

INTRODUCTION

The 'New Zealand Wars' – What's in a Name?

The New Zealand Wars

When most New Zealanders think back to the wars fought on New Zealand soil during the nineteenth century, the name 'New Zealand Wars' probably springs to mind. Certainly, since the publication of James Belich's important book, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Equality*, the name 'New Zealand Wars' has become popular. The name now seems to be securely embedded into the psyche of most New Zealanders, especially those with an interest in our nineteenth-century history.²²

Belich used the term throughout his book, and throughout his later television series of the same name. He did so because his central thesis was that the wars were, in the final analysis, a contest of sovereignty. Running through the book, though perhaps less discernible in the television series, was the contention that these nineteenth-century conflicts constituted a major war of sovereignty fought between disparate Māori tribes and a determined new settler government, backed in part by the formidable British Army. These wars were not mere storms in teacups, said Belich. They were 'bitter and bloody struggles', as indeed they were. They were as important to New Zealand as was Cromwell's revolution to England, or the Civil War fought between the North and South to the United States. We can see this in the number of troops deployed. In 1863, at the height of the wars, about 15,000 British troops were in the field, against a total Māori population of about 55,000. In other words, the British Army and support units, pushing south into the Waikato, possibly numbered more than one-quarter of the total Māori population in 1863.

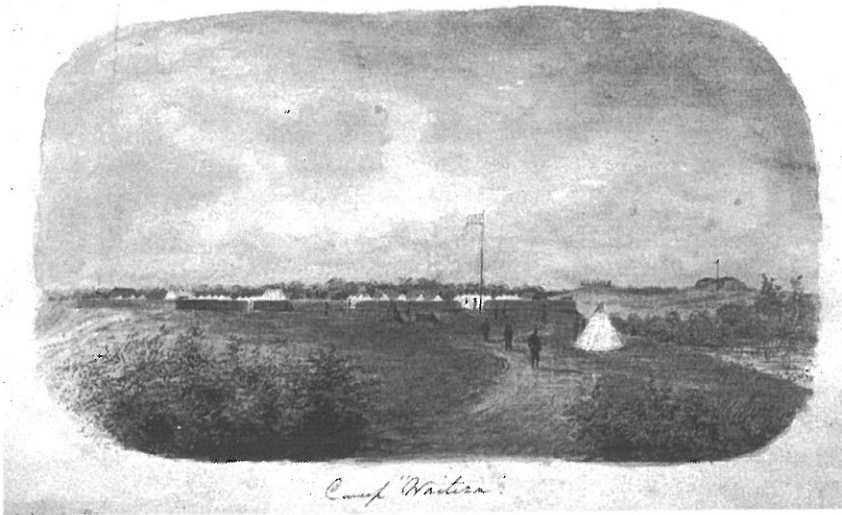
In an episode of the television series, Belich stood near the site of Te Kohia Pā, just south of Waitara. These days, the site of the pā itself is on private land and is not easily accessed. Belich stood near the site marker and pronounced Te Kohia as the place where 'the great civil wars

of the 1860s' began. Had this been America, he said, the site would have been a shrine, a Mecca for visitors. But not here. Te Kohia was an empty space marked by a decaying wooden sign, nestled among a row of trees, tucked in behind the Brixton community hall on lower Waitara Road.²³

Te Kohia Pā was shelled by the British Army on 17 April 1860, bringing the Land Wars to Taranaki. A day later, on 18 April, the pā fell to the British 'at the expense of one dead private', wrote Keith Sinclair. Some British officers thought the engagement to have been insignificant and concluded that more blood had been spilled by the British on local tavern floors than on the contested soil at Te Kohia. But, said Sinclair, the advent of war was ominous: 'ten years of uncertainty, years of building fortifications instead of farmhouses, digging saps instead of ditches, were to bring the grim reality of war into plain view'.²⁴

