the Germans they inspect an area of land roughly seven miles to the north of the settlement as a potential site for the venture.¹²

Many historians assert the claim that the German Missionaries after arriving in Moreton Bay initially established themselves at ‘Humpy Bong’ on the Redcliffe peninsula.¹³ The story of the Germans basing the mission at Redcliffe first appears in W.H. Traill’s Queensland history, A Queenly Colony published in 1901.¹⁴ According to Traill, the ferocity of the local Aboriginal groups at Humpy Bong forced the missionaries to abandon Redcliffe and relocate the mission to a site closer to the convict settlement. Traill’s account, although much repeated by historians, is incorrect. While the missionaries visited Redcliffe and Deception Bay on several occasions throughout the 1840s, they never made any attempt to settle in the area on a permanent basis. Major Cotton advised the new German pioneers not to establish the mission too far from the convict settlement for their own safety and they followed the Commandant’s instructions to the letter.¹⁵

On 25 April 1838 the missionaries traveled north from the convict settlement to the government agricultural establishment at Eagle Farm. There they met J.S. Parker, the Moreton Bay Superintendent for Agriculture. Appointed to the position by former Commandant Captain Logan, Parker had overseen all agricultural production in Moreton Bay for almost a decade and the superintendent took the Germans to the location suggested by Major Cotton. The area lay approximately two miles to the northwest of Eagle Farm, at the top of a small hill bordered by a large creek of fresh water. Parker agreed with the Commandant’s assessment that the location was well suited for settlement. After inspecting the area, the Germans announced they were ‘exceedingly pleased’ and as a group decided they would look no further than this location. Eipper provided a glowing description of the area in his first report to Lang:

¹² The Colonist, 12 May 1838, p.2
¹⁵ Extract from Mulling, Fuhrer Durch Queensland, p.2
There is not only a fine rich soil, useful timber and a large sheet of beautiful fresh water at its foot but… also a sort of rendezvous for the Blacks; their paths to Brisbane Town, Eagle Farm and to the North and West crossing at this place.16

Eipper was correct in identifying the area as significant to the Aboriginal people of North Brisbane. The site chosen for the mission lay at the heart of a landscape used by the Turrbal people and neighbouring Aboriginal groups for many thousands of years. The natural landscape of the North Brisbane region contained areas of eucalypt forest, grasslands, freshwater lagoons, tidal flats and mangrove estuaries. Fauna and flora from these ecosystems were used by Aboriginal men and women for a wide variety of purposes as part of their itinerant hunter gatherer lifestyles. Many significant and sacred Aboriginal sites were located within a radius of a few miles of the mission. These sites included seasonal camping grounds, burial sites, areas for ritual combat or Pullen Pullen and the Nudgee bora ring used for the initiation of the young men or Kippers.17

According to the Brisbane settler Tom Petrie the place name used by the Turrbal people for the land selected by the Germans, was Tumbul.18 After making their inspection, the Germans gave the area a new name, Zion Hill. The creek at the base of the hill was also given a biblical name, Kedron Brook.19 In bestowing biblical names on the area the missionaries took their first step in transforming the site for a new spiritual purpose. Historian Bain Attwood comments on this missionary practice in his study of the Moravian Ramahyuck mission in the 1850s. According to Attwood, European missionaries sought not only to ‘civilise and convert’ the Aboriginal people of Australia

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18 Tom Petrie provided no definition for the placename. Researcher Dennis Cleary suggests Tumbul is the Yuggera/ Turrbal word for the hoop pine. C. Petrie, Tom Petrie’s Reminiscences of Early Queensland, Watson, Ferguson & Co.,1902, p.316 ; D. Cleary ‘Placenames of the Nundah District’, Brisbane History Group Papers, No.9, 1990, p.86
19 In the Judaean-Christian religious tradition Zion is the name of the sacred mountain in Jerusalem on which the Jewish Temple of Solomon was built. Kedron or Kidron brook was the name of a stream which flowed through a small valley at the base of the Mountain ; Gospel of John, Chapter 18, Verses 1-2, The NIV Study Bible New International Version, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1985, p.1631
but also ‘the land itself… giving it a new significance which would destroy what was unknown to them.’\textsuperscript{20} The name Zion Hill embodied the Germans’ hopes and prayers that their mission would in time become a holy place for the advancement of the Christian gospel. This name was used only by the missionaries themselves. In the pragmatic, secular environment of convict Moreton Bay, an ethnic based descriptor was quickly given popular currency; the German Station and it was this title that over time proved to be the more enduring.

The Germans returned to Eagle Farm on 26 April 1838, eager to commence work on the chosen site for the mission. Superintendent Parker allocated the men a hut at the Eagle Farm agricultural establishment for their accommodation and assigned a convict to instruct them in the basic techniques of land clearing. Clearing native vegetation in colonial Australia was arduous, backbreaking work. Letters from the missionaries and early government maps of North Brisbane indicate much of the area was heavily wooded with some of the larger trees measuring up to three feet in diameter.\textsuperscript{21} Colonial methods of clearing began with the removal of undergrowth using hand tools such as axes and brush hooks. Trees identified as suitable for timber were marked and cut down two feet above the ground using broad and felling axes, and then trimmed of their branches. Lacking horses, oxen or the manpower of convict work teams, the logs were not taken by the missionaries to the settlement’s sawpits.\textsuperscript{22} Instead, the Germans split the tree trunks using iron wedges and cut them into slabs using an adze. After all the usable timber in a given area was removed, the remaining vegetation was leveled, piled into heaps and burnt. Tree stumps were destroyed by covering them with branches and setting the heap on fire. Any left over stumps or roots were grubbed from the soil using shovels, crowbars and hoes.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{20} B. Attwood, \textit{The Making of the Australian Aborigines}, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1989, p.4
\textsuperscript{21} Extract from \textit{Die Beine auf dem Missionsfelde}, No.19, 1840, translated by Colin Sheehan; Survey Plan, M 1076.1, Robert Dixon’s Survey Plan of Moreton Bay, Queensland Government, Department of Natural Resources and Water
\textsuperscript{22} The Moreton Bay settlement’s saw pits were located at the northern end of Queen Street, close to the residence of Andrew Petrie, the Superintendent of Works; ‘Brisbane in 1844’, Illustration Plate 123 in J.G. Steele (ed.), \textit{Brisbane Town in Convict Days}, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1975, (following p.297), [See Image Six on page 123]
After the arduous labour of their first week in the field, the Germans returned to the Moreton Bay convict settlement for respite on the Saturday evening and observed the Sabbath with the Women of the mission at the Convict Hospital. As the process of clearing the land continued through April into May 1838, the Germans commenced work on the construction of the first houses for the Zion Hill settlement. All materials for the building of the mission houses came from the immediate area surrounding the site. In the words of Eipper, once a section of land had been cleared, ‘our next task was to split wood for slabs, cut grass for thatching [and] dig clay for plastering.’

Although none of the ‘Godly mechanics’ within the group were carpenters, their combined talents proved equal to the challenge of building houses entirely from locally sourced materials. Four corner posts were sunk into the ground, which supported cross beams and a timber framework for the walls and roofing. The walls were constructed from tightly fitted timber slabs plastered over with a whitewash mixture of clay, sand and straw, on both interior and exterior sides of the house. A central doorway was located at the front of the house with windows on either side. The A-frame gabled roofs were covered with grass thatching, with the slope of the roof extending beyond the front wall to form a small verandah area supported by four external posts. The interior of each house contained two or three rooms and a fireplace, with timber slabs used as flooring material. The ceilings of the mission houses, according to Eipper, were formed with ‘plaits of grass and clay plaster, wound about sticks and laid across the tie beams.’

Miles Lewis, an authority on early Australian housing, argues colonial New South Wales represented ‘a cultural laboratory’ in terms of the construction of its houses and simple dwellings. Numerous British and European styles were employed and adapted by successive waves of white settlers, according to the conditions and available resources of the Australian environment. The houses at Zion Hill built by the German missionaries likewise represent a fusion of colonial British and German methods of housing. The use of plastered slabs as a construction method was employed by many settlers across colonial New South Wales. The external and internal layers of plaster not only improved

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24 The Colonist, 14 July 1838, p.3
the insulation of the house, but also prevented draughts by covering over existing gaps between the wooden slabs. Captain Logan’s convict work teams used the method in Moreton Bay to construct the first military barracks and cottages between 1825 and 1826. Logan favoured a colonial Georgian-style design for the settlement’s houses, with low hipped roofs and front verandahs. Following the local example, the Germans plastered the sides of the mission houses and also adopted a small verandah area at the front of their dwellings. They, however, rejected the Georgian low hipped roof in favour of A-frame gables typical of village housing in rural Germany.

Another distinctly European feature of the houses at Zion Hill was the method used by the missionaries in the construction of their ceilings. Miles Lewis identifies the method of coiling plaited grass and clay around sticks and laying them horizontally across the tie beams as the German *lehmwickel* method of ceiling construction. Also used in France and Hungary, *lehmwickel* ceilings provided excellent insulation against the chill of winter and the heat of summer. In contrast, British houses in colonial New South Wales often lacked any form of ceiling at all, with many builders simply stretching a sheet of hessian across the timber rafters.

Thatching was commonly used by British and German settlers as roofing material in colonial Australia, especially in southern districts of the continent. The convicts of Moreton Bay, however, never employed the method and over time, the original straw thatched roofs at Zion Hill were replaced by overlapping bark shingles clamped into position with horizontal saplings. In dry Australian conditions, thatching posed a potential fire hazard, as Eipper later found to his cost when his roof caught alight one evening in October 1841. A group of Aboriginal men rushed to the house and began ripping away the burning roofing material and the missionaries soon joined them, extinguishing the blaze with buckets of water. Rev. and Mrs Eipper were unharmed during the incident, but their household goods were water damaged and coated with plaster from the walls and ceiling.

27 Steele, *Brisbane Town in Convict Days*, p.47; 56
30 Lewis, *Victorian Primitive*, pp.3-8
31 *Colonial Observer*, 13 January 1842, p.116
The bulk of the work in clearing the land and constructing the first houses fell squarely on the shoulders of the missionaries, but the Germans did receive some outside assistance with their labours. Eipper reported to Lang the missionaries ‘now and then’ succeeded in employing local Aboriginal men in the task of felling timber and cutting sheets of bark, ‘especially when there was a prospect of a good dinner before them.’

Weber, in his essay on the Protestant work ethic, establishes the doctrine as an integral component of the theology of German pietist religious groups such as the Moravians and the Gossner Missionary Society. As a result of this doctrine the German missionaries were strong believers in the spiritual value of honest work and it was this belief they sought to impart to their new Aboriginal labourers.

Rev. Handt recorded in his journal some of the British officers stationed at Moreton Bay also lent the Germans the services of their convict servants for the purpose of constructing the mission houses. On 28 May 1838 the first of the mission houses reached the stage where was habitable and the missionaries moved their tools and provisions from the agricultural settlement at Eagle Farm into the new dwelling. The prospect of being able to live on the mission site greatly pleased Eipper as, in his opinion, ‘much time was lost in going to and fro’ from Eagle Farm each day.’ At the end of the working week the missionaries August Albrecht and Ludwig Doege guarded the new house while the others returned to the settlement to observe the Sabbath with the women of the mission.

In Sydney, with the assistance of the missionary Schmidt, Lang continued to promote the Moreton Bay mission in his newspaper and raise public subscriptions for the project. A meeting was held in Sydney on 18 May 1838 at the Puttenay Hotel ‘to take into consideration the origin, the circumstances and the claims of the German Mission to the Aboriginal people at Moreton Bay’. After numerous speeches, a management committee for the mission was sworn in and a total of £148 14s collected in donations. Lang also continued his negotiations with Governor Gipps to secure ongoing government assistance.

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32 The Colonist, 14 July 1838, p.3
34 Journal of Rev. Handt, 12 July 1838
35 The Colonist, 14 July 1838, p.3
36 The Colonist, 23 May 1838, pp.2-3
support for the enterprise.  

In June 1838 Lang received welcome correspondence from the Governor stating that the Moreton Bay mission would receive official support on the same level enjoyed by the existing Protestant missions in New South Wales. Under this arrangement, land for the mission would be leased to Rev. Lang’s management committee for the specific purpose of the Christian conversion of the Aboriginal people of Moreton Bay. Gipps also gave his assurance the colonial government would provide the mission with financial support equal to that of the funds raised by the committee in the form of donations. 

On 5 June 1838 the German missionaries who had remained in Sydney boarded the government schooner *Isabella* to join their colleagues in Moreton Bay. On this voyage the *Isabella* encountered favorable conditions and reached the convict settlement after three days sailing. The missionaries disembarked just after midnight. The chaplain Rev. Handt again welcomed the new arrivals to the settlement, noting in his journal that the Schmidts ‘appear to be very pious people.’ 

The next day Rev. Schmidt visited Zion Hill, eager to inspect the progress made by his brethren. He found two houses were nearing the final stages of completion with several more underway, and four acres of land had been cleared in preparation for farming. Schmidt’s immediate impressions of the location were highly favourable:

> The place is delightful, the soil excellent, the water close before our houses beautiful and the climate extremely pleasant. In every respect we can say that fate has dealt kindly with us and given us a good inheritance.

As construction of the mission houses continued, the Germans positioned their dwellings in a neat row along the ridge of the hill, at an equal distance to each other, with

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37 Memorial, Rev. Lang to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 31 May 1838, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary, Letters Relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.10, JOL, 380 ff.

38 Governor Gipp’s comments, 4 June 1838, Memorial, Rev. Lang to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 31 May 1838, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary, Letters Relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.10, JOL, 381 ff.

39 Journal of Rev. Handt, 12 June 1838

the front entrances of the houses all facing north. This linear arrangement of housing was characteristic of German rural communities. A German observer in South Australia in the early 1840s reported a similar layout was used by his countrymen residing on the town limits of Adelaide:

Each farmer had built up his hut and stables on his piece of land and thatched it with reeds from the nearby River Torrens, the long line of houses with their gables fronting onto the street, surrounded by trees, provided a peaceful sight and it was like part of the old home county appearing here.\textsuperscript{41}

The arrangement of the fields and gardens employed by the missionaries at Zion Hill also followed methods practised in rural Germany. On the southern side of the mission houses, narrow acreages of land were cleared down the side of the hill to the edge of Kedron Brook. Longer acreages ran down the opposite side of the hill in front of the mission houses, using the same pattern of thin sloping blocks of land. The linear arrangement of mission buildings combined with narrow acreages of sloping farm land was based on the traditional German \textit{hufendorf} system of rural land use.

The origins of the \textit{hufendorf} system of land use, a variant on medieval strip farming, date back to the ninth century where the method was employed by the Franks. The system remained in use in areas of central Europe, before regaining popularity as a farming method during the 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} centuries when German states such as Prussia encouraged waves of settlers to take up new areas of land in the heavily forested eastern regions of the Kingdom. The new settlers typically established themselves in forest valleys, constructing a row of farm houses along the ridge line overlooking the slopes.\textsuperscript{42} Gardens and fields were set out by the settlers on thin blocks of arable land which ran down the contours of the valley to the river or stream below. The length to width ratio of

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item J. Ey, \textit{Lutheran Settlements in South Australia}, Adelaide, 1880, p.17 quoted in Claudia Erdmann, ‘Rural Settlements Founded by German Immigrants in South Australia and Queensland during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century’, M. Jurgenson & A. Corkhill (eds.) \textit{The German Presence in Queensland over the Last 150 Years}, Department of German, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, 1988, pp.113-124
\end{itemize}
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the fields varied from anywhere between 1:12½ to 1:25. It is believed long thin blocks were employed by the settlers because the arrangement allowed them to plow their land with oxen, using only a minimum number of turns. New arrivals to the valley settlements constructed additional houses and farms on either side of the existing row, extending the linear formation of the arrangement. This method of agricultural land use was radically different to contemporary British methods of farming such as crofting, which typically employed square acreages neatly bordered by hedgerows or stone fences. Strip farms similar to the *hufendorf* system were used by the Germanic Saxons in England prior to the Norman conquests of 1066 but nothing resembling the method was ever used by the British in colonial Australia. Traditional *hufendorf* arrangements continue to survive in South Australian German communities such as Hahndorf and Bethany; which bear a striking resemblance to the Zion Hill settlement in Moreton Bay.

Following the construction of the mission houses and the clearing of land for cultivation, the German missionaries began the task of planting crops and establishing gardens. As they worked to create their mission settlement, the Germans were entirely dependent on either rations issued to them by the Moreton Bay Commandant or on supplies shipped to them by Lang and the mission committee from Sydney. Nevertheless the Zion Hill pioneers were determined to implement the Moravian ideal of a self-supporting mission community as soon as they possibly could. Unlike the pastoral ventures of the Lake Macquarie and Wellington Valley missions, the Germans sought to achieve the goal of a self-supporting community through the successful cultivation and harvest of their own crops. During the 19th century five crops—rye, oats, barley, potatoes and sugar-beet—formed the basis of German agriculture. In colonial Australia no attempt at cultivating sugar beet had ever been made by the British. Small quantities of oats, rye and barley had been grown in the southern settlements with the production of the latter encouraged by the colonial authorities to facilitate the brewing of beer. As all three grains preferred cooler climates they were never trialed in convict Moreton Bay.

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45 Young, *Early German Settlements in the Barossa Valley*, p.50
46 Atkinson, *An Account of the State of Agriculture* p.44
The remaining crop, the humble potato had been successfully cultivated in all settled regions of New South Wales by 1838. The vegetable was recommended by colonial agricultural authorities as a dependable first crop in recently cleared areas, delivering high yields in the elevated regions of the interior but also performing well in coastal areas with light, alluvial soils. Seed potatoes were planted in rows in freshly ploughed or hoed fields with September and October regarded as the best months for planting. Small acreages of potatoes had been grown in Moreton Bay since 1829 at the agricultural establishment at Eagle Farm and a letter from the missionary Rode to his family in Europe, reveals the seed potatoes for the fields of Zion Hill were sourced from the Eagle Farm establishment.

Maize or Indian corn was the second staple crop farmed by the missionaries at Zion Hill. Native to North and Central America, maize was quickly adopted by Spain and Britain in the 16th century and taken to their colonies across the new world. In colonial New South Wales maize was highly regarded as a first crop for new settlers cultivating areas of freshly cleared land. In the coastal areas of New South Wales maize was easy to grow and possessed a high productivity-to-labour ratio, producing two harvests every year. Maize was planted in rows by colonial farmers, with October and November recommended as the best months for sowing. Seeds were planted by scooping out a hole in the soil with a hoe, dropping four or five grains into the depression before covering it over with top soil. In a good season, the maize plants would shoot up from the soil, reaching a height of six to eight feet. When the maize was ready for harvest in summer, the cobs were pulled from the tall stalks, and piled in heaps in the field. After drying, the maize was husked and the kernels of grain separated from the cobs by thrashing them with flails.

Maize was the main crop grown by the convict work teams of Moreton Bay. In the more established areas of New South Wales, maize was only considered fit for livestock by the British settlers but in Moreton Bay it formed a substantial component of

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48 Book of Returns of Agricultural Produce, 1 September 1829 – 30 April 1837, QSA ; Extract from Die Beine auf dem Missionsfelde, 1840, No.21, translated by Colin Sheehan
49 Atkinson, An Account of the State of Agriculture pp.31; 37; 43-44 ; Lang, An Historical and Statistical Account of NSW, pp.98-100
the convicts’ diet. A boiled maize porridge called hominy was served to the convicts as part of their morning and evening rations and ground maize meal was also baked into coarse loaves of corn bread. Although nutritious the grain was ‘extremely disliked’ by the convicts. Botanist Allan Cunningham presenting evidence at a government inquiry described the convict maize ration as a ‘harsher description of food, and not so palatable’ compared to wheat.\textsuperscript{50} The early settlers of Moreton Bay also consumed maize on a regular basis. Tom Petrie recalled a mixture of mashed sweet potato and maize meal was often used in Moreton Bay kitchens to bake cakes and a coffee substitute was also made from maize by roasting and grinding the kernels.\textsuperscript{51} Sarah Rode the daughter of the missionary Rode recalled the German missionary families ground their own corn meal at Zion Hill. Loaves of bread were made from the corn meal, but like the convicts she remembered the coarse texture of the loaves as being ‘anything but palatable’.\textsuperscript{52}

The German missionaries made no attempt to plant wheat in the fields of Zion Hill. Although the preferred grain of British colonial settlers, every effort to grow wheat in Moreton Bay had met with failure. Commandant Captain Logan and his successor Lieutenant Clunie made determined efforts to produce a successful wheat harvest but to no avail. After the failure of the 1831 wheat harvest, Clunie was advised by his superiors in Sydney, that in future wheat should be grown only on a limited basis.\textsuperscript{53} By the time of the Germans arrived in Moreton Bay in 1838 all wheat consumed at the convict settlement was imported from Sydney by ship.

Lacking horses or oxen and heavy farming equipment such as ploughs and harrows, the German missionaries cultivated their crops in much the same fashion as the Moreton Bay convicts, using only basic hand tools such as hoes. This was not an unusual situation for new farmers in the first decades of agriculture in colonial New South Wales. Many farmers, in particular those with small land holdings, were forced to use hand tools as they could not afford the luxury of an imported plough or the animals required to pull the implement. It is not known when planting commenced at Zion Hill but it is likely the

\textsuperscript{50} ‘Minutes of Evidence Taken before Select Committee of the House of Commons to Inquire into Secondary Punishments, 1832’, in Steele, \textit{Brisbane Town in Convict Days}, p.163
\textsuperscript{51} The missionary Rode also recalled drinking roasted maize as a coffee substitute in the first years of the mission; T.H.W. (ed.) \textit{Australian Representative Men}, Wells & Leavitt, Melbourne, 1887, p.87 ; Petrie, \textit{Tom Petrie’s Reminiscences of Early Queensland}, p.241
\textsuperscript{52} Undated newspaper article, Old Brisbane Cuttings Book, JOL
\textsuperscript{53} Johnston, \textit{Brisbane the First Thirty Years}, p.45
Germans followed recommended colonial practice and placed the first seeds in the tilled soil during the months of the Australian spring between September and November 1838.

To supplement their staple crops of maize and potatoes, the missionaries also established gardens on the slopes of Zion Hill. While Captain Logan’s once bountiful Government Gardens were now neglected and overgrown, there were numerous well kept private gardens in the settlement belonging to government staff and officials. J. Knight recalled the garden belonging to Andrew Petrie, the government Superintendent of Works, as a ‘large area of cultivation with groves of luxuriant orange, lemon, lime and guava trees.’\(^{54}\) It is likely the Germans sourced many of the seeds and cuttings for the mission from the private gardens of the government staff in Moreton Bay. Suckers for pineapple plants were given to the missionary Wagner by the government chaplain Rev. Handt from his private garden.\(^{55}\) Other fruit and vegetables grown at Zion Hill included cucumbers, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, melons, bananas, figs, lemons, oranges, pomegranates and peaches.\(^{56}\)

Livestock was also purchased by the Germans to provide meat and dairy products for the mission. The first animals to arrive at the mission were two pigs bought from the agricultural establishment at Eagle Farm on 23 May 1838. Major Cotton sweetened the deal by generously donating a third beast to the missionaries for no extra cost.\(^{57}\) In June 1838 Eipper with Lang’s approval negotiated the purchase of three cows from the government herd to provide the mission settlement with milk and butter. The ownership of even a small number of dairy cows greatly advantaged pioneer farmers in colonial times. Unlike crops which required months of labour before any harvest was gathered, cows with access to good pasture could immediately provide the farmer with fresh milk and access to a regular supply of dairy produce for the entire year.\(^{58}\) Eipper also received permission from Major Cotton to buy fresh meat for the mission from the settlement slaughter yards.\(^{59}\) Writing to Lang in Sydney Eipper reported: ‘At the permission of

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\(^{54}\) Petrie, *Tom Petrie’s Reminiscences*, p.233

\(^{55}\) *Queensland Agricultural Journal*, Vol.12, Pt.6, 1 June 1903, p.416

\(^{56}\) Extracts from *Die Beine auf dem Missionsfelde*, No.10, 1839; Extracts from *Die Beine auf dem Missionsfelde* No. 21, 1840 translated by Colin Sheehan

\(^{57}\) *The Colonist*, 14 July 1838, p.3

\(^{58}\) *Queensland Agricultural Journal*, Vol.85, No.9, September 1959, p.561

\(^{59}\) The government slaughter yards were located at the site of the present day corner of Elizabeth and Albert streets, in inner city Brisbane; ‘The Oldest Living White Native’, *The Queenslander*, 7 August 1909, p.22
Government to buy fresh meat we exceedingly rejoice’. While the Germans received official permission to purchase meat from the settlement, Haussman in later years recalled that the missionaries were often informed by the authorities too late to buy the fresh cuts. On more than one occasion the missionary remembered making the seven mile journey to the slaughter yards, only to find all the meat was gone, leaving him to trudge home carrying only a sackful of bones.

