Shifting perspectives about colonial conflict: The Wairau Affray and The Battle of Boulcott's Farm

The following is a transcript of a talk given by Liana Macdonald and recorded live on at the National Library of New Zealand on 1 June 2022. A question and answer session that followed the talk is also included.

Transcript

Sarah Burgess: Kia ora, and welcome to the New Zealand History podcast channel, where you'll find talks on Aotearoa New Zealand history, culture and society. These talks are organised by Manatū Taonga, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage with the support of the Alexander Turnbull Library. They're recorded live either via Zoom or in person at Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa, the National Library of New Zealand.

Paul Diamond: Tēnā koutou katoa. Whakataka te hau ki te uru, Whakataka te hau ki te tonga, Kia mākinakina ki uta, Kia mātaratara ki tai. E hī ake ana te atākura. He tio, he huka, he hau hū. Tihei mauri ora! Tēnā koutou katoa. E kore au e ngaro, he kākano i ruia mai i Rangiātea. Nau mai koutou ki te mātahi o te tau, te tuatahi o te marama o Hune. Ki ngā mate kua hinga i te toki o aituā, haere koutou ki te Moana nui, te rerenga o ngā waka i hoehoe ai e rātou mā, ka ngaro i te tirohanga kanohi. Heoi anō, e mau tonu ana i ngā tō pitopito o te ngākau. Āpiti hono, tātai hono rātou te hunga mate ki a rātou. Āpiti hono, tātai hono tātou te hunga ora ki a tatou katoa. Kā mihi hoki ki ngā mana whenua o te rohe nei, ngā tāngata o te raukura, Taranaki whānui ki te Ūpoko o te Ika, me Ngāti Toa Rangatira, tēnā koutou. Kā mihi hoki ki te kaupapa o te rā nei --- tēnei kaupapa kōrero e kīia nei ko Ngā Kauhau Hītori, nā te Manatū Taonga, nā te wharepukapuka nei e whakahaere ēnei kohinga kōrero. Kate, Steve, Neill mā, tēnā koutou. Hei te rā nei ka tuku mihi maioha ki tā tātou kaikōrero, Tākuta Liana Macdonald, nō

Ngāti Kuia, Rangitāne o Wairau, Ngāti Koata. E te manukura, e te kairangahau, e te kaituhituhi, nau mai ki te kaupapa nei. Mauria mai ō pūkenga, kōrero hoki, kia whakaohooho i a tātou. Nā reira Liana, tēnā anō koe, otirā tēnā koutou katoa. Nau mai ki te whare nei, nau mai ki te kaupapa nei. Kia ora everyone, I'm Paul Diamond, Curator Māori at the Alexander Turnbull Library. And it's just fallen to me to offer a karakia and brief mihi, acknowledging the mana whenua of the land that this library has been built on and these collections, and acknowledging those who have passed on and bringing us back to the realm of the living. And acknowledging that the series is a partnership between Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa, the National Library of New Zealand, and Manatū Taonga, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. And I just wanted to mention before I hand over to the Ministry, that I've known of Liana and had some contact with Liana for a wee while, but this is actually the first time we've met because of these plague times we're living in. And we actually connected through the last New Zealand Historical Association Conference, which was held virtually. And also Liana gave a fantastic kōrero about the exhibition upstairs, He Tohu, a fantastic critique, and of Te Papa. And I thought, well, this is interesting. And then I also, when my - I'm an oral historian, and when the latest issue of the National Oral History Association New Zealand journal landed in my letterbox there was an article from Liana about Wairau which we're hearing about today. So thank you e hoa, it's great that you've come - been able to be with us here today. Now it's my great pleasure to hand over to my former colleague Steve Watters from Manatū Taonga. Kia ora Steve.

Steve Watters: Tēnā koutou katoa. Ki Manatū Taonga au e mahi ana. He Pou Arataki o Te Pae Wānanga, Te Tukunga Ihotanga. Ko Steve Watters tōku ingoa. Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa. Good afternoon. My name is Steve Watters. I'm currently the acting Chief Historian at Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage. And I just want to kind of say how great it is to see

so many people actually in person after having had to run the last few seminars online. But I do understand there's a good turnout online as well. So that's really exciting. I'm really excited about today's talk. In a previous life, I was a history teacher. And I remember vividly in the 1980s when I started teaching, having a really interesting conversation with a Year 13 class about the use of the word 'massacre' in reference to what happened at Wairau. And we talked then about the importance or the power of language when it came to giving us a sort of a perspective or a sense of historical events. So I'm really thrilled to hear Liana share her research with us today, as I'm sure you all will be. Because obviously when reflecting on our history, it's often worth asking ourselves, why is it that some conflicts are publicly remembered? Others have forgotten or overlooked altogether and I guess also who gets to decide which are the ones that we're going to look at. So I think those sorts of issues also are clearly linked to today's topic. Perspective is something we talk a lot about in the work that we do at Manatū Taonga, and in particular the section that we have on our NZ History website for schools, called Te Akomanga. And we talk in there a lot about how we can help teachers and students start to bring more historical perspective into their teaching rather than just the kind of sticking to content. So again, I think the sort of research that Liana is going to be talking today, talking about today is going to be really, really worthwhile. Just because I don't want to take up too much of Liana's time, it was interesting my colleague Neill shared a link with me this morning to an essay by Philip Temple, Wakefield scholar, entitled 'White man's history - the execution of Arthur Wakefield'. This also in reading it highlighted to me again the ongoing significance of the events at Wairau, but also the importance once again of the considerations of perspective. Temple describes there being and I quote, 'no need for euphemisms, it could only have been a massacre'. So I thought that might be an interesting way of leading into today's talk. So I think on that note, I'd best hand over to Liana. Kia ora.

