"MILLER OF WAKATUMUTUMU"

This brochure is published to place on record the noble work effected by one of the least known amongst our early missionaries to the aboriginal Maoris of New Zealand. In view of the complete isolation of his lonely Mission Station, situated as it was in the interior of the North Island, lacking in communication with the outside world and occupied by a wild, ferocious people whose minds were as dark as their skin, the lack of recorded information on the short lifework of this godly man is quite understandable. In the following pages the epic story, gathered from authentic documentary evidence and journals of contemporary missionaries, together with knowledge acquired during sixty years of close friendship with the leading Ngati Maniapoto chiefs and four generations of the Maori converts of Frederick Miller of Wakatumutumu, is now placed on record.  

GABRIEL ELLIOTT. July 31st, 1959.
THE BIRTHPLACE OF FREDERICK MILLER
This picture was specially taken for publication in this brochure by Mr. Charles Miller, of Magherafelt, County Antrim, Northern Ireland, to whom we are indebted for this and other information courteously supplied.

“THE CHAPEL OF THE WOODS”
In this church at Ballymaguiggan, Northern Ireland, Frederick Miller was baptised, and afterwards married before leaving as a missionary for service in the islands of the South Seas. This picture was taken expressly for this historic brochure by the Rector of the Parish, the Rev. J. A. Fair, whose courteous assistance we gratefully acknowledge. 23rd May, 1959.
CENTENNIAL MEMORIAL TO REV. FREDERICK MILLER

On Saturday, May 23rd, 1959, on the site of the early Mission Station, situated between the banks of the Mokau and Mangapehi Streams, a stone cairn surmounted by an illuminated Cross was unveiled by Mr. P. S. Miller, grandson of the missionary, and dedicated by the Rev. G. I. Laurenson, General Superintendent of Methodist Home and Maori Missions in New Zealand, as a tribute to the Rev. Frederick Miller, of Wakatumutumu Mission. The tablet bore the following inscription —

"This Cairn marks the Chapel Site of the Wesleyan Mission established here at Wakatumutumu by the Rev. Frederick Miller, sent out by the London Missionary Society in 1840. Here, at this lonely place, this Godly man with his brave wife led a ferocious, primitive race from heathen darkness to the light of Christian civilization. Died at his post of duty in 1848. Aged 32 years. The Cross on the hilltop marks his tomb. Servant of God, well done."

THE REV. JOHN HOBBS
Superintendent of Wesleyan Maori Missions in N.Z., who on his first visit to Wakatumutumu found a vacant station and the missionary's grave on a nearby hill where his remains were reverently laid to rest by his faithful converts.

The Journal of the Rev. John Hobbs, being the only written record of the Wakatumutumu mission, is published in full in these pages.
THE REVEREND FREDERICK MILLER  
MAORI MISSION WAKATUMUTUMU

EARLY in the year 1904, after seven years missionary work amongst pioneer settlers, main trunk railway workers and Maori people of the King Country, the author of this historic brochure retired from active Church work to take up farming. At the invitation of Patu Patu Keapa, a paramount Ngati Maniapoto Chief, the choice of a block of Maori land on the banks of the Mokau River, in the centre of the King Country, was decided on.

In order to secure a legal title to the land, some sixty-five signatures of Maori owners, each witnessed by a licensed interpreter not interested in the transaction, had to be obtained. The interpreter selected, a son of a Moravian missionary to the Chatham Islands, proved a most interesting companion, and experience thus gained led to the later publication of the book "Where the White Man Treads", by "W.B."

Many of the Maori owners dwelt in kaingas scattered widely over the island, entailing long journeys on horseback from interior to seacoast. Hour after hour the party rode in Indian file along a narrow track through bush scrub and fern, the writer leading, followed closely by the licensed interpreter, the two elderly guides, Kahu Huatare, a burly Maori chief of twenty-one stone avoirdupois, with Ahiwaka Te Taniwha in the rear. In deference to the Pakeha, the Maori always follows behind.

During a lull in the conversation, passing down a sunkissed valley, the leader burst into song:—

"Koutou katoa ra mea ite nei,
Haere mai koutou kei whakakroa,
Tenei a Ihu nana te ki Haere mai ra kik a au."