In the latter half of 1838 the missionaries received permission to purchase three milking cows from the government herd at a cost of £20. Major Cotton urged the missionaries to purchase additional stock including a bull but lacking permission from Lang and the management committee, the Germans were unwilling to extend their purchase. Post and rail fencing was the chief method of holding livestock in the first decades of colonial Australia. Solid timber fence posts were positioned into holes dug into the earth and connected across using three to five wooden rails. Over time the Germans assembled post and rail fencing around the boundaries of the mission land to prevent animals straying on to their fields. Pens and stockyards were also assembled using this labour intensive method of fencing.

Clearing land for cultivation and construction of mission houses continued through the remaining months of 1838. The foundation of the Zion Hill settlement had thus far had been a peaceful process and the missionaries were encouraged by the willingness of local Aboriginal men to cut sheets of bark and fell timber in return for payment of food. The cordial relations between the missionaries and the Aboriginal people of North Brisbane were shattered on 12 July 1838. One of the convict workers was cutting sheets of bark for the missionaries only a short distance from Zion Hill when he was attacked by an Aboriginal man wielding a club. The Aboriginal man took the axe from the fallen convict before running away. Metal axes were highly prized by

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60 Letter, Rev. Eipper to Rev. Lang, 20 June 1838, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 205 ff.
61 Extract from Mulling, Fuhrer Durch Queenslander, p.3
63 Atkinson, An Account of the State of Agriculture, pp.91-93; Lang, An Historical and Statistical Account of NSW, p.101
64 Extracts from Die Beine auf dem Missionsfelde No. 18, 1840 translated by Colin Sheehan; Journal of Rev. Handt, 12 July 1838
Aboriginal men and were taken from Zion Hill on at least two other occasions. Moreton Bay surgeon Dr Ballow tended the wounded convict, pronouncing the man would recover but the incident cast a shadow over the efforts of the Germans.

Rev. Handt visited the mission a week after the incident and found the Germans discouraged and despondent:

Their place which had been frequented by the Aboriginal people before was now deserted by them. They had seen two little boys only since that accident occurred.

In mid August 1838 Rev. and Mrs Schmidt visited Handt’s residence at the convict settlement and informed the Chaplain the situation at Zion Hill had not improved. Aboriginal men and women refused to come near the mission since the attack but Aboriginal voices had been heard at night ‘at no great distance’ from the houses, talking in a ‘low and suspicious manner.’ On another evening a hunting boomerang ‘was hurled by one of the Blacks over their houses, and was heard distinctively whistling in the air.’ For the first time since their arrival in Moreton Bay, the Germans felt threatened and exposed in their new environment. ‘Acute anxiety’ caused by the fear of Aboriginal attack was common among new settlers on the frontier according to Henry Reynolds, even with those situated close to colonial towns. As a result settlers often turned to the security of firearms. Fearing an attack, the missionaries took turns keeping watch over Zion Hill by night, armed with a musket, either sent from Sydney or borrowed from the local government overseers.

The only surviving artifact from the Zion Hill Mission, the Zillman family Bible also provides evidence of the fear of attack and vulnerability felt by the missionaries during this period. Now held by the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, the Bible was originally given to Zillman by his Father-in-law, August Lange, after the missionary

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65 Extracts from *Die Beine auf dem Missionsfelde* No. 13, 1840 translated by Colin Sheehan; Extract from the General Diary of the German Mission at Moreton Bay from 27 September 1842 to 17 January 1843, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 164 ff.
66 Journal of Rev. Handt, 12 July 1838
67 Journal of Rev. Handt, 20 July 1838
69 Journal of Rev. Handt, 11 August 1838
wrote to him requesting a gun. Instead of a firearm Lange sent him a copy of Martin Luther’s translation of the Bible with the following message of encouragement inscribed on the fly leaf: ‘My Son, I cannot send you a gun, but instead I am sending you a Sword of the Spirit where with you shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked’.\(^{70}\)

A further problem facing the Germans was Lang’s waning interest in his own mission project. Through the first half of 1838, the columns of Lang’s newspaper *The Colonist* carried regular reports and updates regarding the mission but after July 1838 the enterprise is barely mentioned. An examination of the official correspondence between the management committee of the mission and the Colonial Secretary from this period reveals Lang had delegated much of the administrative work relating to the mission, to the committee secretary Rev. William McIntyre.\(^{71}\) Through 1838 Lang’s attentions and energies turned away from projects such as the Moreton Bay mission and the Australia College as the clergyman became increasingly preoccupied with the bitter schism dividing the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales.

The Presbyterian Church’s internal rupture sprang from a long standing feud between Lang and Rev. John McGarvie, a Presbyterian moderate who Lang regarded as ‘worldly and irreligious.’ McGarvie and his supporters outnumbered Lang’s faction within the Presbytery of New South Wales, the church’s governing body. As he was unable to overrule McGarvie in the Presbytery, Lang and his supporters split from the established Church in December 1837 creating a rival Presbyterian Synod of Australia. Throughout 1838 Lang lobbied both the British Government and Presbyterian authorities in Scotland seeking recognition for his new Synod over that of the established Presbytery of New South Wales. Governor Gipps attempted to reconcile the warring factions but without success. In December 1838 a report was received from the Presbyterian Church of Scotland declaring Lang did not have the authority to establish his own synod and the Presbytery of New South Wales remained the only official Presbyterian body within the colony. Despite this rebuff, Lang was not discouraged and announced he would once

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\(^{70}\) M. Outridge (ed.), *150 Years of Nundah Families, 1838-1988*, Nundah Historic Cemetery Preservation Association, Brisbane, 1989, p.27

more return to Britain to argue his case in person.\textsuperscript{72} What the missionaries in Moreton Bay made of the dispute has not been recorded but in general the Germans were loyal supporters of Lang. The clergyman’s imminent departure for Britain would result in drastic consequences for the mission.

By the end of 1838 the Germans at Zion Hill had made considerable progress. After eight months working together as a team, they had constructed several houses from locally sourced materials. Crops of maize and potatoes had been planted and a small number of livestock purchased for the settlement. The population of Zion Hill had also grown during the year with the arrival of three babies at the settlement, all of whom were safely delivered.\textsuperscript{73} The traditional \textit{hufendorf} arrangement for their houses and fields, and German housing styles and construction methods, such as gabled roofs and \textit{lehmwickel} ceilings, were serving them well. The missionaries, where they could, had adopted staple crops from their homeland such as the potato, and implemented a mixed agricultural system typical of the rural German peasantry.

These substantial achievements, made in the space of little more than eight months, had come at a tremendous cost to the missionaries. Leaving behind their family and friends in Germany, the party of volunteers took a step into the unknown when they boarded the \textit{Minerva} in Scotland and one of the group, Moritz Schneider, had died in agonizing circumstances before even reaching Moreton Bay. The rigours of frontier life on the new settlement also took its toll on the missionaries. Throughout November and December of 1838, Eipper was struck down with congestive fever. Local surgeon Dr Ballow in his diagnosis, suggested the illness had been brought on by ‘excessive labour and bad food’ and it is highly likely these factors were also impacting upon the health of everyone at the mission settlement.\textsuperscript{74}

The Aboriginal attack on the convict labourer in July 1838 and the subsequent retreat away from the mission by local Aboriginal groups did not bode well for the future


\textsuperscript{73} The new arrivals at the mission were August Rode born 16 June 1838 ; Moritz Schneider (jnr) born 14 September 1838 and John Zillman born 25 December 1838 ; \textit{Queensland Pioneers Index, 1829-1889 : Index to Births, Deaths and Marriages in Queensland}, Register General, Department of Justice & Attorney-General, Brisbane, 2000

\textsuperscript{74} Letter, Rev. Eipper to Mission Committee, 15 March 1839, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 214 ff.
success of Zion Hill. Despite Lang’s placement of the mission at the northern most limit of the settled districts of New South Wales, the German missionaries had been unable to avoid the direct consequences of inter-racial violence and the accompanying dispossession of the Aboriginal people on the colonial frontier. These factors would make Lang’s dream of the Christian conversion of the Aboriginal people of Moreton Bay, a difficult if not impossible task for the German missionaries. In the year to come the plight of the Germans was set to worsen even further.
Chapter Three

1839 – 1841: the Hungry Years

On 2 January 1839 a meeting of the management committee for the Moreton Bay Mission was held in the Mechanics School of Arts Building in Sydney. Rev. Lang addressed the assembled group at length on the poor treatment of Aboriginal people in the colony before announcing the mission was in a healthy financial situation. Public subscriptions combined with official support for the mission, after deducting expenses, left the enterprise with a surplus of £78 18s 5d. The clergyman then took the opportunity to hand responsibility of the mission to the committee secretary Rev. McIntyre and treasurer W. Wright. Thirteen days later Lang left Sydney on the Roslin Castle to argue the case for his synod in Britain.¹

Lang’s departure from the colony left the missionaries in increasingly difficult circumstances. While they aspired to establish a communal Moravian style settlement, able to provide for the majority of its own needs through farming (and they had made substantial progress in their first eight months at Zion Hill) by the summer of 1839 they remained heavily dependent on government supplied rations. While alluvial soils found near Brisbane waterways such as Kedron Brook are among the most fertile soil types found in the Moreton Bay region, the German missionaries were reliant on hand tools, such as hoes, which did not provide sufficient tillage to break up and aerate the soil. As a result the soil of the newly cleared acreages at Zion Hill remained compacted and mixed through with the roots and charred stumps of the original native vegetation, severely limiting the potential for any kind of cultivation in the area.

The mission related documents from 1839 emphasise the Germans’ dependency on government rations and the growing scarcity of these supplies. The government rations were issued by the colonial authorities with the expectation that the practice would continue for only a few months, after which the mission’s management committee would provide all necessary supplies. After Lang’s departure the management committee

¹ The Colonist, 2 January 1839, p.3 ; The Colonist, 9 January 1839, p.4 ; D.W.A. Baker, Days Of Wrath, A Life of John Dunmore Lang, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1985, pp.153-154
proved less than diligent in this task. On 31st January 1839, the Moreton Bay chaplain Rev. Handt recorded in his journal he had received two cartons of biscuits from the government commissariat stores which he intended to distribute to Aboriginal children as a reward for attendance at his school. In contrast he noted the missionaries at Zion Hill had no food to spare for local Aboriginal people whatsoever and were so ‘ill provided that they scarcely have enough for themselves.’ According to Handt, the Aboriginal men and women of the North Brisbane area had taken to calling the mission settlement *Nayairee Ngumpi* or the Houses of Hunger.²

A letter dated 15 March 1839 from Eipper to the management committee in Sydney confirms Handt’s observations: the mission’s supplies of flour, salt and tea were all running low and he urgently requested a consignment of rations be sent to Moreton Bay on the next available ship. Eipper informed the Committee it was over two months since the last shipment of rations had been received from Sydney and as a result of this the missionaries had been forced to draw rations from the government stores on several occasion. Eipper explained that while Major Cotton had initially been happy to provide rations to the Germans, with supplies from the Committee arriving at infrequent intervals and the missionaries showing no signs of being able to support themselves, the Commandant’s patience was wearing thin.³

Major Cotton expressed his displeasure with the situation in a letter to the Colonial Secretary in April 1839. Cotton reported that for some time, he had found it necessary to issue quantities of flour and maiz e meal from the government stores to the Germans despite being technically unauthorised to issue rations to non government personnel. Cotton justified ‘affording assistance’ to the missionaries, as several vessels had arrived in Moreton Bay from Sydney ‘without bringing them any supplies whatever’ and on frequent occasions he felt the Germans were ‘entirely dependent on us for the necessaries of life.’⁴ W. Miller the administrator of the government commissariat stores in Sydney was even less impressed than Cotton with this irregular state of affairs. Miller wrote to Colonial Secretary Thomson, stating he had not been informed of the

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² Journal of Rev. Handt, 31 January 1839
⁴ Letter, Major Cotton to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 22 April 1839, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary, Letters Relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.11, JOL, 41ff.
Commandant’s distribution of government rations to the missionaries. In Miller’s opinion the Germans were a group of civilians who had not been ‘taken into consideration in providing supplies for the settlement.’ Miller stated categorically he did not have the authority ‘to spend the public money in the purchase of provisions for these purposes.’ Adding to Miller’s discontent was the fact that the colonial authorities were still owed the sum of £20 by the mission management committee for the purchase of the three milking cows from the previous year.\textsuperscript{5}

Governor Gipps reviewed the communications from Miller and Major Cotton and advised both men that from May 1839, the New South Wales Government would adopt a policy of reducing ‘as much as possible … but not entirely’ the supply of government rations issued to the mission.\textsuperscript{6} The Governor’s reluctance to continue the practice was not simply a case of maintaining bureaucratic standards, as significant changes were about to occur at Moreton Bay. In April 1839 the settlement was entering its last weeks of service as a major detention facility for British convicts and from May 1839 the majority of prisoners were removed from Moreton Bay. Major Cotton and the 28\textsuperscript{th} regiment were also transferred to a new posting leaving behind only a caretaker administration and a small number of convict work parties.\textsuperscript{7} In this climate of change Governor Gipps was not prepared to supply rations to a non-government project, albeit one with worthy intentions.

Among the administrative staff remaining at Moreton Bay were three government surveyors Robert Dixon, James Warner and Granville Stapylton. While the question of opening of the region to free settlement was still under official review, the three surveyors were assigned the task of comprehensively mapping and subdividing the areas of land surrounding the Moreton Bay settlement. In April 1839 Governor Gipps sent a memorandum to the Surveyor General requesting Robert Dixon to report on ‘the quality and situation’ of the land occupied by the German Mission.\textsuperscript{8} The surveyor was also instructed to enquire if the missionaries wished to make an application to the authorities

\textsuperscript{5} Letter, W. Miller to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 19 April 1839, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary, Letters Relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.11, JOL, 43 ff.
\textsuperscript{6} Governor Gipps’ comments, 19 May 1839, Letter, Major Cotton to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 22 April 1839, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary, Letters Relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.11, JOL, 41 ff.
\textsuperscript{7} W.R. Johnston, *Brisbane the First Thirty Years*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1988, p.62
\textsuperscript{8} Memorandum, Governor Gipps to the Surveyor General, 11 April 1839, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary, Letters Relating to Moreton Bay & Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.17, JOL, 386 ff.
to change the location of the mission. Dixon made contact with the missionaries and forwarded a brief letter from the missionary Schmidt to the Colonial Secretary in June 1839. In the letter, Schmidt stated the Germans had no wish to move to another location as Zion Hill answered ‘very well to the objects of our mission.’

Dixon forwarded a concise description of the mission station to Sydney a few months later in August 1839. The surveyor identified the mission as located five miles north northeast of the settlement at ‘the margin of a swamp on the track which the Natives pass to the Northward.’ Seven acres of land were now in cultivation with ‘nearly every variety of fruit tree and vegetables’ to be found in the gardens. The row of houses constructed along the ridge line of Zion Hill now consisted of seven residences and out buildings. Dixon again reported the Germans had no desire ‘to remove from the place they now occupy.’

Gipps’ request to the surveyor indicates the land to the north of the Moreton Bay settlement was now recognised by the colonial authorities as an area holding strong potential for development. Eipper’s letter to the mission management committee in March 1839 also mentions that parties in Sydney viewed the agricultural establishment at Eagle Farm and surrounding areas as land ripe for ‘improvement.’ These same interests, according to Eipper, regarded the presence of the mission in the area as an impediment to the process of improving the land. They were, he noted, also the source of rumours which claimed that the Germans had spent much time building houses and clearing farmland but made little progress in converting the Aboriginal people of Moreton Bay to Christianity.

By mid-1839 relations between the missionaries and the Aboriginal people of the North Brisbane area had considerably improved from the hostilities of the previous year. Correspondence from the missionaries published in the Gossner Missionary Society’s journal, and extracts from the mission diary, indicates Aboriginal men were again being employed at Zion Hill in return for payment of food, when enough could be spared for wages. Another letter provides a description of the working arrangement between the Germans and Aboriginal men and women:

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In the morning they come visiting, we give them breakfast first [then] they help us sow the land with potatoes. Before sundown they go back to the bush with their dilly full of potatoes.\textsuperscript{12}

The majority of Aboriginal workers at the mission came from the Turrbal or ‘Duke of York’ group whose traditional boundaries encompassed much of the North Brisbane area but Aboriginal groups from the Pine River, Torbal and ‘Yunmonday’ districts to the north of Brisbane are also recorded by the Germans visiting and working at the mission for short periods of time.

As strong adherents of the Protestant work ethic, the German missionaries lived in hope that by encouraging Aboriginal men and women to perform an honest days work, spiritual and ‘civilising’ benefits would soon follow. Mission diaries kept by the Germans meticulously recorded the number of Aboriginal workers employed each day at Zion Hill, providing statistical proof to their supporters of their evangelical achievements. Extracts from the mission diaries also report positive interactions between the two races with a group of Aboriginal men described as expressing delight as they watched Zillman fashioning hatchets and other tools on his blacksmith’s forge. Rev. Schmidt reported the visit of a large Aboriginal family to his house. Mrs. Schmidt fed the visitors boiled dumplings ‘for which they were grateful’ while he ‘introduced them to the English ABC and numbers’ and bandaged their wounds.\textsuperscript{13}

The penal settlement in Moreton Bay closed in May 1839 signaling the intention to end commissariat supplementation of the German’s existence and yet, the supply of rations from the mission committee in Sydney to Zion Hill continued to arrive at infrequent intervals. Correspondence between Miller of the Sydney commissariat stores and the Colonial Secretary reveals that throughout 1839 the mission committee was consistently slow in repaying debts owed to the government. On one occasion the committee treasurer refused payment to the New South Wales Government, claiming the figure charged for a shipment of rations to Moreton Bay was excessive.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12} Extract from \textit{Die Beine auf dem Missionsfelde}, 1840, No.5, translated by Colin Sheehan
\textsuperscript{13} J.D. Lang, \textit{Appeal to the Friends of the Mission to Aborigines of New South Wales}, Sydney, 1839, pp.2-3
\textsuperscript{14} Letter, W. Wright to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 2 September 1839, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary, Letters Relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.11, JOL, 22-23 ff.; Letter, W.
Zion Hill were forced to survive as best they could on meager resources. Rode recalled that for extended periods in the first years of the mission he lived on maize meal and nothing else.\textsuperscript{15} Correspondence from the missionaries in 1839 reveals the mission gardens were producing at least small quantities of fruit and vegetables. Missionary Niquet literally thanked God that: ‘In Sydney we were often forgotten, but not in heaven. We could get by with our garden fruits.’\textsuperscript{16} The milk and dairy produce obtained from the three (as yet unpaid for) mission cows were also an important component of the Germans’ diet. Eipper’s letter of March 1839 declared the purchase of the cows had been of great benefit to the mission community, with all three producing calves since their purchase in 1838.

The production capacity of three cows was not enough to meet the needs of the growing population at the settlement. Three infants were born during 1839 bringing the total number of children at Zion Hill to six.\textsuperscript{17} In November 1839 Eipper and Schmidt drafted a petition to Governor Gipps requesting permission to purchase additional cows for the mission. The missionaries stated they were dependent on milk and dairy products because: ‘the supplies from our society were seldom such as to meet our wants for any length of time, there being some times no room in the vessel, or the notice very short’.\textsuperscript{18} In their petition they described produce from the mission gardens as being ‘very little’ in quantity. Fifteen to eighteen acres were under cultivation ‘wrought solely with the hoe, the Blacks assisting in the breaking up of the ground’. The missionaries also requested permission from the Governor to purchase a team of working bullocks and a dray to assist with the transportation of goods, working the land and carrying timber for fencing. Gipps reviewed their petition in December 1839 but refused to meet any of the requests until the

\textsuperscript{15} T.H.W. Leavitt (ed.), \textit{Australian Representative Men}, Wells & Leavitt, Melbourne, 1887, p.87
\textsuperscript{16} Extract from \textit{Die Beine auf dem Missionsfeld}, 1841, No. 6, translated by Colin Sheehan
\textsuperscript{17} The following children were born to the missionary families in 1839; Maria Haussman born 12 January 1839; Maria Eipper born 20 May 1839 and John Rode born 2 December 1839; \textit{Queensland Pioneers Index: Index to Births, Deaths and Marriages in Queensland}, Register General, Department of Justice & Attorney-General, Brisbane, 2000
\textsuperscript{18} Letter, Rev. Eipper & Rev. Schmidt to Governor Gipps, 28 November 1839, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary, Letters Relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.10, JOL, 844-847 ff.
amounts owing on the previous advances made by the colonial authorities were settled by the mission management committee.19

As the year 1839 drew to a close, Robert Dixon commenced work on his survey of the North Brisbane region. Gipps after reviewing Dixon’s report on the mission, authorised the surveyor to mark off ‘one section of land of 640 acres’ to be used by the missionaries on the same terms as those enjoyed by the Wesleyean missions in colonial New South Wales.20 Following these instructions a square block of land was pegged out by Dixon, with each side measuring 80 chains in length. A map of the area drafted by Dixon on 3 January 1840 clearly delineates the row of mission buildings constructed along the ridge of Zion Hill. Narrow blocks of cultivated land follow the contours of the sloping hill sides, with the settlement enclosed by lengths of fencing joined together at irregular angles. The square section marked off by Dixon for the mission, however, did not encompass the complete area of land cleared and utilised by the Germans. The western side of Dixon’s square section instead cut through and separated a portion of land which the Germans regarded as part of the mission settlement.21

The reason for this lay in the tenure system employed by Dixon in his survey of the area. Under this arrangement an artificial grid of squares was pegged out across the North Brisbane region using the convict tower mill as a fixed reference point. Dixon’s arrangement was similar to the Wakefield system of land subdivision used in South Australia in the 1830s in which large areas of land were opened for sale by dividing the countryside into a grid of 80 acre square blocks. The system was designed to encourage wealthy British investors to settle in the colonies with the proceeds of the land sales used to encourage the immigration of labourers and servants. The Wakefield system proved to be a failure in the 1840s with the downturn in the local economy and the grid

20 Governor Gipps’ comments, 5 September 1839, Letter, Surveyor General to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 24 August 1839, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary, Letters Relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.17, JOL, 383 ff.; Johnston, Brisbane the First Thirty Years, p.36
21 Survey Plan, M 1076.1, Robert Dixon’s Survey Plan of Moreton Bay, Queensland Government, Department of Natural Resources and Water ; ‘Diary for the Year 1840’, Lang Papers, Box. 20, ML, 57-58 ff.
arrangement was equally unpopular in Moreton Bay where it was quickly replaced by other land tenure systems.22

Extracts from the mission diary from January 1840 reveal the concerns and anxieties of the missionaries regarding the loss of the land which fell outside the allocated section. Despite this disappointment the Germans appear to have enjoyed good relations with Dixon and on 3 January 1840 the mission diary records the surveyor delivered a shipment of supplies from the government stores to the mission in his dray. Dixon offered to purchase ten cows and a team of four working bullocks on behalf of the mission under the condition the stock would remain his property. The Germans could keep all the milk and butter produced by the cows and a third of the delivered calves.23 During the 1830s and early 1840s this practice of going ‘thirds’ was a popular method of investing in the pastoral industry for individuals who lacked access to grazing land or did not have the time or skills to manage livestock.24 The missionaries were more than willing to accept Dixon’s conditions but nothing eventuated from the surveyor’s offer.25

The mission diary for the summer months of 1840 reveals the Germans were facing shortages of a number of basic goods, including oil for their lanterns, salt and milk. Two of the mission cows gave birth to calves in December 1839, after which they produced no milk at all, forcing the Germans to purchase dairy goods from the Eagle Farm agricultural establishment. On 7 January 1840 the third of the mission cows also gave birth to a calf but afterwards was unable to stand. Not knowing what to do, the Germans scoured the Moreton Bay settlement, searching for anyone possessing a knowledge of animal husbandry who might be able to assist the animal’s condition. Finding no one with the necessary expertise, they returned disappointed to Zion Hill and

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22 Person communication with Bill Kitson curator of the Queensland Surveying Museum, Queensland Government, Department of Natural Resources and Water, Woolloongabba
23 ‘Diary for the Year 1840’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 58-59, 61 ff.
24 During Lang’s absence from Sydney, several teachers at his school, the Australia College, took more interest in ‘going thirds’ with pastoralists than educating their students; Baker, Days of Wrath, p.174
the cow died later that evening. The death of the animal was a great blow to the Germans but more substantial losses would soon follow.26

In mid-January 1840 the summer maize crop was ready for harvest, yielding a substantial improvement on the previous summer. Men and women from the ‘Duke of York’s’ tribe assisted the Germans with the cultivation of the settlement’s crops through December into January 1840. On the morning of the Sabbath, 19 January 1840 a large group of 180 Aboriginal men and women people from two tribes assembled outside the mission. They had been invited to attend the Bunya festival held every second year in the mountains of the Great Dividing Range North West of Brisbane and the group needed provisions for their long journey. The Aboriginal men waited until they heard the sound of the mission bell which called the Germans together for Sunday worship and then commenced raiding the tall green rows of maize. The missionaries rushed from their service to protect their crops, but in the words of the mission diarist the Aboriginal men: ‘continued to get off pretty well loaded with corn. They went about their work with the greatest swift and cunning and left us to look at the spoiled gardens’.27 The Aboriginal groups moved on the following day leaving the missionaries to assess the extent of the damage. Adding to the missionaries’ sorrow were scorching January temperatures and an outbreak of ‘prickly heat’ which left at least four of the Germans feeling ‘indisposed.’28

Aboriginal raids on the summer crops had periodically occurred in Moreton Bay since the administration of Commandant Captain Logan in the 1820s.29 Henry Reynolds notes inter-racial tensions often flared on a seasonal basis in agricultural districts of the colonial frontier when ‘grain crops ripened and potatoes matured.’ Aboriginal men caught taking the crops were dealt with harshly by the settlers and colonial authorities. As a result Aboriginal men used traditional hunting skills such as stealth and patience to avoid capture and punishment.30 In the case of the raids on the Zion Hill fields the Aboriginal men used their knowledge of the missionaries’ weekly routine to pick exactly the right moment on the Sabbath to commence their raid.