Liana MacDonald: Kia ora koutou katoa. Nei te mihi maioha ki a tātou katoa e hui tahi nei i tēnei rā. E aro hoki nei ki ngā kaupapa o te rā. Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa. Nga mihi Paul and your colleagues for welcoming me here today. Ko wai au? Ko moketapu te maunga, ko hoiere te awa, ko kurahaupō te waka, ko Te Hora te marae, ko Ngāti Kuia raua ko Rangitāne o Wairau ōku iwi, ko Liana MacDonald ahau.

Thank you very, very much for giving up your time to come and listen to my talk today. Certainly wasn't great weather to get you out here, but it's great to have such a good turnout and greetings to those of you who are joining us online. So the talk is titled: Shifting perspectives about colonial conflict in the Wairau Affray and the Battle of Boulcott's Farm.

This talk is based on research that I conducted on behalf of a large-scale ethnographic study called He Taonga te Wareware?: Remembering and Forgetting New Zealand's Colonial Past. The project is led by Professor Joanna Kidman and Dr Vincent O'Malley and traces shifting historical perspectives of the New Zealand Wars. It focusses on how different groups have commemorated these conflicts over time and how memory and silence about this difficult past permeates people's everyday lives in the present. And I was lucky enough join this project as a post-doctoral research fellow from 2019 to 2020, just after finishing my PhD. A significant aspect of my role was conducting field work associated with colonial conflict in the Waikato, Wellington, and in the Wairau regions. And what was also exciting about this research, as has been alluded to, is that the early stages coincided with the government announcement in September 2019 that New Zealand history will be taught to all schools in 2022, which as you know is now 2023. Of course, this has implications for how we reckon with our 'difficult histories'.

Following the post-doc, I was employed as a lecturer at Victoria University in the Faculty of Education and have been thinking about how schools and classrooms can approach the teaching of difficult histories in ways that attend meaningfully to key curriculum understandings in the Aotearoa New Zealand's histories curriculum about power, colonisation and settlement, and I'll return to these points briefly at the end of the presentation. So there are two parts to my talk today. The first part draws from interview data to show how the Wairau Affray is remembered differently by settler and indigenous groups from the Marlborough region. The second part will relay researcher observations for thinking about how sites associated with the Battle of Boulcott Farm reflect settler perspectives about the past.

Okay, so in February 2020, I travelled down to Blenheim to visit the Wairau Affray site, the Marlborough Museum and to talk to mana whenua and the descendants of settlers to hear their thoughts about the conflict. Although I grew up in Blenheim, I'm - and tribally affiliated to the area through my father's parents, I actually learned very little about the battle and the events surrounding it, growing up. I knew the basics, that it was the most historically significant military exchange between iwi Māori and colonial and settler militia in the South Island and that occurred in Tua Marino on the 17th June 1843. Up to nine Māori and twenty-two Pākehā were killed that day. And I could remember that the name kept changing as I grew up in the region and moved back and forth during university breaks. From the Wairau 'Massacre' to an 'Incident', and then to an 'Affray', which is perhaps testament to the slow acceptance of Blenheim's predominantly Pākehā community that the British and settler militia were in the wrong that day.

I spoke to several people during my time in Blenheim, and I'll relay their thoughts in a moment, James, who is a Pākehā museum educator; Hone, who's on the iwi board for Ngāti Toa - Ngāti Rārua ki Wairau; Pita, he's on the iwi board for Rangitāne o Wairau; Piri, who's the marae manager for Ngāti Kuia; and Piri's parents, Aunty Margie and Uncle Timi (and by the way I'm using pseudonyms). And although Hone, Pita and Piri sit on distinct iwi boards and marae committee, we are all related and can whakapapa to each other - and can whakapapa to other iwi in Te Tau - Te Tauihu, aroha mai. Te Tauihu is the name for the top of the South Island.