Immediately from the rear came the refrain, in combined tenor and baritone:—

"Nei te hari, tino hari nui,
A te wa e tutataki ai, Hui atu tatou ropu katoa,
Runga te rangi nei."
("Joyful, joyful will the meeting be.")

An eager enquiry as to where they had learned the hymn revealed they were both converts of a mission school of a Pakeha named "Te Mira" (Miller). They said they had been taught to read the Bible at the mission school, and around the fire by night. The missionary died, and was buried by their elders on a hilltop, to which they would guide me. A pilgrimage through high fern to a steep fortified hilltop a few weeks after, brought us to a spot marked by a gothic shaped squared stone bearing the marks of the implement on which was engraved the one pathetic word on its middle surface:—

"MIRA"
The stone appeared to be taken from the soft rhyolite rocky cliff which had also provided the material for the mission chimney, exhibits of which were still to be seen.

Immediately beneath the site of the tomb, surrounded by a grove of cherry trees, lay a heap of scattered shaped stone, marking the site of the mission house and chapel. A few straggling grapevines entwined amongst the remnant of fig and apple trees looked down to a flat comprising many acres of rich agricultural land, with ditch and bank fences, from which at one time food supplies had been grown to meet the demands of a thriving mission station. Here the mission story rested for many years. Eventually, a letter came seeking news of the burial place of the writer's grandfather who, it was stated, was a missionary in the King Country and died, and was buried there by the Maoris a century ago.

After much correspondence it was found that the father of the person enquiring, Mr. Percy S. Miller, a retired postmaster of Kaeo, was the eldest son of Frederick Miller, who was born at the Maori mission station at Wakatumutumu.

From information and documentary evidence leading from this fresh connection, sufficient reliable data has been gathered to complete the thrilling story of the compressed life of sacrifice of "Frederick Miller of Wakatumutumu".

Acknowledgement is here made of valuable assistance received from the Rev. J. A. Fair, M.A., Rector of the parish of the Chapel of the Woods, Ballymaguiggan, Northern Ireland, and also important information supplied by Charles Miller, of Magherafelt, County Antrim, Northern Ireland, in a published record showing the unusual denominational change through which the Church passed where the young missionary was married and from which he left to undertake missionary work in New Zealand.

Frederick Miller, son of Joseph and Susan Miller, and grandson of the Rev. James Stock, a venerable clergyman of the Church of England, was born in the Parish of Ballymaguiggan, baptised on October 11th, 1818, and married in the same church in the year 1839. He was sent out by the London Missionary Society at the end of that year to "Preach the Gospel to the heathen of the South Seas".

Arriving with his young wife at Port Nicholson (now Wellington) early in 1840, they decided to remain there pending the birth of their first child, after which a schooner was boarded bound for Kawhia, where they were received and welcomed by the Rev. John Whiteley. At this period New Zealand had not yet become a Crown Colony, being merely a part of the Polynesian Group then known as the "Cannibal Islands".

Port Nicholson's population of nine hundred consisted mostly of officers and employees of the New Zealand Land Company, together with a few traders, whalers, sealers and runaway sailors, many of whom were not in sympathy with the missionary. The mission stations were first established along the sea coast ports.

doubt this was to give convenience of travel, opportunity for the securing of regular supplies, and certainty of receiving postal correspondence and essential news from the outside world.

The time was now opportune, with the arrival of reinforcements, to carry the Gospel inland. The interior of the land from Whiteley's station at Kawhia South, Te Ahu Ahu, was held by ferocious fighting tribes, primitive men of the hills and forest. Into this area Whiteley had occasionally ventured, and longed to conquer. However, urgent claims from coastal tribes demanded his full attention. "Whom shall I send, or who will go?" questioned Whiteley.

"Here we are, send us," replied the two twenty-two-year-old missionaries.

The site of the proposed new mission station lay by the nearest route at a distance of eighty miles to the east by foot track, through dark forest, climbing over mountain ranges, and traversing round the head of deep swamps — an impossible task for a woman carrying a young child. They travelled the alternative route: By large canoe down the seacoast to the wide entrance of the Mokau River, along whose banks, eighty miles distant, high up at the foot of the mountain country lay Wakatumutumu, the new mission centre. The large four-man canoe soon reached Mahoe, a few miles from Mokau Heads.