26 ‘Diary for the Year 1840’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 59-60 ff.
28 ‘Diary for the Year 1840’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 69 ff.
29 R. Evans ‘The Mogwi Take Mi-An-Jin’ in *Fighting Words*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, p.59
Another common tactic was to raid the fields under the protective cover of darkness. Night time raids on the mission’s potato crop commenced in March 1840 with many of the Aboriginal men carrying burning fire sticks. Fearing the lit torches could be used to set fire to the buildings, the men of Zion Hill once more stood turns to guard the mission settlement armed with muskets. On several occasions, those on watch fired warning shots into the air to scare off the raiders but on 21 March 1840 the situation descended into violence. In the early hours of the morning, the missionaries observed a large group of Aboriginal men armed with spears and clubs, raiding the potato fields. Seeing the Aboriginal men were carrying weapons, the Germans opened fire with their muskets, taking aim directly at the group from a distance of thirty to forty yards. Blasts of shot cut through the darkness and the Aboriginal men ‘suddenly stopped’ uttering ‘a noise of astonishment’ before retreating to safety.31

The incident was reported the next day to the settlement commandant Lieutenant Gorman who launched an immediate investigation. A ‘Duke of York’ man was found to have minor gunshot wounds on his forehead and chest and the man reported three of his companions sustained similar injuries. The Commandant called upon the Germans at Zion Hill in person and demanded Rev. Schmidt provide the authorities with a written explanation of the incident.32 In his letter to the Colonial Secretary, Schmidt defended the actions of his brethren, stating ‘the Blacks’ had ‘never been so troublesome as the beginning of this month’ and made the claim no serious injury had been inflicted upon the Aboriginal men.33 Gorman enclosed Schmidt’s letter in his next dispatch to Sydney, expressing regret the incident had occurred, as he personally believed his administration enjoyed excellent terms with the Aboriginal groups of Moreton Bay for some ‘forty miles round.’34

Gorman’s investigation into the incident reveals that the ‘the Duke of York’ men responsible for the raid were from the same tribal group employed by the Germans to work on the mission fields. From this it is more than probable many of the Aboriginal

32 Letter, Lt. Gorman to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 30 March 1840, in Steele, Brisbane Town in Convict Days, p.268
33 Letter, Rev. Schmidt to Lt. Gorman, 25 March 1840 in Steele, Brisbane Town in Convict Days, p.267
34 Letter, Lt. Gorman to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 30 March 1840, in Steele, Brisbane Town in Convict Days, p.268
men who worked for the missionaries as laborers were also prepared to take crops from the mission fields. The Germans were aware that at least one of their Aboriginal labourers, Milboang Jemmy, raided Zion Hill and the Moreton Bay settlement on a regular basis, but maintained his services in the hope that honest work would moderate his desire to steal from the mission. While the missionaries and other Moreton Bay settlers regarded the raids as theft, local Aboriginal men saw the matter differently. Pioneer Tom Petrie in his reminiscences recalled a conversation with his Aboriginal friend Dalaipi in which he expressed the view that the white man,

put corn and potatoes in our ground that they took from us at Eagle Farm a long time ago … the white fellow stole the ground and I don’t see any harm in taking a few cobs of corn or a dilly-full of potatoes when we were hungry.

Similar sentiments were shared with Petrie by Milboang Jemmy, who stated he did not see any harm taking food when hungry, ‘as the white man had taken away his country.’ Sharing and reciprocity were core values of traditional Aboriginal society. According to Henry Reynolds the possessiveness of European settlers in their relationship to the land was ‘morally obnoxious’ to Aboriginal people. Skirmishes and violence over the possession of land, food and objects in Reynolds’ view represents ‘the fundamental clash of principles’ which occurred on the colonial frontier between the individualistic materialism of Western Europe and the reciprocal, group values of Indigenous Australia.

The end result of the Aboriginal raids in the first quarter of 1840 according to Rev. Handt’s journal was the loss of half the Zion Hill maize harvest and over half the potato crop. As a result the German missionaries were still dependent on Government supplied rations. Official correspondence from 1840 records the occasional supply of rations from the commissariat stores to the mission settlement. While Governor Gipps in April 1839 had recommended the distribution of rations to the mission be cut to a bare minimum, it is clear from the colonial record that he did not rigidly enforce the decision.

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37 Reynolds, The Other Side of the Frontier, pp.68-70
38 Journal of Rev. Handt, 22 March 1840
Writing to W. Miller at the commissariat stores in Sydney, Gipps argued Lang’s mission settlement was:

An arrangement sanctioned by the Home Government. I cannot allow them to be starved … if there are no other means by which they can obtain their supplies they must continue to have the necessities of life from the Government stores.  

Despite the shortages and hardships experienced by the missionaries, genealogical records reveal five babies were safely delivered to the German families during 1840, bringing the total number of children at the settlement to eleven. During the foundation years of the mission not a single instance of infant mortality occurred at Zion Hill, testament to the devoted parenting skills of the missionaries in genuinely difficult circumstances.

Missionary correspondence to Germany published by the Gossner Missionary Society gives some indication of the progress made by the Germans throughout 1840. In February 1840, Zillman informed German friends and relatives of the excellent produce grown in the mission gardens. He rated the local soil as being very fertile and claimed to have harvested 8 lb cucumbers and 22 lb melons. Fruit trees prospered at the settlement but the hot winds of summer often burnt the fruit. Potatoes grew throughout the year, producing two harvests. Correspondence from the one of the missionaries, August Albrecht, describe the dimensions of his garden as 18 feet wide and over 100 feet in length, running down the entire length of the slope to Kedron Brook. Albrecht’s letter also reveals the missionaries were now keeping poultry including a number of chickens, ducks and turkeys, providing eggs and white meat for the settlement.

In August 1840 letters were published describing the contribution made by Aboriginal workers to the development of the mission. Despite the raids on the summer crops, the Germans still valued the efforts of Aboriginal labourers and described them as ‘very diligent in the gardens.’ Aboriginal men and women performed a variety of tasks

39 Letter, Governor Gipps to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 17 August 1839, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary, Letters Relating to Moreton Bay & Queensland, 1822-1860, A2. 11, JOL, 25 ff.
40 Queensland Pioneers Index, 1829-1889: Index to Births, Deaths and Marriages in Queensland, Register General, Department of Justice & Attorney-General, Brisbane, 2000
41 Extract from Die Beine auf dem Missionsfeld, 1840, No.21, translated by Colin Sheehan
for the missionaries in return for payment of food, including clearing timber, chopping wood, and carrying water. The construction of buildings at Zion Hill was also greatly facilitated by Aboriginal workers bringing in sheets of bark, balanced on their heads. By August 1840 eight houses stood proudly across the ridge of Zion Hill, overlooking eleven gardens.

In the first months of 1841 the summer crops of maize and potatoes were once more ready for harvest but, once again, the first months of the year proved to be a tumultuous period for the Germans. On 17 January 1841 the Brisbane and Bremer rivers broke their banks in the largest flood ever experienced in the history of the Moreton Bay settlement. Comparable in size to the massive deluges of 1893 and 1974, the flood waters ‘totally destroyed’ the convict fields of wheat and maize. Although situated several miles from the Brisbane River the impact of the flood was also felt by the missionaries at Zion Hill. A log bridge constructed by the Germans over Kedron Brook was swept away by the rising waters which also inundated the settlement’s low lying maize fields. The Gossner Missionary Society journal described the flood as shattering the missionaries’ hopes for a rich harvest, ‘laying waste their gardens.’ The impact of the natural disaster was further compounded by Aboriginal activity:

as the rain fell in streams from the windows of heaven …before their very eyes set about plundering their gardens. It was fortunate there was only one tribe in the neighbourhood; had there been others, they would have taken everything that the water left behind.

After the flood waters subsided in February 1841, Lieutenant Gorman submitted a report on the mission to Sydney, responding to a request from the Governor for a detailed account of its activities. Gorman’s report provides a critical but concise picture of the status of the mission in early 1841. Eleven dwellings ‘of a class of building rather

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42 Extract from *Die Beine auf dem Missionsfelde*, 1841, No.10, translated by Colin Sheehan
43 Extract from *Die Beine auf dem Missionsfelde*, 1840, No.21, translated by Colin Sheehan
45 Colonial Observer, 11 November 1841, p.42
46 Extract from *Die Beine auf dem Missionsfelde*, 1841, No.11, translated by Colin Sheehan
superior to huts’ had been erected at the settlement with fifteen acres of fenced land divided into gardens. The mission’s stock holdings consisted of ‘four milch cows, one bullock and six calves.’ In Gorman’s opinion the Germans were still receiving ‘very scanty supplies’ from the management committee in Sydney, leaving them in ‘a state nearly bordering on starvation’. Gorman informed Gipps that, in recent months, he had issued 1015 lbs of flour to the mission as nothing had been sent to them from Sydney and a ‘lack of nourishment’ was cited by the Commandant as the cause of the recent hospitalisation of one of the German women. Gorman admitted the missionaries had successfully employed ‘the Blacks’ in their gardens and made two excursions to the northern coastal tribes, but he saw little effect on ‘the morals or habits’ of the local Aboriginal people. The Commandant concluded: ‘The general opinion here is that they never will be able to render any benefit to the Blacks.”

In March 1841 the Germans faced the more immediate concern of preventing Aboriginal raids on their potato crops. Entries in Rev. Handt’s journal for the month record large numbers of Aboriginal men raiding the fields of Zion Hill and the Eagle Farm agricultural establishment on an almost daily basis. On one such occasion, a watchdog belonging to the missionaries was warded off with a hunting boomerang. In the aftermath of these events, the chaplain reported the damage done to the missionaries crops was ‘very serious.’ The chaplain believed the men responsible were not local Aboriginal people but ‘others of a remote district.’ Handt does not give any explanation for their presence in North Brisbane. It is possible outside groups had arrived to attend kipper-making ceremonies at the local Bora rings or participate in ritual battles or Pullen Pullen to settle inter-tribal disputes, and saw the missionaries’ crops as a source of food to which they believed they were entitled as the traditional owners of the land.

The Germans’ were not alone in feeling the impact of the Aboriginal people’s presence. After one raid in which a government bull was speared to death at Eagle Farm Gorman banned all Aboriginal men and women from entering the agriculture establishment at Eagle Farm. On 20 March 1841 the Commandant sent a contingent of troops to patrol the area. Outside Zion Hill Gorman’s soldiers confronted a group of over

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47 Letter, Lt. Gorman to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 8 February 1841, in Steele, Brisbane Town in Convict Days, pp.269-270
48 Journal of Rev. Handt, 25 March 1841
fifty Aboriginal men ‘who did not appear to fear them.’ Many of the group instead advanced towards the British Redcoats, only retreating when the troops called out to them. According to Handt the soldiers then opened fire with their muskets: ‘but not with the intention of hurting any of them, upon which the Aborigines left the place and drew towards the North’.49

After sustaining considerable losses to their summer harvests for two consecutive years, news came from Sydney which offered the Germans some degree of hope for the future. Rev. Lang had at last returned to Sydney after a two year absence from the colony. His quest seeking official recognition for his Presbyterian Synod of New South Wales had ended in complete failure but the clergyman took the opportunity to enjoy an exhaustive study tour of the United States of America before returning to New South Wales. Upon arrival in Sydney he found the two rival Presbyterian Synods had happily settled their differences in his absence with the reunification of the Church officially recognised by the colonial authorities. Lang was cautiously welcomed back by his Presbyterian brethren and he resumed his ministry at the Scots Church, Sydney.50

Informed of Lang’s return, Eipper immediately travelled to Sydney to discuss the troubled state of the mission with the clergyman. Lang had also received angry correspondence from Rev. Gossner in Berlin regarding the hardships endured by his missionaries in Moreton Bay, and the minister immediately set to work to redress the situation. ‘A large and liberal supply’ of goods and rations was sent by Lang to Moreton Bay and the Scottish clergyman wrote to the missionaries at length outlining his vision for the future of the mission and the course of action he wished them to pursue. Eipper also reported to Lang that two of the missionaries, August Albrecht and Ludwig Doege ‘had not been acting with becoming propriety.’ Lang’s immediate recommendation was that the connection between the two men and the mission ‘should be dissolved’.51 The exact nature of the indiscretion or offence committed by the two men remains unknown but the Germans accepted Lang’s decision without question and Albrecht and Doege

49 Journal of Rev. Handt, 20 March 1841
50 Baker, Days of Wrath, pp.172-174
51 Colonial Observer, 26 January 1842, p.130
departed Moreton Bay in mid-1841, leaving behind the houses and gardens at Zion Hill they had worked so arduously to complete.  

To reinvigorate the mission, Lang recommenced raising public subscriptions towards the project. To improve public awareness of the mission, Lang asked Eipper to write a short pamphlet on the work of the Germans in Moreton Bay. In April 1841 a *Statement of the Origin, Conditions and Prospects of the German Mission to the Aboriginal people at Moreton Bay* was published by Lang with extracts of the document printed in the Sydney newspapers. Eipper’s pamphlet also provides a detailed ethnographic account of the traditional way of life and customs of the Aboriginal people of Moreton Bay and includes one of the first recorded vocabularies of the Yuggera/Turrbal language. Rev. Schmidt was invited by Lang to return to Sydney ‘to excite some interest throughout the Colony on behalf of the mission’ and during 1841 Schmidt made several visits to Sydney to help promote the cause.

By the end of April 1841, Lang’s fundraising efforts had produced a list of contributions totaling £448 7s 10d. He submitted the list to Colonial Secretary Thomson requesting the New South Wales Government match the amount raised as previously agreed in 1838. In addition Lang requested the Germans be allowed to purchase a team of bullocks, ten or twelve milk cows and a few sheep from the government herds in Moreton Bay. Reviewing Lang’s proposal, Governor Gipps made lengthy comment in the margins of the clergyman’s letter expressing his unhappiness with the current state of the mission. He instructed the Colonial Secretary to inform Dr. Lang that the accounts: ‘I have as such received of the mission are but far from favourable.’ Gipps stated the location of the mission was ill-chosen and would soon be ‘surrounded by settlers’ and noted the Germans themselves appeared to be ‘pursuing the ordinary avocations of settlers’ and paying little attention to the Aboriginal people. Having aired these concerns,

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52 August Albrecht remained good friends with the missionaries Wagner and Nique and worked as a shoemaker in Sydney. The fate of Ludwig Doege after leaving the mission remains unknown.; Letter, J. Nique & F. Rode to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 9 March 1844, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary, Letters Relating to Moreton Bay & Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.17, JOL, 393 ff.


54 Letter, Rev. Lang to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 30 April 1841, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary, Letters Relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.17, JOL., 447-449 ff.
Gipps agreed to match Lang’s contributions, but warned the clergyman that he could not guarantee additional contributions would be made towards the mission beyond a year.\textsuperscript{55}

With Lang once more in charge of the management of the mission the Germans applied themselves to their calling with renewed energy, and expeditions to Aboriginal groups at Toorbal, Deception Bay and the Pine River were undertaken by the missionaries throughout the year.\textsuperscript{56} In July 1841 Schmidt reported to Lang he was now holding classes on a regular basis, providing religious instruction to local Aboriginal children and teaching them English. The missionaries made plans to construct a school room for educating Aboriginal students and their own children at Zion Hill.\textsuperscript{57} An even more ambitious project was the establishment of farms and houses on land specifically for the use of local Aboriginal families. The constant movement of Aboriginal groups continually frustrated the efforts of the Germans to maintain close levels of contact with Aboriginal men and women. The missionaries hoped to overcome this problem by encouraging Aboriginal families to settle in houses and take up farming on land adjoining the mission settlement. Several Aboriginal men expressed interest in the proposal and with their assistance the missionaries began clearing an area of land for this purpose in July 1841. The land was cleared and tilled and named ‘Girkum’ by the Aboriginal people of the area. Three huts for the use of Aboriginal families were quickly assembled at the site.\textsuperscript{58}

Extracts from the mission diary in the later months of 1841 reveal significant changes were also occurring in the farming methods used by the Germans. A dismantled dray was sent to the mission from Sydney and assembled by Zillman, who also employed his blacksmith skills to fashion lengths of chain and a plough for the community. His colleague Wagner secured the loan of a bullock team from the government administrator John Kent and for the first time the Germans were able to use heavy agricultural

\textsuperscript{55} Governor Gipps’ comments, 6 May 1841, Letter, Rev. Lang to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 30 April 1841 New South Wales - Colonial Secretary, Letters Relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.17, JOL, 447-449 ff.
\textsuperscript{56} Accounts of the German Missionaries’ 1841 expeditions can be found in \textit{Colonial Observer}, 14 October 1841, p.10; \textit{Colonial Observer}, 21 October 1841, p.23; \textit{Colonial Observer}, 28 October 1841, p.27; \textit{Colonial Observer}, 4 November 1841, p.35; Grope, ‘How Beauteous are their Feet’, pp.54-61
\textsuperscript{57} Letter, Rev. Schmidt to Rev. Lang, 5 July 1841, Box 20, Lang Papers, ML, 242-244 ff.
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Colonial Observer}, 11 November 1841, p.42
equipment at the mission settlement. The first task assigned to the bullock team and its drivers was ploughing a dry area of swamp land for the cultivation of maize. Logs and timber for the construction of a new bridge across Kedron Brook were also dragged into position by the bullocks although the mission diary also indicates that Germans lacked experience in handling the large animals. On two occasions in August 1841 the bullocks broke free and wandered off into the bush. In both instances the Germans were unable to locate the animals themselves and were forced to call upon stockmen from Eagle Farm to track down the bullocks and return them to Zion Hill, rewarding the men with rations of sugar for their efforts.

Through August 1841 the missionaries planted maize in the freshly ploughed fields and prepared the ground for the cultivation of potatoes. Several Aboriginal family groups eagerly took the opportunity to live in the new huts at Girkum but circumstances beyond the control of the missionaries resulted in the abandonment of the area. Diseases introduced by the European settlers such as smallpox and influenza devastated Aboriginal populations across colonial Australia throughout the 19th century. Aboriginal people often ascribed supernatural causes to the strange unfamiliar illnesses and symptoms. In the final weeks of August three deaths in close succession occurred in the Aboriginal camps close to Zion Hill and a climate of fear prevailed among the local Aboriginal men and women. Some blamed the spate of deaths on sorcery cast by ‘Moppe’s tribe while others saw the work of ‘devil devils’ or spirits at play. The traditional mortuary beliefs of many Aboriginal Australians call for the abandonment of a household or camp after a death has occurred to assist the passage of the spirit of the deceased to the next stage of the afterlife. Following these ancient spiritual traditions, the Aboriginal families at Girkum moved away from the settlement leaving the new huts deserted.

In October 1841 Schmidt attended the annual Synod meeting of the Presbyterian Church in Sydney and presented a report detailing the recent work and achievements of

59 John Kent was appointed to the role of Deputy Assistant Commissary General in 1835 to manage the government herds and livestock in Moreton Bay; Johnston, Brisbane the First Thirty Years, p.50
60 Colonial Observer, 11 November 1841, p.42
61 Reynolds, The Other Side of the Frontier, pp.56-58; Evans, ‘The Mogwi Take Mi-An-Jin’, pp.70-71
62 Colonial Observer, 11 November 1841, p.42; ‘Moppe’s tribe’ were a Yuggera speaking group whose territory extended from the Ipswich area through the Lockyer valley region.
the mission. The report was well received and the assembly decided a new committee
should be established to manage the mission, with Lang presiding as convener of the
body. The clergyman meanwhile continued to promote the mission at every opportunity
and his new newspaper the Colonial Observer began publishing extracts from the
missionaries’ journals of their recent expeditions to the Aboriginal people of Torbal, in
serialised installments. In November 1841 Lang’s request for the purchase of additional
livestock for the mission received Governor Gipp’s approval. In the final weeks of 1841
twelve cows, five bullocks, 100 wethers and twenty ewes were transferred from the
government herds to the fields of Zion Hill at a cost of £169, more than doubling the
number of livestock kept at the mission.

The three years from 1839 to 1841 were not an easy period for the Germans of
Zion Hill. Enduring the neglect of their management committee, Aboriginal raids on their
crops and one of the largest floods in the recorded history of southeast Queensland, every
member of the small German community survived these years of hunger and adversity.
Although still vulnerable to the climate and Aboriginal raids, the mission settlement at
the end of 1841 was in a far more secure position than in previous years. The mission’s
gardens and fields were well established and delivering consistent harvests and the
Germans now possessed heavy agricultural equipment including a plough which greatly
improved their capability to produce their staple crops of maize and potatoes. The arrival
of the dray greatly benefited the missionaries in terms of giving them the capacity to
transport loads of all kinds to and from the settlement. The additional livestock purchased
in the final weeks of 1841 were also a valuable addition to the settlement on a number of
levels, providing the Germans with additional dairy produce, fresh meat and wool and
also producing a greater supply of manure thereby improving the fertility of their soil.