And just to give a bit more context about the rohe, Te Tauihu is comprised of eight tribes. Ngāti Kuia were the first to arrive on the Kurahaupō waka at the northern end of the South Island with Rangitāne and Ngāti Apa also residing in the region prior to the 1800s. An alliance of Tainui (so Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Rārua, Ngāti Koata) and Taranaki tribes (Ngāti Tama and Te Āti Awa) arrived in the 1820s and conquered and dominated the region. So I set up the interviews with a clear intention to talk about the Wairau Affray, but as you'll see each participant approached the conflict from different directions and spoke about different but related issues. The findings are relayed through a narrative approach to show how individuals from settler and indigenous participants remember Wairau Affray and think about its significance today. And also to make my relationship with participants, and you the audience, somewhat transparent to emphasise the multilayered environment in which stories and oral histories are told.

The interview with James takes place in the education room in the Marlborough Museum. I look around and I think about thousands of young Blenheim people who've been educated about local history inside this space in his 20 plus year career. We sit in chairs facing each other in the middle, and I

feel exposed by the dim lighting and wide spaces around us and behind me. However, James' articulate voice and gregarious demeanour soon fill the room, and it's difficult to feel lonely in the space for very long. James is Pākehā and he was raised in Marlborough and says that he is a 'Top of the South' person. He learned about the Wairau conflict primarily through reading books from local historians, and discussing the texts that have shaped his thinking, from the 1960s to present-day. Some of James' information was gleaned from 'fireside chats' with the book authors and he enjoyed and valued those occasions immensely. However, much of the interview focusses on his approach to teaching adults and children about the events directly connected to the 1843 battle in Wairau.

James begins by explaining that one point of contention is how different members of the Marlborough community name the conflict. He notes that the label 'massacre' is still in use, particularly by - and I quote - "the generation who are now in the 80s, 90s, hundreds who were taught the true definition of a massacre." Indicating a belief that Māori will no longer be cast as villains when the older generation fades away. James is sometimes invited to talk to other - older groups of people about the Affray to relay a more balanced perspective, whereby he says the "majority of fault was with people in Nelson, and the only fault that can really be cast to anyone on the Ngāti Toa side was that Te Rangihaeata killed people who'd surrendered."

James' main educative work however is reserved for young people. Part of his approach is to discuss how the events that unfolded in the Wairau can be attributed to different cultural values or understandings that were held by Māori and Europeans at the time. He also explains that his "basic approach is to keep the kids interested, and is as much hands on as possible". He gives the students replica artefacts of swords, pistols, handcuffs, and muskets to re-enact the battle when they are taken

to the site. He is clearly passionate about teaching the Wairau Affray and discusses many other significant historical events in the region. I admire the energy and resources that James has poured into understanding the events that unfolded in the battle at Wairau.

Hone and I meet at Ngāti Toa ki Wairau headquarters on the edge of town, a disorderly site of temporary buildings that serve a number of small businesses. It takes me a while to find the office, but when I do I'm given a cheery welcome and Hone waves me in to a space that accommodates a large table with room to move around comfortably either side. He is dressed in a business suit and coincidently an array of papers related to the Wairau Affray are spread on the table. On the walls are eight identical maps of Te Tau Ihu with overlapping boundary outlines for each iwi. The lighting in the room is bright because the walls are white. It feels clean and a little sterile. Hone tells me that he grew up with his Grandmother, who is of Ngāti Kuia, Rangitāne, Ngāti Apa, Ngāi Tahu descent, and Grandfather, who is from Ngāti Rārua of Ngāti Toa. Although his Grandfather didn't speak of the battle directly, he talked to Hone about his connections to the whenua, to maunga, etcetera, and Hone knew that his Grandfather was raised alongside Māori who were at the battle. Hone's Great Great Grand Uncle and Great Great Great Grandfather, were at the Wairau. His Great Great Grand Uncle wrote down the account of the battle "many years later and it was verified by witnesses and written down by someone who was plausible". Hone asserts that "The Wairau Incident was nothing to do with losing any land, it was to do with Ngāti Toa defending ownership of the land, and a foreign country - company that was coming here to take it." He believes that Ngāti Toa intermarried with tribes who were already established in Te Tauihu to bring the peace, "Some people and iwi now think it was done as subjugation, but it was never the intent. It was to marry to keep the peace so there would be no more conflict. There wouldn't be any intertribal conflict anymore because we had a bigger picture on our

hands, and it was White [laughs]. Much bigger problem. And the devastation of the influenza and the diseases coming from 1830. Because 1830s – when most of the Europeans came – was when the population declined and Māori could see it; they would have been able to see it then. And then they realised well, we need to fight together." Hone's own history teacher at school told the class that the Wairau was lost because Te Rauparaha had killed a whole lot of Europeans and the Māoris had lost all their land. Hone said, "Well I thought that was funny because I knew my grandparents lived on Māori land down the Pā [laughter]. Can't have lost it all [laughs]." Hone said that he had heard a lot of people either talking negatively about what Te Rauparaha did or not talking about him at all. Then he said, "but then when you think about it, none of us would be here without him because he owned the place. After he done what he did in the battle, who did the New Zealand Company negotiate with? Who did the Crown have to negotiate with? We would have nothing if it wasn't for him." And those of you who have been to Blenheim probably recognise Blenkinsopp's Cannon sitting outside the Marlborough District Council. It was given to Te Rauparaha in exchange for access to wood and water from his ship, but he later claimed that the chief had signed away the Wairau plain in exchange for the cannon. And Hone spoke briefly about the cannon during the interview, he's actually personally connected to the cannon through whakapapa that goes back to Irihapeti and Blenkinsopp, so it's kind of interesting how he was connected to both sides of the Affray.