The battle at Te Kohia lasted one day, with Te Atiawa withdrawing from the pā during the night. According to Sinclair, the *Auckland Examiner* noted the event with a headline that mocked the British effort: 'Colonel Gold and His Brilliant Capture of the Empty Pā'. Throughout the wars, settlers harboured deep suspicions about the fighting capacity of the British, especially where entry into the bush was concerned. It took many battles in New Plymouth hotels to convince young local 'bush-whackers' that the 'soldiers were as good as the settlers'. The Taranaki war lasted one year, almost to the day. The war was intense at times, but mostly sporadic, at least until the final months when Te Atiawa embarked on a series of costly forays against the advancing British. Initially, the war was confined to Waitara and to the landscape of Te Atiawa. Only once, when the war spread south of New Plymouth to Waireka, did the conflict spill onto the lands of Ngā Mahanga. Other tribes from farther afield did join the fray, however, most notably Ngāti Ruanui and Ngāti Maniapoto.

The battle at Te Kohia in 1860, however, was not the first engagement between Māori and the British Army. Fighting had started earlier, in the Bay of Islands. On 11 March 1845, warriors of Ngā Puhi and a British force clashed around the streets of Kororareka while it burned to the ground. After the battle, the Ngā Puhi protagonists fled inland, pursued by the British Army as far west as Puketutu. The northern war lasted another year to 1846. With that conflict barely over, the British Army was posted to the Hutt Valley and to Whanganui to quell further 'rebellious Māori'. This done, a decade of peace followed. But the 1850s were a turbulent decade characterised by instances of bitter internal tribal fighting.



'The New Zealand Wars'

Camp 'Waitira', 1860?, Justin E.D. McCarthy, ATL, A-032-008.

The Te Kohia warfare soon spilled into the Waikato, though the chiefs there – especially Wiremu Tamihana Tarapipipi – had sought to prevent its spread out of Taranaki. Peacemaking efforts initiated by Governor George Grey in 1862 were not trusted by Māori, especially by the tribes of the Kingitanga.²⁵ During his earlier tenure as Governor, from 1845 to 1853, Grey had earned some respect from Māori. When he was brought back as Governor in 1861, he faced Māori hostility. To some extent, Grey reciprocated. In July 1863 he launched a pre-emptive military strike against the King movement. Within a few months, Waikato and allies were fighting for their survival against the invading British Army. With the Waikato war ended in 1864, Tauranga Māori, later that same year, bore the brunt of the British. But hostilities had lingered in South Taranaki since 1863. The British were posted back there and to the Whanganui district a year later, but not for long. The British Army was gradually withdrawn from New Zealand after 1866 because its work in subduing Māori resistance to settler encroachment was seen to be over.

Thereafter, New Zealand's own Armed Constabulary played a greater role in the fighting against Māori. The campaigns after 1868 waged against Riwia Titokowaru and Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki were seen as 'mopping up' actions, which, though violent, they essentially were. They were fought by the Armed Constabulary and various militia units,

as well as by significant numbers of kupapa – Māori ostensibly aligned to the Crown. These later campaigns were significant. But, for all intents and purposes, the war had long finished. The 'great civil wars of the 1860s' which had commenced in Waitara in 1860 had effectively ended on 21 November 1863 with the defeat of Waikato, Ngāti Maniapoto and allies at Rangiriri when Māori failed to contain, much less prevent, the massive British Army push southward.

The New Zealand Wars then, argued Belich, were substantially wars where the question was asked, and answered – who would prevail? Would it be the Crown or Māori? The Crown and the British Army ultimately prevailed over Māori, and the King movement in particular, and had done so by the end of 1863. This was achieved despite the skilful military innovations of Māori, especially the use of enclosed trenches and the modern pā.²⁶ New Zealand was, therefore, the reason for the war, and New Zealand was the prize. They were 'New Zealand Wars'.

The Māori Wars

However, giving names to history, especially to the history of warfare, is seldom easy and is rarely uncontested.²⁷ Giving names to historical events implies decisions being made about participants, localities, causes and even culpability; or conversely, it implies decisions not being made, if names are to be used uncritically. We do tend to reveal our thinking on such issues by the names we use.