While many contemporary critics castigated the German missionaries for
spending more time farming and building houses than working with local Aboriginal
groups it should be remembered the process of establishing farming settlements in

64 Sydney Herald, 8 October 1841, p.2; Sydney Herald, 9 October 1841, p.3; Colonial Observer, 21
October 1841, p.23
65 The first issue of Rev. Lang’s second newspaper the Colonial Observer hit the press on 7 October 1841;
Baker, Days of Wrath, p.177
66 Letter, Governor Gipps to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 18 November 1841, New South Wales -
Colonial Secretary, Letters Relating to Moreton Bay & Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.17, JOL, 439 ff.
colonial New South Wales was a labour intensive and often unrewarding task, fraught with setbacks and difficulties. It took several years of trial and error before the convict settlements at Sydney and Moreton Bay produced successful harvests of any kind. Small-scale farming was a far riskier proposition than pastoralism on an economic level, with much physical effort and expenditure required before seeing even a small or moderate return. Outside financial support was therefore crucial to colonial farmers in the first years of establishing a successful agricultural property. In Lang’s absence, outside support for the mission from the Presbyterian committee in Sydney was sorely lacking but the generosity of Governor Gipps and Commandant Cotton and the frugality and determination of the Germans themselves, allowed the missionary families to survive this period of neglect. Lang’s return in 1841 provided the mission with a revitalising boost in capital and resources, placing the settlement in a position where it was able to face the challenges of the years ahead.
Chapter Four

1842–1845: Missionaries and Market Gardeners

With the commencement of the New Year in 1842, preparations were made at Zion Hill for the gathering of the summer maize harvest. At a meeting on 7 January 1842 the Germans discussed proposals to preach to Aboriginal groups at Toorbal and the Pine River but the suggestion was rejected. Supplies at the mission were again running low and the consensus was reached that every man was needed to protect the ripening maize crop. Unwelcome Aboriginal harvesting had already depleted the cobs growing in the cultivated area of reclaimed swamp land. On the Sabbath morning of 16 January 1842 it seemed as if the missionaries fears of large scale Aboriginal raids on their crops were once more about to be realised. From their mission houses the Germans watched nervously as ‘a great number of Natives’ gathered outside the fields of Zion Hill. The mission diary does not specify the identity of the group but entries through January 1842 record the arrival of numbers of Pine River and Toorbal Aboriginal people in the area, to fish on the Brisbane River and attend a ceremonial battle with ‘Moppe’s tribe’.¹

Fearing a repeat of the Sabbath raids of January 1840, the missionaries postponed their morning service and stood guard over the fields. To their immense relief the day passed without incident and the missionaries in gratitude distributed a quantity of maize to Aboriginal families in the nearby camps at sunset. The source material does not specify the identity of these families but it is likely they were member of the ‘Duke of York’ tribe, local men and women who the Germans perhaps believed stood the best chance of conversion. The missionaries no doubt hoped the reward of food would encourage the Aboriginal men to refrain from future raids on the summer crops and be content with the rations provided to them as payment for their honest toil in the fields.²

¹ ‘Extracts from the Diary of the German Mission to the Aborigines at Moreton Bay from the 25 December 1841 to the 13 May for 1842’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 131-133 ff.
² ‘Extracts from the Diary of the German Mission to the Aborigines at Moreton Bay from the 25 December 1841 to the 13 May for 1842’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 131-133 ff.
The Germans harvested the ripened maize in late January 1842 with the assistance of eighteen Aboriginal workers. The final yield proved to be lower than expected because of the dry summer conditions. In the same month two Aboriginal men Milboang Jemmy and Wogan agreed to work as shepherds at Zion Hill, tending the recently purchased flocks of sheep. The Aboriginal men received regular rations of maize as wages but also earned the entitlement to the sheep’s head whenever one was slaughtered by the Germans. By the end of January 1842, the once abandoned Girkum area was again the scene of much activity. Several Aboriginal families returned to live in the huts and cultivate small areas of maize, potatoes and other vegetables.3

The mission diary entry for 31 January 1842 records the visit of a party of new immigrants to the settlement traveling to the recently established pastoral stations in the upper reaches of the Brisbane River.4 After the arrival of the Leslie brothers on the Darling Downs in June 1840 several pastoral holdings were taken up outside the limits of the Moreton Bay penal settlement, with the Archer and Mackenzie families establishing stations in the Brisbane Valley in 1841. David Archer introduced himself to the missionaries in November 1841 after blazing a trail with Evan Mackenzie from the Brisbane Valley to the Moreton Bay settlement.5 Archer’s trail passed Zion Hill as it approached the settlement and the missionaries established good relations with the Archer and Mackenzie families encouraging their teamsters to camp near the mission and water their bullocks at Kedron Brook on their frequent journeys to Moreton Bay.6 The establishment of the Brisbane Valley stations heralded the rapid expansion of the pastoral industry in Moreton Bay and surrounding districts. In February 1842 Governor Gipps announced the closure of the convict settlement. The entire region was now open to free

3 The identity of the 18 workers is not revealed by the mission diary but it is likely they were local ‘Duke of York’ men. ‘Extracts from the Diary of the German Mission to the Aborigines at Moreton Bay from the 25 December 1841 to the 13 May for 1842’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 131-133 ff.
4 ‘Extracts from the Diary of the German Mission to the Aborigines at Moreton Bay from the 25 December 1841 to the 13 May for 1842’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 131-133 ff.; J. Mackenzie-Smith, Brisbane’s Forgotten Founder Sir Evan Mackenzie of Kilcoy 1816-1883, Brisbane History Group, Kelvin Grove, 1992 p.75
6 Archer, Recollections of a Rambling Life, pp.81-82
settlement with the first allotments of land in Brisbane town ready for sale at public auction in July 1842.\(^7\)

At Moreton Bay dry conditions prevailed through February and the mission diary records the missionaries’ concerns for the planting of their new crops. The hot dry conditions made the task of working in the fields an arduous experience for the Germans. Many of the Aboriginal labourers at Zion Hill left the area to go fishing on the coast while those who remained could ‘scarcely be induced to do any work’ complaining of headaches from standing in the sun. The summer heat also effected the missionaries including Rev. Eipper who was struck down with severe fever and bowel complaints. Relief from the oppressive conditions came at last on 18 February with the arrival of good rains which continued for the rest of the month.\(^8\)

Aboriginal workers were employed by the Germans throughout the remaining weeks of February into March 1842. Aboriginal children broke up the harvested maize cobs in preparation for milling, while at the Girkum area Aboriginal men planted and tilled potatoes. Teams of Aboriginal labourers also worked with the missionaries to expand the size of the Girkum area, clearing trees and vegetation, burning branches, breaking up the ground and dragging away logs with the assistance of the bullock team.\(^9\) Alongside this close level of cooperation between local Aboriginal groups and the Germans, raids continued to occur on the summer crops but on a much smaller scale than previous years. On 8 March 1842 Zillman discovered a sack of flour and some linen clothing had been taken from his store house. The other missionaries immediately checked their dwellings and Haussman also discovered large quantities of sugar, rice and maize had been removed from his stores. The Germans made inquiries in the Aboriginal camps and three children identified the culprit as the mission’s former shepherd Milboang Jemmy. The missionaries decided not to inform the authorities but set watches during the night. Seeing the unhappiness of the missionaries after the theft, two Aboriginal men ‘the King of Toorbal’ and Dabianco challenged Milboang Jemmy to combat for stealing the supplies. Jemmy accepted the challenge and received a

\(^7\) W.R. Johnston, *Brisbane the First Thirty Years*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1988, p.79

\(^8\) ‘Extracts from the Diary of the German Mission to the Aborigines at Moreton Bay from the 25 December 1841 to the 13 May for 1842’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 133-135 ff.

\(^9\) ‘Extracts from the Diary of the German Mission to the Aborigines at Moreton Bay from the 25 December 1841 to the 13 May for 1842’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 135-137 ff.
comprehensive beating from Dabianco before he ‘took to his heels’ and retreated to the Pine River.  

In Sydney the fragile peace between Rev. Lang and the Presbyterian Synod of New South Wales was disintegrating. Lang’s autocratic approach to his administrative duties and constant involvement in side projects attracted increasing amounts of criticism within the church. Lang was accused of neglecting his work at the Scots Church while he traveled across the colony raising funds to revitalise the Australia College. His role as convener of the mission management committee was also called into question. Since his appointment to the position in October 1841, Lang had failed to call a single meeting of the committee and conducted all business relating to the mission on an individual basis. Lang’s critics noted the growing debts accrued by the project and accused the clergyman of using government funds for the mission to cover the expenses of his fourth voyage to Britain. On the Sunday morning of 6 February 1842 Lang stepped up to the pulpit of the Scots Church and in front of his congregation responded to the accusations of his critics. He declared the Presbyterian Synod of New South Wales to be a ‘Synagogue of Satan’ and announced his intention to once again break away from the Church. Against the wishes of the Presbyterian Synod, the congregation of the Scots Church voted to follow Lang, as did the German missionaries of Moreton Bay. After the years of neglect between 1839 and 1841, the Germans had little faith in the Presbyterian Synod and remained loyal to the founder of their mission.

In March 1842 Lang established a new administrative committee for the mission appointing himself and Baptist minister Dr Ross as joint secretaries. Other members of the committee included the clergyman’s brother, Andrew Lang and prominent Sydney businessman and philanthropist David Jones. Rev. Schmidt who was again visiting Sydney to raise funds for the mission also attended the first meeting of the new committee and during February 1842 he collected £169 12s 5½d in donations from the

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10 ‘Extracts from the Diary of the German Mission to the Aborigines at Moreton Bay from the 25 December 1841 to the 13 May for 1842’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 139-141 ff.; C. Petrie, Tom Petrie’s Reminiscences of Early Queensland, Watson, Ferguson & Co, 1902, pp.166-169
11 Sydney Herald, 15 February 1842, p.2; Colonial Observer, 19 February 1842, pp.1-2
13 Minutes of the Mission Committee, 15 March 1842, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary, Letters Relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.12, JOL, 361 ff.
public. Lang submitted the amount plus additional subscriptions totaling £246 9s 11½d to Colonial Secretary Thomson requesting the total be matched by the New South Wales Government. It was evident that the income raised by public subscriptions was failing to keep pace with the debts of the mission. The shortage of funds was so severe that Rev. and Mrs. Schmidt could not afford to pay for their return fares to Moreton Bay and only secured their passage through the generosity of the Hunter River Company who operated the steamer. Lang wrote to the colonial authorities requesting additional assistance to clear the mission’s debts. Governor Gipps responded not only with a clear refusal but also indicated his intention to visit Moreton Bay, at which time he would inspect Zion Hill.14

On 26 March 1842 Rev. and Mrs. Schmidt returned to the mission on the steamer *Shamrock*, traveling with Governor Gipp’s official party to Moreton Bay. The Germans were informed of the Governor’s imminent inspection of the mission on the morning of 28 March 1842. Pastoralist Thomas Archer was traveling into Brisbane Town that morning. Passing Zion Hill he noticed ‘30 or 40 men, gins and picanninies … arranged in the vestaments of civilisation.’ Well aware that Gipps’ continued support was crucial to the future of Zion Hill, the last minute effort to set about clothing ‘all the Natives present’ was an attempt by the Germans to impress the Governor of the civilising benefits provided by the mission to the Aboriginal people of North Brisbane. The Governor’s party arrived at 11 o’clock and Gipps carefully inspected the mission houses and gardens. Again attempting to impress the Governor, Eipper and Schmidt presented Gipps with the carefully tallied statistics from the mission diary, listing the numbers of Aboriginal people employed, children educated and days spent visiting Aboriginal groups in the field. The Germans also took the opportunity to ask the Governor for a supply of blankets for distribution to Aboriginal men and women, a ram, a horse and additional rations of rice and flour for the mission.15

Gipps noted their requests, before moving on to the Eagle Farm agricultural establishment to witness a corroboree performed by members of the ‘Duke of York’s

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15 ‘Extracts from the Diary of the German Mission to the Aborigines at Moreton Bay from the 25 December 1841 to the 13 May for 1842’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML., 143-146 ff.; Archer, *Recollections of a Rambling Life*, pp.84-85; *Archer Family Letters*, JOL, OM 80-10, pp.65-66
tribe.’ A few days later, Eipper and Schmidt were granted a second opportunity to meet with the Governor in Brisbane Town prior to his departure for Sydney. Gipps informed the missionaries he found the location of Zion Hill to be ‘unsatisfactory’ and too near the main settlement. Gipps suggested he would be happy to see the enterprise relocated to a new site outside Moreton Bay in the ‘Bonya Bonya mountains.’ In answer to their requests Gipps instructed the administrator Mr. Kent to issue the Germans with a ram from the government herd and also advised them a supply of blankets for ‘deserving natives’ would be sent to the mission from Sydney.16

After his return to Sydney, Governor Gipps drafted a memorandum informing the new mission committee that having visited Zion Hill he was ‘fully confirmed in the opinion… the locality in which the mission is placed was very ill chosen.’ For this reason he could not promise to continue official support for the project. Gipps again expressed concern regarding the debts accrued by the mission but announced he was prepared to stand by the promise he made to Eipper and Schmidt and authorised the issue of 100 blankets and ten casks of flour and rice for the missionaries.17 The Governor’s generosity revealed itself again a fortnight later when he agreed to cover the amount still owing from the previous year’s purchase of livestock for the mission.18

The growing debts of the mission and the falling level of donations from the public were symptomatic of a larger crisis enveloping the economy of New South Wales. The pastoral boom and land grab of the 1830s ground to a halt in 1839 with the onset of severe drought across the colony. Falling wool prices on international markets then pushed the New South Wales economy into a spiraling depression in the early 1840s and by 1842 the downturn in commerce soon affected all sections of colonial society. Some 600 insolvencies were recorded by the Sydney Morning Herald during the year and numerous joint stock companies faced imminent collapse. The revenue raised by the New South Wales Government from public land sales also plummeted.19 During his official

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16 ‘Extracts from the Diary of the German Mission to the Aborigines at Moreton Bay from the 25 December 1841 to the 13 May for 1842’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 143-146 ff.
17 Memorandum, Governor Gipps to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 11 April 1842, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary Letters Relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.17, JOL, 411-414 ff.
career Gipps maintained the personal philosophy that ‘the Governor who keeps his Government out of debt is the best.’\textsuperscript{20} With the coffers of the colonial treasury increasingly diminished, Gipps set about reducing all areas of official expenditure, including the official support given to the colonial missions of New South Wales. Seeing few positive results from the efforts of the colonial missions, Gipps’ superiors in London actively encouraged his policy of withdrawing support for the projects. Funding for Rev. Threlkeld’s Lake Macquarie mission was terminated in 1841 and, in June 1842, the Church Missionary Society mission at Wellington Valley lost its official backing. Both missions closed soon after.\textsuperscript{21}

In the autumn months of 1842 the German missionaries began making preparations to implement the Governor’s plan of relocating the mission to the Bunya country. Through April and May 1842 Eipper traveled between Durundur and Kilcoy pastoral stations, conducting services for the Archer and Mackenzie families and making contact with the Aboriginal groups of the area. If the mission was to be successfully relocated to the Bunya country of the Sunshine Coast hinterland, the Germans believed it would be essential to enjoy the support of the closest settlers to the area, the Brisbane Valley pastoralists. For this reason Eipper spent two months at Durundur and Kilcoy cementing positive working relationships with the Archer and Mackenzie families and their station workers.\textsuperscript{22} After Eipper’s return, the Germans mounted the largest field expedition in the history of the mission. Four missionaries accompanied by nine Aboriginal guides left Zion Hill on 1 June 1842 to explore the Bunya country and identify a suitable new location for the mission. After travelling to Durundur station the missionaries turned north reaching the forested slopes of the Sunshine Coast hinterland. Following the ridge lines through the hill country they reached the Baroon Valley. With good pasture and a ready supply of fresh water, the Germans believed the Valley presented an attractive alternative to Zion Hill, but the remoteness of the location presented a serious obstacle to the removal of the mission to the site.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{21} N. Gunson, \textit{Australian Reminiscences & Papers of L.E. Threlkeld, Missionary to the Aborigines 1824-1859}, Vol.1, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1974, p.26
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Colonial Observer}, 23 July 1842, p.347; \textit{Colonial Observer}, 27 July 1842, p.355
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Colonial Observer}, 3 December 1842, p.651; \textit{Colonial Observer}, 7 December 1842, p.662
Returning to Zion Hill, the Germans sent a detailed report of the expedition to the mission committee in Sydney and Lang forwarded a copy of the document to Governor Gipps.\textsuperscript{24} The following month the Germans submitted to Lang a full inventory of the property of the mission as recorded on 1 July 1842. The inventory reveals the number of livestock held at the mission had grown significantly in the last year. They now managed forty-four head of cattle and 111 sheep, with the number of calves increasing every year. The human population had also grown with the number of children at the mission now standing at seventeen. Among the tools and equipment held by the mission were the plough and dray received the previous year, plus a harrow and pit and crosscut saws.\textsuperscript{25}

Through the remaining months of 1842 the missionaries continued to travel among and preach to Aboriginal groups north of the settlement while tending their crops and livestock at Zion Hill. Dry weather conditions prevailed from October through to December 1842 affecting the growth of their potatoes and pasture. In November the Germans washed and sheared the settlement’s sheep with the assistance of Aboriginal workers.\textsuperscript{26} Since the missionaries’ expedition to the Bunya country in June 1842 nothing further had been heard from the colonial authorities in Sydney regarding the removal of the mission. Lang wrote to the Colonial Secretary in November 1842, calling on the New South Wales Government to clarify its position regarding the future of the mission as the German families, in the words of the clergyman were ‘in a state of uncertainty.’ Governor Gipps responded to Lang’s communication, stating an official decision could not be made until a government expedition firstly surveyed the area. The required survey, according to Gipps, would be conducted the following year in 1843 led by Dr Stephen Simpson, the new Commissioner for Crown Lands in Moreton Bay.\textsuperscript{27}

Seeking to put pressure on Gipps and at the same time discredit the pastoralists of New South Wales, Lang published an extract from Rev. Schmidt’s journal of the expedition to the Bunya Country, in his newspaper the \textit{Colonial Observer}. One sentence

\textsuperscript{24} Letter, Rev. Lang & Dr Ross to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 15 November 1842, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary Letters Relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.17, JOL, 403-405 ff.
\textsuperscript{25} ‘Minutes for the Meeting for Business, Monday Evening 11 July 1842’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 155-157 ff.
\textsuperscript{26} ‘Extracts from the General Diary of the German Mission at Moreton Bay from 27th of September 1842 to 17th January 1843’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 160-168 ff.
\textsuperscript{27} Letter, Rev. Lang & Dr Ross to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 15 November 1842, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary Letters Relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.17, JOL, 403-405 ff.
from the journal which noted in passing ‘50 to 60 natives’ had been poisoned at a nearby squatter’s station, created a scandal in the Sydney press, generating correspondence and editorials calling for the guilty parties ‘to be found out and prosecuted.’

Reports of the poisoning incident which occurred at the Mackenzie family’s station at Kilcoy in January 1842 had been effectively covered up by the colonial authorities in Brisbane and Sydney. The Colonial Observer revealed to the Sydney public for the first time the extent of one of the worst frontier killings in the ongoing conflicts between the squatters and Aboriginal people of the districts surrounding Moreton Bay.

While Lang felt compelled to reveal the truth about the incident, he later recalled ‘the German Missionaries did not feel particularly obliged to me for the publication of the journal.’ Lang’s comments indicate the Germans were perhaps fearful that an official investigation into the massacre would jeopardise the good relations forged with the Mackenzie family. This was the impression received by Dr. Simpson when he questioned Schmidt in January 1843 about his failure to investigate or report the incident in the summer of 1842. Simpson observed Schmidt’s ‘disinclination to follow up this investigation has no doubt arisen from his fear of offending the Squatters generally.’

The source material offers no indication as to whether the decision to remain silent troubled the collective conscience of the Germans. They were however not alone in keeping quiet about the killings. Not a single settler, clergyman or government employee from Moreton Bay was prepared to break the ‘conspiracy of silence’ protecting the Mackenzies, an influential family with strong links to the British aristocracy.

The summer of January 1843 reflected those of previous years with the occurrence of Aboriginal forays on the summer crops combined with losses from rising flood waters, but the damage was minor compared to previous years. Despite the dry conditions experienced in the final months of 1842, the eventual yield of the summer.

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28 Colonial Observer, 3 December 1842, p. 651; Sydney Morning Herald, 5 December 1842, p.2; Sydney Morning Herald, 7 December 1842, p.2; Colonial Observer, 7 December 1842, p.662
29 Mackenzie-Smith, Brisbane’s Forgotten Founder, p.78
31 Letter, Dr Simpson to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 20 January 1843, in G. Langevad (ed.) The Simpson Letterbook, Cultural & Historical Records of Queensland, No.1, University of Queensland, St.Lucia, 1979, p.5
32 J. Mackenzie-Smith, Moreton Bay Scots 1841-59, Church Archivists’ Press, 2000, p.22
harvest for the first time exceeded the expectations of the missionaries. In Sydney Rev. Lang and the mission committee continued to face the problem of the mission’s debts. With the ever worsening economic situation in New South Wales subscriptions to the mission had all but dried up. Lang organised a public meeting open to all supporters of the mission in December 1842 and tabled a memorial to Governor Gipps asking the New South Wales Government to clear the mission’s debts which now totaled £182. Gipps made no response to the petition. Lang repeated his request that the debt be cleared in a communication sent to Colonial Secretary Thomson on 11 January 1843. This time the Governor responded with an adamant refusal, informing Lang that while the New South Wales Government was prepared to match amounts raised by public subscription as agreed by both parties, no additional funding could be made towards the mission. 

The depressed New South Wales economy in 1843 showed no signs of recovery. Businesses across the colony began to fold causing the collapse of the Bank of Australia in March 1843. Unemployment was rife in Sydney and tradesmen lucky enough to keep their jobs found their wages cut by up to fifty percent. In the space of two years, market prices for agricultural commodities such as wool, mutton, beef and wheat more than halved. Slight returns could be made by pastoralists through the wholesale slaughter of their herds and boiling the carcasses down to produce tallow. Manning Clark describes the livestock markets as being in such dire circumstances in 1843, people would not accept herds and flocks even as gifts. This statement, however, was not true in all instances. In 1843 the Archer family offered the German missionaries a flock of forty-seven sheep at no cost which they gratefully accepted. The missionaries Haussman and

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33 ‘Extracts from the General Diary of the German Mission from January 23 to July 1843’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 171-172 ff.
34 Sydney Morning Herald, 17 December 1842, p.2; Colonial Observer, 21 December 1842, pp.689-690; Sydney Morning Herald, 19 December 1842, p.2
Niquet undertook the task of driving the sheep from Durundur to Moreton Bay and the flock reached the green pastures of Zion Hill on 17 March 1843.37

Like the rest of New South Wales, Brisbane Town and the surrounding pastoral stations were reeling from the effects of the economic downturn. A Brisbane correspondent writing to the Colonial Observer described business as ‘flat’ and expressed the fear the young settlement would remain for sometime ‘in anything but a flourishing condition.'38 A boiling down plant for tallow production was established at Kangaroo Point while one pastoralist Arthur Hodgson resorted to bringing his flocks into Brisbane Town, slaughtering them and selling the fresh mutton door to door.39 While the financial outlook for the region was grim, weather conditions in Moreton Bay during the first half of 1843 were perfect for agriculture. Extracts from the mission diary mention good rains falling from late January through to April 1843, with the second crop of maize in the upper gardens reported by the missionaries as ‘highly promising.’40

In March 1843 Eipper accompanied the government’s overland expedition to Wide Bay. Following the Governor’s instructions, Dr. Simpson assembled a party to explore the ‘Bunya country’ and the newly opened areas of Wide Bay, with an official brief to investigate reports and collect evidence relating to the poisonings at Kilcoy. The expedition left Durundur station on 10 March 1843 venturing north into the hill country of the Sunshine Coast hinterland. The survey party inspected the proposed new site for the mission in the Baroon Valley, before continuing northwards to the headwaters of the Mary River. The expedition returned to Moreton Bay without incident in late April and Dr Simpson submitted his reports and findings to the colonial authorities in Sydney in May 1843.41

Governor Gipps reviewed Simpson’s reports in June 1843. It was clear from Dr Simpson’s descriptions of the Baroon valley that relocating the mission to the region

37 ‘Extracts from the General Diary of the German Mission from January 23 to July 1843’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 173 ff.
38 Colonial Observer, 25 February 1843, p.846
40 ‘Extracts from the General Diary of the German Mission from January 23 to July 1843’, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML, 173 ff.
would be a difficult and expensive exercise. On 16 June 1843 Gipps wrote to the Colonial Secretary requesting Lang and the mission committee be informed he had decided against the relocation of the mission to the Bunya Country. Worse still for the Germans, he further determined that with the ‘present state of the Land Fund I regret I cannot hold out to the Mission any further prospect of assistance from the Government.’ With this instruction Gipps effectively cut all government assistance to the Moreton Bay mission as had occurred previously at Lake Macquarie, Wellington Valley and Port Phillip Bay. The first wave of Protestant missionary activity in colonial New South Wales was now all but finished.

The Germans faced the prospect of leaving Moreton Bay for new mission fields or alternatively supporting themselves at Zion Hill through their own efforts. The mission committee met in Sydney on 11 July 1843 and saw little hope for the project, concluding that ‘with the state of depression in the colony, the public are unlikely to provide support for the mission.’ The Germans, however, chose to stay at their Zion Hill settlement and support themselves through the sale of agricultural produce in Brisbane Town. The following month when the noted German botanist and explorer Ludwig Leichhardt visited Moreton Bay he was sufficiently impressed to write to his mother that: ‘the missionaries used to be maintained by the Government, but they’re living by market gardening whilst the question of their future is being settled’. Despite the dire circumstances of the New South Wales economy the Germans were in a strong position to succeed as market gardeners. The mission was situated on fertile farm land within easy reach of Brisbane Town. Possessing their own dray and bullock team, the missionaries could now transport quantities of fresh produce into the centre of town in a matter of hours. Equipped with a bullock drawn plough and harrow, the Germans were now making far more effective use of the soil than in their first years of farming at Zion Hill when all tillage was completed by hand using hoes. The growing

42 Governor Gipps comments 16 June 1843, ‘Journal of Excursion to the Bunya Country’, Dr Simpson to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 6 May 1843, New South Wales - Colonial Secretary Letters Relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860, A2.13, JOL, 128-130 ff.
numbers of livestock at the mission were now producing not only enough milk to meet their own dairy needs but also surplus quantities for sale to the residents of Brisbane. A further advantage for the Germans as they commenced work as market gardeners was the fact they had little or no competition in the settlement.

The land agent for Brisbane Town, Thomas Dowse also acted as the regular Moreton Bay correspondent for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. In his columns Dowse frequently identified the need for the development of commercial small-scale agriculture in Moreton Bay. In October 1842 he reported the Government Gardens had fallen into complete disuse and vegetables of any description were ‘scarcely procurable’ and ‘a few gardeners would find it worth their while to come here.’

In January 1843, Dowse reported Brisbane lacked a good dairy establishment and suggested farmers who could supply butter, cheese, fowls and eggs would find a ready market for their produce. It was these gaps in the Brisbane market place that the German missionaries targeted as they ventured into the commercial sale of their produce for the first time in mid-1843.

A description of the German missionaries’ early efforts as market gardeners suggests they enjoyed an almost immediate demand for their produce in Brisbane Town. The reminiscences of James Demarr describe the author’s visit to the settlement in 1843. The effects of the Depression were apparent to Demarr as soon as he arrived in Brisbane town:

Everyone was complaining of bad times, trade there was none, money there was none; the staple products of the country, livestock, were almost value less… All were doing badly except some German missionaries, so everybody said. They it was said, were doing well and carrying on a good trade with Brisbane Town supplying the inhabitants with butter, eggs, fowls etc. and appeared to be the only person doing so.

