

NEW BOOKS

Christmas saw the publication of several interesting new books. If you received any book tokens as presents and haven't known what to get with them, maybe something reviewed here will interest you. Two books on Rua Kenana are reviewed by Sydney Melbourne. Paul Potiki looks at Tony Simpson's controversial *Te Riri Pakeha*, and Marama Martin talks about the autobiography of "Te Maari".

THEY CALLED ME TE MAARI Florence Harsant Whitcoulls Publishers: \$9.95

Another autobiography to add to the list – everyone is writing an autobiography. But not everyone travelled with Satan ("I'm not sure about him, but I think I can win his confidence") from Tokomaru Bay, around the East Coast of the North Island, through the Bay of Plenty to Waihi.

They Called Me Te Maari really began with the Radio New Zealand "Spectrum" series. Florence Harsant, née Woodhead, a European New Zealander, talked to Alwyn Owen about her life in Maori communities in the early 1900s. Although the written word doesn't quite give us the warmth and spontaneity of those radio programmes, it still does very well. Florence Harsant is not a stylish writer. The latter part of the book consists largely of excerpts from her journal. In 1905 the Woodhead family moved from Taranaki to Waitahanui on Lake Taupo, a journey which meant travel by sea, rail, horse-drawn coach and lake steamer.

Florence was fourteen, and life at Waitahanui provided the opportunity for her to learn Maori. She became a fluent speaker and a sympathetic observer of Maori protocol and procedure. She established friendships which remained warm and firm, and which helped give her the entrée to many Maori communities.

Florence trained and worked for the Anglican Mission at Whakarewarewa. She met many people whose names are well known. Dame Nellie Melba gets a special mention – but not one to dwell on! Next move for the Woodhead family was to Otamatea on the Kaipara Harbour, and it was there that Florence taught school for a time. She "wasn't fond of school teaching" and when she heard that the Women's Christian Temperance Union were looking for an organiser among Maori women, decided that this was what she wanted. The work meant setting up W.C.T.U. groups in Maori communities and giving help in hygiene, child care and whatever else was necessary. She would often be on her own, moving from district to district, and very much dependent on the Maori people for warmth and hospitality. "It was a wonderful prospect and I accepted

it happily." Extracts from her journals while working for the W.C.T.U. make up a good part of her story from here.

Travel (mostly horseback), vagaries of the weather, and quality of accommodation (very varied) are described at length and usually with humour. Did you know there was a smallpox epidemic in the far north of New Zealand in 1913? Florence Woodhead rode through the middle of it – not always happily, but it didn't stop her. She saw the gum fields, the camps, and the poor living conditions of women and children. Her own living conditions weren't always marvellous either, but in March 1914 she set out on another journey from Gisborne to Waihi via the East Coast and coastal Bay of Plenty. It was at Tokomaru Bay that Florence met Satan. Florence was obviously a skilled horsewoman. She had to be, to cope with Satan. She calls him a "wretched, reluctant animal, an evil natured, black hearted pack horse." Six months and 1600 kilometres later Florence Woodhouse was home in Otamatea. Her last journey for the W.C.T.U. was to the Maori settlements up the Wanganui River. After that, ill health forced her to resign as Maori organiser for the Union.

Florence Harsant writes of the end of World War I, the Spanish 'flu epidemic, her marriage and life on the Coromandel Peninsula. It was pioneer life with laundry day at the creek, and toilets a short walk from the house. She takes us through the birth of her children, the arrival of electric power, World War II when she was a postmistress, and so to 1975. *They Called Me Te Maari* is a record of New Zealand history – not the imaginings of a scholar but the factual account of a woman's life, spanning sixty-five years.

Florence Harsant mentions her regret at not recording the stories so freely told to her. Indeed it is now too late and the elders have gone, taking their store of riches with them. How many times have I, and many of my contemporaries, used those same words. At least Florence Harsant has given us her own story.

MARAMA MARTIN

MIHAIA
Judith Binney, Gillian Chaplin and Craig Wallace
Oxford University Press: \$13.50
paperback
\$19.95 hardback

RUA AND THE MAORI MILLENNIUM
Peter Webster
Price Milburn/Victoria University Press: \$18.00

For many years the writing of non-fiction dealing with Maori themes, Maori society, Maori history and Maori politics has been the almost exclusive preserve of Pakeha historians and anthropologists. The new publications *Mihaia* and *Rua and the Maori Millennium* are no exception. For some reason, the Maori arena has been largely ignored by other disciplines, such as political science and psychology. Even more noticeable is the lack of Maori scholars entering this field of study with disciplined zeal. As a result, Maori experiences and reactions to the advent of western dominance will continue to be interpreted in western terms.

Certain reactions to these two books from an increasingly critical Maori readership can be predicted. Hopefully there will be more than regurgitation of those Maori protests about the intrusion of Pakeha historians, as Michael King experienced with *Te Puea*.

Judith Binney states, "the publication of two discrete studies of Rua in the same year certainly adds spice to New Zealand historiography". The study of Rua by an historian and an anthropologist provide interesting comparison not only in terms of the theoretical issues raised by them, but also in their presentation and styles of language.

Both these studies are presented from a point of view that begins with the analysis of the meaning of Rua's millennium – the thousand years when Satan would be overcome and Christ's saints would deliver the promise of good things to come on earth. Rua's millennium applied, of course, to the Tuhoe people. They had been left partly leaderless by the decay of traditional society, and were suffering from uncertainty about the future of their environment, threatened as it was by the intrusions of the Pakeha. Rua Kenana rose as the new prophet to provide assurance of the people's survival and security. Binney and Webster attempt to come to terms with the historical background peculiar to Tuhoe, before setting the movement in the wider mainstream of New Zealand's social, economic and political developments of that time.

At the end of the nineteenth century the Tuhoe emerged bitter about the injustices they had suffered after the Land Wars. They were unsure of the amount of control they would have over their own lands and destiny, and suspicious of encroaching Pakeha laws and culture. The death of Te Turuki (Te