Before 'New Zealand Wars' became popular, other terms were used to name these wars, to some extent illustrating the diverse range of opinions about participants, places, causes – and responsibility. Not so long ago, the preferred term was 'The Māori Wars', a name that still persists in some quarters despite being dealt a near-death blow by Belich. This name reflected the British Army's practice of naming their colonial wars after their enemy – hence the Zulu Wars, the Boer War and the Māori Wars.²⁸ 'The Māori Wars' was also accepted as an appropriate name for a long time because Māori were seen as having precipitated the outbreak of war.

Much later, it was generally acknowledged that Māori should not bear such responsibility. According to J. G. A. Pocock, the 'Māori Wars' had 'divisive implications'. It suggested to the Pākehā subconscious that 'we fought them', while its psychological effects on Māori were harder to predict.²⁹ Thus, for many, the continued use of 'Māori Wars' carried divisive and even accusatory connotations. Keith Sinclair had used this term when he examined the wars in 1957, but his use of 'Maori Wars'

was uncritical. He did not argue that Māori carried any responsibility for the wars. If anything, he argued the reverse. He was damning of colonial officials at Waitara, and he argued that ministers who drafted native land policy bore a major responsibility for the outbreak of war.³⁰ And the cause of war, he said, was land. The demand for land among settlers before 1860 was very high. They were especially envious of the 'fertile Waikato', said Sinclair. Yet, the cry for more land was 'out of all proportion to the increase in the number of Europeans'. It was not only speculators who clamoured for land; it was also the poorer folk and, in their combined pursuit of Māori land, the interests of both classes – rich and poor – coincided.

But the land speculators were dominant. They were merchants and shopkeepers, and they substantially controlled the provincial governments and the press, and they dominated Auckland society. Especially dominant were Fredrick Whitaker and Thomas Russell, the Auckland members of Alfred Domett's Ministry. Sinclair said they were legal partners in a firm with 'extensive speculative and mercantile interests'. Land was clearly foremost in their political ambitions. Men such as these would later abolish the Crown monopoly on Māori land purchasing, unilaterally removing protections from Māori against fraudulent land dealings at the hands of settlers. Whitaker and Russell (and others) also formulated the later policies of confiscating huge tracts of customary Māori land, thus 'blatantly demonstrating what the war was about'. They also negotiated government loans from Russell's Bank of New Zealand, contingent upon land gains from war. 'All of these policies were of enormous benefit to themselves, as well as to settlers in general', Sinclair argued.

The Anglo-Māori Wars

The 'Māori Wars' was soon superseded by the 'Anglo-Māori Wars'. This name was popular for a time, having been first used by Alan Ward in 1967 in an essay that reassessed the causes of the wars. Ward argued that, in the end, the wars comprised a series of sustained conflicts between two peoples, new European settlers and native Māori. All other issues were important, for sure, but they were peripheral. The conflicts of the 1860s had come about, Ward argued, because, after many years of settler unease, a small and anxious white community (typical of other colonial situations) had wanted to press its claims. According to Ward, the crisis of 1860–63 came about because of twenty years of 'tension and mistrust arising from many causes, some connected directly with land, some not'. He conceded that the land-hunger motive was overwhelmingly

important, especially in Taranaki. True, that war had begun as an attempt to deny the right of Wiremu Kingi to prohibit the alienation of land by minor owners. But the Governor, who initiated the war, was misled by his colonial officials, said Ward. He had pursued war because he believed that Kingi had no valid claims and was merely an 'interfering bully'. Gore Browne believed that he was promoting law and order by ending a long period of violence and anarchy in Taranaki.

Although Māori hospitality and generosity were usually to the fore, said Ward, North Island settlers nonetheless felt themselves to be 'insecure in the face of Maori power'. The invasion of the Waikato expressed the determination of Pākehā to resolve the ultimate question: 'which race and which society was going to prevail and admit the other under its sufferance'.³¹ Pākehā were determined to press the question, and it would be resolved in their favour. Settlers would secure their claims to sole sovereignty, and they would govern in their own interests. A seemingly seditious and belligerent King movement, holed up in the upper reaches of the Waikato, provided the perfect opportunity.