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45 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 November 1842, p.2
46*Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 January 1843, pp.2-3
Demarr’s praise of the enterprising Zion Hill market gardeners finds parallels in South Australia, where the German settlers’ importance as food producers for Adelaide had impressed J.W. Bull in the 1840s:

The Germans very soon began to carry into the city for sale, small supplies of butter, and within a few months, vegetables, generally on the backs of the females, and in the same manner taking back their supplies of rations… Before the end of their first year of residence among us they furnished the townspeople with a good supply of vegetables &c., realising to themselves a good profit.48

Demarr’s praise was not without its underside. The German missionaries were ‘useful colonists’, he admitted, but the local Aboriginal people did not consider them to be generous individuals:

The blacks from what I could learn did not like the missionaries and if asked why, they were ‘Murra Wiaroo’ (too much greedy). The settlers near Brisbane Town… would generally give them something such as flour, meat, sugar and tobacco but not the missionaries, so the Blacks said.49

Similar sentiments were expressed in a letter written by visiting Catholic dignitary, Archbishop Polding in July 1843:

The Blacks have taken a prejudice against them. They call their house a house of hunger, because they get nothing… They complain bitterly that the Germans invited them to work and then kept the crops for their own families.50

Both sources indicate a strong level of anger and resentment existed in at least some local Aboriginal people towards the missionaries The Germans, now entirely dependent on

49 Demarr, *Adventures in Australia 50 Years Ago*, p.248
50 Archbishop Polding to Father F. Murphy, 2 July 1843, in O. Thorpe, *First Catholic Mission to the Australian Aborigines*, Pelligrini, Sydney, 1950, pp.191-192
revenue raised by the sale of their own agricultural produce had largely discontinued their earlier practice of distributing surplus food among Aboriginal workers. With the move to market gardening much of this surplus was now sold to the population of Brisbane Town. As well, more advanced farming equipment (such as the dray, plough and harrow) at Zion Hill meant that the number of Aboriginal labourers required was also substantially reduced. These factors combined to decrease the amount of food received by local Aboriginal people from the missionaries.

In August 1843 the mission committee in Sydney reached the conclusion it was impractical to continue with the operation of the mission without the New South Wales Government’s financial support and cooperation. Lang made one last attempt to secure funding from the colonial authorities, submitting a list of publicly raised subscriptions with a request for the colonial authorities to match the amount. Gipps refused to relent, expressing his ‘deep regret at not having it in my power to make any further advance. The mission committee formally dissolved itself on 3 October 1843. A public meeting for all supporters of the mission, held two weeks later at the Bathurst Street Baptist Church in Sydney heard Lang sadly announce the abandonment of the Moreton Bay mission, a consequence of the New South Wales Government’s decision to withdraw its support from the venture. It was reported the missionaries were endeavouring to support themselves through farming but Eipper and Schmidt would seek new locations for their ministry in the following year.

Eipper accepted a position with the Presbyterian Church as minister of the congregation of Braidwood, New South Wales and his family left Moreton Bay for Sydney on board the schooner Piscator in January 1844. That same month the Germans received word that a party of four Gossner Missionary Society volunteers, Wilhelm Gericke, Carl Gerler, Johann Herman and August Richter had recently arrived in Sydney from Berlin. Niquet and Rode traveled south to meet them. The four missionaries had been originally sent by Rev. Gossner to commence work in the New Hebrides in the South Pacific but, upon arriving in Sydney, they had been warned the Islands were too

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52 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 October 1843, p.4
53 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 February 1844, p.2; N. Gunson, ‘Eipper, Christopher’ in *ADB, 1788-1850*, p.352
dangerous for Europeans to even consider establishing a settlement in the region. Niquet and Rode, with the encouragement of Lang, persuaded the four men to remain and reinforce the mission at Moreton Bay. After three of the party obtained brides in Sydney, the new missionaries reached Brisbane Town in late April 1844.54

At Brisbane Town they found a mission settlement actively engaged in small-scale agriculture. Brisbane land agent Thomas Dowse reported in April 1844 the German missionaries were finding:

considerable demand for the vegetables, butter, eggs and poultry, which they bring into the Brisbane markets once or twice a week… and could find ready sale for five times the quantity, butter is 2 shilling per lb, eggs 2 shilling per dozen, fowls for 4 shillings per couple.55

A report from Dr Simpson also observed the mission was enjoying a ‘prosperous trade’ within Brisbane, supplying ‘various commodities’ to the settlers.56 The keenly observant Ludwig Leichhardt returned to Moreton Bay in February 1844 after a tour of the region’s pastoral stations. Seeing past the immediate success of their prosperous trade in market garden produce, Leichhardt noted in a letter to his brother that the missionaries appeared weak and protein deficient. In his opinion the ready availability of fresh meat on pastoral stations and the excellent health and physical condition of the stockmen and station hands far exceeded that of his fellow countrymen. In comparison, he noted the German missionaries ‘live mainly on vegetables and you’ve only to look at them to see that most of them are neither strong nor healthy.’57

Of even greater concern to Leichhardt were the internal dissensions he observed within the mission. According to Leichhardt there was now a lack of ‘systematic cooperation’ between the Germans with each striking ‘out on his own … to make sure of

55 Sydney Morning Herald, 18 April 1844, p.3
56 Letter, Dr Simpson to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 6 May 1844, in Langevad, The Simpson Letterbook, p.15
57 Letter, Ludwig Leichhardt to Dr W. Nicholson, 6 February 1844, in Aurousseau, The Letters of F.W. Ludwig Leichhardt, p.731
a living.’ Tensions between Schmidt and some of the brethren had led to complaints that the missionary was exercising ‘constraint and oppression’ within the Zion Hill community, charges which Leichhardt utterly rejected. In his opinion Schmidt represented the Christian ideal nearer to anyone he personally knew.  

The same tensions within the mission were also noted by Simpson in his end of year report for 1844. According to Simpson the Germans refused to ‘acknowledge any superiority amongst’ themselves and now used their exertions primarily to supply the wants of their wives and families.  

Neither source document gives detailed evidence regarding the internal conflict within the mission. It would appear from the evidence that while Schmidt still believed in Lang’s primary objective of working with the Aboriginal people of North Brisbane, the immediate priority of many of the brethren was to earn a living and provide for their growing families.

The new party of Gossner missionaries in April 1944 took the total population of Zion Hill to forty. The livestock owned by the missionaries consisted of some eighty head of cattle and 100 sheep. To meet the requirements of these expanding populations the Germans requested permission from the colonial authorities to take up additional areas of land. A submission from Niquet and Rode to establish an out station in the ‘Bunya Country’ was politely refused by Governor Gipps in February 1844. Three months later the Germans requested permission to settle an area of land on Noonga Creek some thirty miles north of Brisbane, near the present day suburb of Burpengary and this time approval was granted by the colonial authorities. The area at Noonga Creek contained approximately four square miles of arable land surrounded by ‘swampy and scrubby flats.’ The missionaries commenced work at their new outstation and, by the end of

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59 ‘Report on the State of the Aborigines for the year ending 1844’, Dr Simpson to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 31 December 1844 in Langevad, The Simpson Letterbook, p.16
60 Letter, Dr Simpson to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 6 May 1844 in Langevad, The Simpson Letterbook, p.15
62 Letter, Dr Simpson to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 6 May 1844 in The Simpson Letterbook, p.15
1844, a small hut had been constructed and a section of land cleared and planted with maize.63

The expansion into Noonga Creek station met with resistance from the Aboriginal inhabitants of the region. In March 1845 a band of men, led by the warrior Dundalli, approached the outstation in the late afternoon and called out to the missionary Haussman who was protecting the maize crop. Haussman received two blows to the head with a waddy and a spear wound to the back before he managed to slip inside the hut and shut the door behind him. While Dundalli’s warriors smashed down the door and set fire to the dwelling, Haussman created a gap between the timber slabs in the back wall and crawled through the hole. With the hut filling with smoke, the Aboriginal men removed the quantities of flour and other rations. Concussed and bleeding, Haussman crawled from the hut and took cover in an adjacent gully. When he felt it was safe to emerge he staggered back to Zion Hill and lived to tell the tale of his ordeal.

Returning to Noonga Creek the missionaries found the hut burnt to the ground and their maize crop completely destroyed. No further attempt was made by the Germans to farm the area.64 The attack on Haussman gave some indication of what was to follow in the region. The encroachment of European settlers into the Pine Rivers area north of Brisbane throughout the late 1840s met with fierce resistance from bands of Aboriginal warriors led by figures such as Dundalli and Barlow. Resistance to white settlement continued in the area until the early 1860s by which time the ruthless ‘dispersal’ tactics of the Native Police based in Sandgate had effectively destroyed all Indigenous opposition.65

Different histories of the Zion Hill mission give varying dates for the mission’s closure but with the attack on Haussman and Rev. and Mrs. Schmidt’s departure from the settlement in 1845, Christian outreach to the Aboriginal people of Moreton Bay was no

63 ‘Report on the State of the Aborigines for the year ending 1844’, Dr Simpson to Colonial Secretary Thomson, 31 December 1844 in’, The Simpson Letterbook, p.16
64 Moreton Bay Courier, 3 June 1854, p.2 ; Extract from E. Muhling, Fuhrer Durch Queensland, Brisbane, Nord-Australischen Zeitung, 1898, translated by Anita Stampleton, manuscript, JOL, pp.3-4 ; Rev. Schmidt’s evidence, 11 September 1845, ‘Report from the Select Committee on the Conditions of the Aborigines with Appendix, Minutes of Evidence and Replies to a Circular Letter’, Votes & Proceedings of the New South Wales Legislative Council, 1845, pp. 957-963
longer a major concern for the remaining German families. Their decision to turn away from the ideal of mission work had been a gradual one forced in part by the withdrawal of funding in 1843 combined with the need to provide for the well being of their own families. With the effective closure of his Moreton Bay mission Rev. Lang made no further attempts to establish a mission settlement in New South Wales and instead concentrated on his burgeoning career in colonial politics. Of the German missionaries only Rev. and Mrs. Schmidt made the decision to move to a new mission field accepting a posting to Samoa with the London Missionary Society.66

In reviewing the achievements of the Zion Hill Mission it is easy to follow the example of historians such as Jean Woolmington and label Lang’s project, like its colonial contemporaries, as a failed enterprise. From 1838 through to 1845 not a single Aboriginal Christian convert was made by the German missionaries, with no Christian baptisms or marriages performed. Basic vocabularies of the Yuggera/Turrbal dialect were collected by Eipper and Schmidt but they made no headway in translating the Bible or other Christian texts into the Aboriginal languages of Moreton Bay. The Girkum area, which provided an opportunity for local Aboriginal families to live in European style huts and farm the land, was also an ultimately unsuccessful experiment. Aboriginal families were prepared to live at Girkum for short periods but the example of the Protestant work ethic demonstrated by the missionaries could not persuade them to abandon either their hunter gatherer way of life or the spiritual and cultural traditions which had served them many thousands of years.

The German Missionaries taught the Aboriginal people of North Brisbane basic English and skills such as farming and sewing, familiarising them with European ways in a non-threatening environment. There is no evidence that Aboriginal men and women at Zion Hill were ever forced to work in the fields against their will and the Germans never attempted to remove Aboriginal children from their parents. While Aboriginal workers were only paid in food rations, this was all the Germans had to offer.

The missionaries exerted a humanitarian influence to a small degree and Rev. Eipper in particular did all he could to report and prevent the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal women and other abuses committed by soldiers and convicts in the North

66 Lang, Cooksland, p.470
Brisbane camps. Another contribution made by the mission is the vocabularies and ethnographic accounts of the Aboriginal people of the Moreton Bay region which survive in the mission journals, reports and diaries. Largely unpublished, these source documents provide a vivid and detailed picture of Aboriginal life in 1840s Queensland, equivalent to the observations of other colonial writers such as Tom Petrie and Archibald Meston.

Many Australian historians have addressed the failings of the first colonial missionaries in New South Wales at length but it was the economic downturn in the pastoral industry above all other factors which forced the abandonment of the initial wave of missionary activity. A final achievement of the Zion Hill Mission was the ability of the German families to adapt to this adverse economic situation and effectively change direction to become successful market gardeners. In the space of only a few years, the Germans moved from a situation of dependency on government rations to become among the first suppliers of fresh produce in the post-convict era of Brisbane Town.
Chapter Five

1846-1863: Market Gardeners to Pioneer Farmers

In June 1846 Brisbane’s first newspaper the Moreton Bay Courier published its premier edition. Reporting on the closure of the Zion Hill and Catholic Missions in Moreton Bay, the editors of the paper made the following observations:

The German Missionaries phlegmatic and practical, have become the German graziers and market gardeners located on the rich land of Eagle Farm commanding an extensive back run, paying neither license nor assessment. It may be gratifying to their friends to know that they are doing well, that is, that they have much cattle and their butter and vegetables are highly prized in Brisbane; that if their spiritual harvest has been small their vegetables are most luxuriant; and that if during their Mission they have made no converts, their last increase of calves is at least ninety per cent.1

From the ironic tone of the article, it is evident the growing prosperity of the missionary families by 1846 was attracting both attention and resentment from the residents of Brisbane Town. Living on land designated by the colonial authorities for mission work, meant that the families were effectively not paying any revenue to the New South Wales Government for the privilege of farming the Zion Hill allocation. This was seen as an unfair advantage by many new settlers in the Brisbane region and letters voicing complaints against the Germans were published in the Moreton Bay Courier in 1849 and 1851.2 The Germans were well aware of the accusations. The missionary Hartenstein wrote to Rev. Lang in 1850 reporting ‘several sentences appeared against us in the Brisbane papers’ for holding the mission land without license. Hartenstein and his brethren answered their critics by pointing to the tremendous sacrifices they had made

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1 Moreton Bay Courier, 27 June 1846, p.2
2 Moreton Bay Courier, 30 June 1849, p.3; Moreton Bay Courier, 10 May 1851, p.2
since their arrival in 1838 and the dangers they had experienced working in the mission field.\textsuperscript{5}

While the Germans enjoyed the financial benefit of not paying license fees to the New South Wales Government, a disadvantage of the arrangement was that they possessed no title to the mission land. This lack of security was a source of concern and their fears are expressed in a letter from Rode to Lang:

> It would give us great ease if we had our own place for home. We would make more improvements. Now we always think our work here may be in vain, they may send us off when we have spent our strength, many of us are complaining very much of health, having had many hardships to fight through.\textsuperscript{4}

The New South Wales Government, although aware of the situation, continually deferred making any decision to resolve the matter and the tenure of Zion Hill remained unchanged throughout the 1840s and 1850s. In the mean time the Germans endured the criticism of their peers as they continued to work the land.

There are few surviving documents from the late 1840s describing daily life at Zion Hill or the German Station as it was now more commonly referred to in Moreton Bay. A piece of artwork, however, completed by the missionary Carl Gerler in his retirement years, presents a fascinating visual representation of life at the mission settlement in 1846. In European folk style, etched in Indian ink, Gerler’s drawing of Zion Hill reveals the traditional \textit{hufendorf} arrangement of housing and fields was still in operation in 1846. A neat row of eleven houses is depicted in the sketch with gardens, orchards and fields running down the slopes of the hillside beneath them. Gerler’s sketch also identifies the individual houses belonging to each missionary family and from this listing it is clear that of the four Gossner missionaries who arrived in 1844 only Wilhelme


\textsuperscript{4} Letter, F. Rode to Rev. Lang, 13 April 1846, Lang Papers, Box 20, ML,350-352 ff.
Gericke and Carl Gerler remained at the mission in 1846, with one of the vacated houses used as the settlement’s chapel and school.⁵

Image One: Carl Gerler’s Sketch of the German Mission in 1846

Gerler’s artwork also provides an insight on the farming methods employed at the German Station. By 1846 stock and milking yards and a separate enclosed paddock for the calves had been established for the settlement’s livestock. The missionary Zillman’s house is positioned closest to the stockyards, supporting the view of his son that Zillman, above all the missionaries, was the most experienced in handling farm animals.⁶ Gerler also places the settlement’s plough behind Zillman’s house and with his smithy skills it is likely Zillman was responsible for the care and maintenance of the settlement’s farming equipment. The plough in the sketch appears to be a single furrow mould-board plough in design. Double handled mould board or swing ploughs were common farming equipment

⁵ ‘Sketch of the German Mission Station at Nundah by Carl Friedrich Gerler, 1846’ in H.J.J. Sparkes, Queensland’s First Free Settlement, 1838-1938, W.R. Smith & Patterson, Brisbane, 1938, p.22
⁶ J.W. Zillman, Recollections of my Early Life, Brooweena, Woocoo Historical Society, 1974, p.3
in colonial Australia. These ploughs typically featured a wooden frame and mould-board fitted with an iron share, coulter and adjustable hitching device known as a hake. The hake allowed the farmer to alter the depth and width of the furrow while the long curved design of the share and mould-board efficiently cut through and inverted the soil.7

While the settlement possessed heavy farming equipment Gerler’s sketch reveals hand cultivation was still employed at the German Station, with both the missionaries and Aboriginal workers depicted tilling the soil with hoes. Although the Zion Hill Mission no longer functioned according to Lang’s original vision, the drawing shows a strong Aboriginal presence still existed at the German Station in 1846. One of the missionaries is shown preaching to a group of Aboriginal people while Aboriginal women carry water to the houses and Aboriginal labourers work in the fields. A small cemetery to the side of the mission farms in Gerler’s sketch reveals that by 1846 the first deaths had occurred within the small German community. The complete lack of infant mortality in the first seven years of the mission’s history was a remarkable feat by colonial standards, but between 1846 and 1847 five children died in infancy at the German Station. Perhaps the most horrific of these tragedies was the accidental death of Wilhelm Gericke’s eighteen-month-old daughter Caroline whose dress caught fire while left momentarily unattended by her parents.8 Sophie Niquet, the wife of the missionary Johann Niquet was the first of the original Gossner volunteers to die in 1845 as a result of a facial skin tumor.9

Gerler’s depiction of Zion Hill reveals another significant demographic change at the German station by 1846. The house to the immediate left of the Zillman families’ residence is identified as belonging to the labourer, indicating the Germans were now in a strong enough financial position to hire employees. This is confirmed by an advertisement placed in the columns of the Moreton Bay Courier in late 1846 stating: ‘Wanted, a stockman. Application to be made at the stores of Mr. Zillman, Queen Street, North Brisbane.’10

8 Moreton Bay Courier, 7 November 1846, p.3 ; Sydney Morning Herald, 30 November 1846, p.2
9 Letter, Rev. Schmidt to Rev. Lang, 31 December 1845, quoted in Sparkes, Queensland’s First Free Settlement, p.42
10 Moreton Bay Courier, 28 November 1846, p.3
The children of the mission families were also now at an age where they were able to assist their parents with chores at the station. Following in their father’s footsteps, Zillman’s sons were given the task of herding the family’s cows and horses. In April 1848 the missionary’s oldest son, John Rudolph Zillman, went missing in the bush after being asked to feed the calves. The entire population of the German Station searched for the boy into the evening but to no avail. Rode found the boy the next day on a ridge above Breakfast Creek some five miles away from the station, later claiming the location of the lost child was revealed to him in a dream.11

As the labour force at the German Station in the late 1840s expanded to include hired servants and their own children, so too the commercial environment of Brisbane Town was evolving. By 1846 the Germans were no longer the sole suppliers of fresh produce to the settlement. As the colonial authorities opened up areas of land for sale in the immediate vicinity of the township, small farms were established in locations such as Hill End, Milton and Breakfast Creek. The majority of the new farmers were of British origin. Some like Frawley and Gage were former convicts, well used to the climate and conditions of Moreton Bay. In 1848 Gage received praise from the Moreton Bay Courier for the quality of his bananas which ‘surpassed in size and flavour’ anything the editors had seen ‘in this colony or South America’.12

Brisbane Town in the late 1840s and 1850s had no market place. Produce was sold by the market gardeners directly to the few grocery stores and hotels in Queen Street or hawked to passing customers in the dusty Brisbane streets. The sale of farm produce was often the responsibility of the wives of market gardeners in colonial New South Wales, particularly in the case of new German immigrants. In the 1860s German women in the newly settled areas of Coorparoo and on the Darling Downs were recorded selling vegetables to the local townspeople.13 The historical record for the German Station unfortunately does not reveal if the Women of the mission ever sold produce from the settlement in Brisbane Town.

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12 W.R. Johnston, *Brisbane, the First Thirty Years*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1988, p.81; *Moreton Bay Courier*, 19 March 1848, p.2
Alongside the lack of a designated market place, the absence of a bank in Brisbane Town also influenced how commercial transactions were made within the district. Without a bank, cash was invariably in short supply in Moreton Bay. Instead of bank notes, the missionary Haussman recalled that ‘certain pieces of paper’ were circulated ‘bearing the amount and the signature of those who wrote them.’ These handwritten promissory notes or ‘calabashes’ were used extensively throughout colonial Queensland often changing hands on numerous occasions to conduct multiple transactions. Haussman remembered the promissory notes ‘were always credited’ but land agent Thomas Dowse reported several instances where they had not been honoured, raising the prices of local goods and hindering the expansion of trade in the district. Calls from the Brisbane business community for the establishment of a bank continued throughout the late 1840s and their demands were finally met in November 1850 with the opening of a branch of the Bank of New South Wales in Queen Street.

Another development which assisted the Moreton Bay economy in the 1840s was the arrival of steamers on the commercial shipping route between Sydney and Brisbane. Steamers such as the Shamrock and Sovereign could travel between the two towns in just over two days in all but the worst conditions. Exports from Moreton Bay during this period were dominated by the pastoral and timber industries and barrels of tallow, bales of wool and planks of cedar and pine filled the holds of these vessels on their journeys to Sydney. The speed and reliability of the steamers also allowed Brisbane farmers to export fruit and vegetables to the Sydney markets. The initial quantities of produce exported from Moreton Bay in the late 1840s were not large, with only a few casks or cartons sent at any one time. British farmers such as Davidson and Harriet were among the first to make use of the steamers, exporting pineapples and pumpkins to Sydney in March 1847

14 Mulling, Fuhrer Durch Queensland, p.3; Sydney Morning Herald, 20 January 1844, p.2; Johnston, Brisbane the First Thirty Years, p.89
16 Sydney Morning Herald, 11 November 1850, p.3
but four months later Niquet loaded the first case of fruit grown at the German Station on board the steamer *Tamar* to be sent to the Sydney markets.\(^\text{18}\)

By the beginning of the 1850s the growing levels of prosperity enjoyed by the missionary families of the German Station placed them in a financial position where they were now able to purchase their own blocks of freehold land. The New South Wales Government had made no effort to re-designate the original mission land and when two blocks adjoining the mission were opened up for sale in 1851, Rode seized the opportunity to make the community’s first land purchase. The Crown land sales were held at the Brisbane Court House on 14 August 1851. Rode purchased lot No. 39 and lot No. 42 paying £33 and £35 respectively for the two blocks at the then standard purchase rate of £1 per acre. Rode kept the larger of the two blocks for the use of his family but the first lot of thirty-three acres was subdivided into eight portions with the individual portions sold to the different missionary families. The arrangement of the subdivisions again resembled the traditional German *hufendorf* system employed at the Zion Hill Mission, with eight narrow blocks of land, each four to five acres in size, running down the sloping gradient to the water course beneath.\(^\text{19}\)

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\(^{18}\) *Moreton Bay Courier*, 6 March 1847, p.2 ; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 March 1847, p.2 ; *Moreton Bay Courier*, 12 June 1847, p.2  
\(^{19}\) Survey Office, Lists of Land Sold, Colony of Queensland, 1842-1859, QSA, SUR/4 ; *Moreton Bay Courier*, 16 August 1851, p.2
Of the eight subdivided portions, the missionaries Gerler and Harternstein purchased two for their families, while Franz, Gericke, Haussman and Zillman each purchased a single section. Wagner was unable to take advantage of the sale as he had accepted a call to work for the Presbyterian church and by 1851 was serving as a minister.
to the congregation of goldfield town of Tumut. With the effective closure of the mission in 1845 there was to some extent a lessening of the close communal ties between the families but the collective purchase and subdivision of the block of freehold land by the missionaries in 1851 suggests a spirit of cooperation still existed at the German Station.

