

New Zealand Founders Society Inc Vision

It is a privilege to be the Chair of the New Zealand Founders Society, who are a group of people that have *ancestors* who arrived to the shores of New Zealand prior to 31 December 1865.

Our main purpose is to tell stories prior to the above date, acknowledging that in some cases there are more than one version of a story.

For example: my Great Great Grandfather James Mudford, the ships cook, arrived at Nelson on the 25 September 1854 on the ship Ashmore. On the 2nd October 1854, James was in court before John Poynter defending himself against a charge laid by Captain Henry Edwards, for refusing to board his ship that was returning to the *United Kingdom*. James Mudford version of the story was that ‘Captain Edwards was incompetent and therefore placed him and the ship at risk.’ Captain Edwards claimed, ‘Wilful disobedience to lawful commands and neglect of duty on board.’ The court ruled in favour of the Captain and James Mudford was sentenced to twelve weeks of imprisonment and hard labour.

The punishment seems harsh by todays standards, however in 1854 the Captain’s word was law. Without this intervention, the Methodist church would not have been started in Marlborough, the Tua Marina School would not have been gifted a schoolhouse and more importantly, I would not have been born.

All of us have stories to share, and these stories make us who we are, with the values we promote. We cannot fix the wrong-doings of the past, but we can celebrate our family’s positive contribution to this great country, and hold our heads up proudly, for being Kiwi’s.

I encourage you all to join me in the celebration of our past, by writing your stories, so that others can begin to understand a part of our history and how this shaped New Zealand.

Raymond Mudford
Chair, New Zealand Founders Society Inc
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