

“Recording the Incident with a Monument”: The Waikato War in Historical Memory

VINCENT O’MALLEY

Abstract

This paper charts changing perceptions of the Waikato War in national memory and consciousness. The recent sesquicentenary passed by most New Zealanders largely unnoticed. Historical memories of the war that once (in part thanks to James Cowan) fed into larger nation-building narratives cut across them today. A century ago it was possible for Pākehā to believe that the Waikato War had given birth to fifty years of peace and that mutual respect forged in battle had provided the basis for “race relations” of unparalleled harmony. By the 1970s such a notion could no longer be sustained, leaving a kind of uncomfortable silence about one of the decisive events in New Zealand history.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, something strange started to happen. After nearly fifty years of neglect, Pākehā New Zealanders began remembering the wars fought on their own shores. In part that could be seen to reflect a nostalgia for the pioneering period that had passed. Veterans of the wars were reaching their final years, and there was a real desire to capture their stories before it was too late. It was a process in which the writer and journalist James Cowan would play a leading part. As Chris Maclean and Jock Phillips have noted, the early twentieth century witnessed “an outpouring of pioneer memoirs and local histories as the younger generation was told about the hard struggles of the noble pioneers.”¹ But there was more to it than that. Now that Māori were no longer viewed as a threat to the colonial order—and the dark days of the New Zealand Wars had receded into distant memory—settlers could afford to be nostalgic about them too, even appropriating Māori motifs for symbols of nationhood and placing colonial literature in romanticised “Māoriland” settings.² Remembering the New Zealand Wars, or at least a kind of mythologised version of these, heavily laced with tales of mutual chivalry and heroism but devoid of more disturbing elements, became a core part of this process.³

Step forward a century and the nation is in the midst of an extended period of World War One centennials. There are websites, art exhibitions, plays, documentaries, dramas, docu-dramas, musical recitals, the opening of a new national war memorial and books galore—all being funded by the government, which set aside \$17 million in lottery funding for these purposes.⁴ Politicians and members of the public are flocking to the various public acts of remembrance here and overseas staged in association with these anniversaries, so much so that a ballot was conducted for admission to the Anzac Day centennial commemoration at Gallipoli.⁵

The contrast with the recent sesquicentenary of the Waikato War could not be greater. When, for example, the 150th anniversary of the battle of Rangiriri—one of the largest and most significant engagements of the Waikato conflict—was marked in November 2013, the prime minister was nowhere to be seen. Neither was the governor-general. Te Ururoa Flavell was the only MP to attend (according to organisers, John Key was the only other one to even acknowledge the invitation).⁶ Key and Jerry Mateparae did attend the Ōrākau 150th commemoration at the start of April 2014, where the prime minister dismissed calls for a national day of memorial to those who died in the New Zealand Wars, while not ruling out returning the Ōrākau battle site to public ownership. He added that most New Zealanders would have known little about the history of what had taken place there.⁷ Both the Rangiriri and

Ōrākau events received relatively minimal mainstream media coverage. They probably passed by most New Zealanders largely unnoticed. That would seem an unlikely scenario in the case of the Gallipoli centenary or any of the other significant World War One anniversaries.

It is worth briefly considering these matters in wider context. A central tenet of the burgeoning interdisciplinary field of memory studies is the idea that what a society or nation chooses to remember, and how it chooses to go about remembering, reveal much about its contemporary priorities. Just as individual memories are necessarily selective (because we cannot, and do not wish to, remember everything), so too are collective or public memories.⁸ We remember some things and forget others. But here too there is a choice. Forgetting is not merely the absence of memory: there is an art to it. As David Lowenthal has observed:

Individual forgetting is largely involuntary, though suspected felons are credited with special expertise in this craft. Collective oblivion, on the other hand, is mainly deliberate, purposeful and regulated. Therein lies the art of forgetting—art as opposed to ailment, choice rather than compulsion or obligation. The art is a high and delicate enterprise, demanding astute judgment about what to keep and what to let go, to salvage or to shred or shelve, to memorialize or anathematize.⁹

Considered in these terms, it is clear that contemporary Pākehā New Zealand has chosen to mostly forget the Waikato conflict, while making a great deal of the World War One centenary. While this is certainly revealing as to current priorities, based on international experience it is not always the case that internal conflicts will be forgotten in favour of offshore ones. The American and English civil wars, still widely remembered today, are testament to that (though Spain's "pact of forgetting" in the aftermath of the Franco regime provides a prominent example of efforts to consciously suppress public memories of a more recent—and deeply divisive—era of national history). Yet in the case of New Zealand there is little doubt as to which war has been remembered and which forgotten.

Why does this even matter? Isn't there something in the common Pākehā refrain that Māori should just "get over it", or "stop living in the past"? By that logic, the same would apply to World War One commemorations, or indeed to any other historical events previously considered worthy of remembrance. And as memory studies scholars have also noted, it is a common argument of those who feel they have something to hide. It is not consistent with a mature nation facing up to its past. Remembering does not require guilt or shame, but honesty and a willingness to confront difficult topics. Neil Jarman has argued that "The power of the past, of a collective memory, to influence the present and the future relies heavily on the process, or practice, of commemoration, and the selectivity of memory and of forgetting."¹⁰ By choosing actively to forget the Waikato War we demonstrate the limitations of our willingness to carve out new national narratives that are genuinely bicultural.

None of this is to suggest that we should not be marking World War One. Remembering the Great War does not, of itself, make us forget the New Zealand Wars. Neither is it a question of creating some kind of equivalence between the two wars. The Waikato conflict was important for its own reasons and in its own ways. It was different from the kind of "total war" that came to characterise the major conflicts of the twentieth century. But the almost total neglect of the Waikato War by comparison seems telling. Organisers of the Rangiriri commemoration expressed disappointment at the lack of funding for the day, and by the almost total absence of parliamentarians. Te Ururoa Flavell said he was "a little bit embarrassed that I'm the only MP here today because people from Parliament should understand about days like this."¹¹ And it is not just MPs who apparently need a history lesson. As Tom Roa, the chair of the Ngā Pae o Maumahara body that oversaw many of the 150th anniversary commemorations, noted, "I think we need to give more attention to what happened on our own doorstep ... History informs our

present and guides our future.”¹²

The Waikato conflict of 1863-64 was hardly insignificant. It brought 18,000 British (and Irish) soldiers to New Zealand, which for a time had more imperial troops stationed here than almost anywhere else in the empire outside India.¹³ The conflict had a profound influence on the future shape of New Zealand society, allowing the government to begin to assert the kind of real control over the country that had eluded it since 1840. And after a period in which the South Island had dominated the colonial economy and society, it was British victory in the Waikato War (later consolidated through Julius Vogel’s immigration and public works scheme) that enabled the North Island to pull ahead. This was far more than a localised conflict—it went to the heart of what New Zealand was and would eventually become. For Māori, any real prospect of power-sharing or partnership went out the window for at least the next century. Land confiscations and a long search for justice followed. So why the historical amnesia with respect to the most significant war fought on New Zealand shores?

It was not always this way. As war clouds loomed over Europe, on 1 April 1914 a crowd of up to 5000 people gathered at Ōrākau, a few kilometres up the road from Kihikihi, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the most famous battle of the Waikato conflict. Cabinet ministers, MPs, the head of the armed forces, multiple dignitaries and a small smattering of elderly Māori and Pākehā veterans were present for the unveiling of a memorial on the site where Ōrākau pā once stood.¹⁴ The movement towards memorialisation of the New Zealand Wars coincided with a revival of militaristic sentiments dating from the time of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 to 1902. As imperial rivalries intensified, and the likelihood of a new conflict in Europe increased, there was (as Maclean and Phillips have noted) a strong urge to remind younger generations that men had died in the service of empire during the earlier New Zealand clashes.¹⁵ The implication was clearly that it might be their turn to do likewise in the near future.