The purchase can also be seen as one of the first cooperative farming ventures to be implemented in the history of Queensland agriculture and under the guidance of Haussman, the German settlers on the Logan River in the 1860s readily adopted methods of collective land purchasing similar to that used by the missionaries at the German Station. Cooperative ventures were a distinctive feature of German agriculture in the second half of the 19th century with farmers joining together to establish cooperative banks, purchasing consortia and processing factories. Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm identifies the German cooperative movement as a non-governmental response to the general ‘economic malaise’ which gripped much of Europe during these years, while one contemporary observer described the quality of cooperation as the ‘stronghold and bulwark’ of the German farmer.20

Additional freehold land purchases were made by all the German missionaries in the following years. [See Appendices, Table Three, p.150] The largest of these purchases was made by Carl Gerler in July 1852 when the missionary bought two allotments in Eagle Farm with a combined area of just over 190 acres, at the purchase rate of £1 per acre.21 Niquet, like Wagner, did not purchase any portions of Rode’s subdivided block but, in November 1853, he bought two adjoining blocks with a total area of sixty-four acres. Local historian, Stan Tutt has written that a pastoral run was also secured by the German mission families in the early 1850s when Brisbane settler Tom Petrie sold his Deception Bay run to Zillman in 1851. Zillman managed the Deception Bay run in partnership with Franz grazing dairy cattle on the land.22

With the purchase of their own freehold land and pastoral runs the German missionary families were able to increase the area of land under cultivation and the

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21 Survey Office, Lists of Land Sold, Colony of Queensland, 1842-1859, QSA, SUR/4 ; Moreton Bay Courier, 31 July 1852, p.2
quantity of goods produced for both the local and Sydney markets. From 1852 bananas, potatoes and sweet potatoes were occasionally sent to Sydney by the Germans on the steamers but the fruit most welcome in the harbour city was the pineapple. In 1838 the private gardens of the government staff in Moreton Bay had provided the basis of the gardens at Zion Hill. The suckers for pineapple plants given to Wagner by the government chaplain Rev. Handt from his private garden were now ready, fourteen years later, for commercial exploitation. They had been supplemented, as the next chapter explores in detail, by similar plants from another colonial garden. Gerler and Haussman led the way in exporting pineapples from the German Station and they were soon joined by their missionary brethren sending cartons and casks of the fruit to Sydney in the summer months between January and April.23

The quality of the agricultural produce grown at the German Station also received local recognition at Brisbane’s first agricultural show in July 1853, held in the School of Arts building in Alice Street. Niquet was awarded a prize of £2 for exhibiting the best lemons and Zillman and Hartenstein also won prizes for their pineapples and arrowroot in subsequent years.24 In 185, a visiting English clergyman Rev. Stobart attended the Brisbane agricultural show and was impressed with the quality of the locally grown produce on display. During his stay in Brisbane, Stobart also visited the German Station and recorded the following impressions of the settlement:

I cannot call their houses pretty, one was built of mud at least the outside was thickly coated with it, but inside was neat and tidy. They have each plots of garden ground. Government made them a grant of some land and they have purchased some small adjacent allotments…We went into a school where there were about 20 to 25 children who looked clean and neat… They are very industrious and cheerful people.25

An article published one month later in the *Moreton Bay Free Press* by another recent visitor to the German Station also presented a favourable assessment of the settlement.

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23 Moreton Bay Courier, 24 January 1852, p.2; Moreton Bay Courier, 13 March 1852, p.2
24 Moreton Bay Courier, 16 July 1853, p.2; Moreton Bay Courier, 14 July 1855, p.2
The anonymous writer stated he was ‘quite pleased’ with the ‘quiet progressive like appearance’ of the German Station:

everything about looks orderly and decent. I am told that the crops are very forward for the time of the year – with prospect of being very bounteous… altogether I left highly pleased and satisfied… the Germans are admirably adapted to become good and useful colonists.26

The growing number of freehold properties acquired by the missionary families in the 1850s combined with the rising scale of agricultural production necessitated an increase in the hired workforce at the German Station. The historical record from this period does not indicate exactly how many servants and labourers were employed by the Germans but contemporary newspaper reports do provide some insights into the dynamics between the missionaries and their employees. By the 1850s the missionary families could afford the luxury of employing both male and female servants. These hired workers included men and women of British, Irish and German origins.27 Noticeably missing in these reports however is any mention of the original Aboriginal labour force, an absence indicative of their separation and exclusion from both their traditional lands and the new colonial society. Pushed to the margins of the expanding city, Aboriginal men and women maintained a presence in the North Brisbane area throughout the 19th century, living in fringe camps and earning a meager living through begging and performing occasional jobs for the new settlers.28

The life of a colonial servant in the North Brisbane region in the 1850s was by modern standards a hard and at times dangerous existence. In December 1850 the *Moreton Bay Courier* reported Mary Haly a servant girl at the ‘late German Mission Station’ was killed by a falling tree while walking to church on a Sunday morning with a friend. Assaults and robberies also occurred on the road from Brisbane Town to the

26 *Moreton Bay Free Press*, 23 August 1853, p.3
27 *Moreton Bay Courier*, 26 October 1850, p.3; *Moreton Bay Courier*, 25 June 1853, p.2; *Moreton Bay Courier*, 18 February 1854, p.2; *Moreton Bay Courier*, 9 September 1854, p.2; *Moreton Bay Courier*, 21 October 1854, p.2
German Station throughout the decade.\textsuperscript{29} Working in the fields also posed hazards for European labourers at the German Station particularly in the extreme temperatures of the Australian summer. In January 1858 the \textit{Moreton Bay Courier} reporting on the heat wave conditions experienced in recent days, noted a German labourer named William Klemm had died of sunstroke while working on a property belonging to the missionary Gericke.\textsuperscript{30}

From the colonial newspaper record it is evident strong tensions sometimes existed between employers and servants at the German Station and several instances of servants ‘absconding from service’ are recorded. As devout believers of a Protestant faith which emphasised and placed a spiritual value upon honest labour, the German missionaries did not hesitate to press charges in the local courts, against servants who left their duties without permission. In one such instance the source of conflict between employer and servant appears to have been sectarian differences. Rode appeared before the local bench in October 1850 to prosecute a charge of ‘absconding from the service of her master’ against Catherine Dempsey, an Irish servant girl in his employ. On the stand Dempsey stated she had stayed away because she had been refused permission by the Rodes to attend Catholic mass in Brisbane. Rode stated this was untrue and accused Dempsey of calling ‘one of his children a dirty Protestant’. The magistrates fined Dempsey 12s 8d, to be taken from her wages when she returned to service but also ruled she must be allowed to attend divine service ‘at least every second Sunday’.\textsuperscript{31}

In June 1853 Franz brought the more serious charge of assault against a former servant, Ralph William Barrow, at a court session held in the Brisbane Police Office. The incident occurred on Monday 20 June 1853 when Franz confronted Barrow at the German Station, accusing him of absconding without leave and stealing a bunch of bananas from Gericke’s garden. Barrow produced a gun and leveled it at the missionary telling him to ‘be silent … I’ll shoot you down in a moment.’ Franz backed off slowly, walked to his house and closed the door behind him. Inside he heard Barrow fire the gun before departing. On the stand, Barrow claimed the weapon was only loaded with powder

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Moreton Bay Courier}, 30 December 1850, p.1
\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Moreton Bay Courier}, 2 January 1858, p.2
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Moreton Bay Courier}, 26 October 1850, p.3
and he had discharged the gun to clean it. Unconvinced by the excuse, the Magistrate found Barrow guilty of the charge and fined him £3 10s 6d or two months gaol.  

Members of the missionary families were also charged with assault by their servants on at least two occasions in the Brisbane courts. Mrs. Gericke was charged with assaulting ‘her hired servant’ William Tyson in October 1854 but as the plaintiff failed to appear at the court session, the case was dismissed. Her husband faced the court the following year:

to answer the complaint of his apprentice Adam Muller who charged him with assault. It appeared the lad had misconducted himself and that his master had corrected him with a small riding whip.

Gericke’s defence argued ‘that such correction was perfectly justifiable’ but the Magistrate thought otherwise and fined the missionary 20 shillings plus costs.  

While the contemporary newspaper record presents a negative picture of employer–servant relations at the German Station, personal reminiscences and family histories of the North Brisbane settlers suggest harmonious working relationships and friendships were also cemented between the missionary families and their servants. After the death of William Klem from sunstroke, the missionary families supported his widow Fredericke and three children until she married the German settler Gottlieb Klump. A young Scottish immigrant John McMaster made his start in Moreton Bay working as a labourer for the missionary Gericke and became close friends with many of the German families. According to J.W. Zillman, McMaster was encouraged by the Germans to make his first public address at a Sunday school lesson in the mission chapel and from there began a career as a lay preacher, local alderman, Mayor of Brisbane and Member of the Queensland Parliament.  

32 Moreton Bay Courier, 25 June 1853, p.2  
33 Moreton Bay Courier, 21 October 1854, p.2 ; Moreton Bay Courier, 14 July 1855, p.2  
35 Zillman, Recollections of My Early Life, pp.3-4 ; Pugh’s Almanac 1894, p.141 ; Brisbane Courier, 29 December 1923, p.8
Having achieved the status of property owners and employers, the German missionaries further consolidated their position as settlers of the North Brisbane region by becoming naturalised citizens of the colony and, by July 1854, the names of all the missionaries were registered on the Moreton Bay electoral roll for the County of Stanley. The Germans’ path to citizenship in the British colony was also accompanied by a growing interaction on their part with the local Brisbane community. Zillman appears to have led the way in participating in the educational and religious life of the settlement. By 1846 the missionary already owned a stores building in the centre of town in Queen Street. In July 1846 he allowed D. Scott to operate a small day and night school in the empty room above his stores and acted as a referee for Scott, providing ‘testimonials as to [his] character and fitness.’ Zillman was also listed among the contributors who purchased a gold watch for George Little in April 1847 in appreciation for his running the first Protestant Sunday School in Moreton Bay. That same year the Zillman family welcomed the arrival of William Moore, the first Wesleyan Methodist preacher to visit Brisbane and invited him to conduct services at the mission chapel. An extract from Moore’s journal from 20 October 1847 reads: ‘this day I have been to Germans Station… there are five or six families there. I got them all together and we had a blessed season… I intend to preach there once a week if I can’.

The structural collapse of the Breakfast Creek Bridge in 1849 and again in 1855 forced the German missionaries to work closely with the civic leaders of Brisbane Town. The original Breakfast Creek Bridge was built by Captain Logan’s convicts to provide access to the Eagle Farm agricultural establishment. By the late 1840s it was a decaying, rickety structure causing bodily injury to Breakfast Creek market gardeners on at least two occasions. The state of the bridge moved one Brisbane resident to submit a poem to the Moreton Bay Courier in 1848, written from the point of view of the bridge itself.

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36 Moreton Bay Courier, 8 July 1854, p.4
37 Moreton Bay Courier, 27 June 1846, p.2; Moreton Bay Courier, 4 September 1847, p.3
38 Moreton Bay Courier, 24 April 1847, p.3
40 Moreton Bay Courier, 3 October 1846, p.2; Moreton Bay Courier, 5 February 1848, p.3
Included in the poem were the following stanzas referring to the strain placed on the aging timbers by the German missionaries’ dray:

And twice a week the German cart
Well nigh bursts out my aged heart;
Its very sight brings on a shiver,
That injures much my lungs and liver
And I do fear, some evil day,
Its weight will make my sides give way
While Germans, much against their wish
Start on a mission to the fish! 41

As predicted the bridge finally collapsed in May 1849 and, in March 1850, a committee was established to organise the construction of a replacement structure. Those on the committee included Brisbane police magistrate Captain Wickham, the town surgeon Dr Cannan and the missionary Franz Rode. The local authorities were only prepared to allocate £100 towards the £180 tender awarded to local builder James Atkinson. The settlers of North Brisbane were expected to make up the short fall and it was Rode’s role to raise the additional funding required to complete the project.42

The new bridge was completed in 1851, providing the increasing numbers of settlers in the North Brisbane region once more with easy access to Brisbane Town. Barely five years later, on the morning of 12 February 1856, Gericke and John McMaster, were again confronted by the sight of a collapsed bridge, when they reached Breakfast Creek with a dray loaded with pineapples. Determined to get their produce into town, the two men followed the course of Breakfast Creek upstream, hacking their way through the ‘three mile scrub’ until they found a shallow crossing point. It took them two days to reach Brisbane Town, sell their produce and return to the German Station.43 The Moreton Bay Courier reported that while the bridge was only five to six years old, the amount of traffic crossing Breakfast Creek had doubled within this period.44 A poem marking the

41 Moreton Bay Courier, 5 August 1848, p.3
42 Moreton Bay Courier, 26 May 1849, p.3; Moreton Bay Courier, 30 March 1850, p.2; Moreton Bay Courier, 13 April 1850, p.2; Moreton Bay Courier, 11 May 1850, p.2
43 Brisbane Courier, 29 December 1923, p.8; Outridge 150 Years Nundah Families, p.37; 42
44 Moreton Bay Courier, 18 February 1856, p.3
collapse of the second bridge was published in the newspaper and the German missionaries again received a (dis)honourable mention in its verses:

I stood in Brisbane by the famous Creek
Which from the Matin meal derives its nomen
Where the once joined, now parted shores bespeak
A wished for – soon to be departed omen
Ah! peerless bridge, how couldst thou play this freak
To tumble in, I cried ‘Are German’s foemen?’
Do they not bring us butter every week
Pines and bananas daily, like good yeoman.45

A public meeting was organised to respond to the situation and Rode, Gerler and Gericke played an active role in proceedings. The meeting determined that a punt should be ‘obtained at once, as the best means of ready and safe transit over the creek’.46 The following week the Moreton Bay Free Press reported the bridge committee had ‘not been idle.’ Mr. Eldridge had secured a punt to serve as a ferry while others had been active raising funds ‘for making the approaches and providing a hut for the ferryman’.47 Through 1856 and 1857 a ferry linked the British and German settlers of North Brisbane to the main settlement, charging 1d for foot passengers, and 4d for each horse.48 Construction of a new bridge costing £2000 commenced in 1857 and in August 1858 the new bridge was declared open to the Brisbane public.49

By the mid-1850s increasing numbers of German immigrants were arriving in Australia. Victoria and South Australia received the majority of the German arrivals but numbers were also settling in Moreton Bay and the original missionary families employed many of their countrymen as labourers and servants at the German Station during this period. Many immigrant families settled in the North Brisbane area purchasing properties adjoining the land held by the missionaries. Among the prominent

45 Moreton Bay Courier, 1 March 1856, p.3
46 Moreton Bay Free Press, 23 February 1856, p.1
47 Moreton Bay Free Press, 26 February 1856, p.3; Moreton Bay Courier, 16 February 1856, p.3
48 Moreton Bay Courier, 14 November 1857, p.2
49 Moreton Bay Courier, 21 August 1858, p.2
German families who settled in North Brisbane at this time, were the Goeldner, Kubler and Wildermuth families. By 1857 the German population of Brisbane was large enough to the warrant posting of a Lutheran minister to the town. Pastor Schirmeister based himself at the German Station but was dismayed by the lack of religious unity at the settlement. Some of the missionary families no longer identified themselves as Lutherans, with the Zillman family identifying strongly as Wesleyan Methodists. Baptist services were also held on a regular basis at the German Station. Schirmeister persisted for a year to establish a Lutheran congregation at the German Station but eventually gave up and moved to inner Brisbane where he founded St. Andrew’s Lutheran church.\(^{50}\)

Many of the missionaries did retain a strong Lutheran faith and, in 1856, Gericke, Haussman and Niquet accepted invitations from the Lutheran pastor Rev. Goethe to work with German immigrant congregations in the booming goldfield regions of Victoria. Haussman was appointed Lutheran pastor of German Town, an immigrant community near Geelong and during his ministry established Lutheran churches at Castlemaine, Maldon and Yandoit. Gericke became the Lutheran pastor at Bendigo while Niquet took up a position at Ballarat.\(^{51}\) Factionalism between the different Lutheran congregations made life difficult for the new ministers. Many of the congregations in Victoria and South Australia adhered to ‘Old Church’ traditionalist Lutheran doctrines and strongly disapproved of the Evangelical leanings of the missionaries. Gericke resigned from the church after only one year, returning to his farm at the German Station. Haussman took a more active role in attempting to mend the rifts between the Lutheran factions but his efforts were unsuccessful and at times met with open hostility. During one meeting with South Australian representatives Haussman was reportedly refused communion at a local church service and on the morning of Good Friday in 1861 a section of the German Town congregation barricaded the church, barring Haussman from conducting the Easter service. Rev. Goethe attempted to intervene and find a new appointment for the missionary but, like Gericke, Haussman cut his ties with the Victorian congregations and returned to Moreton Bay. Niquet managed to avoid the factional conflicts within the

\(^{50}\) F.O. Thiele, *One Hundred Years of the Lutheran Church in Queensland*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1985, p.8

Church and worked successfully with Lutheran congregations in Victoria and South Australia throughout the remaining decades of the 19th century.⁵²

By the end of the 1850s the majority of the mission families were no longer living in the original row of mission buildings at the German Station. Most had now moved into far more substantial and luxurious houses constructed on their own freehold land. Franz’s house *Heimat*, featured thick stone walls, a gabled roof and wide verandahs. In July 1860 *Heimat* was the venue for the wedding of Franz’s sister-in-law, Jane Best, and German immigrant Frederic Alles, who had worked for Franz for several years at the German Station. Lutheran pastor Schirmeyer officiated at the ceremony and large festivities followed with the German, Irish, English and Scottish settlers of North Brisbane joining together ‘all bearing food and drink’.⁵³

**Image Three:** F.T. Franz’s House, *Heimat*

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⁵³ Sparkes, *Queensland’s First Free Settlement*, p.32 ; Outridge, *150 Years Nundah Families*, p.53
An even grander residence was built by Rode at the highest point of his hill side property overlooking the German Station. Rode named the two storey mansion ‘Silesia House’ after his European homeland. For many years it was one of the largest residential buildings in North Brisbane and a prominent landmark in the Nundah region.\(^5^4\)

Image Four: F.A. Rode’s Residence, Silesia House
(Collection of the Nundah & Districts Historical Society)

On 2 December 1861, the missionary A.T.W. Hartenstein died at his property on the German Station aged fifty. Rode and Gerler acted as the trustees and executors of his will. Hartenstein was less ambitious than his brethren in the pursuit of freehold land and exporting produce but, in the sixteen years since the closure of the mission, he and his family had enjoyed a comfortable living as farmers and market gardeners at the German Station. His estate in 1861 consisted of a paddock of thirty acres, a farm of three acres, a fenced paddock of three acres, 200 head of mixed cattle, two horses, a dray, a plough and additional farming implements.\(^5^5\)

\(^5^4\) The Courier, 20 February 1862, p.1
\(^5^5\) Queensland Pioneers Index: Index to Births, Deaths and Marriages in Queensland, Register General, Department of Justice & Attorney-General, Brisbane, 2000; Outridge, 150 Years Nundah Families, p.60
In December 1859 Queensland separated from New South Wales to become an independent British colony with its own Governor and elected parliament. The question of the future tenancy of the original mission land at Zion Hill had not been resolved by the New South Wales colonial authorities and responsibility for the matter was transferred to the Surveyor General of Queensland. In 1860 Wagner was the only remaining missionary still living on the original mission site. His career in the Presbyterian ministry had been a far from happy experience, with the loss of his first daughter and the severe mental illness and suicide of his wife Anna. In April 1860, Lang wrote to the Colonial Secretary of Queensland on Wagner’s behalf stating the missionary had been ‘left alone…with scanty resources at the German Station, with his four motherless boys.’ Lang reported Wagner had purchased the improvements of Franz and Gericke and held about twenty acres of land, including a grass paddock for his cattle but the missionary now wished ‘to purchase at the minimum price 80 acres of land or one eight part of the land originally set apart for the original mission’.  

No decision was made by the Queensland Government so, in November 1861, Wagner wrote to the Surveyor General requesting permission to purchase the mission land stating that of the original missionaries he was ‘the only one who is still living on these grounds’. With a new wife and five children to support, Wagner was ‘anxious to obtain title’ and make improvements to the property, requesting from the Queensland Government a grant of 100 acres of the mission land to be purchased at the upset price of £1 per acre. Wagner’s application however was disputed by the other missionary families and a rival letter of application for the mission land was forwarded to the Surveyor General, signed by Franz, Gerler, Gericke, Hartenstein, Rode and Zillman.

In the months that followed many of the missionaries wrote to the Surveyor General listing their improvements made to the mission land but the Queensland Government again deferred any decision to resolve the matter. In June 1862 Franz, Gerler, Gericke, Haussman, Rode and Zillman forwarded a joint letter to the Minister of

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56 Letter, Rev. Lang to Colonial Secretary of Queensland, 8 August 1860, in ‘Godfred Watson Wagner 1890 to 1978’, unpublished manuscript, Wagner Family File, Nundah and Districts Historical Society
57 Letter, J.G. Wagner to the Surveyor General, 6 November 1861, Department of Lands & Works, Correspondence, 1862-1866, QSA, LWO / A2, 61/4505
58 Letter, T. Franz, J.L. Zillman, W. Hartenstein, A. Rode, C.F. Gerler & W. Gericke to the Surveyor General, 11 November 1861, Department of Lands & Works, Correspondence, 1862-1866, QSA, LWO / A2, 61/4645
Lands, stating they were aware Wagner had written to the Department claiming a preemptive right to purchase 100 acres of land at the German Station, but had done so without their consent. The missionaries stated they wished to purchase the land on behalf of all the mission families and divide it equally between themselves including a share for Wagner. In August 1862 Wagner again wrote to the Minister of Lands and Works claiming the preemptive right to purchase the mission land, reminding the minister he had received no reply to any of his previous applications. In the weeks that followed the missionary appears to have experienced a change of heart and resolved his differences with his German colleagues for, on the next joint letter from the missionaries to the Surveyor General, Wagner’s signature appears alongside those of his brethren. The letter from the missionaries expresses an awareness that the mission land was ready to be laid out in lots for public auction and they once more claimed ‘the preemptive right to purchase these lots in whole or in part improved by us’.  

An official response to the missionaries’ application was finally made in September 1862. The Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands received advice that the land in question was granted by the New South Wales Government of the day for mission work:

Mr Secretary McCalister is therefore unable under the aspect which the case assumes to observe that the applicants have upon equitable grounds a preemptive claim to the lands referenced to.

In the summer of 1863 the Queensland Government announced the division of the mission land into fourteen lots to be sold at public auction with no preferential treatment

60 Letter, J.G. Wagner to the Minister of Lands and Works, 1 August 1862, Department of Lands & Works, Correspondence, 1862-1866, QSA, LWO / A2, 62/570  
62 Letter, to the Chief Commissioner of Lands, 23 September 1862, Survey Office, Letters Received, 1 January 1862 – 31 December 1862, QSA, SUR / A14, 62/773
afforded to the German mission families. The allotments went under the auctioneer’s hammer at the Brisbane Police Courts on 11 March 1863. All fourteen lots were sold, fetching an average price of £4 per acre. [See Appendices, Table Four, p.151] The missionaries Wagner, Franz, Rode and Zillman were among the successful bidders. Zillman purchased lot 14 on behalf of all the German families, as it was this lot which contained the original Zion Hill buildings and £2000 worth of improvements.

Image Five: Wagner’s Cottage in 1891, the Last of the Original Mission Houses

The study of pre-separation agriculture has been a neglected area of Queensland history. Many writers have made the same assumption as Queensland historian Hector Holthaus:

When Queensland was separated from New South Wales there was no more than a dozen or so milking cows in the colony, only a small amount of grain was grown … and fruit and vegetables were raised only for personal use.

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63 Supplement to the Queensland Government Gazette, Vol.4, No.11, 10 February 1863, p.99
64 The Courier, 11 March 1863, p.1; The Courier, 12 March 1863, p.2; The Courier 14 March 1863, p.2
65 Holthaus, Illustrated History of Queensland, p.203
While it is true pastoralism dominated primary production in Queensland throughout the 1840s and 1850s, there was also a small but growing agricultural sector, an emerging industry in which the German missionary families played a significant role. While the squatting fraternity regarded farming as ‘in the main experimental’ and all too likely to ‘result in failure’ the German mission families proved beyond doubt it is was not only possible to grow commercial crops in Queensland but also earn a comfortable living while doing so. The German missionary families and the other small-scale farmers of Moreton Bay laid the foundation for the future expansion of Queensland agriculture, identifying and cultivating the region’s first cash crop, the pineapple. Finding agricultural commodities suited to the vagaries of the Queensland climate, which can also be consistently sold for profit on local and national markets, then as now remains a challenge for the State’s primary producers. The missionary farmers of the German Station were among the first agriculturists in Queensland to successfully meet this challenge.

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By the 1860s, the Missionary families of the German Station were established farmers of the North Brisbane area. From 1838 they had practised a system of mixed agriculture, farming a variety of fruit and vegetables, alongside the keeping of livestock. In colonial Queensland, this agricultural system was also used extensively by many European settlers, including later German arrivals. Most German immigrant farmers did not implement monoculture systems of agriculture and primary production to nearly the same extent as their British counterparts.  

The missionary farmers of the German Station retained the practice of mixed agriculture throughout the 19th century, but as they purchased larger areas of freehold land there was a gradual tendency on their part to invest resources in dairying and the production of cash crops which provided consistent economic returns. Through this strategy the missionaries not only produced a comfortable living for themselves and their families but also earned the recognition of their farming peers for their contribution to the development of three primary industries in Queensland: namely pineapple production; viticulture; and dairying.