Here, where the last of Whiteley's converts were to be found, the party rested for the night. Many arduous days' paddling, and many half-sleepless nights were spent on the river and its banks — mounting dangerous rapids and negotiating fast-flowing bends before the most formidable barrier at "Te Wairere" was reached.

Here the large canoe, laden with all necessary equipment for founding a mission station had to be hauled over land around a wide, turbulent fifty-foot waterfall. How this was accomplished is only known to a Divine Providence charging these zealous missionaries with such dynamic spiritual power enabling them to do all things in His strength.

The further twenty miles to Wakatumutumu comprised a placid, slow flowing stretch of open water much appreciated by the weary travellers. The site of the new mission close by the banks of the Mokau and Mangapehi junction, being reached before late afternoon, the jaded missionaries pitched camp and gave thanks.

For the party's safe protection it is believed John Whiteley accompanied the Millers and assisted in establishing the mission station at Wakatumutumu. His knowledge of the Maori language would soon gain the confidence of primitive people he had never before seen. Maori tradition indicates that Whiteley continued to make periodical visits to the mission station at Wakatumutumu.
The first recorded news of this remote mission is found in the diaries of Donald McLean (afterwards Sir Donald McLean), and Rev. Richard Taylor, missionary geologist of Wanganui. Ref. Turnbull Library, as follows: —Donald McLean's diary:—

"On December 5th, 1845, we came to Wakatumutumu, a Wesleyan Catechist's station, where we stopped and saw all the natives. They, I was glad to learn, had made considerable improvement since my last visit."

Richard Taylor's diary records:—

"December 5th, about 3, we reached the Wakatutumutumu, which is sited upon a hill of some altitude. We called on the Wesleyan catechist stationed here and took tea with him. They strongly pressed me to sleep there but I was anxious to get on a little further this evening — it was 6 before we left. His name is Miller and his wife a Yorkshire woman, and apparently a very amiable one. They have three children."

Two days later Taylor records:—

"I have a sore throat through sitting in Miller's house in my wet clothes." (This might have been avoided had he accepted their proffered hospitality.—G.E.)

Donald McLean had been appointed Native Commissioner with power to deal with every emergency arising from the clash between heathen and civilised cultures. A liaison officer to assist the missionary in the work of colonisation, McLean's periodical journeys through the wild, isolated interior proved useful and necessary. Although Commissioner McLean records "an improvement in the natives since his last visit", it must be said that tribal wars, witchcraft, cannibalism and all kinds of evil practices still existed. It is recorded at that period, 1840, when Frederick Miller went to Wakatumutumu, King Country, the Rev. Mr. Ashwell had established a Church of England mission station on the northern boundary at "Otawhao" (Te Awamutu), near Waipa.

"Shortly after my arrival a war party of Ngatikuru who had been away with Ngatihaua and other tribes raiding Arawa Country returned from Rotorua and Maketutu districts under their chiefs, laden with human flesh," writes Mr. Marshall. "There were sixty pikau, or flax baskets, packed with the cut up remains of their slaughtered foes. Then came a terrible feast of cooked man (kai tangata)."

By the year 1846, all these evil practices had largely been swept away by the preaching of the Gospel. One day an aged chief wrote to the missionary informing him that his coming put an end to slavery, war, cannibalism, murder and other evils formerly practised.
The Millers continued their work at Wakatumutumu in silence for a period of seven years, during which time periodic visits were made to this station by the Rev. John Whiteley from whose journal the following brief record has been supplied by the Rev. G. I. Laurenson:—

"Extracts from Baptismal Register of John Whiteley at Wakatumutumu."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Baptism Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Te Warihi, 36 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>October 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Daughter of TeRangiteaho, 23 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>October 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Daughter of Turia Kapo, 40 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>October 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Te Mira Owio, 10 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>October 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Patara Hurakia, 7 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>October 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Rora Hurakia, 6 months</td>
<td></td>
<td>October 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Georgee Hannah Dorothy, daughter of Frederick and Susan Miller</td>
<td></td>
<td>25/9/44, baptised 6/10/44.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the occasion of another visit to Wakatumutumu evidently made a year later, the following additional Baptisms are recorded in Whiteley's Register:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Baptism Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>177</td>
<td>Hone Waitere son of Te Ahiwaka, 1 year</td>
<td></td>
<td>November 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 1845.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>185</td>
<td>Te Wunu, son of Rua</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>405</td>
<td>John Napier Miller, son of Frederick and Susan Miller, Catechist, born October 6th, 1846, baptised February 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; 1847.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>443</td>
<td>Hone Pumipi son of Korohake, aged 4 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>February 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;, 1847.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Other entries in Register not legible)

