

Vol. 1. Mrs. Elizabeth Turner

EARLY NEW ZEALAND

Stories of early pioneer women have a never failing human interest, and in this series I want to tell you about some of those brave women who aren't so well known. Of course we all know there were white men living in New Zealand soon after the turn of the century, but though they reared families here, their wives were Maori women.

WOMEN

OF NOTE.

It wasn't until 1814, when Samuel Marsden established his little mission stations in the Bay of Islands that white women seriously considered coming to this wild country.

by

DOROTHY BLACK

their privations and hardships are to be found in any of our history books, so I don't propose to tell you anything about them. If I'm to begin at the beginning, however, it will have to be Samuel's wife soon after, and my choice is going to be Mrs. Nathaniel Turner.

On the 15th of January 1822, just a month before he was due to sail, Turner married a Miss. Anne Sargent of Stafford, and on the first of their honeymoon the pair embarked on the "Porpoise" for the Bay of Islands. After a few months' work, the Turners were busy planting to look at when the first Maori people arrived at that year by the ship. Samuel died in 1824.

Taupiri
1950.

The ship had arrived in the Bay of Islands in 1822, and the first Maori people seemed to, and Anne Sargent, who was born in 1818, for health reasons, left with the Sargents on a trip to New Zealand and so became the first white woman to see the country after years of speculation by the white men.

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SERIES OF TALKS ON EARLY NEW ZEALAND WOMEN OF NOTE.

Norahy Black

No. 7. THREE MAORI WIVES.

Well, we've had six talks on New Zealand women of note, and not one of them has been a Maori. Why? Because the hardships the pakeha women found so terrible were part of the every day existence of her Maori sisters. As we know, many of them lived with the whalers and traders along the coast, but these men were not much given to putting pen to paper. Even F.E. Maning, the Pakeha Maori of Old New Zealand makes only fleeting mention of his Maori wife. Still they were there, and occasionally their doings vitally effected those early years of settlement.

Today I'm going to tell you about three Maori wives. Two of them were married to Pakehas, and the third the wife, or rather I should say one of the wives of Rangihaeata. Other than that they were all related to the bloodthirsty Te Rauparaha of Kapiti, and lived round about Cook Strait. I can find nothing about their early lives. They would grow up in pas and know little of the white man until he appeared about their coast.

My story really begins away back in 1830, when a Captain Blenkinsopp put into Cloudy Bay. There he took a fancy to a pretty Maori Lass, and decided to settle somewhere about Cook Strait. The fertile Wairau took his eye, and he was told this land now belonged to the great War Lord at Kapiti. It seemed Chief Te Ruaoneone of the Rangitane tribe had been so foolish as to say the great Chief Te Rauparaha was going the right way to having his head pounded like a fern root. Someone with a liking to gossip handed on the remark, and Te Rauparaha hearing it, decided to bear such an insult in mind. The Ngatitua fleet eventually paddled south, and Te Rauparaha didn't forget to pay Te Ruaoneone a call. This chief lived at a pa called Kowhai, about half a mile from the sea just where the Wairau and Opawa rivers met. The Muskets of the Ngatitua soon wiped out any resistance, and the pa of Kowhai fell into their hands. Not the least of their spoils was the chief, and the victor, Te Raupa-

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raha, took great pleasure in making the Maori eat his words. "Tukituki patu aruhe" he called it. The battle of the fernroot pounder. And so it came about the Ngatitocas claimed possession of the Wairau.

Capt. Blenkinsopp immediately set out for Kapiti, and before long was bargaining with Te Rauparaha for the land. On board his ship, the "Caroline" there was a muzzle loading 6 pounder. Now this war lord had a keen eye for all guns, and decided he wanted that cannon. After a fair amount of bargaining these two came to an agreement, and not a bad one for those days, Blenkinsopp got Wairau, and Te Rauparaha the 6 pounder. Three chiefs, Nohorua, Rangihaeata, and Tawiri Kingi Puaha put their signs on the paper, and off Blenkinsopp went. The Wairau was his. All he had to do was to find settlers for it, and he'd be a rich man one day. After a loving farewell to his Maori wife, he set sail for Port Hobart, but it wasn't too easy to convince people how desirable the Wairau valley was. The cannibal habits of the Maoris were too well known. Time began to pass, and one night off the Australian coast, his ship was wrecked in dirty weather, and Blenkinsopp was drowned.

You'd think that would be the end of his claims to the Wairau, but no, the scrap of paper passed into the hands of a lawyer in Sydney who had lent him money. The day came when he decided to get something out of a bad debt. In 1840 he sent down a mob of cattle in charge of a party of men who were to farm this wonderful valley. The boat landed at Cloudy Bay and leaving their wives and families at the whaling station there, Wilton, Baldick, Baird, and Hall, went overland to bring the farm in

Then it was discovered Mrs. Blenkinsopp had a copy of the bill of sale, and when Colonel Wakefield was looking for suitable land for settlement, she sold it to him for the sum of £300, and thereupon drops out of my story. But the repercussions of this transaction were far reaching.

