

Taranaki Land Confiscations

TARANAKI LAND CONFISCATIONS.

The report by the Waitangi Tribunal that there was a holocaust in Taranaki is correct. It's the date they got wrong. The actual "holocaust" took place between 1830/ 34 when the Waikato came down from the North and completely annihilated the people of Taranaki; one third were slaughtered, one third taken to Waikato as slaves and the remainder fleeing to Wellington. In Maori lore, being taken as slaves or fleeing forfeits all rights to their land*.

The first of many European purchases of the same Taranaki lands

was made by William Wakefield of the New Zealand Company, with the assistance of whaler, Dickey Barrett. When Wakefield arrived in Taranaki in 1839 he found Barrett protecting the 50-Maori survivors of Ngati Te Atiawa – Ngati Te Whiti hapu, who were still under siege from the Waikato Maoris. Were it not for Barrett's cannons and muskets, these last survivors would have been overwhelmed.

A group of these people, who had fled Taranaki, later commandeered the brig Rodney and invaded the unprotected Chatham's Island Moriori, slaughtering hundreds of peace loving men women and children*. The remainder

became slaves, or were farmed like sheep for the next 7-years, into virtual extinction. Another "holocaust", or in fact, Genocide!

*** 'They were laid out along the beach over a quarter of a mile touching one another, parent and child; some of the women with stakes thrust into them were left to die in their misery' (see *The Musket Wars* by R.B.**

Crosby, Reed Publishing, 1999, pp 294-295). Of the estimated 1700 Moriori at the time of the invasion only 101 survived the years of slavery and cannibalism that followed (see **1862 *New Zealand Gazette*, census, pp. 29-32).**

The New Zealand Company then bought a large part of Taranaki from a mere handful of people who had hidden from the Waikato and remained after the siege, but most of this claim was either returned by the Governor to the ex-slaves from the Waikato or sold to the Cornish settlers*.

***William Wakefield of the New Zealand Company, with the assistance of Dickey Barrett, went to Waikanae, Wellington district and purchased a large section of Taranaki from former, vanquished chief in exile, Wiremu Kingi.**

It was only when the Wesleyan missionaries christianised the Waikato and led the now ex-slaves back to Taranaki*, did the people who had fled to Wellington and the Chatham Islands return, but now under the protection and safety of British rule. The Waikato claiming ownership as conquerors being paid

off by the Governor. It seems the Taranaki people were quite happy with the British and their justice system when it suited them. Without the intervention of British rule, it is extremely doubtful if Taranaki people would have ever returned to Taranaki. The Governor allowed the people who had fled to Wellington to return, but only on the understanding that they remain on the north bank of the Waitara River. They didn't keep this promise and crossed over into the ex-slaves domain.

***Reverend John Whiteley of the Church Missionary Society, Kawhia Mission Station negotiated hard and long with paramount Waikato chief Te Wherowhero and other Waikato chiefs for the release of the Taranaki slaves, thus saving their lives and restoring their freedom. Whiteley was later murdered in Northern Taranaki by raiding Maoris from Waikato. His profoundly humane work on behalf of Maori slaves has been vilified by present day Taranaki Maori activists, who label him as a British spy. They recently insisted that the monument to his memory be removed, when in fact many of these same Taranaki activists would never have been born, were it not for the ongoing pleadings and negotiations undertaken by Whiteley in behalf of their ancestors.**

For six years these southern returnees led an inter-faction civil war against the despised ex-slaves, destroying both Maori and

European farms,
buildings and stock as they went.

About this time the Waikato “rebels” decided that Taranaki was the place to fight the Pakeha and a large contingent travelled south to join the Taranaki “rebels”. Eventually the Governor was forced to bring in the Imperial Troops to bring this small band of rebels to justice. This with the blessing of many tribes throughout the country who disagreed with these people’s “rebel” actions.

This was not a land grabbing exercise by the British, far from it.

It was to squash the anarchy and rebellion and bring law and order to this small group of people, as asked for and agreed to in 1840. Britain had to make a stance to the commitment she had made to the rest of the country and warned that the treaty would be abnegated if the anarchy persisted, but the warning went unheeded and the troops were brought in.

It was two years later that the land, which British intervention had returned, was confiscated as payment for the wars. Much of this land was returned as Maori reserves later. The land confiscated was a result of a war, not a reason for it. It was a war of Sovereignty.

Many of these people then travelled north to join the Waikato to continue their defiance of Sovereignty and the law of the

land, agreed and accepted by the majority in 1840. But this is another untold part of our history.

For another sixteen years the Governor tolerated Te Whiti's now passive resistance to law and order until their patience was exhausted and again a stance had to be made. Parihaka was invaded, but without casualties. Te Whiti was imprisoned for sedition, after his trial, in New Plymouth on the 14th of November, 1881.