The prospect of war in 1863 produced war fever on the streets of the capital. Sinclair described the Auckland scene: 'On 25 June, part of the militia was called out. The townsfolk were intensely excited, partly frightened by rumors of an impending Māori assault, partly aggressive. The "d***d nigger" tone was dominant'. Many Māori took the extreme step of moving back to the Waikato, in the depths of winter, as Grey had instructed them to do, taking with them their old people and the bones of their ancestors.³²

Politicians saw opportunities arising from the land confiscations that would be forthcoming, once the impending war was won. W. H. Oliver pointed to key Auckland individuals in 1863, as had Sinclair: 'the outbreak of war in the Waikato in 1863 was welcomed in Auckland as that province's perfect opportunity to realise her "grand colonial destiny"'. The Māori were in rebellion, said Oliver, and British regulars were available to conquer them. Auckland businessmen could follow in the wake of the army. 'The land could be thrown open to settlers but first of all – and this was the vital nerve of policy for Russell and Whitaker – it could be presented to the speculators.'³³

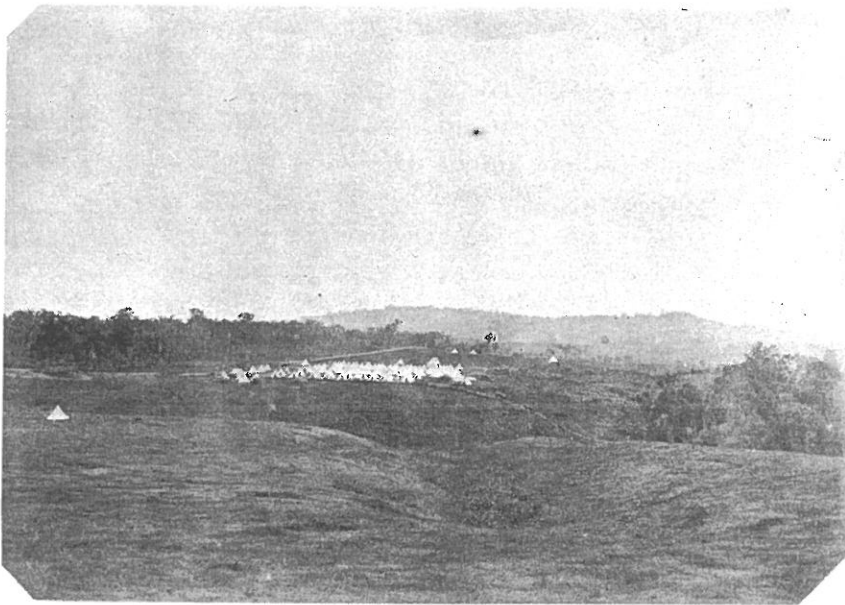
Despite the dominance of land as an issue, however, Ward argued that land was but one issue of many. In the end, the wars constituted a defining conflict between two distinct peoples, precipitated by settlers. They were, therefore, Anglo-Māori Wars. Perhaps paradoxically, Sinclair eventually adopted this term. However, he would later argue that, though

it was indeed a war of peoples, in his view the primary cause of war was still land, as he had argued in 1957. Another major cause of war, and an immediate one, was undoubtedly the determination of the government to assert its authority over New Zealand, said Sinclair. However, in any discussion about causes, he would still stress the 'competition for land'.³⁴

The Land Wars

From about the mid-1980s, the term 'Land Wars' appeared and won some acceptance among historians because the issue of land was now widely held to have been an important factor underlying the wars, especially in Taranaki and the Waikato. Though Sinclair had argued this in 1957, the 'Māori Wars' took some dislodging. Earlier, in 1965, Keith Sorrenson had published an article 'The Politics of Land' in which he too mounted a strong defence of land as cause of war, though his preferred name was the 'Māori-European Wars'.³⁵