Every effort was made to encourage young and old to attend the Ōrākau event. An early-morning train from Auckland to Te Awamutu was organised for the big day, and free rail passes allocated to veterans to allow them to attend. The Auckland Education Board granted a special holiday to all children attending schools in the Waikato and Waipa counties. Schools that found it impossible to take part in the ceremony were instructed to assemble their children, hoist the national flag and give a lesson on “the difficulties of early settlement in New Zealand.”¹⁶

Newspapers throughout the dominion reported at length on the Ōrākau “celebrations.” For Pākehā New Zealand that was precisely what this was. As the *New Zealand Herald* explained, the Ōrākau battle marked “the final acceptance of the British mana by a heroic and warlike native people,” which had been met by “a just and generous reciprocity which is everywhere regarded as an example to the civilised world.” From the time of Ōrākau onwards, the editorial claimed, there had been “no other country in the world where the native race is so equitably situated amid a dominant European community.” It added that “This freedom, this equality, may be unhesitatingly ascribed to the possession by the Maori of the heroic qualities which make Orakau historic and to the whole-hearted appreciation of those qualities by the Pakeha people. Thus it is that Orakau was a great moral victory, a sublime triumph over disaster, a proof of high and noble spirit which has never been forgotten and has compelled the British race which reverences courage to acknowledge the Maori as a man after its own heart.”¹⁷



Fig. 1 “Orakau Memorial Unveiling,” 1914, PH282, Te Awamutu Museum

This conception of Ōrākau as somehow noble and heroic was reinforced by the decision to unveil the monument, which had first been erected in about 1912, not on 2 April 1914, which would have marked the fiftieth anniversary of British victory at Ōrākau, but one day earlier, fifty years after the defenders of Ōrākau, though lacking in food, water and ammunition, had nevertheless vowed to fight on (there had been ongoing discussions within the pā as to what to do, though the famous exchange with William Mair came on the final day).¹⁸ As one newspaper editorial noted, the date had been carefully chosen “to indicate that it is the heroic defence, and not the capture of the pa, which admirers of the Maori valour wish to celebrate.”¹⁹

Something of that view was reflected in the official jubilee souvenir programme, which was described as being not merely intended to mark the Ōrākau anniversary, but also “in commemoration of 50 years of peace.”²⁰ Newspaper headlines echoed this view,²¹ and although a few observers tried to point out that Ōrākau had not marked the end of the wars (which continued, in various parts of the central North Island, through until 1872), they were swimming against the tide.²² Fifty years of peace it was, at least according to the prevailing narrative. But as the *Herald* editorial quoted above suggests, this was no ordinary peace.

It was Ōrākau that gave birth to the myth of New Zealand as having the greatest race relations in the world. And for a land that many Pākehā felt was lacking in suitable legends, what better tales to immortalise than those that emanated from Ōrākau? Defence Minister James Allen told the crowd assembled for the unveiling of the Ōrākau monument that “50 years ago Europeans and Maoris fought fights which went to make history and to create traditions” which had come to assume great significance for the generations which followed. He added that those traditions were “not alone possessed by the Maoris, but belonged to all New Zealanders. Pakeha and Maori alike had a right to participate in the glorious tradition of the courage and heroism

and devotion to duty displayed at Orakau.”²³ In this way, a highly sentimentalised version of Ōrākau was openly appropriated by Pākehā for their own nationalist and nation-building ends.

To this end, rival European authorities bitterly contested whether it was Rewi Maniapoto or another chief who had famously responded to the British invitation to surrender on that final day of the battle, when lacking food and water and assumed to be totally surrounded, by declaring “Ka whawhai tonu matou, ake, ake, ake!” (“We shall fight on, for ever, and ever, and ever!”).²⁴ They argued over the words to be used on the Ōrākau monument and how best to protect the graves of those who had fallen in battle there. Rewi Maniapoto’s chivalry had earlier been marked in a monument erected in April 1894 on the site of his former home in the township of Kihikihi and paid for by the government. When the rangatira passed away two months later, he was buried at the foot of the memorial.²⁵

There was also a monument to British troops killed at Rangiaowhia, Hairini and Ōrākau and buried in the graveyard at St John’s Church in Te Awamutu. It had been built at government expense in 1888. But it was only some decades later that the government was asked to consider a second monument at St John’s on the site of six unmarked graves believed to belong to kūpapa. Except that further inquiries around the time of the Ōrākau unveiling revealed quite a different story. They were, in fact, the graves of Kīngitanga fighters taken captive by the British at Hairini and Ōrākau who had subsequently died of their wounds.²⁶ That changed matters considerably. But “rebels” or not, the men were regarded as dying in what Europeans by the early twentieth century were able to sentimentally depict as a brave and chivalrous, although entirely hopeless, cause. And so the decision was made to press on with a memorial. Still, the suggestion that they be described as “heroes” rather than merely “warriors” was considered a step too far. That decision came too late: “heroes” had been literally carved into stone in time for the official unveiling on 11 June 1914 and remains the wording on the monument today.²⁷

The Te Awamutu memorial was just one of a number of measures under action or contemplation at this time.²⁸ Months after the Ōrākau unveiling, proposals were floated for the Crown to resume ownership of the site of the battlefield (which had been confiscated in 1865 but subsequently sold or granted to military settlers). It would then become a permanent memorial to those who had fought and died there. The proposal also involved diverting the road to avoid the graves of some of those buried at Ōrākau, something which the Waipa County Council rejected outright. The government nevertheless indicated that it was willing to consider purchasing the Ōrākau site as a memorial ground. But war, and the general need for belt-tightening, intervened, and the matter was allowed to lapse.²⁹

Just one thing was missing in 1914. The Ōrākau ceremony had largely been a Pākehā affair. An appeal was issued “To the Maori Tribes who fought against us in the Waikato War” to “attend to their side of the celebration.”³⁰ But all of the vital decisions, including when, where and how Ōrākau would be commemorated (or rather, celebrated), had already been made and it appears that there was minimal Māori response to this appeal. Meanwhile, planning for Ōrākau coincided with a period of heightened Kīngitanga activism. One day before the ceremony, the *Herald* reported that the Māori King, Te Rata, and his chief counsellor, Tupu Taingakawa, were planning to travel to Britain to submit their grievances to their Treaty partner, the British monarch.³¹ This would include a request that an inquiry be held into the cause of the Waikato War, and that “justice be done to those ... unjustly deprived of their land.”³² As far as the newspaper was concerned, this was evidence of just how ungrateful Māori had become when it came to the blessings bestowed on them by “civilisation” and European settlement. “They draw old-age pensions with cheerful alacrity, but some of them still wish to fish without regard to close seasons,” the paper thundered, “They all use our roads, but they are largely exempt from rating. Their members assist in making our laws, but some of them contend that the Crown should treat them as above the authority of our legislature in certain respects.”³³

If attitudes such as these were in any way reflective of mainstream Pākehā opinion, it was perhaps hardly surprising that many Māori stayed away from Ōrākau. But the correspondent for the *Auckland Star*—more than likely James Cowan—was more insightful, writing of the Ōrākau gathering that “Numerically the attendance of natives was not notable. It was hardly to be expected it would be. If you take a man’s land, and then fight him when he objects, it is hardly likely that he will take a particularly keen interest when you record the incident with a monument.”³⁴

In fact, it appears that news of the Kīngitanga deputation to Britain may have prompted the government to re-evaluate its own commitment to the Ōrākau event. It was widely reported that the governor (who had recently made an historic visit to Parihaka)³⁵ would be in attendance, along with Prime Minister William Massey.³⁶ But neither man was there on the day. The governor instead made a surprise visit to an A & P show in Oxford (Massey was also in the South Island), while plans to present the colours of the 16th Waikato Regiment (which incorporated “Ake! Ake! Ake!” as the regimental motto) during the ceremony were also cancelled.³⁷

But the most obvious absences were on the Māori side. It was especially telling that King Te Rata and prominent members of the Kīngitanga were not present for the Ōrākau “celebration,” and that Maui Pomare, as the representative of the Native Race in Cabinet, felt compelled during his speech to the gathering to deny reports “that the Maori people rather resented the erection of the monument as celebrating their defeat at the hands of the pakeha.”³⁸ The Ōrākau gathering was, nevertheless, largely consistent with earlier events held in Taranaki to mark the fiftieth anniversary of war in that province, except that in Taranaki there was absolutely no Māori input or involvement.³⁹ Things were only marginally better in Waikato. Six surviving Māori veterans of the Ōrākau battle were in attendance on 1 April 1914, their entry to the ceremony flanked by a guard of honour from the St Stephen’s Senior Cadets.⁴⁰ And during the course of the day, Hari Wahanui, the sole Māori member on the organising committee “representing the Native Race,” made a symbolic presentation to the Defence Minister.⁴¹