My cousin Pita is highly regarded among Māori and Pākehā communities in Blenheim. He offers to take me and a research colleague to sites around Blenheim and the Wairau of significance – a tour he has conducted many times before and with groups of Blenheim youth. We spend the first hour in the township, visiting Pou and a recently-erected sculpture to commemorate the history of local iwi. The second hour takes us out of Blenheim to some Pā sites where our tūpuna lived. Unlike Hone, Pita was

taught by a “really good history teacher” who was a migrant to Aotearoa. When the teacher learned of Pita’s iwi connections “he walked out to the back of his room and out to the resource room and brought out this big folder that was full of old copy documents from the appendices to the House of Representatives and stuff like that. I saw all of the names on the census: Hemi, Whero, Meihana, Kereopaa, Tahuariki, all of the old folks”. Pita said he also got a lot of the Wairau stories from an Uncle and from my own Grandmother, who had a great memory and lots of knowledge about families within the rohe.

So Wairau Bar Road is just north of Blenheim, the Spring Creek turn off. The road leads to Te Pokohiwi, the Wairau Bar, a significant archaeological site that marks the arrival of the first Polynesian people ever set foot in Aotearoa. But while the area is rich in pre-colonial history and has seen several waves of Māori settlement, the area is also significant for the part it plays in colonial history between settler-indigenous groups, and inter-iwi relations in the region. And so we travel for about 10 minutes down the road until Pita suddenly instructs us to pull over and jump out. Then he gives us the talk that he gives to Blenheim youth who come to this place, "I say to the boys ‘Did you know that in New Zealand we had reservations?’ And of course, they've seen all the cowboy movies, and they know that North American tangata whenua were put on reservations, but they didn’t know that we also had reservations. So pretty much what you can see here, going that way and that way, was what was called the Wairau Reserve. That was set up in 1856, and from the very get go it was a problem. Rangitāne was of the belief that they were going to get a reserve that was two miles inland from the mouth of the Wairau River, 10 miles up the coast up into Port Underwood, two miles inland and then 10 miles back this way. And that reserve was then supposed to link up with the other reserves in Havelock and Canvastown. But what happened was that the government reneged and said, 'We’re not going to give

you that much. We're going to give you 770 odd acres', which was basically that and that, shared amongst three tribes. They divided the reserve up into three blocks, so that part down there became Ngāti Toa, this was Rārua, and then down there was Rangitāne. So, the situation you had was two tribes that had recently arrived in the area, at war with the other tribes, and now they were pushed on to the same reserve. After that, you had lots of flow on effects, right? You have big families getting born of 13 kids. The next generation has 13, 14 kids. It just exploded. And of course, these blocks, these blocks at that time were swamp, so you didn't have enough land to support families. What happens then, is you have competition and squabbles and the squabbling still going on. So, you have swamp and the tribes fighting amongst themselves over the boundaries, because one tribe believed they should have more than the other. Once the boundaries were fixed, then you had families within tribes fighting over who should get what. Then as families grew and grew and grew, people got pushed out and pushed out and pushed out. Then the next lot of government reserves were set up in 1906, and the people who would have been here if the original reserve was set up, got forced out into the Sounds. Then, after the Depression and the Second World War those people started to move back to the Wairau but what happens is people get these ideas that 'well, hang on a minute you guys aren't from here, you're from out there.' Well actually nah, 'We were from here. It's just that because of what happened we got forced out but now we're back'.

The drive from Blenheim to Canvastown is only about 25 minutes, but in that short space of time my shoulders drop and my neck relaxes and any ties to urban landscapes have long since disappeared, and the car brings me and my research colleague through grass fields and rolling mountains and hills. I always feel like I've stepped back in time when visiting Te Hora marae. This is my turangawaewae, the place I reconnect with relatives, the fields I roamed freely with cousins, the urupa that holds the

remains of whanaunga and my father. The wharenui however has completely transformed since I was a child. What was a modest steel structure of the size of small hall, has grown several extensions including a larger wharekai to the right. I meet Uncle Timi under an alcove that looks out on the urupa. It's been a while since we last saw each other but he's just the same. Still a little older but quick with a quip. My favourite spot on the marae is here. The day has turned out a beauty, hot and still. My eyes squint out to the brightness. Flecks of pollen and darting insects screen the view looking out into the hills, my cousin's makeshift home perches in the foreground flanked by cars and caravans. I notice the fence cordoning the urupa has grown considerably. Scrub and trees line the marae on the right, blocking the view to the main road to Nelson below. Aunty Margie greets us and takes us proudly through the building extensions, then into the wharenui to talk to Uncle Timi and cousin Piri about the Wairau Affray.