At this Period as evidenced by the more frequent visits of the Superintendent Missionary to Wakatumutumu, the health of Frederick Miller was rapidly deteriorating, necessitating a journey to Auckland for medical advice and treatment. A letter written to his wife, reproduced from the original appearing in this brochure reads as follows:—

My Dear Susan, Auckland, 29 Aug., 1848.

I arrived here last Sunday and am at Mr. Buddle's. I have had Dr. Polen with me every day but he has done nothing yet but endeavouring to get my stomach and bowels in proper state. He says the change of air will do me much good. I forward you an English paper and letter from Waipa and I have two more here. One from Mr. and one from Mrs. Shirley which I will send with our supplies by way of Kawhia by a vessel that has just arrived And I hope she will go back in a few days. You must keep up your spirits and take care of yourselves. I cannot say in this when I will get home but I must not leave before another week at least. Excuse the shortness of this as the man is just starting. May God bless you and the children is the Prayer of Your Affectionate Husband.

FREDERICK MILLER."
Frederick Miller’s last letter to his wife, written from Auckland when undergoing medical treatment there.

The rest of this epic story is found in a letter from William Hobbs, grandson of the Rev. John Hobbs to Mr. John Napier Miller, son of the missionary, written some years later:—
"I am sure you will appreciate these extracts and notes as a valuable family record and eulogy of your late beloved father. It has been quite an inspiration to me to read them from my grandfather's journal. He must have had a sad heart when he visited the grave and the vacant mission station of your father. I could not help shedding some tears, partly in sorrow and partly in pride of our parents who were such fearless pioneers of this our fair country. I would like to know if your father's family were living at Wakatutumumu at that time or had they moved somewhere nearer civilisation, I would like to meet you sometime.

Yours fraternally, WILLIAM HOBBS."

Rev. Hobbs' journal is in the form of a leather well-bound pocket book, eight inches by three inches, by one and a half thick. It shows signs of having been wet, but it is in a wonderful state of preservation. It is inscribed "Presented to the Rev. John Hobbs by Lady Franklyn on a round the world trip in search of her husband explorer when she visited the Hokianga mission station on October 5th, 1841." The journal is mostly written in pencil and is quite legible. The pencil is also of interest having an empty revolver cartridge case on one end.

Extract from the diary of the Rev. John Hobbs:—

"September 21st, 1848. Left Hokianga in a twenty ton register cutter in command of Captain Leithart. Arrived at Manukau Heads on the 22nd. Onehunga on the 24th. Had on board also as passengers Mr. and Mrs. W. Kirk going to establish a mission station on the Wanganui River at Ohinemutu. After visiting Auckland took on board Rev. and Mrs. Stannard and child. October 2nd. Sailed down to Manukau Heads and waited five days for favourable wind to cross the bar for the south. October 7th. After one day got a view of Mt. Egmont, Taranaki. After encountering heavy weather and waiting a favourable chance to make Wanganui Heads the Captain was forced to hove ship and stand in for the harbour in despair of keeping off the land. The vessel missed the bar harbour and was driven ashore at the Breakers. Fortunately the tide was high at the time. After a very trying experience the passengers and crew were able to get ashore, wet, hungry and cold. The officer commanding troops at Wanganui got his men to remove luggage and cargo above high water and all the people of Patea showed us every kindness."

For the happenings of the following three weeks, during which time the new mission station, high up the Wanganui River at Ohinemutu was established, Hobbs's journal is silent. The time was evidently fully spent in travelling one hundred miles by canoe with all belongings essential to commence the work of the young missionaries. Mrs. Kirk was the eldest daughter of John Hobbs, having only recently been married to Mr. Kirk, a late arrival from England. Brought up on a Hokianga mission station, Emma
Kirk's knowledge of the Maori language and her ability to read the native mind was a great help to her husband on this new station.

While Mr. Kirk, with the Rev. John Hobbs, were making friends with inland Maori people Mrs. Kirk was teaching the Maori women of the new station to sew.