Among the gifts handed over were three carbine rifles and cartouche boxes, a flag belonging to the Taranaki Military Settlers No. 6 Company that had been captured during fighting, along with an officer’s sword that was said to have been highly prized by Māori, having been rumoured to have been handed to Rawiri Puhirake by a dying Colonel Booth at the battle of Gate Pā, before later being presented to King Tāwhiao.⁴² Although there were varying stories as to the origins of the sword in particular,⁴³ it was clear that this and the other articles presented to the government were of considerable symbolic value. Allen, in accepting the gifts on behalf of the government, declared that there could be no greater evidence of the healing of wounds. He promised that the gifts would be conserved and protected, and the memory of their presentation not forgotten.⁴⁴ By 1921, the flag, the sword and the carbines had all been lost, the Department of Defence confessing that, after full and exhaustive inquiries (which also involved the Railways Department and the Dominion Museum), it could find no trace of any of the items in question.⁴⁵ (The flag has very recently been located in New Plymouth’s Puke Ariki Museum, having been found in the General Assembly library in 1952 by the historian Guy Scholefield. Unaware of the flag’s provenance, Scholefield had simply handed it over to the museum, which was also in the dark as to its origins until alerted to the backstory by researcher Cathy Marr in 2014).⁴⁶

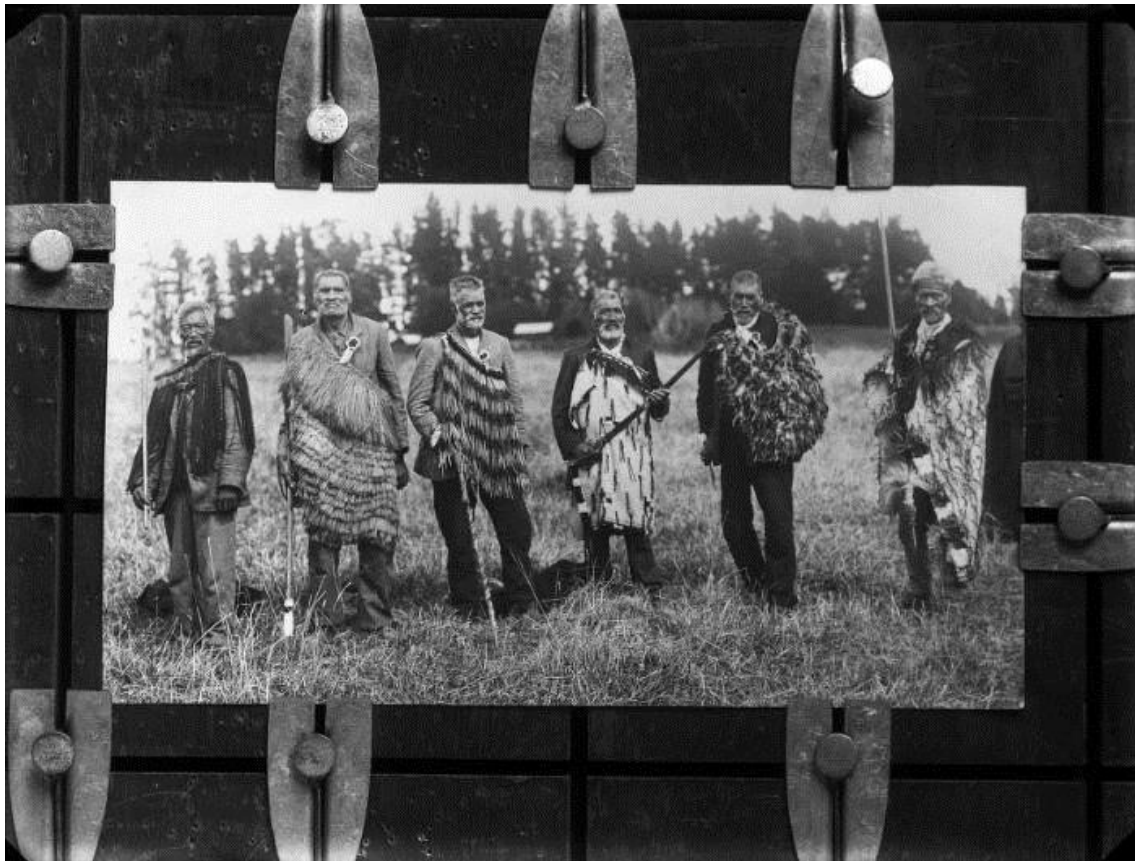


Fig. 2 “Maori survivors of war,” James Cowan collection of photographs, c.1914, 1/1-017975-G, ATL: (left to right): Te Wairoa Piripi, Hekiera Te Rangai, Pou Patate Huihi, Te Huia Raureti, Matiu Te Munu, Te Wharerangi Parekawa. This photograph, probably taken at the time of the ceremony on 1 April, later appeared in Cowan’s history of the New Zealand Wars.

Perhaps it was in keeping with the festive nature of Pākehā celebrations around the Ōrākau anniversary that so little care and attention should have been given to the items once received by the government. And a similar attitude seems to have extended to the few surviving Māori veterans of Ōrākau. In 1919 one of their number, an elderly Pou Patate Huihi, wrote to Maui Pomare concerning the “desires of the people in regard to grants made to the survivors of the Orakau pa.”⁴⁷ He asked that, now that the Great War was over, he might receive such a grant. Pomare referred the matter to the Defence Minister, who advised that he could find no reference to any such undertaking.⁴⁸ Given that there were only six surviving veterans as at 1914, any grant would likely have been a matter of a few hundred pounds per annum at most. But while happy to celebrate Ōrākau, the government was not interested in extending practical assistance of this kind to its survivors (even though military pensions were paid to the Pākehā veterans).⁴⁹

For Waikato Māori, though, Ōrākau was not something to be celebrated. It was the place where as many as 150 of their relatives had been killed, including women and children. Most died not during the siege but in a desperate effort to flee for their lives on the final day. One newspaper account from 1864 noted that “*Women—many women—slaughtered, and many children slain, are amongst the trophies of Orakau.*”⁵⁰ In fact, this troubling evidence of atrocities committed was one of the few discordant notes in 1914, with one writer stating that the soldiers had vowed to “Destroy the women, so that there shall be no more of the breed.”⁵¹

That prompted one Ōrākau veteran to deny the report, while nevertheless admitting that “Several women and children were necessarily killed in the pa, and perhaps some may have been when we attacked the swamp.”⁵²

For the most part, such a debate was not allowed to intrude into the emerging Pākehā narrative of Ōrākau as being marked by mutual respect and chivalry. But the facts pointed to an altogether darker affair. One female named Hineiturama was murdered in cold blood before William Mair could save her.⁵³ Another woman, Ahumai Te Paerata (who had famously vowed that if the men died, the women and children would die too) survived but was wounded in four places.⁵⁴ There was nothing noble or glorious about any of this. On the third day of the siege, and with British sappers about to breach the pā’s outer defences, the occupants of Ōrākau made a run for it. Large numbers were killed in the subsequent British pursuit, the smell of decomposing corpses from the nearby swamp where many fell lending a foul stench to Ōrākau for weeks afterwards.⁵⁵

That Māori held to a notably less sentimental view of the war than most Pākehā, even more than fifty years later, was evident in the exchanges around another mooted proposal by which to remember the war. As the plan for a road deviation at Ōrākau was eventually dismissed as too costly and complicated, a suggestion arose to erect another memorial on the site, this time specifically to mark the graves of the Māori killed there.⁵⁶ Added to that, on one side of the existing monument, the name “Rewi Maniapoto” appeared, without further explanation or description. Although the proposed second monument was left in abeyance, proposed additional text for the existing one was by late 1916 being solicited. Eventually a member of the Te Heuheu family (possibly Tureiti Te Heuheu) supplied an inscription, which, when translated by the government read:

Rewi Maniapoto was one of the highest of the chiefs of Ngati-Maniapoto and Ngati-Raukawa.