Except our kōrero covers a lot historical terrain and very little of the battle itself. Piri drives the first part of the discussion and much of this centres on the Te Tauihu Treaty settlements process between the late 90s and early 2000s. He describes feeling frustrated, angry, and disappointed at court hearings. Each iwi had hired lawyers to write up reports that said "real ugly things". Piri said that relationships between iwi and hapū changed after the settlement process, "Although everyone knew we were Ngāti Kuia, we weren't arguing with our Koata neighbors and our Rārua neighbours and our Te Atiawa neighbours. We were still all cousins and uncles, I remember that growing up. And then the Waitangi Tribunal Claims came along and iwi started having to draw lines in the sand and present claims. I know the rhetoric was these are grievance claims against the government, but at the end of the day it was iwi trying to stake their claim and sometimes that meant to the detriment of other iwi." The process was hurtful and changed Piri's view of some relations. However, he later came to realise

that it was “the Crown and the policies and the laws and the government that keep driving it”. He spoke about Ngāti Kuia experiencing four or five “life changing events that you usually only get one of them in a century, or every couple hundred years. Ngā Iwi Hau, the Taranaki-Tainui iwi, came through in the early 1830s or whenever it was. Not even 10 years later we're having the Treaty of Waitangi. Then within the next 20 odd years you've got all these massive land sales happening, and then the Native Land Court in the 1800s. Each one of them had massive effects on our people and not one of them through our own doing. All driven with the intent to alienate us, not just from our lands, but from who we were as Māori as well. So, it is a process and it carried on happening in the 1900s as well." The Wairau Affray only featured twice briefly during the interview. Aunty Margie said “We never learned about the Māori Wars at school. They taught us all about Waterloo and all of those big wars over in other places but they never taught us about the Māori Wars”. She said they didn’t really hear about the Wairau Affray, "Oh, until actually after the [settlement's] claims. It was from hearing from our Rangitāne and Ngāti Apa cousins about how they experienced the wars. All I know is they fired the first shot and started the war that ended up really really nasty. It was Wakefield and Co. They fired the first shot, I believe. That was all I know about it." Uncle Timi said at school “no-one spoke to me much about the massacre. We all kept quiet here because we weren't allowed to speak Māori. I spoke one word and the Headmaster heard me and gave me six of the best, and said, 'Don't you ever let me hear you saying Māori again'”.

So the interviews with James, Hone, Pita, Piri, Aunty Margie and Uncle Timi revealed that the Wairau Affray is not thought about the same way by individuals from different iwi and settler groups in Te Tauihu. James, the museum educator, spoke mostly about the conflict itself. And like many Pākehā living in Blenheim, colonial injustice is likely associated with one event that happened in the past and

racism is attributed to the actions of settler forebears. Hone spoke across several issues but primarily Ngāti Toa's desire to unite against the colonisers. Pita discussed the Wairau reserves and the divisive effect these had on several iwi and Piri and his parents spoke about the Te Tauihu settlements process and further iwi division. The issues that emerged in relation to discussions about the Wairau Affray were diverse, contested and partial, indicating the importance of draw from a wide range of iwi and hapū perspectives. Oral histories are connected to lived realities, shifting timeframes, personhood and for Māori, the struggle for self-determination. Indeed, my own personal experiences no doubt inform the way that I have framed the talk I deliver today. To further illustrate, I sent this interview analysis to one of my cousins to hear his thoughts, or their thoughts. One thought it important to acknowledge the building of a new Pou on the edge of the township next to the Ōpaoa River; a beacon for iwi living in the Wairau to look to our tūpuna and tamariki for a more hopeful future. It feels important to acknowledge that my interpretation of the interviews as shifting perspectives of the Affray could equally be reformulated as local assertions of tribal autonomy. But attending to diverse, partial, and incomplete oral accounts of local history from a range of Indigenous and settler perspectives can play an important role in decolonising local histories to reconstitute new narratives of colonial violence that speak for us all. Have a bit of water.