In 1986, the Historic Places Trust indicated its clear preference for the 'Land Wars'. According to the trust, what to call the wars had become a problem for many New Zealand historians since the term



Covering the Land

Camp of 2nd Battalion, 14th Regiment, and the 1st Battalion, 12th Regiment, Pokeno, c.1863, ATL, PA1-q-250-37.

the 'Māori Wars' was seen to have fallen into disfavour. Conceding that there was some debate on this issue, the trust, on the advice of its Māori Advisory Committee, advised branches to use 'Land Wars' in trust publications. However, branches were to first consult with local Māori about appropriate local Māori naming of these conflicts. Where a general term was needed, however, the 'Land Wars' was to be preferred over the 'New Zealand Wars'. J. G. A. Pocock also preferred the 'Land Wars' because it avoided using ethnic terms altogether and encouraged the 'beneficent idea that we are now one people'.³⁶

As names go, it is fair to say that the 'Land Wars' was never really popular, not as popular as it might have been; certainly not since Belich re-invigorated 'New Zealand Wars'. Yet, 'New Zealand Wars' was quite an old term that had been used for well over a century. The name appeared as early as 1860 when Charles Torlesse published a series of articles in the *Lyttelton Times* advocating that strong measures be taken against Māori waging war against the Crown. Octavius Hadfield took a different view, and used a different name. To Hadfield, they were 'England's wars', since new settlers carried a major responsibility for their outbreak. His pamphlet 'One of England's Little Wars' appeared in 1860 to protest against the war in Taranaki. He argued that these were England's wars, not New Zealand's. But Charles Hursthouse used the term 'New Zealand's War' in 1865 when seeking to answer severe Colonial Office criticism of settler actions in New Zealand. These were wars for New Zealand, he argued. Other writers agreed. *A Sketch of the New Zealand War* was produced in 1899 by Morgan Grace who had served as a medical officer in Taranaki.³⁷

James Cowan's Wars

In the early 1920s, James Cowan wrote his masterly two-volume history of the wars under the New Zealand Wars name. Cowan travelled extensively and spoke with many veterans of the later Armed Constabulary campaigns, both Pākehā and Māori. He visited most of the sites while they were still warm and bore evidence of battle.³⁸ In fact, Cowan was raised on one of the most important war sites. His father's farm encompassed part of the 1864 Orakau battlefield. He grew up amid the 'romantically shaped ceinture of volcanic salencies' which seemed to mount guard like giant sentries over the Māori King's domain, just to the south of Orakau across the Puniu Stream which was the King's eastern boundary. The foundations for his later scholarship were laid during these youthful days spent on the 'farthest out farm on the King

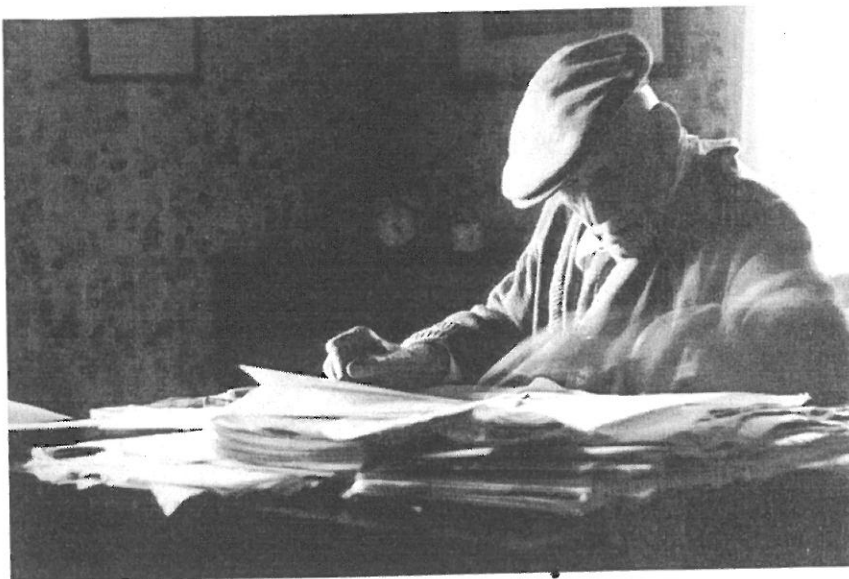
Country frontier'. Many hours were spent on the old battlefield where 'shawl-kilted tattooed Maoris' had once fought against 'Pakeha stalwarts who had carried rifle on many a bush war-path'.³⁹

