



## DAVID ALEXANDER De MAUS

De Maus arrived in 1867 by the ship 'Caribou'. A note written on the back of a photograph in the Otago Early Settlers' Association archive suggests James De Maus, the photographer mentioned in the short biography of William Meluish later in this book, was his uncle. The origin of David De Maus professional career is not known, but he was a proficient portrait photographer in Port Chalmers, and gave his talent with amateur enthusiasm to photographing innumerable events, especially picnic parties in the harbour area, and was both a vice-president and photographer-in-chief to various rowing, cricket, football and hockey clubs. Mr H. Bowman, in his 'Port Chalmers: Gateway to Otago' (Capper Press reprint 1978) acknowledges his use of, and reliance on, De Maus' photographs. De Maus was not only an active photographer but a member of the Borough Council from 1888 and mayor in 1899-1901 and again in 1903-6, and closely associated with and involved in the social and sporting life of the place. He was well known as a singer and composer of Scottish songs, and he organized many concerts and plays, and produced 'The Geisha' in 1893. Much of his photography could be called functional, but as his photograph of the North Express shows, he had an eye for the dramatic subject. The Otago Early Settlers'

Association holds a number of his photographs in albums, and the Hocken Library has an extensive file of his negatives, among which are some studies of the nude. David De Maus had the dubious honour of being the first to be prosecuted under the Offensive Publications Act that had been recently placed on the Statute Book, for selling a photograph of "an indecent nature". The magistrate considered the photograph shown to the court to be "gross and disgusting". The police detective showed other photographs of the nude and asked for a ruling if they were indecent or immoral within the meaning of the act, but no opinion was offered by the bench. De Maus was the official photographer to the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition of 1890. He offered for sale a selection of over 400 photographs of works of art, photographs of the Union Steam Ship Company's fleet of favourite steamers, the Shaw Savill Albion, the N.Z. Shipping Company, and the Shire Line steamers, views of the Sounds, Lake Wakatipu, Lake Tekapo, Hot Lakes, Terraces, and all parts of New Zealand, 24 views of Old Port Chalmers, and photographs of wrecks. Most of these were available in whole plate, cabinet and stereoscope size, and as lantern slides. He had a studio in the exhibition grounds and took portraits. De Maus and his camera accompanied picnic parties on the harbour ferry boats to Broad Bay, Portobello, and Harington Point, all favourite spots on the Otago Peninsula, and so popular were his group photographs that many of them have survived, reminders of the merry times of a more leisurely age. He died in July 1925 at the age of 78, not living to see the great exhibition in Dunedin opened later that year.



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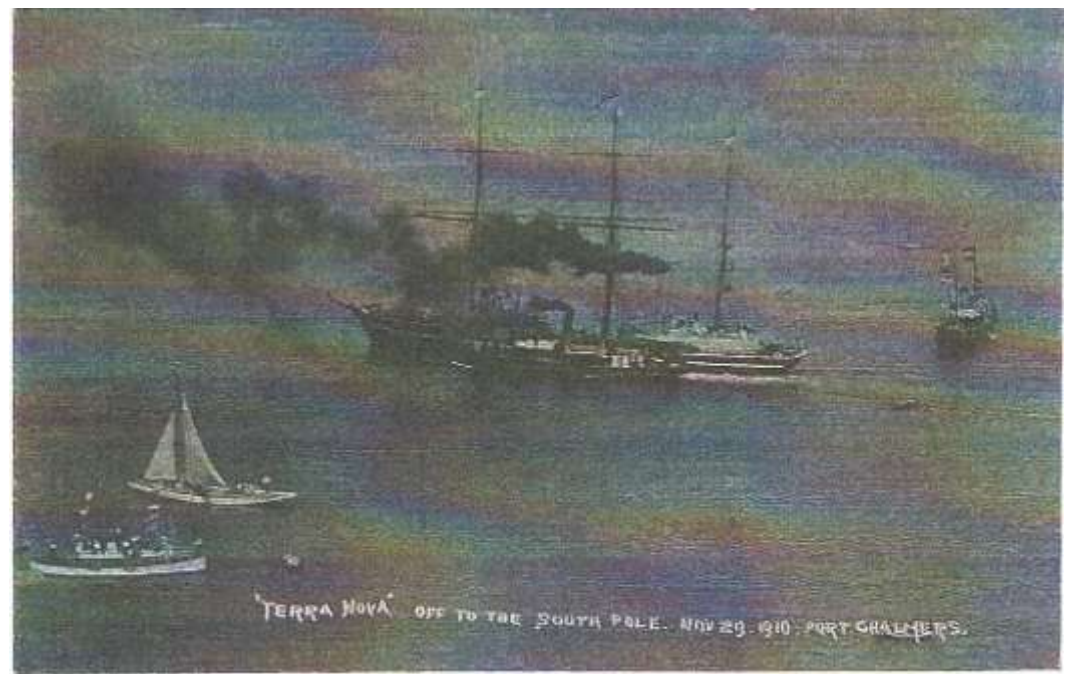


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 DE MAUS' SERIES OF ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS.

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**DE MAUS,**  
 Exhibition  
 Photographer,  
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 2079



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