He was an upholder (or supporter) of the Kingdom (or Kingship) of Potatau te Wherowhero and Tawhiao, and at the time of the war waged by the Pakeha race against the Maori King he fought in the war on the side of the Maori King, with the result that he was defeated here at Orakau; his tribe subdued; and his lands taken by conquest.⁵⁷

Edith Statham, the Inspector of Old Soldiers’ Graves for the Department of Internal Affairs, had led the charge for a new monument and/or inscription at Ōrākau, but wrote in response to the translation of Te Heuheu’s text “I do not quite like it, as it does not set forth the main fact that I was anxious to give publicity to, viz., that Rewi was the Chief commanding the Maori troops and made such a gallant defence against our men.”⁵⁸

Te Heuheu had disrupted Pākehā myth-making around Ōrākau with awkward reminders of the Kīngitanga that Rewi Maniapoto had devoted much of his life to defending, to a war “waged by the Pakeha race against the Maori King,” and to the dreadful consequences of that conflict for the tribes involved. This was not what Pākehā at the time wanted to hear. They preferred to frame Ōrākau in terms of a noble and heroic, if ultimately doomed, defence, giving rise to fifty years of unblemished—and unrivalled—peace and harmony between Māori and Pākehā. Their imagined Ōrākau was conspicuous for chivalry, gallantry, mutual respect among contending fighters, before final acceptance by Māori of their subservient position in relation to the government. A bland alternative inscription was solicited from Elsdon Best before the whole matter was quietly dropped.⁵⁹

But Ōrākau was not completely forgotten. As the Great War drew to a close, there came renewed interest in New Zealand’s own wars. Supporters lobbied for a history of the New

Zealand Wars to be commissioned by the government before the last survivors passed away.⁶⁰ In 1918, the government finally agreed, commissioning James Cowan to write what was originally intended as a four-volume history of the wars between 1845 and 1872.⁶¹ Cowan, a bilingual journalist who, as the son of an Ōrākau military settler had grown up on a farm that included at least part of the Ōrākau battle site, spent considerable time interviewing surviving Māori and Pākehā veterans of the wars. His resulting history was eventually published over two volumes in 1922 and 1923 to critical acclaim and came to be seen as the definitive history of the wars for decades thereafter (even if this did not at first translate into particularly strong sales).⁶²

It was heavily narrative in approach, full of gripping yarns of heroism and bravery, often incorporating the perspectives of the Māori and Pākehā veterans Cowan had interviewed over the years. But it was largely devoid of critical analysis and interpretation (accepting at face value trumped-up allegations of a supposed Kīngitanga plot to attack Auckland, for example), and in this way did not constitute any kind of threat to the newly emergent myth of Ōrākau.⁶³ If anything, the success of his book (with its own emphasis on the “mutual respect” of former adversaries forged through “ordeal by battle”) may have helped to foster this development.⁶⁴ And although Cowan did not shy away from describing atrocities, with respect to Ōrākau at least, he sought to pin these on Imperial soldiers, while claiming that “colonial troops behaved better.”⁶⁵ Minimising colonial responsibility could be seen as another way of emphasising the war as a basis for improved relations locally. After all, British regiments had departed the country nearly five decades earlier (even if many of the individual soldiers had remained behind as settlers).

Cowan’s work inspired efforts to capture the wars through other media. Pākehā flocked in their thousands to Rudall Hayward’s 1925 silent movie, *Rewi’s Last Stand*, later remade as a popular feature-length talkie. Hayward proudly proclaimed the film’s historical accuracy, pointing out that it was closely based on Cowan’s work.⁶⁶ Many of those who appeared in the 1940 version were descendants of Māori and Pākehā veterans of the Ōrākau conflict (Ramai Te Miha, later Ramai Hayward, the star of the remake passed away in July 2014, aged 98).⁶⁷ But the 1940 film, which later became part of the School Film Library catalogue and hence was shown to large numbers of New Zealand children, remained very much in the tradition of Ōrākau as a chivalrous and noble conflict (even if the death of the central heroine, Ariana, at the hands of a Forest Ranger hinted at a grimmer reality).⁶⁸ “Today,” an opening foreword declares, “the slowly blending races of white men and brown live in peace and equality as one people ... the New Zealanders.” Myth prevailed on screen, and to a lesser extent in print. But what the success of both Cowan’s book and Hayward’s films did show is that for many Pākehā at this time, the Waikato War was vital, important and remembered, even if often in a form of myth reconstituted as history.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s Cowan played a leading role in advocating for greater protection of the Ōrākau site. In about 1870, his own father had fenced off and planted blue gums around an area believed to be an urupā where forty Māori killed at Ōrākau still lay, carefully preserving it, his son noted, as a sacred or tapu spot. But the Cowan family had long since ceased to own the land and the fence and trees had disappeared. Cows were instead grazing on the site. In an article published in the *Auckland Star* newspaper on the sixty-third anniversary of the battle, Cowan wrote that “the forty defenders who were laid in their self-dug trenches deserve at least the tribute of a fence and a stone.”⁶⁹

Precedent was on his side, and not just with the memorial to the Māori “heroes” at St John’s. On 13 April 1927 a memorial gateway to Rangiriri cemetery, where both Māori and Pākehā killed in the November 1863 battle were buried, was officially opened by the Minister of Internal Affairs, R.F. Bollard. The gates had cost over £1000 to construct and followed

sustained criticism of government neglect of the graveyard.⁷⁰ On the Ōrākau anniversary in 1935, Cowan took up the same theme, this time in even bolder terms. Cowan observed that:

In the churchyard at Te Awamutu there are memorials over the graves of the British and colonial soldiers killed at Orakau. The Government memorials in various parts of the country usually commemorate only the British side. The Maoris who were defending their country from invasion would seem to deserve at least equal honour. It is not creditable to the pakeha people who now occupy that country that the ground where the defeated ones fell should be desecrated and forgotten.⁷¹

The Te Awamutu Historical Society had recently been formed, and Cowan urged its members and other interested locals to take responsibility for protecting the site. That message was at least partly heeded when in 1937 the society paid to repair the Ōrākau monument after recent damage to its spire.⁷² But within three months of repairs being done, the monument had been damaged again, both times wilfully. This prompted the Internal Affairs Under Secretary to posit that such vandalism “surely could only have been caused by some person or persons mentally obsessed.”⁷³ Police never found the culprit, and so the question as to whether the attacks had been in some way politically motivated, rather than merely mindless acts of destruction, was never answered.⁷⁴

On 1 April 1939, Cowan wrote another column for the *Auckland Star* in which he declared that residents of the district were not unmindful of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Ōrākau battle, with wreaths in memory of the combatants of both races to be laid at the foot of the memorial unveiled a quarter century earlier. But still, he reminded readers, there was no protection or acknowledgement of the nearby wāhi tapu where many Māori defenders of Ōrākau were buried.⁷⁵ In some respects Cowan’s own views on the Waikato War had become more forthright. In a draft chapter on the settlement of Waikato for *Settlers and Pioneers*, his contribution to the official centennial histories project, Cowan compared the treatment of Waikato Māori with the recent Italian invasion of Abyssinia, while adding:

I wish the insensitive Englishman of Waikato could have heard the views of a certain Maori friend of mine on the subject of the raupatu. The good old man had a sense of humour strongly developed for a Maori; he thought it was a beautiful joke asking the evicted tribes to come back and sing jubilee hymns of praise in a Church built with the timber that they had freely given for it, with their labour, in the district that had been seized from them. “The pakeha,” he said, “is willing to let bygones be bygones, but does he offer to give me back my potato ground?”⁷⁶

Officials who had already voiced discomfort at the prospect of the New Zealand Wars being stressed (especially, perhaps, now that there was the ANZAC tradition to draw upon) were not having this: the entire chapter was excised, leaving Cowan greatly peeved. But Cowan’s attempted deviation from his customary role of story-teller to a more serious social commentator was not without its own contradictions, especially given his own celebratory accounts of “the pioneering period.”⁷⁷

Even so, with Cowan’s death in 1943, no one with a comparable public profile remained to advocate for the Ōrākau site and its dead. Times were changing, but not everyone was up with the play. The committee planning the centenary of Rangiriri in November 1963 eventually agreed to drop plans for a mock re-enactment of the battle, when confronted with Waikato Māori complaints that this was an insensitive way to mark an event that was still a source of great pain and bitterness for them.⁷⁸ The programme of events nevertheless featured Pākehā dressed up variously as either settlers or British troops, along with canoe races, a Māori concert party, hangi and Māori against Pākehā tug of war. Meanwhile, the official souvenir

programme featured various advertisements, including one commending Lion Beer for all Rangiriri “centenary celebrations,” while the cover featured the word “Tua kana tanga” prominently.⁷⁹

Although that seems to have been intended to mean something along the lines of “brotherhood,” a closer translation might be “seniority.”⁸⁰ And the associated imagery left no doubt as to which party was the senior one. On both the battle and rugby fields the Pākehā is getting the better of the Māori combatant, while the Pākehā hand firmly clasps and envelops the Māori one it purports to embrace. In these ways, the cover itself could have served as a painful (and offensive) reminder of the subjugation of the Waikato tribes. That these messages were probably inadvertent only serves to reinforce the gulf between Māori and Pākehā sentiments around the Waikato War by this time. The tone of the speeches continued to emphasise mutual bravery and respect, within a strong assimilationist ethos. Governor-General Sir Bernard Fergusson’s message declared that:

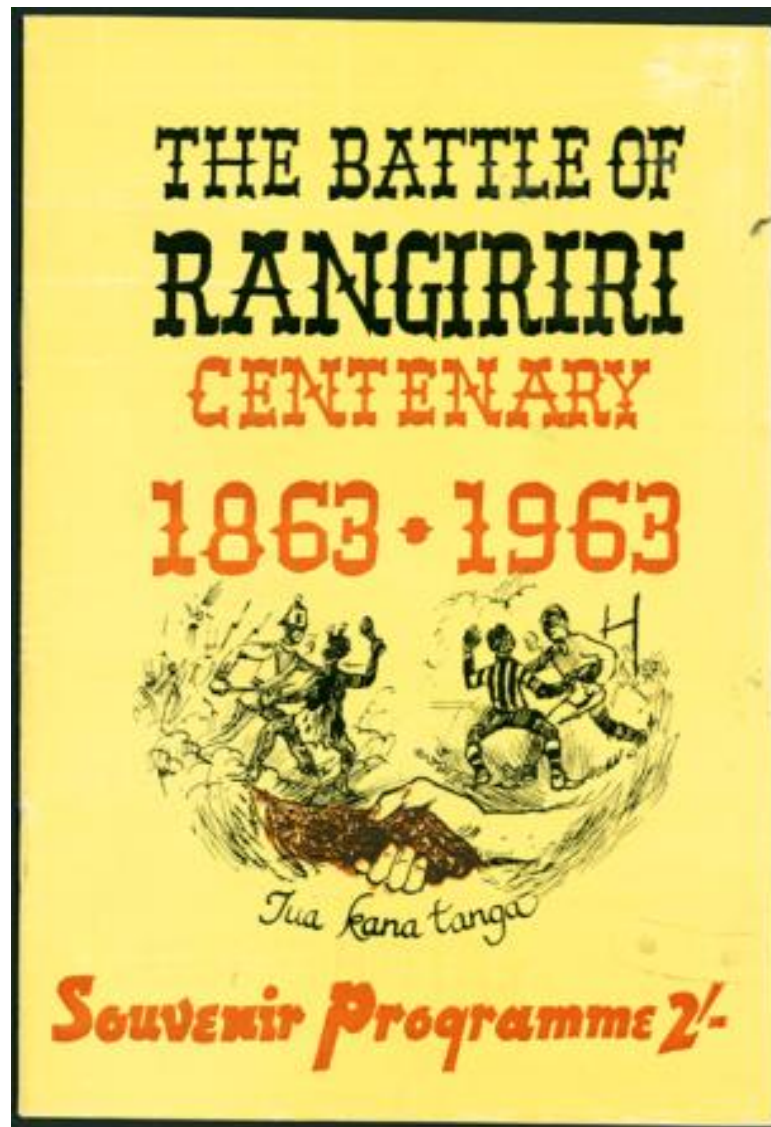
In celebrating the Centenary of the Battle of Rangiriri, we are not harping on what the poet Wordsworth called “old unhappy far-off things, and battles long ago.”

We are commemorating the gallant men who fought on both sides. We are rejoicing in the knowledge that the two races concerned now live harmoniously together, and indeed have fought shoulder to shoulder in two wars in a common cause. We are pledging ourselves and our children to be worthy descendants of our ancestors, displaying the same virtues of courage and devotion.

It is indeed a measure of the degree to which our people have grown together that Maori and Pakeha can celebrate without rancour but with pride such an occasion as this.⁸¹

One speaker, a naval chaplain, went even further than this. After lamenting the loss of life resulting from the Rangiriri battle, he added “but we rejoice that there are now no longer two peoples in this land.”⁸² Quite what those Māori among the estimated 2000-strong crowd would have made of this statement is difficult to know. In any event, the whole affair appears to have been overshadowed by the news that reached New Zealand overnight of the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas, Texas, prompting prayers for the people of the United States.

When the centenary of the battle of Ōrākau was marked in 1964, guests were treated to a special screening of *Rewi’s Last Stand*, a hangi, kapa haka competitions and a concert featuring Kiri Te Kanawa.⁸³ New plaques were unveiled on the existing monument and a less than culturally appropriate picnic area built by the Waipa County Council. Perhaps in tacit acknowledgement of its proximity to an urupā where many of the victims of Ōrākau lie, the picnic area was recently removed.⁸⁴ Yet some Waikato elders wanted no part in the centennial proceedings, concerned that the whole affair had become something of a circus. So long as Pākehā continued to use the war anniversaries as an excuse to pat themselves on the back for their supposedly superior race relations, that attitude was understandable. The Pākehā narrative of the Waikato War was out of sync with the still largely ignored Maori story of an unjustified invasion of their homeland, followed by numerous and senseless killings, confiscations, exile and poverty.



Rangiriri Centennial Programme, 1963, Eph-A-HISTORY-1963-01-front, ATL

Writing in the Māori Affairs Department magazine, *Te Ao Hou*, later that year, the Māori journalist and commentator (and future Race Relations Conciliator) Harry Dansey offered an insightful set of reflections on the recent battle centenaries. He observed that overall:

A sense of being ill at ease in this matter, felt indeed by many, was manifest as far as I was concerned in a seemingly illogical combination of sorrow, anger, pride, foreboding and amusement. There was sorrow that the relationship of the two races ... should have once reached such a stage that no course was left but to kill one another; anger that Pakeha greed dictated the viciously unjust confiscation of land; pride in the peerless courage of men and women irrespective of which cause they espoused; foreboding that those who were arranging ceremonies would not recognise such sorrow, anger and pride; amusement, wry though it may have been, at how so many Pakehas could have lived so long and closely with Maoris and yet brick by dropped brick demonstrate that they had learned next to nothing of their neighbours.⁸⁵

He noted his own view that there ought to have been commemorations rather than celebrations (as they had been described) of the anniversaries and added that:

It was with some misgivings that I read how Rangiriri planned to hold a service to be followed by a gala afternoon which included a raft race, Maori parties performing, people in period costume and all the fun of the fair. But because the Maori people of the district were participating I kept my thoughts to myself. Later, however, when attending a gathering at Turangawaewae Pa, Ngaruawahia, I was approached by a man of standing among the Waikato people who was concerned that the hundredth anniversary of Rangiriri was going to become a “circus,” using that word with a terse English adjective. He asked me to write a story recording the objection of Waikato elders to the whole proceedings.⁸⁶

Not all of Waikato objected to proceedings. As Dansey noted, King Koroki eventually lent his support to the occasion, while those who were opposed largely remained silent.⁸⁷

Yet thanks to more militant Māori voices, aided by a new generation of historians, the Pākehā version of the wars was becoming harder to sustain, and had been all but discredited by the 1970s.⁸⁸ The problem was that no new narrative of the wars emerged (or at least, no new narrative with popular support), and so we were left with a kind of uncomfortable silence. “Don’t mention the [Waikato] war” became a kind of unspoken mantra, and tied in with broader Pākehā discomfort at the level of Māori unrest, as evident through annual Waitangi Day protests, the Māori Land March of 1975 and the dramatic Bastion Point occupation of two years later. When that silence was challenged in ways that mainstream Pākehā opinion found difficult to ignore, significant controversy arose. *The Governor*, a highly ambitious six-part drama series that screened on TV One in 1977, presented the Waikato War as an unsavoury land grab, while continuing to laud Māori bravery at Ōrākau. It was attacked by Prime Minister Robert Muldoon, supposedly for its excessive expenditure, though probably reflecting deeper cultural unease at its troubling depiction of the colonial era.⁸⁹ From the perspective of many Pākehā, it was easier just to forget the Waikato War had ever happened.