Cowan used the term 'New Zealand Wars' to represent a monumental series of wars fought between settlers and Māori, somewhere out on the distant fringes of empire. These were wars fought to consolidate New Zealand's place within the British Empire. His volumes were subtitled *Maori Campaigns and the Pioneering Period*. They were written to fulfil the need for a consolidated 'history of the wars with the Maoris since the establishment of British sovereignty and of the era of pioneering settlement and adventure'.⁴⁰ Belich described Cowan as 'a product of an intensely Anglo centric, Empire-worshipping period in New Zealand's development'.⁴¹ In this context, he said, Cowan's balance was quite impressive. And he showed a real sympathy for the Māori. Māori veterans trusted him enough to provide him with accounts of their war experiences.

James Belich took a very different stance in defence of his use of 'New Zealand Wars', as befits a work of substantial scholarship published some sixty years later. His primary focus was on the nature and impact of campaigns launched against Māori; and, looking beyond these, on the later Victorian interpretations of those conflicts, which contained a significant bias. This Victorian bias had obstructed understandings of the wars' complexity; and had especially failed to recognise Māori military achievement. This Victorian interpretation was 'alive and well and living in New Zealand', and had become an integral part of the wars 'received version' which Belich set out to challenge. He argued that the wars were largely an internal contest over the sole right to govern. They were wars substantially removed from the context of empire. He also rejected the term 'Land Wars' because, he said, this name was 'monocausal'. It was a name which suggested that the wars were all about the seizing of Māori land, and very little else.⁴²

Naming the Wars

Other names have also appeared over the years. Edgar Holt named his 1962 book *The Strangest War* after a quotation from Sir Fredrick Rogers, Under Secretary at the Colonial Office in London, who said that 'it seems to me the strangest war that was ever carried on'.⁴³ To Tony Simpson in 1979, the wars were *Tē Riri Pakeha: the White Man's Anger*.⁴⁴ *The Colonial New Zealand Wars* was the literal title used by Tim Ryan and Bill Parham in their illustrated 1986 book of that name.⁴⁵



James Cowan (1870–1943)

James Cowan at his desk writing, Eileen Cowan, 1940, ATL, PAColl-5877-5.

The term 'New Zealand Civil Wars' has also appeared from time to time, though it is rarely used with conviction. The name has not yet been promoted by any major New Zealand historian who might want to argue that the wars were, in fact, true 'New Zealand Civil Wars'; it would be interesting to see such an argument mounted. J. G. A. Pocock thought the concept had possibilities: 'it would be good to be able to call them "Civil Wars", but we were not then a single polity, nor are we now; and land, after all, was what the wars were fought about'.⁴⁶

There is much to suggest that the wars were in fact a genuine New Zealand Civil War, a war between two distinct polities, the Crown, and Māori, especially as represented by the King movement of the early 1860s. What constitutes a 'civil war' needs to be clarified, however. Overseas examples reveal how difficult this can be when matched with historical specificity to New Zealand. For example, the American Civil War of 1860–64 bears a marginal resemblance only, on the face of it, to the Land Wars. A better corollary is found out on the Great Plains, in the wars fought on horseback by the Native American tribes against the American State, and the United States Army, especially in the 1860s. These wars mirror those in New Zealand in many ways.