Through marketing and tourism the pineapple has achieved almost iconic status as a symbol of Queensland identity. The production and sale of tropical fruit never matched the scale of primary industries such as sugar and wheat, but has made (and continues to make) a significant contribution to the Queensland economy. The history of pineapple production in Queensland is a neglected area of study and yet the origins of the industry date to the first days of the convict era in Moreton Bay. ‘Valuable exotics’ such as pineapples, mangoes, and bananas were among the plants trialed in 1824 at the failed

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2 The pineapple, *Ananas Comosus*, is a member of the Bromeliad family and originally a native of South America. Like maize, the fruit was quickly adopted by the Spanish, Portuguese and British and taken to Europe and their numerous colonies across the world. T. MacDougall (ed.) *The Australian Encyclopaedia*, 6th Edition, Vol.6, Australian Geographical Society, Terrey Hills, NSW, 1996, p.2417
convict settlement at Redcliffe. The first successful cultivation of tropical fruit occurred four years later under the administration of Commandant Captain Logan. Pineapples and bananas were planted in the Government Gardens in 1828, with both fruits producing good returns after only one year. After the end of Logan’s administration the Government Gardens fell into disrepair but the cultivation of pineapples was maintained in the private gardens of government employees in Moreton Bay and it was from these gardens that the German missionaries obtained the pineapple suckers for the fields of Zion Hill.

Pineapple stocks at the mission settlement appear to have been sourced from two private gardens in Brisbane Town. The first pineapple plants farmed by Wagner, grew from suckers given to the missionary by the Moreton Bay chaplain, Rev. Handt. Handt’s garden occupied the site of the present day Treasury building in inner city Brisbane and his pineapple plants are said to have been originally sourced from India. The missionaries also obtained pineapples from the garden of Brisbane’s first postmaster G.M. Slade who began growing the fruit in 1837. Carl Gerler’s map of Brisbane Town in 1844 [see Image Six on page 123] locates Slade’s garden behind the old Post Office building at the southern end of Queen Street. Thomas Dowse, in September 1844, reported a beautiful crop of pineapples growing in Slade’s garden. Slade was credited by the colonial government biologist Henry Tryon as the first Moreton Bay farmer to export pineapples to Sydney and his name appears in the shipping columns of the Moreton Bay Courier in 1847 with other English farmers including R. Davidson and D. Peterson, sending small quantities of the fruit to Sydney on the coastal steamers.

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3 Journal of Allan Cunningham, 1 September 1824, in J.G. Steele (ed.), Brisbane Town in Convict Days, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1975, p.7
4 Letter, C. Fraser to Colonial Secretary Macleay, July 1829, in Steele, Brisbane Town in Convict Days, pp.112-113
5 Queensland Agricultural Journal, Vol.12, Pt.6, 1 June 1903, p.416
6 ‘Brisbane in 1844’, Illustration plate 123, in Steele, Brisbane Town in Convict Days, (following p.297)
7 Sydney Morning Herald, 10 September 1844, p.4
8 The Queenslander, 2 December 1893, p.1083 ; Moreton Bay Courier, 10 April 1847, p.2 ; Moreton Bay Courier, 24 April 1847, p.2 ; Moreton Bay Courier, 22 May 1847, p.2
Suckers from Slade’s plants were obtained by the missionaries Gerler and Rode in the early 1850s and cultivated on their new properties. The pineapples from Handt’s and Slade’s gardens were a rough leafed variety named the Queen. The Queen was the dominant pineapple variety in colonial Queensland until canning was introduced in the late 19th century, a process which preferred smooth leafed varieties such as the Cayenne.
Gerler planted large numbers of Queens at his Eagle Farm property and these plants were identified by Henry Tryon as ‘the principal source for further cultivation of the fruit across North Brisbane.’ Rode also planted sizable quantities of Queens on the slopes of his properties and an undated photograph held by the Nundah and Districts Historical Society shows sloping rough leafed pineapple plants in front of his mansion ‘Silesia House.’

The methods of cultivation employed by the North Brisbane pineapple farmers were simple but effective. Pineapples were planted in winter, allowing the young plants ‘time to strike’ before the hot conditions of summer set in. The fruit was planted in rows, with each row set eight to nine feet apart. Cabbages and beans were sometimes grown between the pineapple rows to maximise the potential yield. New plants were obtained from suckers pulled from year-old offshoots. Planting was a two-person operation, with one digging six-inch holes in the sandy North Brisbane soil while the second placed a sucker in each hole and leveled the soil around it. Little cultivation was required after planting, apart from an occasional weeding and after one year the plants were ready to bear fruit and produce new suckers. Harvesting occurred in the summer months of the year from January through to April. The fruit was cut from the plant with a knife and loaded by hand into horse drawn carts and drays or placed into baskets. The fruit was then taken into Brisbane for local sale or export.

A visitor to Moreton Bay in 1857 made the following observations regarding pineapple farming in the region:

It is a novelty to see the pineapple grown by the acre, as your market gardeners grow turnips and cabbages, but in reality the pine is here grown much more easily than either of the latter, and planted in rows like cabbages they go on producing.

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11 *The Boomerang*, 11 November 1887, p.9
fruit from the young shoots of each season, and if the ground be kept clean and unusually rich they never appear to require replacing.12

Modern methods of pineapple cultivation allow one plant crop plus two ratoons (seasonal regrowth after the original plant crop has been harvested) before the pineapple plants are replaced. Even in the late 19th century agricultural experts recommended no more than three or four harvests for each plant before replacement. The German missionary farmers, however, allowed their plants to grow year after year. Henry Tryon in the early 1890s noted Rode’s plantation in Nundah contained healthy thirty-year-old plants, while the *Queensland Agricultural Journal* in 1903 reported a sixty-year-old patch of pineapples descended from Rev. Handt’s original suckers was ‘still growing healthy and strong, on Mr. Andrew Wagner’s farm.’13 The climate and conditions of Moreton Bay proved ideal for pineapple production in the 1840s and 1850s and early growers in the region faced few problems producing successful harvests, apart from occasional hail damage from summer storms and theft from their fields.14 In the coldest months of winter Brisbane growers prevented frost damage to their plants by covering them with a light scattering of straw.

Along with the relative ease of cultivation, the other incentive for Moreton Bay farmers to invest in pineapple production was the lucrative return to be made from exporting the fruit to the Sydney markets. While pineapples sold locally in Brisbane Town sold for a few pennies each in the early 1850s, a case of North Brisbane pineapples could fetch anywhere between twenty-five to thirty-five shillings in Sydney. British farmers, such as Slade, led the way in exporting the fruit to Sydney in the late 1840s, but by 1852, they were joined by the missionary farmers of the German Station. The purchase of their own blocks of freehold land allowed the Germans to expand the scope of their agricultural operations from small-scale mixed farming at Zion Hill, to the production of Moreton Bay’s first cash crop, the pineapple. An examination of the *Moreton Bay Courier*’s shipping columns reveals Carl Gerler was the first of the missionaries to send a

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12 *Moreton Bay Free Press*, 16 September 1857, p.2  
13 *The Queenslander*, 2 December 1893, p.1083; *Queensland Agricultural Journal*, Vol.12, Pt.6, 1 June 1903, p.416  
14 *Moreton Bay Courier*, 5 March 1859, p.3; *Moreton Bay Courier*, 22 October 1859, p.2
consignment of pineapples to Sydney in January 1852 on the steamer *Eagle* and he was soon joined by Hausmann and the other brethren as regular exporters of the fruit.

Rev. Stobart, who visited Moreton Bay in July 1853, was impressed by the quality of the local pineapples:

They grow here in the open sun in large quantities together. We generally have one every day. They are about 6 shilling or 8 shilling a dozen in winter. In summer they are much less I believe.\(^{15}\)

During his inspection of the mission settlement he observed that the Germans had one field 'planted with pineapples which make anything but a pretty crop; they have a weedy disorderly appearance.'\(^{16}\) Another visitor to the German Station in 1853 was more complimentary, stating the pineapple fields 'have certainly a most thriving and flourishing aspect, reminding one more of a tropical than an Australian Garden'.\(^{17}\)

The shipments from the German Station to Sydney continued through the 1850s with the size of consignments gradually increasing in quantity. Even in 1855, when the local press reported dry conditions had effected the summer harvests in Moreton Bay, producing shortages of fruit and vegetables, the Germans maintained regular shipments of pineapples to the Sydney markets.\(^{18}\) That same year at the Agricultural Exhibition held in the Brisbane School of Arts building, Zillman received a prize of ten shillings for the best pineapples on display.\(^{19}\) By the end of the 1850s the shipping columns of the *Moreton Bay Courier* reveal the missionary farmers of the German Station were at the forefront of the Queensland pineapple industry, exporting large quantities of the fruit to Sydney every summer from January through to April.

Pineapple farms were a common feature of the North Brisbane landscape in the later half of the 19th century with large areas under cultivation at the German Station, Nudgee, Eagle Farm and Zillmere. A letter, written in October 1862, from Wagner to the


\(^{16}\) Journal Letter, Rev. Henry Stobart to Mrs. Thos Chilton, 8-19 July 1853, *Papers of Rev. Henry Stobart*

\(^{17}\) *Moreton Bay Free Press*, 23 August 1853, p.3

\(^{18}\) *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 January 1855, p.5

\(^{19}\) *Moreton Bay Courier*, 14 July 1855, p.2
Queensland Government’s Surveyor General lists ‘about 140,000 pineapples plants ¼ with fruit - £583’ among the improvements made to his section of the mission land. Thomas Dowse visited the German Station in 1859 and praised the missionaries as ‘lucrative’ farmers, stockholders and dairymen. Among their many achievements, Dowse noted they had ‘grown and sold some thousands of pineapples’ and the ‘unsightly forest’ of North Brisbane had given place ‘to the luxuriant banana and prolific grape and pineapple plantations’.

While the German missionary farmers in general earned the admiration of their peers in regards to their pineapple production, some commentators were critical of the standards of the Brisbane growers. Critics in the early 1850s suggested the local pineapples were ‘dear in price and indifferent in kind’; ‘not of the best’ varieties and would be ‘vastly improved by being manured—a fact which our local cultivators either known not or neglect.’ Another commentator in the 1870s made the observation ‘there appears to be little cultivation in the growing of the pineapple here after it is planted and the fruit consequently is small and stunted.’ He suggested local growers should space their rows of pineapples further apart to allow more air, light and nourishment for each plant and also advocated the introduction of new smooth leaf varieties to replace the rough leafed Queen.

While the German missionaries did not leave any firsthand accounts of the methods they used to grow their pineapples, an 1898 letter written by Carl Gerler’s son, published in the *Queensland Agricultural Journal*, provides some insights into the techniques and philosophy of their farming practices. In the letter Gerler junior emphasises three key factors in the successful cultivation of pineapples: good drainage; the careful application of manure; and the value of ‘deep working’ the soil. Gerler was also critical of standards in the Queensland industry, accusing many farmers of only tickling the surface when preparing new ground, neglecting to provide proper drainage and heaping fresh manure directly on to the root system of their plants causing rot and

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20 Letter, G. Wagner to the Surveyor General, 17 October 1862, QSA, LWO / A2, 4714  
21 *Moreton Bay Courier*, 19 January 1859, p.2  
22 *Moreton Bay Free Press*, 14 December 1852, p.3; *Moreton Bay Free Press*, 15 March 1853, p.2  
23 *The Queenslander*, 11 March 1876, p.22
From 1887 through the following decade the North Brisbane pineapple farms were devastated by ‘Black Rot’ disease which caused the discoloration and withering of pineapple leaves and stems. Government agricultural experts blamed the keeping of old plants decade after decade for encouraging the disease, but it was acknowledged that no trace of ‘Black rot’ had ever been found in the plants of the missionary families despite their age.

Members of the Gerler and Wagner families continued to grow pineapples in the North Brisbane area through the first half of the 20th century. Pineapples were cultivated on the original site of the Mission as late as the 1940s by the Wagner family, with the fruit trucked into Brisbane and sold at the Roma Street markets. Technological innovations such as canning, the development of the State’s railway network and the gradual urbanisation of North Brisbane combined to shift the centre of Queensland pineapple production to regional areas including the Sunshine Coast, Gympie and Yeppoon.

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24 Queensland Agricultural Journal, Vol.3, Pt.4, 1 November 1898, pp.351-352
The German heritage of the iconic Queensland pineapple industry is not well known in the state but it was at least widely acknowledged at the time. The German Station missionary farmers have not fared well within the historiography of viticulture and winemaking in Australia either, and yet they were important pioneers. Their lack of acknowledgement within the history of winemaking is partly due to the fact that within the extensive literature on the history of Australian viticulture, the Queensland industry, at best, receives only passing mention. While Queensland winemaking has undergone tremendous growth in the last decade, it is by no means a new industry in the state. Like the pineapple, grape vines were first trialed in Moreton Bay in 1828 in the Government Gardens and produced a good return after one year. There is no evidence for the cultivation of grape vines in the first years of Zion Hill but the mission’s founder, Rev. Lang, possessed a strong interest in viticulture and grapes were grown extensively on his

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27 Letter, C. Fraser to Colonial Secretary Macleay, July 1829, in Steele, *Brisbane Town in Convict Days*, pp.112-113
family property in the Hunter Valley.\(^{28}\) In January 1844 land agent Thomas Dowse reported grape vines thrived in Moreton Bay.\(^{29}\) Advertisements advising the sale of Brisbane farms in the *Moreton Bay Courier* through the 1850s, often list grape vines in their descriptions of the properties.\(^{30}\) Early reports of grape cultivation in Moreton Bay make no mention of individual varieties but table grapes appear to have predominated. An article on agriculture in Moreton Bay published in March 1853 argued the climate of the region was well suited for table grapes, with many varieties for growers to choose from, but concluded local grapes ‘will perhaps never be cultivated for wine’ and there is no evidence that any attempt at wine production was made in Moreton Bay during the first three decades of settlement.\(^{31}\)

After the closure of the mission in 1845 there is evidence which shows many of the missionary farmers including Hausmann and Wagner, grew grape vines on their properties but of the missionary brethren it was Carl Gerler who demonstrated a life long passion for the vine.\(^{32}\) After the purchase of his Eagle Farm property ‘Carlsberg’ in July 1852, Gerler’s immediate priority was the planting and cultivation of pineapples but grape vines were also quickly established. It is not known if Gerler sourced his grape vines from Australian growers or had them imported from Europe but only one year after the purchase of Carlsberg, Gerler received recognition at Brisbane’s first agricultural show for exhibiting a bunch of sweet water grapes, from a vine ‘which had grown in one season to the extraordinary length of 31 feet 10 inches’.\(^{33}\)

In January 1854, land agent Thomas Dowse reported improvements in the Moreton Bay grape harvest noting:

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\(^{29}\) *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 January 1844, p.2

\(^{30}\) *Moreton Bay Courier*, 28 March 1857, p.3; *Moreton Bay Courier*, 30 July 1859, p.3

\(^{31}\) *Moreton Bay Free Press*, 15 March 1853, p.2

\(^{32}\) Correspondence from Wagner and Haussman to the Surveyor General in 1862 list grape vines to the value of £25 and £22 as part of their improvements made to the Zion Hill mission land; Letter, G. Wagner to the Surveyor General, 17 October 1862, QSA, LWO / A2, 62/4714; Letter, J.G. Haussman to the Surveyor General, 17 November 1862, QSA, LWO / A2, 62/5132

\(^{33}\) *Moreton Bay Courier*, 16 July 1853, p.2
Grapes have been in the market place since Christmas and their quality is superior to any I have heretofore seen produced here. This appears to be owing to the favorable early part of the season, and also no doubt in some measure to the increasing age of the vines and greater skill in their management.\textsuperscript{34}

During the winter months of 1854 Gerler placed an advertisement in the \textit{Moreton Bay Courier}, advising he could supply farmers with ‘grape vine cuttings of various sorts, in any quantity’ and one year old vine stocks at ‘very reasonable prices’, and recommended the month of July to growers as the best time for planting.\textsuperscript{35} The following winter in 1855 Gerler again placed an advertisement in the newspaper for vine cuttings from his ‘Carlsberg property. This time the missionary listed the individual grape varieties available for sale which included Black Muscatel, Muscat, Purple Alvena, American, Sweet Water, White Muscatel, Cluster and Corinth, along with some 200 peach and quince fruit tree seedlings. In 1856 Gerler advertised the availability of ‘a few thousand excellent rooted grape vines of different sorts; also cuttings in any quantity’.\textsuperscript{36} The quantities of cuttings and seedlings mentioned in the advertisements not only suggest the Carlsberg vine stocks and fruit trees were healthy and well established by the mid 1850s but also indicate the missionary was highly skilled at plant propagation techniques for many fruit varieties. His skill at producing cuttings and seedlings on a commercial basis in the 1850s lends credence to Henry Tryon’s observation that the majority of North Brisbane farmers sourced their pineapple stocks from Gerler’s farm.

The profits made by Gerler during the ‘palmy days’ of the pineapple industry in the 1850s and 1860s were invested in the establishment of one of the first wineries in the Moreton Bay region on his Carlsberg property.\textsuperscript{37} The first grapes grown at Carlsberg were almost certainly sold as table grapes for the local Brisbane market. The cost of grapes varied in Brisbane according to season and availability, but table varieties such as the Isabella and the Sweet Water were always a highly saleable item for market gardeners and street vendors. It is difficult to determine the exactly when the German missionary

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 17 January 1854, p.2
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Moreton Bay Courier}, 21 June 1854, p.3 ; \textit{Moreton Bay Courier}, 1 July 1854, p.3
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Moreton Bay Courier}, 2 June 1855, p.3 ; \textit{Moreton Bay Courier}, 26 July 1856, p.3
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{The Queenslander}, 28 April 1894, p.791
commenced the commercial production of wine from his Eagle Farm vineyards but it is likely the first Carlsberg vintages were sold from the late 1860s.

A journalist using the pen-name ‘Zamia’ from the Brisbane Courier newspaper made an inspection of Carlsberg in November 1870 and published a detailed description of the vineyard. Twelve acres at the property were under cultivation with the majority taken up by grape vines. Pineapples were also ‘largely represented with a fair display besides of mulberry trees and peaches of every description.’ A distinctive feature of the vineyard was Gerler’s practice of attaching individual vines to vertical wooden stakes driven into the ground instead of using horizontal trellises. Gerler favoured the single stake method of training vines over trellises, as he believed it encouraged the vines to grow low to the ground, producing ‘thick clustering foliage’ and higher quality grape juice. 

Trellised vines, according to Gerler, yielded a greater quantity of fruit but of an inferior quality to staked vines and the missionary only used trellises for select varieties at Carlsberg including the Isabella. The single stake method employed by Gerler was a traditional European method of vine training also extensively used by German immigrant farmers across Queensland in the 19th century. An article published in The Queenslander in 1876 was dismissive of the ‘staking and tying method’ of the German farmers of North Brisbane but the system remains in use today by many grape producers.

The Brisbane Courier journalist ‘Zamia’ in 1870 also noted the orderly appearance of Gerler’s vines, with scarcely a weed ‘to be seen between the long regular rows’ and each plant carefully pruned ‘as if it alone had monopolised the care and attention of the proprietor’. In Gerler’s opinion careful pruning of the vines was essential for the long term health of the vines. The missionary maintained that many local growers allowed their vines to grow too long forgetting they ‘make here in one year as much wood as in three in the old country.’ Gerler also took considerable care with the drainage of the soil at Carlsberg, arranging a system of pipes and trenches lined with

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38 Brisbane Courier, 28 November 1870, p.7
39 The Queenslander, 11 March 1876, pp.21-22
40 The Queenslander, 1 April 1876, p.22; A.J. Winkler, General Viticulture, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1962, pp.206-207
41 Brisbane Courier, 28 November 1870, p.7
42 The Queenslander, 1 April 1876, p.22
wooden slabs between the vines.\textsuperscript{43} The first cartographic map of the North Brisbane region, made in 1889 by the British military surveyor Lt. Edwin Cave Owen, reveals the parallel rows of grape vines at Carlsberg were arranged by Gerler to slope down the gentle gradient of his property.\textsuperscript{44} The grapevines at Carlsberg were fertilised with manure. Journalists from \textit{The Planter and Farmer} newspaper who visited the vineyard in 1883 noted that ‘Mr Gerler believes in manure and applies it regularly’. They carefully recorded his warning, however, that fertilising grape vines with raw manure was a process which needed to be undertaken with care: ‘He showed us one piece vines which have done nothing this year through having an overdose of dung last winter’.\textsuperscript{45}

The cultivation of grapes was not always easy in the Moreton Bay climate. Summer weather conditions including high temperatures, storms and hailstones could devastate the crops of the North Brisbane growers.\textsuperscript{46} The grapes were also targeted by flocks of birds, flying foxes, rats and a white grub which attacked the stems of the vines. More serious was the fungal disease oidium which destroyed the leaves of the vines, reducing the quantity of grapes produced. To combat the disease, Gerler recommended the application of powdered sulfur on the plants ‘five or six times during the season.’ Gerler also believed some grape varieties such as the Verdelho were highly susceptible to the disease, while other varieties such as the Isabella displayed a natural resistance to the fungus.\textsuperscript{47} Brisbane growers were fortunate in that they were spared the ravages of the disease phylloxera which devastated the vineyards of Europe and colonial Victoria in the 1870s and 1880s but failed to reach Queensland in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.

The harvesting of the grapes took place over the months of February and March. Gerler’s team of five labourers cut grapes from the vines for two days and crushed them on the third, repeating the process until all the grapes were harvested.\textsuperscript{48} An average harvest at Carlsberg yielded approximately forty tons of grapes and produced

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{planterfarmer} \textit{The Planter and Farmer}, Vol. II, No.3, March 1883, pp.458-460
\bibitem{surveyplan} Survey Plan, M 33.2381, Lt. Edwin Cave Owen, Sketch Plan of the Country North-East of Brisbane, 1889, Queensland Government, Department of Natural Resources and Water
\bibitem{planterfarmer2} \textit{The Planter and Farmer}, Vol. II, No.3, March 1883, pp.458-460
\bibitem{queenslander} \textit{Moreton Bay Courier}, 22 October 1859, p.2
\bibitem{queenslander2} \textit{The Queenslander}, 18 April 1874, p.5 ; \textit{The Queenslander}, 20 March 1875, p.5 ; \textit{The Queenslander}, 11 March 1876, p.22
\bibitem{queenslander3} \textit{The Queenslander}, 18 April 1874, p.5
\end{thebibliography}
approximately 4000 gallons of wine. The harvested grapes were taken from the fields to Gerler’s winery and cellars. According to the journalist ‘Zamia’ the winery was a large timber building measuring forty by twenty-three feet, with hardwood walls ‘carefully plastered within’ and a brick floor. Inside was a crushing machine, fermenting vats and a row of maturing casks with a holding capacity of several thousand gallons.

The crushing machine, operated by two men, processed the grapes by passing them through a hopper and a pair of rollers. One ton of grapes could be crushed by the machine in close to an hour. The pulverised mass of grapes was then poured into the fermentation vats. The first stage of fermentation lasted only a few days, after which the skins and grape solids were skimmed from the surface and the juice drawn off to commence secondary fermentation in wooden casks. The casks were coated with lime ‘to keep them sweet and to guard against the ravages of insects.’ The process of secondary fermentation lasted several months after which the wine was drawn off for a third time and cellared for two to three years until it was fully matured and ready for consumption.

During the 1870s and 1880s Gerler produced a white and red wine for commercial distribution each year. The colonial British taste for wine during this period favoured strong, sweet fortified blends and Gerler tailored his wine accordingly to meet the demands of the local market. Gerler’s preferred grape varieties for his white wines included the Royal Muscadine of Alexandria and the Pineau Blanc, while the Isabella, Black Cluster and Burgundy varieties were used to produce his red vintages. To strengthen the alcoholic content of the wines, Gerler used imported brandy as a fortifying agent, disparaging other local vigneron who, he claimed, often resorted to fortifying their wines with ‘crude spirits’ obtained by distillation.

In 1881 the Queensland Government commissioned W.G. Chancellor from Her Majesty’s Customs to test the alcoholic strength of sixty-four wines produced in Queensland. Gerler’s 1880 red was found to have an alcohol content of 17.4% and was

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50 *Brisbane Courier*, 28 November 1870, p.7
51 *Brisbane Courier*, 28 November 1870, p.7
52 *Brisbane Courier*, 28 November 1870, p.7
one of the lighter vintages tested in the survey.\textsuperscript{54} Contemporary descriptions of the Carlsberg vineyard reveal Gerler also produced and personally preferred non-fortified wines. These wines, however, were not nearly as popular with Brisbane drinkers, as in the words of the journalists from the \textit{Planter and Farmer}, colonial palates in Queensland ‘had not yet been trained to appreciate the pure juice of the grape’.\textsuperscript{55} Fruit wines were also made by Gerler from the mulberries and pineapples grown at Carlsberg. The \textit{Brisbane Courier} journalist ‘Zamia’ described the missionary’s pineapple wine as ‘heady’, possessing the colour of ‘a pale sherry’, with a flavour ‘not unlike cider plus the rich lusciousness of the fruit which forms its basis’.\textsuperscript{56}

By the 1870s Carl Gerler was recognised as one of the finest winemakers in Queensland. British naturalist James Craig visited the missionary farmer at Carlsberg in 1876 and observed ‘his wine has obtained for him a local celebrity’.\textsuperscript{57} Annual reports on the production of the Carlsberg vintages written by Gerler were published in \textit{The Queenslander} during the 1870s, while \textit{The Planter and Farmer} newspaper praised Carlsberg as a fine vineyard exemplifying what could be done ‘with the most commonplace soil when skill, industry and enterprise are brought to bear upon it’.\textsuperscript{58} By the late 1880s old age and an injury sustained in a buggy accident forced Carl Gerler to retire from winemaking, and the management of his property was passed to his sons. A Queensland Government report on the local wine industry in 1889 recognised Carlsberg as one of the oldest vineyards in the colony. The report stated winemaking had only recently been abandoned at the property with ‘the cultivation of table grapes only carried on’, the bulk of the crop now being sold ‘to hawkers, who come and buy from the vine’.\textsuperscript{59} Carl Gerler died in 1894. Carlsberg was retained by his family until the 1920s when it was sold and subdivided into allotments for housing and stables.