One historian threatened to upset this status quo. But while James Belich’s book on the New Zealand Wars was hailed as a tour de force by scholars when first published in 1986, the wider public response to a five-part documentary series based on the book that screened in 1998 was decidedly more mixed. It drew a huge audience,⁹⁰ but also attracted the ire of many talk-back radio callers and authors of letters to newspaper editors.⁹¹ Representative of the flavour of many of the latter was one letter which took exception to what its author believed was the portrayal of Pākehā as universally “wicked, or stupid or cowards, or all of those,” as against “noble and clever and brave” Māori.⁹² While some dismissed Belich’s work as “politically correct” nonsense—“part of continuing propaganda by an elitist neo-liberal ... academic grouping which wants to change society to reflect its own ideology,”⁹³ as one correspondent put it—others seized on a particular issue which they claimed undermined the credibility of the work as a whole. How dare Belich suggest that Māori might have contributed to the invention of modern-day trench warfare, these critics complained.⁹⁴

After this brief bout of excitement, the war was quickly forgotten again. There was to be no new narrative based on recognition of Māori military achievement (far less on a frank acknowledgement of British atrocities committed at Ōrākau, Rangiaowhia and elsewhere). Meanwhile, there has been one positive development. The sesquicentary of the Waikato War saw local iwi take a prominent role in ensuring that the key battles were remembered in a culturally appropriate way.⁹⁵ They emphasised that their intention was not to demonise the troops who fought on the British or Crown side, but to honour the memory of all those who fell in the conflict. At Rangiriri, a Tohu Maumahara (symbol of remembrance), consisting of a

carved gateway made of recycled totara, had been unveiled a year earlier, on the 149th anniversary of the battle there. The 2014 commemoration at Ōrākau was part of more ambitious proposals to secure the site from private ownership and to construct a living memorial that would include a visitors' centre where the history of what took place on the land would be explained. Although there was a world of difference between their conceptions of that history and its significance, interested Pākehā (including James Cowan) had likewise campaigned a century earlier for the site to be appropriately protected and recognised.

No doubt the formal apology to Tainui signed into law by Queen Elizabeth II in 1995 for the Crown's invasion of Waikato has contributed to a greater Māori willingness to engage in these public acts of remembrance.⁹⁶ Yet important as the Treaty settlements process is, it is not an excuse for the rest of New Zealand to simply forget. We still need to own our history, warts and all. In 2014, there were no special trains from Auckland, no mass school closures. Just a kind of awkwardness.

The Waikato War does not fit within a comfortable nation-building framework. According to the legend, our nation was born at Gallipoli, not Ōrākau. Who wants troubling introspection when we can have heart-warming patriotism instead? That, fundamentally, is the reason for the historical amnesia. That stands in marked contrast with the Ōrākau "celebrations" of 1914, which could be seen as a kind of pre-Gallipoli foundational narrative, based around the mythical notion of fifty years of peace and the greatest race relations in the world. Those ideas continued to exert a powerful influence on the way in which the Waikato War was marked half a century later. But much has changed since the 1960s. Today, when Pākehā can no longer celebrate the Waikato War, the challenge is to find new narratives that at least allow us to remember it.

¹ Chris Maclean and Jock Phillips, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials* (Wellington: GP Books, 1990), 28.

² James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Auckland: Penguin, 2001), 209-10; Jane Stafford and Mark Williams, *Maoriland: New Zealand Literature, 1872-1914* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006).

³ James Belich has argued that a central feature of this "suppressive reflex" was a tendency to downplay Māori military achievement in the wars. James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1986), 318.

⁴ For details on the range of activities being funded see "Activities and Projects," New Zealand WW100, accessed 14 May 2014, <http://ww100.govt.nz/>. This does not include television programmes funded separately through NZ on Air. One journalist has calculated that, in total, the government has committed something like \$25 million to the World War One centenary and associated events, but only around one per cent (\$250,000) of that on the Waikato War sesquicentenary, including the Tauranga campaign. Alison McCulloch, "Lest We Remember," *Werewolf* 47 (2014), accessed 14 May 2014, <http://werewolf.co.nz/2014/04/lest-we-remember/>.

⁵ Just over 10,000 people vied for the 2000 places allocated New Zealand for the 25 April 2015 ceremony. "Results of the Gallipoli 2015 Ballot Released," Gallipoli 2015, accessed 14 May 2014, <http://www.gallipoli2015.govt.nz/>.

⁶ "Thousands Show Up to Remember Rangiriri," 3 News, accessed 14 May 2014, <http://www.3news.co.nz/Thousands-show-up-to-remember-Rangiriri/tabid/423/articleID/322154/Default.aspx>.

⁷ "Large Crowd Remembers Crucial Battle in Land Wars," *New Zealand Herald*, accessed 14 May 2014, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11230464; "Call for Restitution as Orakau Remembered," *Waikato Times*, accessed 14 May 2014,

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/waikato-times/news/9894885/Call-for-restitution-as-Orakau-remembered>.

⁸ Ann Rigney, "Reconciliation and Remembering: (How) Does it Work?" *Memory Studies* 5, no. 3 (2012): 251-58.

⁹ David Lowenthal, "Preface," in *The Art of Forgetting*, ed. Adrian Forty and Susanne Küchler (Oxford: Berg, 1999), xi.

¹⁰ Neil Jarman, "Commemorating 1916, Celebrating Difference: Parading and Painting in Belfast", in *The Art of Forgetting*, ed. Forty and Küchler, 171.

¹¹ "Waikato Battle Remembered at Rangiriri," *Waikato Times*, accessed 8 May 2014, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/waikato-times/news/9421174/Waikato-battle-remembered-at-Rangiriri>.

¹² "Relevance of Bloody Battle Felt 150 Years On," TVNZ News, accessed 8 May 2014, <http://tvnz.co.nz/national-news/relevance-bloody-battle-felt-150-years-5718223>.

¹³ Belich, *New Zealand Wars*, 126.

¹⁴ Or at least where at the time it was assumed to have stood: recent surveys by Heritage New Zealand (formerly the Historic Places Trust) indicate that the pā was most likely located approximately seventy metres to the east of the monument and south of the road. If that is correct, then the old story about Arapuni Road being deliberately constructed through the middle of the pā sometime prior to 1914 might no longer hold good. However, the pā had been levelled by British troops in the immediate aftermath of the battle, so there remains the distinct possibility that those who had constructed the road remained under the impression at the time that they had indeed torn through the heart of the pā. If that is the case then it does seem one of New Zealand history's great ironies—the road of destruction which missed its target. "Orakau Paewai Registration Report," 2013, Heritage New Zealand, accessed 8 May 2014, <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-register/details/9615>.

¹⁵ Maclean and Phillips, *Sorrow and the Pride*, 29.

¹⁶ "Orakau Celebrations," *New Zealand Herald*, 30 March 1914.

¹⁷ "The Fruit of Orakau," *New Zealand Herald*, 31 March 1914.

¹⁸ Maclean and Phillips (*Sorrow and the Pride*, 37) state that the monument was originally erected by public subscription. However, contemporary sources, including the official souvenir programme and earlier newspaper accounts, suggest that it was a government measure. Gilbert Mair, *Jubilee Souvenir of Battle of Orakau, Fought March 31st, April 1st, and 2nd, 1864, and in Commemoration of 50 Years of Peace, 1864-1914* (Hamilton: Waikato Times, 1914); "Battle of Orakau," *New Zealand Herald*, 23 October 1913.

¹⁹ "'Ake! Ake! Ake!'" *Timaru Herald*, 21 March 1914.

²⁰ Mair, *Jubilee Souvenir of Battle of Orakau*.

²¹ "Fifty Years of Peace," *New Zealand Herald*, 2 March 1914; "Fifty Years of Peace," *Auckland Star*, 18 March 1914.

²² For example, "Battle of Orakau" (letter to editor), *New Zealand Herald*, 30 March 1914.

²³ "Orakau Jubilee," *New Zealand Herald*, 2 April 1914.

²⁴ See, for example, J.W. Ellis, "Rewi Maniapoto the Fighter," *New Zealand Herald*, 14 March 1914; J.W. Ellis, "Rewi Maniapoto and Orakau," *New Zealand Herald*, 7 March 1914; Gilbert Mair (letter to editor), "'Ake! Ake! Ake!' and Orakau," *New Zealand Herald*, 30 June 1913; Gilbert Mair, "Rewi's Part at Orakau," *New Zealand Herald*, 21 March 1914. James Cowan also contributed to this debate, arguing that it was Hauraki Tonganui of Ngāti Te Koherā and Ngāti Tūwharetoa who had responded to the British. "Orakau. The Real Story of 'Ake, Ake,'" *Auckland Star*, 17 March 1914. He later adopted a more tactful stance in his published history of the New Zealand Wars, reciting the different tribal traditions relating to this incident.

²⁵ Manuka Henare, "Maniapoto, Rewi Manga," from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, accessed 25 November 2014, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/1m8/maniapoto-rewi-manga>.

²⁶ Maclean and Phillips, *Sorrow and the Pride*, 35-36.

