

The Scars of Papatūānuku

Selected Sources

The New Zealand Land Wars, Loss of Māori Land and the Impact of War

Extract from '[Papatūānuku – the land](#)', Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand:

Much tribal land was lost in the 19th century. While some tribes willingly released some land, much land was taken against their will and the will of others. The New Zealand Wars were followed by land confiscations, and the Native Land Court also facilitated the sale of land by transferring land titles from tribes and putting them into individual names. Iwi made many attempts to halt this loss. The felling of forests and the loss of land were a catastrophe for their traditional worldview. The trees of the forest were a model for the tikanga or behaviour of a people, so their destruction was a calamity. The widespread loss of land meant the loss of foundation and stability, and the centering, nurturing principle of Papatūānuku.

The desperation of such loss is captured by Wi Naihera of Ngāi Tahu:

When the waves rolled in upon us from England, first one post was covered, then another till at last the water neared us and we tried to erect barriers to protect ourselves. That is, we entered into agreement with those who purchased our lands from the Queen, but when the flood tide from England set in, our barriers were cast down, and that is why you find us now, clinging to the tops of these rocks, called Native reserves, which alone remain above water.

Naihera likened the loss of land to its disappearance under the sea, an echo of the old mythological idea of land rising up from the sea.

Extract from '[War in Waikato](#)', NZHistory:

After fighting broke out again in Taranaki in early 1863, Governor George Grey turned his attention to the region he saw as the root of his problems with Māori: Waikato, the heartland of the anti-land-selling King Movement. Grey vowed to 'dig around' the Kīngitanga until it fell.

On 11 July, he issued an ultimatum to the 'chiefs of Waikato' to pledge their allegiance to Queen Victoria. The following day – before Waikato Māori had even received this message – a force led by Lieutenant-General Duncan Cameron crossed the Mangatāwhiri Stream, a tributary of the Waikato River near Mercer. This waterway marked the autaki – a line that should not be crossed – between the European settlement of Auckland and the territory under the mana (protection) of the Māori King. The key conflict of the New Zealand Wars had begun.

Māori and World War One

Extract from '[Māori and the First World War](#)', NZHistory:

Māori had mixed views about the First World War. Some supported the war effort and rushed to join up. Others opposed the war as they did not want to fight for the British Crown, which was seen to have done much harm to Māori communities in the 19th century. The varied reactions reflected iwi experiences of British actions in the previous century.

While more than 2000 Māori would serve in the Māori Contingent and Pioneer Battalion (later the Māori [Pioneer] Battalion), others opposed the war effort. The application of conscription to Māori in 1917 brought the issue to a head. Those iwi who had land confiscated as a punishment for having been deemed to be in rebellion against the British Crown in the 1860s mounted a campaign of resistance. Leaders such as Te Puea Hērangi gave important support to these men, some of whom were imprisoned for refusing to serve.

Māori and World War Two

Extract from '[Māori and the Second World War](#)', NZHistory:

By the time the Second World War ended in 1945, 28 (Māori) Battalion had become one of the most celebrated and decorated units in the New Zealand forces. The pinnacle of its achievement was the Victoria Cross won by Te Moananui-a-Kiwa Ngārimu in 1943. Ultimately, nearly 16,000 Māori enlisted for service during the Second World War.

New Zealanders reacted with patriotic fervour to the outbreak of war in South Africa in 1899 and again when the First World War began in 1914. Imperial policy had officially excluded Māori from fighting in South Africa, but a number still enlisted. That policy was still in place in 1914, but a change of heart in London saw several thousand Māori eventually fight in the First World War.

Some Māori leaders, such as Apirana Ngata, saw participation in war as the 'price of citizenship'. Others, such as the Kīngitanga leader Te Puea Hērangi, questioned why Māori should fight for an Empire that had, within living memory, invaded and occupied their lands.

Other resources

[‘War in Waikato – Rangiriri’](#), New Zealand History

[The Waikato War of 1863–64: A guide to the main events and sites](#),
Neville Ritchie, Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai, 2001

[‘The Waikato War’](#), Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

[‘The Haka - New Zealand WW1 Short Film’](#), YouTube

[‘Forgotten grandfathers – Maori men of WW1’](#), YouTube

[‘The Legendary Maori Battalion’](#), YouTube

[‘Weekly Review No. 232 \(1946\)’](#), YouTube/Archives New Zealand

[‘Te Reo Hotunui o Te Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa’](#), Michel Tuffery