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{The Planter and Farmer}, Vol. II, No.3, March 1883, pp.458-460
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Brisbane Courier}, 28 November 1870, p.7
\textsuperscript{57} J. Craig, \textit{Diary of a Naturalist, : Being the Record of Three Years Work Collecting Specimens}, Paisley, Scot & Parlane, London, 1906, p.158
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{The Queenslander}, 18 April 1874, p.5 ; \textit{The Queenslander}, 20 March 1875, p.5 ; \textit{The Queenslander}, 11 March 1876, p.22 ; \textit{The Planter and Farmer}, Vol. II, No.3, March 1883, pp.458-460
As pioneers of pineapple production and winemaking in Queensland, the German missionaries hold an eminent position in the agricultural history of the state, but there was one further aspect to their pioneering role in food production in southeast Queensland. Small-scale dairying was an important feature of suburban and town life in Queensland throughout the 19th century. The colonial British were great lovers of dairy products with milk, butter and cream essential ingredients in English kitchens. The warm climate and lack of refrigeration necessitated the daily purchase of dairy goods and this consumer demand was met by local dairies. These producers supplied the few existing grocery stores in a given area with dairy goods or sold their milk and butter direct to consumers in the streets. Although providing an important service to colonial households on a culinary and nutritional level, the dairies were such a commonplace feature of the Queensland urban landscape they receive little attention in contemporary records from the period.

Sourcing information on the dairies, and the men and women who ran them, is often a difficult task but from the documentation relating to the final years of the mission it is clear the German missionaries were among the first farmers to supply Brisbane town with dairy goods in the 1840s.

Contemporary reports allow conjecture that the German families owned several hundred head of cattle between them. Haussman recalled that after the closure of the mission he bought twelve cows from the government herd and ‘brought the milk and butter into market’. Between 1846 and 1848 the New South Wales Government sold off large portions of their Moreton Bay herd and it is likely Haussman and the other missionaries took advantage of these sales to bolster their livestock holdings. Carl Gerler’s sketch of the mission in 1846 reveals that separate fenced paddocks had been constructed for the settlement’s livestock and calves, and the reminiscences of J.W. Zillman mention ‘the missionaries all had small dairies’ by 1848. By the late 1840s a

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61 *The Queenslander* 9 November 1901, p.88
number of English farmers were also supplying Brisbane Town with dairy produce, including John Westaway at Eagle Farm and M. Fletcher of New Farm.\textsuperscript{64}

Dairying in colonial Queensland was primitive by modern standards with little or no mechanisation occurring in the industry until the 1890s. Milking was done in the open using little more than a pail and a rope to tether the cow. A contemporary observer of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century Brisbane dairy industry argued that ‘no class of people … worked harder than the dairymen of the Brisbane district’ with their work taking place ‘at unreasonable hours in all weather.’\textsuperscript{65} Members of the Wagner family recalled milking the family’s cows at midday and midnight at the German Station. The practice of milking in the middle of the day is supported by evidence given at a colonial inquest in 1848. The Anglican priest Rev. Gregor drowned in Kedron Brook in January 1848 and the missionary Nique testified ‘he was milking in the stockyard at about eleven or half past eleven o’clock when he saw Rev. Gregor go past to swim in the lagoon’\textsuperscript{66}.

Before the age of mechanisation, Queensland dairies needed to be close to their market areas to ensure the produce remained fresh at the point of sale. The pasturage of the immediate Brisbane area was not always of the best quality, especially in the winter months of the year when dry conditions often prevailed. Maize and sweet potatoes were therefore grown by Brisbane dairy farmers as a dietary supplement for their cows to improve ‘the quality of the milk and subsequent products of butter and cheese’.\textsuperscript{67} The process of making butter, which involved separating and churning the cream, patting the yellow mass into neat blocks and salting was ‘no light task’ in Queensland’s warm climate. According to W.H. Traill on hot summer mornings the dairyman would often find ‘the butter would not come, churn he ever so wisely.’\textsuperscript{68}

The few references to the dairies of the missionary families dating from the 1850s, emphasise the Germans’ production and sale of butter to the residents of Brisbane. Rev. Stobart, who visited the German Station in July 1853, made the observation:

\textsuperscript{64} Moreton Bay Courier, 28 October 1848, p.3; Sydney Morning Herald, 29 March 1845, p.2
\textsuperscript{65} Brisbane Courier, 20 December 1888, p.3
\textsuperscript{66} Moreton Bay Courier, 29 January 1848, p.2
\textsuperscript{67} The Queenslander, 11 March 1876, p.22
\textsuperscript{68} Queensland Agricultural Journal, Vol.85, No.9, September 1959, p.561; Traill, A Queenly Colony, pp.25-26
‘Brisbane is dependent upon them for their supply of butter.’ The poem commemorating the second collapse of the Breakfast Creek Bridge also mentions the Germans bringing butter into the settlement every week. While the Germans appear to have sold much of their dairy produce directly to their Brisbane customers, in the streets, there is also evidence of their supplying their goods to local businesses on a wholesale basis. In September 1856 the following advertisement appeared in the Moreton Bay Courier:

Fresh Butter Fresh Butter, The undersigned has made arrangements with Mr. Franz of the German Station to have a constant supply of his superior butter, D. Fowles.

The fact that the businessman specifically mentioned the name of his supplier indicates he believed his customers were not only aware of the German farmer but also associated Franz’s name with quality produce. Butter production was often the responsibility of women in colonial Australia and while it is likely the women of the mission were heavily involved in this task, contemporary reports on the German Station remain silent on the matter.

When Zillman and Franz took up pastoral runs in the 1850s their families were able to increase their stock holdings and levels of dairy production. Dairies were established at Warabah and the Upper Caboolture region by Zillman, with bailiffs hired to work them until his sons were old enough to take them over. Butter was transported from the dairies into Brisbane on pack horses. During the hot months of summer the journey was completed at night, to keep the butter from melting. J.W. Zillman recalled falling asleep in the saddle one summer night and woke to find himself in the bush and the pack horse gone:

That was a bit of a calamity. I rode zig zag until I found the track. I then rode back until I found the pack horse with the butter; no going to sleep after that.

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69 Journal Letter, Rev. Henry Stobart to Mrs Thos Chilton, 8-19 July 1853, Papers of Rev. Henry Stobart
70 Moreton Bay Courier, 1 March 1856, p.3
71 Moreton Bay Courier, 6 September 1856, p.3
The Zillman and Franz families were among the first settlers in the Caboolture area to take up dairying, an industry which continues in the region to this day. In the late 1860s the two families were also the first producers to supply the new Gympie gold fields with milk, taking fresh cows up to the mining settlement on the road from Caboolture and returning with the dry ones.

Alongside the production of dairy goods, during the 1850s and 1860s the German missionaries were also breeding livestock on a commercial basis. According to J.W. Zillman, his father was the first of the missionaries to purchase independently a bullock team for his own use. He soon broke in another team and sold it for £100 and, throughout the 1850s, Zillman continued to break in and sell bullock teams, after branding them LZ7. Purchasers of the teams included the future Mayor of Brisbane, John McMaster and local businessman George Toms.73 In December 1855, the Moreton Bay Courier advertised the sale of one of Zillman’s bullock teams ‘with or without a dray’.74 Franz and Rode also advertised the sale of bullock teams in the newspaper during the 1850s with Franz advising readers his teams were in good condition and came complete with ‘yokes, bows and chains’.75

After the 1860s the agriculture and dairying of the missionary families in general no longer centered around the original mission site, with the notable exception of the Wagner family. In his 1862 letter to the Queensland Surveyor General, Wagner listed the following improvements made to his portion of the mission land; ‘store, kitchen, bee shade, two stockyards, calf pen and shade, pig sty and dairy - £ 50.’76 Starting with this basic infrastructure Wagner established the ‘Toombul Dairy’ which supplied milk to the Nundah – Clayfield area until the 1950s. Andrew Wagner inherited the dairy in 1893 after the death of his father in 1893 and in turn passed the dairy on to his sons Fred and

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72 Zillman, Recollections of My Early Life, pp.4-5
73 Zillman, Recollections of My Early Life, p.3
74 Moreton Bay Courier, 29 December 1855, p.2
75 Moreton Bay Courier, 10 November 1855, p.3 ; Moreton Bay Courier, 26 September 1857, p.2 ; Moreton Bay Courier, 26 July 1856, p.2
76 Letter, Wagner to the Surveyor General, 17 October 1862, QSA, LWO / A2, 4714
Jeff Wagner. Fred Wagner assumed the responsibility of the day to day running of the
dairy while his brother Jeff took care of the financial management of the business.77

Toombul dairy operated on the site of the original mission and was located
between Hows Road, Hedley Avenue, Walkers Way and David Street in the suburb of
Nundah. Older residents of the area still recall cows from the dairy being grazed on the
grass flats beside Kedron Brook near the present day location of Toombul Shopping
Centre. Agistment paddocks were also used by the family to fatten their cows. Fred
Wagner often told the story of a muster he undertook as a boy in 1904, driving cattle
from Nundah through inner Brisbane and herding the animals across Victoria Bridge. The
animals were then taken south to agistment paddocks in the Mount Cotton region, where
fresh cattle were rounded up and returned to Nundah; the round trip taking almost a week
to complete.78 During the depression years of the 1930s, dairy produce was freely given
to members of the extended Wagner family. Cattle were also butchered and the meat
distributed. Fred’s daughter, Marian Wagner recalled, ‘it was not seen as a charity, rather
it was about being family’.79

The outbreak of World War Two witnessed the adoption of mechanised systems
at the dairy. The shortage of manpower led to the installation of milking machines and a
cool room. Milk was sold to the Paul’s dairy company, as the local distribution of bulk
milk was phased out and replaced by pasteurised bottled milk. The Australian Army also
requisitioned land from the Wagner family during the war taking the family’s paddocks
situated near the Banyo State School. After 1945 the Brisbane City Council enacted
bylaws to move farming beyond the metropolitan area and with the passing of this
legislation, the Wagner family’s farmlands were broken up for suburban housing in the
1950s. Houses and blocks of units now stand on the site of the dairy but members of the
Wagner family continue to live in the Nundah area, only a short distance from where
their missionary ancestor built his first house in 1838.80

77 Godfred Watson Wagner, Fred, 1890 to 1978, March 2002, unpublished manuscript, Wagner Family
File, Nundah and Districts Historical Society
78 Godfred Watson Wagner, Born 4th May 1890, Died 20th April 1978, p.3
79 Godfred Watson Wagner, Fred, 1890 to 1978, March 2002, unpublished manuscript, Wagner Family
File, Nundah and Districts Historical Society
80 Godfred Watson Wagner, Fred, 1890 to 1978, March 2002 ; V. Murray, The Wagners of Nundah,
unpublished manuscript, Queensland Women’s Historical Association, p.5
The contribution made by the German missionary families to the development of the pineapple, viticulture and dairying industries not only consolidated their position as pioneer settlers of the North Brisbane area but also earned them the respect of their peers. In examining this success several contributing factors can be identified. Although the German missionaries grew up in a European landscape that was only beginning to implement the technological developments of the agrarian revolution, the missionaries had an excellent understanding of the basic principles of farming and plant cultivation. They understood the importance of well-drained soil for growing their crops and appreciated the value of manure as a natural fertiliser. Some, like Carl Gerler, exhibited considerable skill in the art of plant propagation, while all upheld a strong Protestant work ethic, taking pride in their labour and delivering a high standard of produce.

Although skilled farmers, the German missionaries were also highly successful in the economic strategies they implemented to produce and market their goods. Farming a variety of crops allowed the Germans to target the specialist fruit and vegetable and dairy markets in Brisbane, at a time when there was a considerable demand for their product and little or no competition. This ability to cultivate and sell a variety of different goods also helped the Germans withstand the fluctuation of individual commodity prices in the marketplace. Profits from this core activity of market gardening were invested over time in the acquisition of freehold land and carefully targeted areas of primary production which yielded even greater returns for the missionary families. In this regard the German missionaries can be seen as the first successful group of immigrant market gardeners in Queensland history. They in turn would be succeeded by new waves of immigrant market gardeners from a diversity of cultural backgrounds including China, Italy, Greece and Vietnam. Each group in turn would secure an economic foothold in a challenging, foreign environment through intensive mixed agriculture and then diversify into new fields of endeavour.
Conclusion

Rev. Lang’s German Mission to the Aboriginal people of Moreton Bay was one of the most ambitious evangelistic projects to be undertaken in the first decades of missionary activity in colonial New South Wales. Although Zion Hill operated as a mission for little more than seven years, the settlement made a substantial contribution to the development of colonial Queensland in many areas, particularly in the field of agriculture. The withdrawal of government support from the colonial missions during the 1840s, resulted in their closure without exception. Prominent missionaries and Aboriginal protectors of the period, such as Rev. Threlkeld and G.A. Robinson, after the closure of the missions, typically moved on and took no further interest in the development of their former mission fields, but this was not the case in Zion Hill. While some of the German missionaries such as Eipper and Schmidt departed after the withdrawal of official funding, the majority of German families remained and consolidated their position as pioneer settlers of the North Brisbane region throughout the 19th century. Such was their success, familial descendents of the missionary Wagner still live near the original mission site in Nundah to this day.

The introduction to the thesis posed three questions. What were the origins of the Zion Hill Mission and how did these circumstances differ from contemporary mission settlements in colonial New South Wales? Secondly, what process enabled the German missionaries of Zion Hill to make the successful transition from being missionaries to becoming Moreton Bay’s first market gardeners and pioneer farmers of the North Brisbane area? And finally what factors enabled the missionary families to leave a significant legacy of agricultural and pioneering achievement, unlike contemporary missions of the 1830s?

Chapter One addressed the first of these question and in exploring the origins of the mission identified a number of key differences between Lang’s design for his evangelistic project and the other contemporary missions of New South Wales. Organised on an individual level, without the support or backing of any of the British Protestant societies, the Zion Hill Mission reflected the idiosyncratic beliefs and passions of its founder, Reverend John Dunmore Lang. A life long critic of graziers and squatters, Lang
rejected the design of a pastoral-based mission settlement, as employed by Threlkeld at Lake Macquarie, in favour of a self-supporting Moravian style community to be situated at the northern most limits of the settled regions of New South Wales. Never a man for doing anything by half measures, Lang recruited twenty men and women to oversee his mission project, a number far exceeding the small groups of evangelists who worked at the other mission settlements of New South Wales. While missions such as Lake Macquarie and Wellington Valley were largely administered by British evangelists, Lang’s volunteers were German in origin, sharing a common and culturally distinct religious, socio-political and linguistic heritage.

Historian Jean Woolmington argues that the design and ambitious scale of Lang’s project hindered its chances of success. In her opinion, the German missionaries were so busy constructing homes and growing food for themselves they had little time or resources to spare for the actual work of evangelising the Aboriginal people of Moreton Bay. While it is true that much of the labour of the German missionaries was directed towards the establishment of the mission settlement, especially in the initial years of the project, Lang’s design for the mission also held innate advantages for its growth and survival. In examining the process which enabled the Germans missionaries to make the transition from evangelists to market gardeners in Moreton Bay, the value of Lang’s Moravian community model, becomes apparent on a number of levels.

The first years of the mission were marked by arduous physical labour, the neglect of the mission committee in Sydney and Aboriginal raids on the crops. The generosity of Governor Gipps and the Moreton Bay commandants, through the issue of government rations, provided the missionaries with a crucial lifeline of support in these difficult years. The communal Moravian principle of working together as a team for a common good, was also a highly significant factor in the establishment of the settlement. According to this principal every missionary was held to be equal. To the surprise of the British, the ordained missionaries Eipper and Schmidt were not given preferential treatment and worked alongside their lay-brethren in the field as they cleared and farmed the land and built the mission houses, sharing their equipment and tools. The Moravian

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cooperative ideal encouraged the group of missionaries to work together as a unified team, giving every member of the mission a strong sense of purpose and ownership of the evangelistic project, fueling them with the determination to endure the hardships and difficulties they encountered and the stamina to keep working towards their spiritual goals.

Lang’s adamant rejection of pastoralism in favour of a Moravian style community supporting itself through mixed agriculture, also allowed the Germans to not only survive the depressed economic conditions of the 1840s but to prosper during this time of adversity. The clergyman’s return to the colony in 1841 re-energised the mission settlement with the delivery of heavy farming equipment and additional livestock. Having reached a level of agricultural attainment where they were able to produce consistently a surplus from their fields, the German missionaries commenced market gardening and found a high demand for their produce from the residents of Brisbane Town. In contrast, Queensland’s first pastoralists in the 1840s faced a market glut and low prices for their commodities. This same model of mixed agriculture and small-scale dairying, so effectively used by the missionaries at Zion Hill, enabled later German settlers on the Logan River ‘to be more self-sufficient and better survivors than their British counterparts’ during the economic downturn of the 1880s.2

In addressing the final question posed by the thesis, namely what factors enabled the Zion Hill Mission to achieve an agricultural and pioneering legacy unlike contemporary evangelistic projects, Lang’s communal design for the mission can once again be identified as a key determining factor. The cooperative approach to farming and settlement employed by the German missionaries at Zion Hill was an effective strategy in its pooling of resources and talents, enabling the missionaries to persevere through the times of hardship and ultimately achieve their goal of creating a self-supporting community. This style of collective enterprise was largely absent from the contemporary British missions in New South Wales which typically operated on traditional hierarchical, master–servant arrangements. British evangelists working in the New South Wales mission field lacked the immediate support of a close knit community who shared their

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values and, hence, they possessed a more individualistic approach to their calling. As a result, when Governor Gipps withdrew official support to the missions in the 1840s, it was the easier option for the British missionaries to simply abandon their settlements and pursue their ministry elsewhere.

Rev. Threlkeld’s pastoral mission settlement design, implemented by the majority of British missions in colonial New South Wales, made perfect fiscal sense in the boom years of the industry during the 1830s. With the downturn in the economy in the 1840s, Lang’s Moravian model which reflected his own ideals of yeoman land ownership, proved to be the superior and more enduring system. While the Germans of Zion Hill were able to make the successful transition to market gardening, the British missionaries administering pastoral-based mission settlements, such as Lake Macquarie, found themselves in the same dire financial position as the squatters and graziers and had no alternative but to fold after losing official support for their ministry.

The personal qualities of the German missionaries were also a significant factor in their continuing success as pioneers. W.E. Hanlon described the Logan River Germans as ‘characteristically modest in their requirements, frugal in their living, and indefatigably industrious’ and these descriptors can be applied equally well to the missionary families of Zion Hill. Working assiduously to make a living from the North Brisbane soil, the German missionaries over time invested their profits in the purchase of larger properties, guaranteeing security of tenure and a future source of income for their families. This steadfast approach to farming and creating settlements is seen by the historian C.A. Price, as an important quality of German settlers in colonial Australia. In Price’s opinion German immigrants exhibited a strong commitment to the quality of their produce and care of their land, with contemporary British settlers far more likely to pursue short term profits and over-stock or over-farm their holdings. The successful cultivation of crops on the Zion Hill site for over a century provides compelling evidence that the German missionaries and their descendents made determined efforts to take care of the land and not exhaust the soil.

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The skills of the German missionaries as pioneer farmers should not be underestimated. The transition from farming under European conditions to those found in the remote tropical settlement of Moreton Bay was a far from easy experience for British or German settlers. The missionaries of Zion Hill, however, proved to be more than equal to this challenge and successfully adapted traditional German methods of agriculture, such as the *hufendorf* system of land use, to the unfamiliar climate and conditions. As farmers, the Germans understood the importance of good drainage and natural fertilizers for the productivity of their soil. They were skilled at plant propagation and also exercised sound judgment in meeting the requirements of the local markets, identifying cash crops suited to Brisbane’s climate which consistently yielded profitable returns.

In the pages of Queensland history the Zion Hill Mission has alternatively been criticized as a failure or celebrated as the state’s first free settlement. Skilled farming practice, personal qualities of industry, a communal settlement design and a strong group ethos of cooperation, enabled the missionaries to build an enduring legacy of agricultural achievement. Lang’s ambitious scheme for a chain of mission stations along the Queensland coast never came to fruition. Making no Christian converts, the Zion Hill Mission at best provided only marginal educational and humanitarian benefits to the Aboriginal people of Moreton Bay. The gradual transformation of the Zion Hill Mission into the pioneer farming community of the German Station, was perhaps not a complete disappointment to the Scottish clergyman. As a settlement which helped facilitate the development of agriculture in Queensland, the German Station was as successful a realisation of Lang’s ideal of a yeoman society, to be achieved in his lifetime in colonial Australia.
Image Eight: In the 1930s the agricultural history of Zion Hill was still apparent.
### Appendices

**Table One – The Missionaries of Zion Hill**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Profession / Trade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August Albrecht</td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Bitterfeld</td>
<td>Shoemaker &amp; Bookbinder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludwig Doege</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Hienrichsdorf, Pomerania</td>
<td>Gardener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Christopher Eipper</td>
<td>20 August 1813</td>
<td>Esslingen, Wuerttemberg</td>
<td>Ordained Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick Franz</td>
<td>23 January 1814</td>
<td>Stolp, Pomerania</td>
<td>Tailor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambrosius Hartenstein</td>
<td>1811</td>
<td>Hof, Bavaria</td>
<td>Weaver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannes Haussman</td>
<td>20 October 1811</td>
<td>Sonnewalde, Neiderlausitz, Prussia</td>
<td>Farmer, Butcher &amp; Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johann Niquet</td>
<td>21 December 1811</td>
<td>Braunsberg near Ruppin</td>
<td>Bricklayer &amp; Stonemason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franz Rode</td>
<td>18 July 1811</td>
<td>Schmiegroda, near Breslau, Silesia</td>
<td>Cabinetmaker &amp; Joiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. C.W. Schmidt</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Stargard, Pomerania</td>
<td>Ordained Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moritz Schneider</td>
<td>1811</td>
<td>Leipzig</td>
<td>Medical student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gottfried Wagner</td>
<td>15 November 1809</td>
<td>Glockschweitz near Breslau, Silesia</td>
<td>Shoemaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johann Zillman</td>
<td>12 November 1812</td>
<td>Neu Ulm, near Driessen, Prussia</td>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Date of Birth</td>
<td>Place of Birth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harriet Eipper (nee Gyles)</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Christiana Hartenstein (nee Sempel)</td>
<td>1803</td>
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<td>Louise Haussman (nee Lehman)</td>
<td>16 November 1809</td>
<td>Kemberg Province Sachsen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophie Marie Niquet</td>
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<td>unknown</td>
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<td>Juliann Rode (nee Peters)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louise Schmidt (nee Deutschmann)</td>
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<td>unknown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caroline Schneider</td>
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<th>Purchaser</th>
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<th>Cost</th>
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<td>33 a</td>
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<td>Stanley</td>
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<tr>
<td>F.J.A. Rode</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>C.F. Gerler</td>
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<td>106 a 2 r 14 p</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>11 a - 37 p</td>
<td>£ 123 10s 11d</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>T. Franz</td>
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<td>31 May 1859</td>
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<td>28 a 3 r</td>
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<td>29 a 1 r 22 p</td>
<td>£ 29 7s 9d</td>
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Table Four

The Sale of the German Station Mission Lands, 11 March 1863

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<td>R. Cribb</td>
<td>£ 4 7s 6d</td>
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<td>128</td>
<td>24 a</td>
<td>A. Martin</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>41 a</td>
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<td>£ 3 11s 0d</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<td>53 a</td>
<td>E.W. Tufnell</td>
<td>£ 1 0s 0d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>131</td>
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<td>E.W. Tufnell</td>
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<td>31 a</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>32 a</td>
<td>F.J.A. Rode</td>
<td>£ 5 2s 0d</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>32 a</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>30 a</td>
<td>J.G. Wagner</td>
<td>£ 6 4s 0d</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>33 a</td>
<td>Kubler &amp; another</td>
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<td>139</td>
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<td>F.T. Franz</td>
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<td>140</td>
<td>49 a</td>
<td>J.L. Zillman</td>
<td>£ 1 0s 0d</td>
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</table>

(Source: *The Courier*, 12 March 1863, p.2)
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