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Now let's turn to the Second maori wife. Sometime before this, a young Dutchman settled in the Port Underwood district, and did very well for himself storekeeping. One day he took to wife the daughter of one of the principal chiefs of the Ngatittoa tribe. Kuika Rangiaawa, she was called, though the whalers called her "Squeaker" for some un-known reason, and she was distantly connected to Te Rauparaha. As time went by, she had two small children, a little boy, and a baby girl, Wynen, her husband was supposed to have quite a lot of money in the house, a fact which interested a crafty character by the name of Dick Cook from Cloudy Bay. One day when Wynen was in Nelson on business Cook, and his Maori wife called on Kuika hoping to frighten her into giving them her husband's money. Mrs. Wynen refused, and in the quarrel that followed Cook killed her. The little boy of 16 months saw everything, so to make sure he couldn't tell he killed the child too. The baby he left lying beside her dead mother. Then he ransacked the whare, but all found was a bag of tokens which were, of course, no use to him. ^{Le} ~~didn't be found.~~ ~~There were~~

It was sometime before the murder was discovered, and by then the baby was in such a bad way they could do very little for her. Mrs. Ironside did her best, but she died a week later in the mission house.

Cook was known to have blood on his clothes which he tried hard to remove. His wife also admitted seeing him kill Mrs. Wynen, so he was taken into custody, and sent to Wellington. His trial came up in April 1843, and everyone was sure that would be the end of Dick Cook. His Maori wife was sent, and the Rev. Samuel Ironside as interpreter. In a report he made later, Mr. Ironside alleged the Magistrate was inclined to take the attitude that after all the murdered party was only a Maori Girl, and what did it matter anyway. Mr. Ironside himself should have known that once he admitted marrying the maori less to Dick Cook, her evidence would be useless. He should have seen to it, or somebody down Cloudy Bay way should have, that more evidence was

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widow his second class wife, who was therefore a close relative of
sent. Anyway, for want of sufficient evidence Dick Cook was acquitted
When the news reached the Maori population their anger was intense.
They pointed out that at Hokianga about that time a Maori there had
been executed for the supposed murder of a European on very slender
evidence, and that in Auckland too a similar case had occurred of
circumstantial evidence. The Maoris had approved of the verdicts,
because they understood that was British Law. Now here was a similar
case, but this time the accused was a European. What happens? He gets
off, and the Maoris as a result were furious.

To make matters worse, Colonel Wakefield began to press his claim
for the Wairau Valley. And the four settlers from Sydney were still
working the land on the strength of the lawyer's claim, taking no
notice of Te Rauparaha's warnings to get off the land. Once or twice
After the death of Huika Wynen they visited the Cloudy Bay settlement
to see their families. Then suddenly they disappeared. Search parties
went out to scour the district, but they couldn't be found. There were
lots of rumours though -- talk of pools of blood and heaps of ashes
and Maoris seen using things identified as belonging to the missing
men. All the settlers were sure they'd been murdered in payment for
Mrs. Wynen, and all the Maoris were just as certain they'd had nothing
to do with their disappearance. Their boat was missing, they said.
It had never been found. The men could have been drowned in the surf
crossing the Wairau bar. And there it rested. To this very day no
one ever learnt any more of the matter.

So there we are with the stories of two Maori wives, and how they
affected the Wairau Massacre. Now we come to the third wife Te Rongo.
This lady was a chieftainess of the Ngaitika tribe. Actually she was
the widow of a chief Te Whaiti who was Rangihaeata's first cousin,
and a nephew of Te Rauparaha.. Upon the death of Te Whaiti, she
became the wife of Rangihaeata, in accordance with Maori Custom which
demanded that some close relative of the dead man should make

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widow his second class wife. She was therefore a close relative of Te Rauparaha, his nephew's widow, and another nephew's wife even if it was only second class, so with the loose terms of relationship that governed the Maori speech, she could be called Te Rauparaha's daughter.