Okay, so I'm turn now to the second part of this talk which is in a chapter that I co-wrote - which is a chapter from a book that I co-authored with Joanna Kidman, Vincent O'Malley, Tom Roa and Keziah Wallis, called Fragments from a Contested Past. And this is the book - this is the book here. I heard yesterday that there are three copies of our pukapuka at Vic Books Pipitea and you can order a copy online, so that's just a wee plug for that. After returning from the Wairau, I was accompanied by a YellowKnife Dene scholar from the Canadian Arctic circle called Laurie-Ann Lines and we went to visit

sites associated with the two main clashes of the 1846 Wellington Wars, the Battle of Boulcotts Farm in the Hutt Valley, Te Awakairangi, and Battle Hill, Horokiri, which inland from Porirua. Fighting in this region followed duplicitous attempts by the New Zealand Company in 1839 to purchase land 'stretching all the way from Mōkau in northern Taranaki to the Hurunui River in North Canterbury'. Hutt Valley mana whenua, Ngāti Tama and Ngāti Rangatahi, were not part of any land sale agreement. However, the pressure to house thousands of settlers were purchased lands from the company in good faith gave Governor George Grey a reason to bring military reinforcements to Wellington in February 1846 to assert, and I quote O'Malley, 'the Crown's authority over the Cook Strait region' and destroy Māori independence. After Māori in the district were effectively driven from their lands, Te Mamaku (who was also known as Te Karamu) and 200 other Ngāti Hāua-te-Rangi warriors retaliated. On the 16th of May 1846, a taua attacked a garrison of troops from the 58th Regiment stationed at Boulcott's Farm. The British were overpowered and Māori withdrew unhampered. This is now known as the Battle of Boulcott's Farm. Although Te Rangihaeata of Ngāti Toa Rangatira was not present at the battle, he and his tribe been prominent in resisting Crown efforts to drive Māori from their lands and was accused of plotting the attack on British troops. On 23 July 1846 senior Ngāti Toa Rangatira leader Te Rauparaha was seized under Grey's orders at Taupō Pā, in present-day Plimmerton. British forces and their allies then moved against Te Rangihaeata, forcing him from Mataitaua, his pā at Pāuatahanui, into steeper country further up Horokiri. Grey's determination to eliminate Te Rangihaeata 'as a threat to Crown authority in the region' ultimately led British forces up Battle Hill, in pursuit of the rangatira and his supporters. The British eventually retreated due to the difficult terrain and weather conditions leaving their Māori allies to engage in a half-hearted pursuit. Laurie-Ann and I spent a day visiting these sites, beginning our fieldwork in Lower Hutt then heading over the Haywards Hill to Pāuatahanui. And

along the way we recorded our thoughts and conversations about how these events are remembered (or not) today. What follows are loosely edited notes from our time in the field at sites associated with the Battle of Boulcott Farm.

“Just missed it!” Laurie-Ann cries. I quickly swerve into the Boulcott hospital entranceway and execute a hairpin turn back towards the Boulcott Farm memorial. We park down the side street just off the main road, and I complain to Laurie-Ann about how difficult it is to find these monuments. The weather is quite overcast today and we get out of the car and we move towards the monument. The boulder looks a lot more impressive in real life. The photo in Ewan Morris’ paper don’t do justice to the scale of it, however, it’s still only a boulder and I’m mystified by its significance. Surely something more fitting could’ve been used to commemorate the event than a large rock from the Hutt river. I read the plague and take some photos. A misty shower begins to descend. It’s muggy and a constant stream of cars moves loudly in either direction next to the site. I know I’ve been down High Street several times in all the years I’ve lived in Wellington, but the presence of this boulder just doesn’t register.

Laurie-Ann points out the names on a plaque and notes that only the Pākehā soldiers are honoured. She marvels at the term ‘Māori Wars’; as if Māori are villains who came and killed people. She wonders what it would like to be a Māori child and read this hurtful narrative. The details of the battle on the plaque are sparse. I read the references to Māori involvement in the battle: “Here 200 Natives on the 16th May under Rangihaeata’s orders and led by Te Karamu of the Ngati-haua-Te-Rangi Upper Wanganui were repulsed by a garrison of 50 men of the 58th Regiment.” Hm, I remember that these lands were occupied by Ngāti Tama and Ngāti Rangatahi but there’s no mention of this, or that these iwi are Te Karamu’s whakapapa too. Laurie-Ann reads, “hm, six Imperial men who fell rest nearby”.

Hm, she wonders where they are resting and why the monument isn't with them. She counts nine men's names and says that this is a place to honour 'heroes' who did something for New Zealand. We wonder about the situation that led soldiers to be "accidentally killed". Suddenly, there's a small break in the traffic. Our minds enjoy the moment and the ability to sit in quiet contemplation. Laurie-Ann talks about a picture she'd received earlier from a friend on social media. The picture was of a metal pole in a playground in Canada that had 'White Pride' etched into the paint work. She says that this is captured here and that there's pride in creating this New Zealand narrative, "No wonder there's a resistance to learn New Zealand history. When I first got here, I asked my roommate how much she knew about New Zealand history and there really wasn't much that she knew. I can see her attitude perpetuating here."

