

Vicky

from "New Zealand Shipwrecks 1795-1982"
by CWN Ingram

The following ship is the one which Hugh Sinclair is supposed to have helped recover whale bone from, after its wrecking.

ELBE, ship: During the south-easterly gale which blew in the Cook Strait area on December 11 and 12, 1841, another wreck occurred, that of the ship ELBE in Palliser Bay. The ship came in from the eastward, bound for Port Nicholson. She had encountered light and variable winds for three days, and at one time was within four miles of the port, but, seeing no signal of any kind, her master was afraid to venture in. About 5.30pm on December 11 the wind suddenly shifted to the south-east, which threw the vessel on a lee shore, as she was then in Palliser Bay. Every effort was made to beat off, but at every board she went to leeward, and at length was embayed in Palliser Bay. A council of her officers was held, when, in order to save life, it was determined to run the ship ashore. All hands landed safely, but the ELBE soon became a total wreck. During the gale the ship sustained much damage to her masts, rigging and sails, and her master came in for much commendation for his handling of his ship, including a letter from Captain William Wilson, master of the ship Oriental. The merchants of Wellington recognised his seamanship by presenting him with a cheque for £26.

The ELBE was under the command of Captain JR Merrihew, and was owned in New York.

The following wreck was recalled by Christina Prouse (nee McIlvride) in her reminiscences.

ZULEIKA, ship: On the night of Friday, April 16 1897, the ship was totally wrecked in Palliser Bay, about four miles west of the Cape Palliser lighthouse, with the loss of 12 of her crew of 21. The ZULEIKA was chartered in America to load cargo for New Zealand, shipping 2,000 tons, half of which was discharged at Dunedin, and the vessel was bound for Wellington to discharge the remainder when lost. Shortly after 11 o'clock on the night of the disaster land was sighted on the port bow, near Palliser Bay. A strong gale was blowing, and the captain, realising that the ship ZULEIKA was in danger, gave orders to wear the vessel. The ZULEIKA was in the act of wearing when she struck. A grating sound was heard, and in a few minutes the vessel was hard and fast. A tremendous sea was running into the bay, and the waves dashed over the ship, sweeping everything movable on deck overboard. The crew realised that it was a matter of life and death with them, and an attempt was made to launch the boats, but their efforts were not successful, all the boats being so badly damaged that they were unfit for use. All hands took refuge in the fore rigging. About 3am the mizzen-mast went by the board, and as there was every appearance of the foremast going, the crew returned to the deck and joined the master on the jibboom. Shortly afterwards the ZULEIKA lurched into the sea, and every man was thrown into the water. Many of the men struck out for the shore. Those unable to swim clung to pieces of wreckage, and several of these were drowned. Others who could swim were stunned by the wreckage and their dead bodies were washed ashore, battered and bruised almost beyond recognition. All the bodies, with the exception of three, were washed ashore. Those drowned included the mate, seven seamen, cook, steward and two apprentices. The ZULEIKA struck bow on, and all that remained above water the next day was a piece of the fore-castle. The beach was strewn for two miles with wreckage and miscellaneous cargo.

The ZULEIKA, No 70,770, was an iron ship of 1,144 tons gross and 1092 tons net register, built at Glasgow in 1875 by Messrs Aitken and Mansel, and her dimensions were: length 211.5ft, beam 32.5ft, depth 21.1ft. She was owned by T Law and Co, of Leith, and was under the command of Captain John Reiach Bremner. The Court of Inquiry found that the casualty was caused by the vessel making more leeway than calculated on, and to a surface set to the NNW. The master did all in his power for the safety of the ship during the gale, and for the preservation of life after the wreck.