In 1883, some eighteen months later, Te Whiti was released and returned to Parihaka where he re-established his settlement and continued his passive resistance to the country's law and order, but on a very low key.

The West Coast Settlement Reserves Act was passed in 1892 and the reserved land leased to give the Maori owners an income from very productive undeveloped land that had been lying idle for over 30-years since its return.

The lessees, with blood, sweat and in many cases tears, turned this land into some of New Zealand's most productive farming areas, returning much needed capital to New Zealand and at the same time, an income to the Maori owners. From these facts, I do not see why the people of New Zealand should be expected to pay compensation. Compensation for the improvements should be paid by the people who are to benefit when the land again becomes available to

them at the end of the lease term. They have gained in so many ways without so much as lifting a finger.

The fact is, the Taranaki people first lost their land to the Waikato in 1830/ 34. They then sold most of it, which in Maori lore did not belong to them, to the New Zealand Company. It was the Governor who paid off the Waikato owners and then returned it in 1841 with the protection of British law and order. The leasing of the returned land was a means of the Maori owners receiving a return on very productive land they were uninterested in developing or farming. Not only have they benefited by the leases on this land, but also from the huge taxes the farmers have paid to the Government over the years. A full and final settlement has already been made and honoured by the people of New Zealand in 1946 for the land confiscated by the Crown in 1863. All this to a people who virtually wiped out a complete race of people single handed while they waited to have land they had lost and then sold returned to them again, but this time on a golden platter.

I hope this puts the record straight on the total events surrounding the confiscations, the taking of Parihaka and the leased lands. The people of New Zealand have a right to know the full story. There was no holocaust at Parihaka; the holocaust occurred in Taranaki in 1830/ 34 and on the

Chatham Islands in 1835, long before the British became involved. The British made it possible for the Taranaki Maoris to return to their defeated lands, as well as receiving a return for 100 years without even lifting a finger, but still they want more!

For additional study, please read: *"The Realms of King Tawhiao"*, by Dick Craig.

BY 1860 TARANAKI HAD BEEN FULLY PURCHASED THREE TIMES.

There is evidence that land sold by the Maoris to European settlers in the early days was sold more than once. Yet we are constantly being told the settlers were land grabbers and crooks, "putting one across the Maoris". In *The History of Taranaki*, published in 1878 by B. Wells, provided extracts from a letter the warrior chief Ihaia Kirikumara wrote in conjunction with his friend Tamati Tiraura, to the settlers in New Plymouth;

"Friends, formerly we, the Maoris, lived alone in New Zealand; we did wrong one to another, we ate one another, we exterminated one another. Some had deserted the land, some were enslaved, the remnant that were spared went to seek other lands".

"Now this was the arrangement of this Ngatiawa land. Mokau was the boundary on the north, Ngamotu on the south; beyond was Taranaki and Ngatiruanui. All was quiet deserted; the land, the sea, the streams, the lakes,

the forests, the rocks, were deserted; the food, the property, the work was deserted; the dead and sick were deserted; the landmarks were deserted”.

“Then came the Pakeha hither by sea from other dwellings, they came to this land and the Maori allowed them – they came by chance to this place – they came to a place whose inhabitants had left it. There were few men here – the men were a remnant, a handful returned from slavery”.

“And the Pakeha asked, where are the men of this place? And they answered, they have been driven away by war, we few have come back from another land. And the Pakeha said, are you willing to sell us this land. And they replied, we are willing to sell it that it may not be barren; presently our enemies will come, and our places will be taken from us again”.

“So payment was made; it was not said, let the place be taken, although the men were few; the Pakeha did not say, let it be taken, but the land was quietly paid for”.

“Now the Pakeha thoroughly occupied the purchases made with their money; and the Maoris living in the land of bondage, and those who had fled, heard that the land had been occupied and they said, Ah! Ah! the land has revived, let us return to the land. So they returned. Their return was in a friendly manner. Their thought of the Pakeha was, let us dwell together , let us work together”.

“The Maoris began to dispute with the Pakeha. When the Governor saw this he removed the Pakeha to one spot to dwell. Afterwards the Pakeha made a second payment for the land, and afterwards a third; and then I said, Ah! Ah! Very great indeed is the goodness of the Pakeha, he has not said that the payment ceases at the first time”.

“My friends the Pakeha, wholly through you this land and the men of this land have become independent; do not say that I have seen this your goodness to day for the first time. I knew it formally, at the coming here of Governor Grey, I was urgent that the land might be surrendered and paid for by him; that we might live here together, we the Maori and the Pakeha. And my urgency did not end there but through the days of Governor Grey.....”.

This letter was written by the warrior chief Ihaia Kirikumara and his friend Tamati Tiraura at Waitara on 15 July 1860 and records that the land in that area was paid for three times over.

Ross Baker, Research Department, One New Zealand Foundation Inc.

To be continued.