It starts to lightly rain. We reflect that government policy changes appear to be making a positive difference, but society overlooks the everyday ways that colonialism continues. I see a forgotten trolley, sitting behind the forgotten boulder and think the comparison seems fitting. Across the road are lots of references to the name Boulcott. I can see a sign saying Boulcott Village and another sign close by that points to 'Boulcott Farm: Eatery and bar'. Even the hospital's been gifted the name. A couple is walking on the other side of the road. I remember that locals who were close to monuments in Auckland and Waikato didn't seem to know much about the history, but surely it would be different here given that I could see the Boulcott name all around me. "G'day guys, do you know who Boulcott is?" "Doesn't it say it there?" The woman points to the memorial. My gut drops. I've heard that before. I point out that the farm, village and hospital all carry the Boulcott name. Then the woman responds that she does know some stuff about it. "There was a farm, I think he owned it back in the 1800s. All the locals got together and helped him secure the farm because of all the raids the Māoris were

doing.” “Where did you learn about that?” I ask. “I researched my family history. Do I know who he was? He just owned the farm.” For some reason, maybe because of her prosaic response, we both laugh. After I leave the couple, Laurie-Ann and I head back to the car. Laurie-Ann bursts out that all over the indigenous world Māori are known for their strength and decolonisation but here it’s just the same as other indigenous countries, where the histories are being told in a certain way. She was shocked when she saw the monument, but it’s triggered important questions: How are schools going to teach this? How are different perspectives of the histories going to be taught in a critical way, if the narrative has been one-sided for so long? She appreciates that the monument is a resource to teach students about the history and it would be awesome for students to learn about the monument beforehand, visit it, and then later draw how it could be changed. Laurie-Ann thinks that learning about monuments moves society beyond reconcilliation, to resurgence and reclamation of indigeneity. “People talk about one-sided histories and I was so surprised that New Zealand was like that too – where Māori are so strong." She remembers seminar where one male presenter said ‘New Zealand is racist as fuck!’ We both laugh and Laurie-Ann says that now she understands what he means.

“Wow, what a flash place man!” Laurie-Ann and I start giggling as we drive over the man-made water feature, into a manicured landscape. We can’t believe how close the farm is to the forgotten boulder. “Wait, is this Boulcott Farm, really?” says Laurie-Ann. She thinks that the reason why the Boulcott memorial doesn’t say where the settlers were buried, is because they might be buried under these golf greens. The rustic farm look of the Golf Club centre reminds me of the vineyard estates in Blenheim. The wind is stronger and more blustery here than at the memorial boulder, thanks to the open golf grounds. We walk up the ramp towards the centre and wonder where the battle happened. The interior of the golf course centre is large and airy with high ceilings. We arrive in the foyer section and

there's a golf-cum-souvenir shop just beyond. To the right of the café area and several people are queueing for food. The course side of the building is large and - with big, wide windows, to ensure that the golf fields are presented in all their glory

I walk to a small table close to the main entranceway. On the top of the table are brochures about the golf course. An older woman, wearing heavy eyeliner and tidy clothing sits nearby. I flick through a booklet titled 'Boulcott's Farm. Heritage Golf Club' and note that the record of history begins in 1937. I ask the woman if she enjoys playing golf here. She said she doesn't play and just comes to eat at the café. I note how lovely the view is and she agrees, "Yes, it's fabulous. It's a great setting". Feeling emboldened, I ask her more if she knows much about the history of the place?" "Nnno. I know it's just very new. And the clubhouse is over that way somewhere". I press on. "Do you know who Boulcott is?" I make sure I'm smiling, I can see she's a bit nervous. "No". She directs me to an administration area around the corner. Laurie-Ann and I see a man walking around the shop area. His shirt looks official, so Laurie Ann approaches him and begins to ask him for more information about the battle, but his phone rings and he walks away. It's an abrupt and oddly ungracious departure.

As I turn around, a woman who is wearing the same official shirt as the man steps in my way. "Can I help?" she asks in an upbeat manner. I say we're trying to find out who Boulcott is and any information about the farm. She takes me to the table where the brochures are stacked. "Sure. One of our books has a brief… like historically there were two separate golf courses. The Hutt Golf Club and Boulcott's Farm. And the battle of Boulcott's Farm was held here. You can take this with you, there's a brief history in there". "It starts at 1937…" "Yeah. And then you've got the monument at the end of the street. That signifies the land and what happened here. And the Hutt Golf Club located here, um, a bit

over 100 years ago. And then we merged with the Boulcott Golf Course – we were two separate courses – and the council was having to build a big stock bank through it, so it made sense for us to merge, rather than be neighbours. And that's when we merged and renamed the Boulcott's Farm Heritage Golf Club". "Do you know where the original homestead would've been? Or where the battle would've been?" I ask. "No. But you're welcome to take that with you. I do know my boys go to Boulcott school and I do know that one of the teachers there took them to the monument, so whether she managed to find any more information?" "Well, the interesting thing is the memorial says that the soldiers were buried nearby", says Laurie-Ann. The woman responds, "Aw yeah, it's quite interesting. With the redevelopment the land that was our old club, that was over there. Now Summerset now owns that, and they had to do some investigative digging because there were some rumours about some remains, so, they've done some digging and not found anything other than crockery and glassware. So, they were given the go-ahead and they've done enough investigation". "So, the bodies are not there?", says Laurie-Ann. "Do people know where? 'Cos it's very weird that it says nearby and there's not a specific…" "No, I don't know" "There's not a cemetery…" "No, no." We pause to let this soak in and say our goodbyes. The woman asks to let them know if we find out anything and we leave the building.