From time to time, the term 'Civil Wars' is used by some New Zealand historians in a different way. It is used to suggest that the later wars of

the 1860s were in fact civil wars fought by Māori against Māori, with settlers and the Crown almost relegated to the role of mere bystanders. According to Mathew Wright

civil war raged within many central North Island iwi through the mid-1860s. This unprecedented violence, ultimately was a consequence of the process of contact and settlement, and paradoxically came in the face of active settler efforts to stop it.⁴⁷

Peter Maxwell has expressed a similar view: 'the historians do not emphasise that in the final stages there were no more than a handful of Europeans involved. What began as a colonial war between the two races became a civil war almost exclusively fought by Maori.'⁴⁸ Edmund Bohan, who generally talks the wars down as insignificant and as a 'minor imperial matter', writes of the 'legacies of the small-scale imperial campaigns fought between British Regiments, the Taranaki tribes and Tainui's King federation and, later, the essentially civil wars of settler and kupapa forces against Te Kooti and Titokowaru'.⁴⁹

Such suggestions invariably arise when historians attach too much weight to the latter years of conflict. It is true that, by the late 1860s, significant numbers of Māori had been recruited and were now fighting alongside colonial forces, ostensibly on the side of the Crown. In the later years of the wars, Māori forces assumed a greater burden of the fighting, and the reasons for doing so were probably only understood by those who participated. Be that as it may, by the late 1860s the wars were almost over, and they were certainly lost by Māori. Māori fighting against Māori became a tragic footnote to wars lost earlier in the Waikato. The war was won by the British Army, and had been by 1864. The British used few Māori allies when waging war against 'rebellious Maori'.

Māori did assume much of the later fighting, and, it is true, took the war into the bush in pursuit of Titokowaru and Te Kooti. The Māori against Māori fighting was bitter and characteristically violent, as with the taking of heads in South Taranaki for no better reason than collecting bounty. But in the end, such fighting, Māori against Māori, was always carried out at the Crown's bidding, whatever those Māori fighting alongside the Crown supposed. They might have imagined that their own purposes were being served by conducting bloody warfare against other Māori who were, already, under attack from the constabulary. The only purposes being served, however, in the prolonging of war to 1872, were the Crown's.

For the present, then, 'New Zealand Wars' is the most widely accepted and used name. The name has persisted strongly, and has been picked up by historians of the wars as diverse as Chris Pugsley, Neil Finlay and Jock Phillips.⁵⁰ In fact, most historians who use this name do so without comment or analysis. There is nothing wrong in this, of course. The term tends to be used with the meanings attached to it by Belich accepted as a given; or the name is used uncritically – it has now taken on such a life that the term is drained of substantive meaning. 'The New Zealand Wars' just sits out there as *the* name.

Does it really matter what we call these wars? What's in a name?

The names we give to history are important, of course, because the names that we use speak volumes as to what we think about – in this case at least – such important issues as causes, who was involved, where precisely did these events occur and who was responsible. The Historic Places Trust was onto something when they suggested that branches should consult with local Māori before deciding on a name to use. This is because one issue frequently overlooked by historians is – what did Māori people think?

Ngā Pakanga Whenua o Mua

Māori people do have names for these wars. If we are able to look at how these names are derived, then perhaps we might catch some customary insights into how Māori themselves viewed issues such as causes, places and extent of conflict, who was involved and who was responsible. In North Taranaki, the term 'Ngā Pakanga Whenua o Mua' is one of the terms used among older Māori. The term is used to describe the past years of conflict and war that frequently ravaged Māori settlements scattered from Ngamotu (New Plymouth) to Mokau in the north. 'Ngā Pakanga' refers to the conflicts, or the wars. 'Whenua' refers to the land on which, or over which, the wars were fought. 'O Mua' means 'in years gone by'. So, in a sense, the term means 'Land Wars'.