²⁷ "Erected by the N.Z. Government / in memory of the Maori heroes / who fell in the battles of / Hairini and Orakau—1864 / many of whom lie buried / beneath or near this stone." St John's Church Māori NZ Wars Memorial, NZ History, accessed 25 November 2014, <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/st-johns-church-maori-nz-wars-memorial>.

²⁸ Another measure was the famous monument to Rawiri Puhirake, who had fought in the Tauranga 93 Journal of New Zealand Studies NS19 (2015), 79-97

campaign at Gate Pā on 29 April 1864, before being killed at Te Ranga nearly two months later. The monument, celebrating a famous act of chivalry at Gate Pā in giving water to wounded British soldiers, was unveiled on the fiftieth anniversary of Te Ranga on 21 June 1914.

²⁹ James Hislop, Under Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, 20 August 1914, IA 1 7/4/38, Archives NZ.

³⁰ “The Battle of Orakau,” *Te Puke Times*, 3 March 1914.

³¹ “Maori Grievances,” *New Zealand Herald*, 31 March 1914. King Te Rata got to meet with King George V in June 1914, but only on condition that no grievances were raised. Michael King, *Te Puea* (Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 74-75; Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1987), 228.

³² “Battle of Orakau” (letter to the editor), *New Zealand Herald*, 30 March 1914.

³³ “Maori Grievances,” *New Zealand Herald*, 31 March 1914.

³⁴ “For Ever and Ever!” *Auckland Star*, 2 April 1914.

³⁵ “At Historic Parihaka,” *Evening Post*, 19 March 1914.

³⁶ *King Country Chronicle*, 25 February 1914; “Battle of Orakau,” *New Zealand Herald*, 23 October 1913; “Fifty Years of Peace,” *New Zealand Herald*, 2 March 1914; “Battle of Orakau,” *New Zealand Herald*, 19 March 1914; “Personal Matters, Vice-Regal,” *Evening Post*, 17 March 1914; “Ake! Ake! Ake!” *Timaru Herald*, 21 March 1914.

³⁷ *King Country Chronicle*, 7 March 1914; “Orakau Celebrations, Governor Cannot Be Present,” *New Zealand Herald*, 26 March 1914; “The Premier at Fairlie,” *Press*, 1 April 1914; “Mr Massey in South Canterbury,” *Timaru Herald*, 1 April 1914; “A Great Success,” *Press*, 2 April 1914.

³⁸ “Orakau Jubilee,” *New Zealand Herald*, 2 April 1914.

³⁹ Kelvin Day, “Introduction,” in *Contested Ground/Te Whenua i Tohea: The Taranaki Wars, 1860-1881*, ed. Kelvin Day (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2010), xiv.

⁴⁰ “Notable Function,” *Evening Post*, 2 April 1914; “For Ever, and Ever!” *Auckland Star*, 2 April 1914; “Orakau Jubilee,” *King Country Chronicle*, 4 April 1914. Six veterans were named in these reports and a photograph of the group, included as Fig. 2 in this article, was taken. However, according to Cowan, one member of this group, Hekiera Te Rangai, though most likely a veteran of the Waikato conflict, had not fought at Orakau. Yet it was Hekiera, wearing the same clothes as in the group portrait, who appeared in another photograph, this time shaking hands with a Pākehā veteran of the war in front of the Ōrākau monument. James Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars*, 1: 405.

⁴¹ Membership of the various organising committees (ten in all) is set out in Mair, *Jubilee Souvenir of Battle of Orakau*. J. W. Ellis, a Pākehā, was the second member of the committee on which Wahanui sat.

⁴² A. W. Robin, Quartermaster General, to Colonel T. W. Porter, 6 August 1914, AD 1 23/30/1, Archives NZ.

⁴³ It was often assumed to have also been captured in Taranaki at the same time as the flag. One version had it that both had been seized during the February 1869 attack on the Pukearuhe Redoubt, in northern Taranaki, in which eight Europeans, including the missionary John Whiteley, were killed by a Ngāti Maniapoto party. “Orakau Jubilee,” *New Zealand Herald*, 2 April 1914.

⁴⁴ “Orakau Jubilee,” *King Country Chronicle*, 4 April 1914.

⁴⁵ Minister of Defence to Minister of Railways, 31 August 1921, AD 1 23/30, Archives NZ.

⁴⁶ “Accession No. A96.636,” Puke Ariki Museum, accessed 9 May 2014,

<http://vernon.npdc.govt.nz/search.do?id=175281&db=object&page=1&view=detail>.

⁴⁷ Thomas Hughes, “alias Pou Patate,” to Maui Pomare, 11 July 1919, AD 1 23/30/1, Archives NZ.

⁴⁸ James Allen, Minister of Defence, to Maui Pomare, September 1919, AD 1 23/30/1, Archives NZ.

⁴⁹ In the 1913-14 financial year a total of £29,447 was paid to 1240 military pensioners (including 128 Māori who had fought on the Crown side), an average of just under £24 per person. The full pension was worth £36. “Sixteenth Annual Report of the Pensions Department,” *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1914, H-18, 7.

⁵⁰ *New Zealander*, cited in *New Zealand Herald*, 14 April 1864. The *Herald* denounced this allegation as an unfounded “calumny,” while the *Daily Southern Cross* (12 April 1864) was also outraged. However, the eyewitness accounts of William Mair and others (discussed below) prove beyond doubt that atrocities of this nature were committed at Ōrākau.

-
- ⁵¹ “Battle of Orakau,” *Evening Post*, 1 April 1914.
- ⁵² “Battle of Orakau,” *Auckland Star*, 31 March 1914.
- ⁵³ W. G. Mair, 6 April 1864, Gilbert Mair, Papers Relating to the New Zealand Wars, MS-Papers-4862, ATL
- ⁵⁴ Hitiri Te Paerata, *Description of the Battle of Orakau, As Given by the Native Chief Hitiri Te Paerata of the Ngatiraukawa Tribe, at the Parliament Buildings, 4th August 1888* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1888), 5-6.
- ⁵⁵ William Race, Under the Flag. Reminiscences of the Waikato War, by a Forest Ranger, 206, qMS-1671, ATL.
- ⁵⁶ J. Hislop, Under Secretary, Department of Internal affairs, to E.M. Statham, Inspector of Old Soldiers’ Graves, 17 May 1915, IA 1 7/4/38, Archives NZ.
- ⁵⁷ Translation of draft inscription, n.d. [c. January 1917], IA 1 7/4/38, Archives NZ.
- ⁵⁸ E. M. Statham to J. Hislop, 15 January 1917, IA 1 7/4/38, Archives NZ. Edith Statham played a vital role in protecting and marking the sites of old soldiers’ graves with memorials, including those of Māori who had fought against the British. See Maclean and Phillips, *The Sorrow and the Pride*, 34-38; Jock Phillips, “Statham, Edith Mary,” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, accessed 12 May 2014, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/3s32/statham-edith-mary>.
- ⁵⁹ Best downplayed Rewi Maniapoto’s role at Orakau, and suggested that if an inscription to him was still considered advisable, “It might be stated that ‘He was a Chief of Ngatimaniapoto, and a leading man among the natives who defended Orakau against the British troops in 1864’—or something to that effect.” J. Allan Thomson, Director, Dominion Museum, to Under Secretary, Internal Affairs, 20 January 1917, IA 1 7/4/38, Archives NZ.
- ⁶⁰ Gregory Wood, “Revisiting James Cowan: A Reassessment of *The New Zealand Wars* (1922-23)” (master’s thesis, Massey University, 2010), 50.
- ⁶¹ Ian McGibbon, “‘Something of them is Here Recorded’: Official History in New Zealand,” in *The Last Word? Essays on Official History in the United States and British Commonwealth*, ed. Jeffrey Grey (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003), 57.
- ⁶² One thousand copies of each volume were printed. By October 1925 the first volume had sold 682 copies and volume two just 392. By 1947 volume one was out of print, but there were still copies of the second volume remaining. Both volumes were reprinted without amendment in 1955 (and in 1983 with a new introduction by Michael King). Marginal note on J. Hislop, Internal Affairs Under Secretary, to Controller and Auditor-General, 2 October 1925, IA1 126/8/23, Archives NZ; W. E. Parry, Minister of Internal Affairs, to A. J. Williamson, 11 April 1947, IA 1 126/8/23, Archives NZ. Cowan was paid a salary while writing the books and did not receive any royalties.
- ⁶³ James Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars and the Pioneering Period* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1983), 1: 237-40. For a critical analysis of the evidence used to justify the invasion of Waikato in July 1863, which centred on these allegations of a plot against Auckland and the settlers, see Vincent O’Malley, “Choosing Peace or War: The 1863 Invasion of Waikato,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 47, no. 1 (2013): 39-58.
- ⁶⁴ “The wars ended with a strong mutual respect, tinged with a real affection, which would never have existed but for this ordeal by battle” (Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars*, 1: 3).
- ⁶⁵ Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars*, 1: 400.
- ⁶⁶ In the 1940 remake this was taken even further. Cowan’s book is shown in the first scene, while the opening credits declare that the film had been written by Hayward “From the basis of records by JAMES COWAN, Official Historian.”
- ⁶⁷ Annabel Cooper, “‘Our Old Friends and Recent Foes’: James Cowan, Rudall Hayward and Memories of Natural Affections in the New Zealand Wars,” *Journal of New Zealand Studies* 14 (2013): 152-70; Jennifer Evans, “Making of Orakau Battle Film Was Major Event in District,” *Footprints of History* 12 (1994): 20-23.
- ⁶⁸ A Forest Ranger comments, soon after Ariana is shot, that, with their hair cut short, it is difficult to tell the difference between the women and the men fleeing the pā, echoing an excuse that was used at the time for the killing of multiple women. But Ariana and the other women depicted in the film do not have short hair. And in real life there were other notable differences. It appears that many of the 95
- Journal of New Zealand Studies NS19 (2015), 79-97