And now we shall see how she affected the Wairau troubles. About this time when the Maoris were simmering over the Cook verdict, Colonel Wakefield sent off a party of surveyors to survey the Wairau Valley for Settlement. Te Rauparaha had already gone out of his way to tell the Colonel to keep his hands off that Valley. He claimed that when the troublesome deed was signed neither he nor the three other chiefs understood a word of English or that matter appreciated the European attitude to land. When Blenkinsopp wanted it the Raheha only beachcombed the country or went whaling. Besides he'd been quite willing for Blenkinsopp to have the valley. He was one of the family, for hadn't he married the daughter of Te Pehi, Te Rauparaha's uncle? It was an entirely different matter to have outsiders claiming it. Yes, there was something in it about a 6 pounder cannon, but that was accepted as the price of food and water for his ship, and in consideration of Te Pehi's daughter being handed over to him. As for the Cannon they could have it back any time they wanted it. It was still at Kakapo anyway. But the Valley they were not to have. Consequently when the surveyors arrived, their huts were burnt and their goods undamaged were removed to the seaside. Mr. Thomson, a hot headed Nelson Magistrate issued a warrant for arson, and a party of some 50 men set out for the Wairau to bring in Te Rauparaha. They were armed and ready, so they thought, to use force. The party of Maoris they met at a place called Tuamarina were armed also, but they weren't ready for a fight because one third of their numbers were women and children. About 140 of them there were, nursing their grievances, and unfortunately their muskets. At first the Maoris were willing to be reasoned with. Te Rauparaha and Rangihaeata said they weren't willing to be arrested, but would accept the decision of the land court in the matter

This, however, didn't please Thomson, and when he began to flourish the handcuffs he'd brought and his warrant the Maoris became troublesome. The Nelson lawyer Richardson, who'd thought it a lark to go with the expedition didn't feel so happy about things, and chief Ruaha joined the strained group with the idea of trying to smooth the matter out. Thomson wouldn't listen to Ruaha, and was foolish enough to push him out of the way, pointing to his armed forces over the small river who were watching their leaders rather anxiously. Capt Arthur Wakefield began to feel worried. He thought they should join forces, so he ordered his men across the creek. One of the party accidentally slipped and discharged his gun. Instantly the Ngatitoea warriors sprang to their feet and fired right into their midst killing two immediately. The rest, including Thompson and Wakefield managed to scramble back firing as they went. The Maoris all took to the scrub, ~~and safely~~. Bullets were flying everywhere and one of the party being a Quaker surrendered. He was immediately tomahawked while the rest of the Pakehas fled up hill as fast as they could with the Maoris whooping and hollowing after them just as if they were pigs. After a few minutes the fire began to slacken and a flag of truce raised. Te Rauparaha reached the leaders who gave themselves up, and the battle, so they thought was over. But further uphill a small party of fugitives opened fire as the rest of the Maoris came out of the scrub and so it began all over again. The Bloodthirsty Hanguihaeata busily despatched all the wounded, and had just finished it when word came to him Te Rongo had been killed in the scrub by a chance bullet. Leaping uphill, he shouted at Te Rauparaha, "Your Daughter Te Rongo, Te Rongo, my wife is dead", and demanded the lives of the captives in payment. Thomson called to Te Rauparaha to save them, but within 10 minutes they were killed. One of the party managed to creep unobserved into the scrub nearby and hiding there, saw all that happened.

No doubt in the heat of the fighting Te Rongo's importance was exaggerated but she was of high rank, and at that time the murder of Ruika Wynen still rankled. In addition Modern opinion is agreed the Pakeha's attitude invited the trouble, and afterwards the Maoris took away the handcuffs

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not to mention the leg irons, Thomson had brought to put on Te Rauparaha and Rangihaeata. These were sent from pa to pa throughout the North Island, and did much to embitter the Maoris.

Out of this tragic affair there grew a legend -- the legend of the last resting place of a Maori Princess. In the hurry and bustle of getting away from the massacre as soon as they could, there was no time to give Te Rongo a decent tangi, so it is thought she was hurriedly buried somewhere. Then at a more convenient time she would be carried away and properly interred. But things didn't work out like that; the opportunity never came, and so it happened no one was quite sure where she lay. Down at Robin Hood's Bay there was a lovely grave which the local residents fondly believed to be Te Rongo's. Her kinsfolk, however, were never sure where she'd been hidden. For many years after the massacre various weapons were recovered from Tuamarina, and not so many years ago a skeleton of a woman aged about 30 was found by a gang of workmen cutting away the sharp corners of the Blenheim-ixton highway. A greenstone tiki of unusual design was around her neck, and so it was believed to be Te Rongo. Her relatives claimed it anyway, and interred the bones at long last in the burial grounds of her family.

And that is the story of the three Maori wives, whose lives so seriously affected the Wairau massacre. And Blenkinsopp's 6-pounder? They tell me you can ^{still} see it ~~still~~ if you care to poke about ~~Symour Square.~~ ~~in~~ to go to Blenheim and

Blenheim.

References:-

Williams Centennial of Methodism
My personal cuttings - Mostly from the "Dominion"
Buikk's Old Marlborough
Tales of NZ Women
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