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RACE RELATIONS IN THE WAIMARINO

1880 - 1911

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History at Massey University.

Rex Herbert Voelkerling

1970

To my Parents

\* \* \* \* \*

## PREFACE

This thesis makes an examination of Maori-Pakeha relations in the Waimarino area of the King Country in the belief that all too often Maori history is approached on a national scale and viewed within a framework of national trends and Parliamentary Acts. Through the explorations of the dynamics of a bi-racial community it is hoped a regional corrective may be made to former national interpretations. A local study possesses the advantage of getting back to the 'grass-roots'. History is reduced to its very common denominator, the individual in a small community.

From a point of 'culture contact' the emphasis in this thesis is placed on the years leading up to the new century, these initial years being crucial in determining the future of race-relations in the Waimarino. Briefly, it was not a series of Land Acts so much as particular comments and actions on the local level which influenced both Maori and European attitudes. These comments and actions have been investigated up to 1911 with one exception: the liquor question has been pursued to the early 1920's, it being very difficult to formulate any sort of a conclusion prior to this period in time.

Paucity and unreliability of source materials posed a

considerable problem in writing this thesis. By checking local sources against official publications such as the Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives and the New Zealand Gazette, local sources were rendered more reliable. This cross examination was very important. Local identities often possess 'set' views, their history tending to be constructed around a hard 'mythological' core. One of the most arduous tasks was the process of 'demythologising'. There is also a relative paucity of newspaper material. The two local papers, the Waimarino County Call and the Ohakune Times appear to have been destroyed or lost with time, although several issues still exist, and these have been used in the thesis. A complete set of the Wanganui Chronicle, the Wanganui Herald and the Yeoman exist at the Wanganui Public Library, but, generally, yielded a disappointing amount of material.

Raetihi township received more emphasis than Ohakune, although neither are very important in this study, as very few Maoris had ventured permanently into the town by 1911. Neither is Pikipiki brought into the picture in any depth. The Maoris who lived there were closely linked to the Wanganui River, and seldom made any consequential penetrations inland. They appear to have been very 'civilised', probably due to the influence of the Catholic mission established in the vicinity. They depended on the river for food as well as communication.

A map of Waimarino County is included, which indicates the area under survey in this thesis. It should be pointed out that what was originally known as the 'Waimarino Block' as purchased in 1887, constituted considerably more territory to the North, but did not extend south of the Fipiriki-Karioi road. For convenience, chapter two, on the purchase of the land by the Government, refers to the entire Waimarino Block, and is thus not restricted to the area inside the Waimarino County.

Collecting figures and statistics proved almost impossible. On 4 May 1903, Waimarino County came into existence, and prior to this date, Raetihi was in the County of Waitotara, and in the electoral district of Patea. Census figures for the years 1906 and 1911 are included.

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It is doubtful if this thesis would have been presented had it not been for the infinite help of my parents which has already been acknowledged. I would also thank Mr. M.R. Turner for acting as virtually my research colleague for a short while in Wanganui, and Mr. G.R. Dickson for the provision of material comforts.

Finally special thanks to Margaret Brogden as any credit for the neatness of the appearance of this thesis is due entirely to her.

Orutoha Valley,  
Raetihi.

R.H. Voelkerling.

May, 1970.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AJHR Appendix to the Journals of  
the House of Representatives.
- PD New Zealand Parliamentary  
Debates.
- Voelkerling Journals A collection of private diaries  
written by A.W. Voelkerling,  
1896-1898.