men wore European waistcoats as a convenient way of storing their ammunition, something which the women were unlikely to have replicated. In the film the men wear only piupiu (flax skirts). On the film generally see: Martin Blythe, *Naming the Other: Images of the Maori in New Zealand Film and Television* (Metuchen (New Jersey): Scarecrow Press, 1994), 39-49; Alistair Fox, "Rudall Hayward and the Cinema of Maoriland: Genre-mixing and Counter-discourses in *Rewi's Last Stand* (1925), *The Te Kooti Trail* (1927) and *Rewi's Last Stand/The Last Stand* (1940)," in *New Zealand Cinema: Interpreting the Past*, ed. Alistair Fox, Barry Keith Grant and Hilary Radner (Bristol: Intellect, 2011), 45-64; "New Zealand Feature Project, *Rewi's Last Stand*," New Zealand Film Archive, accessed 12 May 2014, <http://www.filmarchive.org.nz/feature-project/pages/Rewis.php>.

⁶⁹ "Graves of Orakau," *Auckland Star*, 2 April 1927 (with handwritten marginal note from James Cowan), in IA 1 7/4/38, Archives NZ.

⁷⁰ "Memories of Rangiriri," *Auckland Star*, 14 April 1927; "Rangiriri Memorial," *New Zealand Herald*, 14 April 1927; "Rangiriri NZ Wars cemetery arch," NZ History, accessed 25 November 2014, <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/rangiriri-nz-wars-cemetery-arch>.

⁷¹ "Orakau," *Auckland Star*, 2 April 1935, in IA 1 7/4/38, Archives NZ.

⁷² "Historical Society," *Te Awamutu Historical Society*, 19 March 1937, in IA 1 7/4/38, Archives NZ. Cowan was hardly disinterested in the matter. He had been appointed as inaugural patron of the Te Awamutu Historical Society.

⁷³ J. W. Heenan, Under Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, to H. A. Swarbrick, Honorary Secretary, Te Awamutu Historical Society, 9 September 1937, IA 1 7/4/38, Archives NZ.

⁷⁴ F. S. Dyson, District Engineer, to Under Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, 22 September 1937, IA 1 7/4/38, Archives NZ.

⁷⁵ "After 75 Years," *Auckland Star*, 1 April 1939, in IA 1 7/4/38, Archives NZ.

⁷⁶ James Cowan, "The Settlement of the Waikato" [October 1939], Cowan Papers, MS-Papers-0039-54D, ATL.

⁷⁷ See Chris Hilliard, "James Cowan and the Frontiers of New Zealand History," *New Zealand Journal of History* 31, no. 2 (1997): 230-32; Chris Hilliard, *The Bookmen's Dominion: Cultural Life in New Zealand, 1920-1950* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2006), 77-80.

⁷⁸ "Centenary Plan Opened Up Again," *Auckland Star*, 11 October 1963; "Rangiriri Centenary: Handshake Solves Any Difficulties," *Waikato Times*, 16 October 1963.

⁷⁹ *The Battle of Rangiriri Centenary, 1863-1963: Souvenir Programme* (Rangiriri, 1963).

⁸⁰ My thanks to Basil Keane for pointing this out.

⁸¹ A Message from His Excellency Brig. Sir Bernard Fergusson, in *The Battle of Rangiriri Centenary*, 5.

⁸² "Races Pay Homage to War Dead," *New Zealand Herald*, 25 November 1963.

⁸³ *Orakau Commemoration, 1864-1964: Kihikihi Centenary* (Te Awamutu: Te Awamutu Jaycees, 1964).

⁸⁴ Paul Diamond, "Ōrākau: Ka Maumahara Tonu Tātou," The Meeting Place—A New Zealand History Blog, accessed 2 July 2014, <http://themeetingplacenz.blogspot.co.nz/2014/05/orakau-ka-maumahara-tonu-tatou.html>.

⁸⁵ Harry Dansey, "Reflections on Battle Centenaries," *Te Ao Hou*, 48 (1964): 34-35.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁸⁷ King Koroki, who was in poor health by this time, did not attend the anniversary, instead sending his daughter Piki, who in 1966 became Queen Te Atairangikaahu. "Tribute Paid at Centenary of Orakau Battle," *New Zealand Herald*, 1 April 1964.

⁸⁸ As indeed had the view that New Zealand had the greatest "race relations" in the world. Although Keith Sinclair in 1971 published the text of a short talk that assumed such superiority over other former settler colonies, it was seen as a sign that Sinclair was himself out of step with the new histories emerging from a younger generation of historians such as Alan Ward. Keith Sinclair, "Why are Race Relations in New Zealand Better Than in South Africa, South Australia or South Dakota?" *New Zealand Journal of History* 5, no. 2 (1971): 121-27; Vincent O'Malley, "Unsettling New Zealand History: The Revisionism of Sinclair and Ward," in *Texts and Contexts: Reflections in Pacific Islands Historiography*, ed. Doug Munro and Brij V. Lal (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 154-65.

⁸⁹ See Trisha Dunleavy, "'Magnificent Failure' or Subversive Triumph? *The Governor*," in *Making Film and Television Histories: Australia and New Zealand*, ed. James E. Bennett and Rebecca Beirne (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 67-72.

⁹⁰ Annabel Cooper, "Televisual Memory and the New Zealand Wars: Bicultural Identities, Masculinity and Landscape," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 14, no. 4 (2011): 449-50.

⁹¹ Paul Diamond, "Potshots Fired Over Belich's Wars," *Evening Post*, 8 July 1998.

⁹² Letter to editor, "Doco's Whites are Stupid, Maori Clever," *Evening Post*, 3 July 1998.

⁹³ Letter to editor, "Series Part of Campaign," *Sunday Star Times*, 28 June 1998.

⁹⁴ See, for one of the more scholarly critiques along these lines, John M. Gates, "James Belich and the Modernist Maori Pa: Revisionist History Revised," *War and Society* 19, no. 2 (2001): 47-68. Gates' view was itself critically analysed. See Lorenzo Veracini, "Revising Revisionist History: The 'Maori Achievement' and Recent Historiographical Developments on the 'New Zealand Wars,'" *Electronic Journal of Australian and New Zealand History*, accessed 12 May 2014, <http://www.jcu.edu.au/aff/history/articles/veracini.html>.

⁹⁵ As David Green noted, this was almost a mirror image of 1913-14, when Pākehā worthies had called almost all the shots when it came to planning for the jubilee. Green, quoted in McCulloch, "Lest We Remember."

⁹⁶ Tainui negotiators had asked that the Queen personally deliver the apology. But that was a bridge too far for Crown officials (and without constitutional precedent). And so the compromise was that she would sign the Waikato Raupatu Claims Settlement Bill, which included the apology, into law during a visit to New Zealand to attend a Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Auckland. The royal connection remained an important one to Waikato Māori and early in 2014 there were reportedly high hopes that the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge would attend the 150th commemoration of Ōrākau. However, their itinerary ultimately saw the royal couple arrive in New Zealand one week after the Ōrākau gathering. "Queen Apology Improper—Graham," *Dominion*, 3 July 1995; "High Hopes of a Royal Stop at Orakau Centenary," *Waikato Times*, 3 January 2014.