"Isn't it strange to think that there are people probably buried here and no one seems to mind?", Laurie-Ann says. She's still wondering why the memorial doesn't mark the place where those who died in the battle were buried. "So that's why they have the memorial site over there, because they wanted a place to play golf?" she asks. "I wonder how old that tree is. It might have been growing here when the battle took place" I say. "You can see the wounds in the bark, but trees can heal themselves, like that", responds Laurie-Ann, pointing to some ancient gashes in the trunk. "It's so interesting that they

make out Boulcott Farm to be this big thing but it really seems to be more of a marketing ploy for some of the businesses around here. People don't really care that much about the battle because if you really cared how could you play golf on land where people are buried and where there's a memorial right over there? It's mind boggling. This is the land they fought on. It's so sad because there's nothing to say that this is iwi land." "Yeah," I agree, "There's a particular kind of forgetting at work. Even the story about how the bugler boy who raised the alarm and continued to warn of the attack even after he was said to have been fatally injured. We've just read about how he was a martyr but where is he now? It seems like he's been forgotten too – a bit like the Boulcott monument." "The winds are really strong here," says Laurie-Ann restlessly, "It feels unsettled. I don't think most people have any real idea about the history of this place or maybe they don't want to talk about it. When I tried to talk to that guy back there to get some historical information, it was really clear he didn't want to talk about it. But that's the feeling I'm getting, it's kind of a, 'well, let's forget that history, we want to play golf and do posh things.' People here have such uncomfortable connections to the past. There's nothing to show what took place. The wind is so powerful here. To me, the wind is important. It connects what happened back them to what's going on here now. Maybe a new monument that tells a different history needs to be built."

Okay I'm going to round off the talk sort of quickly, because we're running out of time and just bring us back quickly to the content of the Aotearoa New Zealand histories curriculum and draw your attention to its Big Ideas and in particular the words: power, colonisation, settlement. Researching colonial conflict associated with the Wairau Affray showed me the importance of questioning the way we frame how we teach New Zealand history. Through what lens do we look when we approach issues of colonial violence with our students? Research at sites associated with the Battle of Boulcott's Farm

helped me see the subtle ways that memory is buried in our everyday landscapes and how this shapes how we remember or forget difficult episodes in our past. There's much more work and thinking to do around how to engage this new curriculum in a way that helps students to see that history walks with us now wherever we go. And I'm excited and a little nervous about most of that but most of all, I hope. Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

Steve Watters: I think we've got time probably for two questions from the audience. So if anybody has any particular question they'd like to ask Liana?

Audience member 1: Kia ora, my question really is, is it possible to interpret at place contested stories? Or what would that look like? Or could it look like?

Liana MacDonald: To go to a battle site like the Battle of Boulcott's Farm, like the Boulcott's Farm, and then talk about diverse perspectives at that site? Sort of a way of grounding, putting context to your question, is that what you mean?

Audience member 1: Yeah, I have, yeah. Is it possible, when you've got multiple contested stories? How do you mitigate the controversy, I suppose?

Liana MacDonald: I think perhaps you can, I mean, teach to that power relationship, you know, be transparent about the fact that there are multiple diverse partial perspectives and talk about the power dynamic that's happening around that, and perhaps convey some perspectives without, you know, closing the conversation. I think how that would look, is probably quite locally dependent on how certain parties involved in those histories decide they should look. Yeah, it's probably, probably

not a blanket kind of response. You can't apply a blanket response to every rohe in context, perhaps, if that makes sense.

Audience member 2: Have you resolved, where the battle took place? And where the graves are?

Liana MacDonald: Resolved? No. But during the course of looking into, you know, the battle, through the field notes, working with Joanna and Vincent in particular did a little bit of digging around and, you know, kind of maybe have sort of some strong signals that it might be in a particular place, but I wouldn't say resolved.

Audience member 2: [inaudible]

Liana MacDonald: I don't even think I can remember off the top of my head, but hopefully, there will be something coming out soon that might shed some more light on that. But yeah, no, seriously, I can't remember at the moment, sorry.

Steve Watters: Kia ora. Just another shameless plug for Te Akomanga, on the NZ History.net. We've got a section there that talks about how we can use sites like this to kind of interrogate the past for students, so it's really, I think the conversation you shared there is really powerful way of how we can go about that. On that note, I'm going to have to wrap that up and once again, if we could just thank Liana for her presentation today.

Sarah Burgess: Thanks for listening to this New Zealand History podcast from Manatū Taonga. Don't forget to subscribe. And if you're looking for other content about New Zealand history, check out earlier talks in the series. You can find them on your favourite podcast channels. Just search for New Zealand history. Mā te wā.