The 'Land Wars' is the term most preferred by Māori because, far from being monocausal, the land was always the most important issue into which many other matters flowed. Wars fought over the land were longstanding, predating the arrival of the British Army by centuries. When the later wars were fought against the Crown, the issues, of course, were vastly different, setting them apart from anything that had gone before. But for Māori the cause was invariably the same: ngā pakanga whenua, fighting over the land. The whenua, as we have seen, drew its meaning from its customary context. In other words, there was



Ngā Pakanga Whenua O Mua

Sketch in trenches of Māori wounded, Gate Pā, 30 April 1864, Horatio Gordon Robley (1840–1930), ATL, A-033-036.

always a geographical specificity attached to te whenua. 'Ngā Pakanga Whenua o Mua', then, suggests a war or series of wars fought over a long period, within a specific area or region, a series of discrete if continuing local engagements only latterly involving new settlers and the Crown.

Traditionally, Māori had little sense of a unified regional or even national identity, much less a war, since such notions were at variance with the importance of hapū or iwi as being at the centre of the Māori worldview. However, an alternative Māori term often used is 'Ngā Pakanga o Aotearoa'. This name, which appears on a number of Land Wars monuments, has recently gained in popularity. It means 'the wars of New Zealand' or 'the New Zealand Wars'. The term is currently being used for example by Archives New Zealand to name its substantial collection of war documents and records. However, though of value in that context, the term does confer on the wars a sense of size, space and unity that did not really exist for Māori. Ngā Pakanga Whenua o Mua instead conveys a precise place, time and people, consistent with the traditional and customary environment within which wars, like most things, were viewed and understood.

As the wars drew to a close in Taranaki, Māori were drawn into a legalist and documentary-driven environment of Compensation Court proceedings and petitions. Such approaches were now unavoidable if lands unfairly confiscated were ever to be retrieved from the Crown. These processes were as foreign to Māori as they were daunting. But there was very little alternative, if livelihoods were to be rebuilt out of the wreckage of war. Māori therefore came forward and, using the full range of customary tenets like *whakapapa* and *mana whenua*, argued for the return of lands, as we will see. But first, they had to demonstrate their 'adherence to the Queen'.

In 1877, Ruhia Teira sought the return of a portion of the southern Oakura block. Following the lodging of his petition, Teira was cross-examined on the question of loyalty to the Crown. He was asked, 'whether your hapu generally was in rebellion'. Teira responded: 'about an equal number fought against the Government to those who supported them.' 'Were the principal men of the hapu under arms against the Government?' Teira replied, 'some of the principal men who remained quiet have died since the fighting. Some of them fought against the natives.'⁵¹

Hemi Matenga's right to petition in 1878 for the return of Waitara South lands was also similarly examined. To the question, 'were any members of (your) tribe in rebellion against her Majesty', Matenga replied, 'No, none of the Ngatihinetutu. The only one of them who remained behind was killed by the hau haus.' And later, 'was any portion of this tribe of which this hapu formed a part engaged in rebellion against the Queen?' to which Matenga replied, 'Some of the Ngati Awa were'. 'A large number?' 'I cannot say: I was in the north at the time.'⁵²

Such testimony tells us many things about how individual Taranaki Māori families were affected by the wars of the 1860s, and the confiscations that followed. Of all issues that weighed heavily on Māori, none was as important as the fate of the land. This is why Māori viewed the wars of the 1860s through the context of land. There was really no other issue.

In 1957, Keith Sinclair recognised the primacy of land as cause of war in Taranaki. Yet, he argued, it might have been different. Land problems being faced by settlers elsewhere in New Zealand were not as intense in Taranaki. Sinclair concluded that Taranaki settlers were less desperate. Their hunger for land therefore outstripped their need. Taranaki settlers were also fearful of Māori: 'anxiety united with avarice in producing

aggressive attitudes towards Maori'.⁵³ These were expressed in a stern demand that Māori be forced to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Queen; and they be disciplined for defying the government.

In 1859, the Governor was undoubtedly determined to force the issue over land in Waitara. But how had he come to this view, one of intolerance towards the land claims of Māori? And what was the basis of those claims made by Maori? In the next chapters, we will seek to untangle some of the many strands of competing interests in land, as possessed by the Crown and Māori that could not be reconciled and, as a consequence, contributed to the outbreak of war in Waitara in 1860.

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