They tried to "tie the thread on the top of the needle instead of through the eye". They said the needle "bit them", not being accustomed to such sharp implements.

After seeing the station at Ohinemutu established to his satisfaction the superintendent missionary continued his itinerant journey through the central King Country back homeward to his station in the far north at Hokianga. This entailed a two-hundred mile overland journey on foot, carrying his tent and enough food to sustain the energy required.
Rev. Hobbs' journal record continues:—

December 13th, 1848.

Before leaving Ohinemutu a great earthquake occurred. [This was the earthquake which shook the towns of Wellington and Wanganui in 1848.] Travelled as far as necessary up the river by canoe, we struck out overland December 15th. Arrived at Hauphei. Very hot weather. Saw smoke. Called a woman across. Brought us some potatoes, which we roasted, ate and gave thanks. Went forward.

6 p.m. Arrived at Wakatumutumu, our late Brother Miller’s station at the foot of a hill named by him and Brother Whiteley "Mt Zion". On this hill rests the remains of our late departed brother. Put up my tent, was much fatigued by the heat of the journey. Was thankful for a pot of milk which a man brought from the cow belonging to the station. In the evening preached in the chapel here, a rush building with door and window, from the text "Unto Him that loved us", and then went to my tent well prepared to rest.

This is a pleasant place and I should think very healthy. Brother Miller's house is of native material, except doors one window, chimney and floor. Two or three peach trees and cherry tree are beginning to bear; I intend to spend Sunday here if God permits.

"December 16th. Was thankful to rise early and kill a goat belonging to the station, and then I turned cook, made a stew and at twelve had a good breakfast. Thanks to God for such provision in the wilderness.

"Today visited the spot made sacred by a small fence to the remains of our dear brother whose station is now vacant. Here is his resting place, the Hill of Zion, the place he pointed out to them to deposit his remains. Kind is the native hand which now plucks up the fern which would steal its way over his remains and hide them in oblivion. Enduring are the sympathies of the native teacher who performed his funeral rites and erected a neat little fence to guard the sacred spot where in a wilderness and alone, rest these precious ashes ‘Servant of God, well done!’ I hope to meet thee in the skies God has provided for this dear man's widow and children So he will for mine if I should fall in a similar way.

"Could our friends [this word “friends” evidently referred to the Missionary Society in Exeter Hall, London.] see the room in which his consumptive lungs breathed their last, with no glass in the opening of the rush-built house and know that he had no tent to keep him warm and sleep in when he was travelling, they would feel as I have felt this afternoon.

"December 17th. This morning I preached in the rush chapel here to about fifty persons and afterwards met about forty of them in class. In the evening I
preached to them again. The intervals were spent in answering innumerable questions on the meaning of passages of scripture. My goat soup has done me good service today. The weather is very hot.

"Te Pupa and Paraone are the principal teachers in this place. I like their disposition much. They certainly attend well to catechism and reading. I gave them a lecture about letting their children run about naked. Paraone is a cousin of Newton and he has a fine woman for a wife. The chapel is thirty by sixteen, of good raupo.

"December 18th. ——This morning is wet and dull. My boys were tardy in getting their food. 9 a.m., we left Wakatumutumu. 4 p.m., at Pukemapau, where we are waiting to cook food. Found Kotuku here. He is a sensible fellow. A relation of Newton. Preached to the people in the chapel. This is one of Brother Buttle's outposts.

"December 19th. Rose at 4 a.m. and left for Onepaka. The sun was scorching hot. At 5 p.m. arrived at Kopua, the station of Brother Buttle. Much fatigued. But cheered by a hearty welcome from our brother and sister. It is three weeks today since I left my dear children, Mr. and Mrs. Kirk, at Ohinemutu. I am glad indeed once more to find a house and garden in European style and to take tea from a table and chair. Oh, for civilisation! Our brother and sister have four children, all well. Their house is on a vast plain through which the Waipa River runs.

"December 20th. Planning here to continue my journey by canoe via the Waipa and Waikato to Tuakau, thence overland to Papakura and Auckland and proceed by sailing vessel "Nancy" to Bay of Islands. Received a hearty welcome from Archdeacon Williams and his family.

"January 3rd, 1849. Left Paihia at 5 a.m. on horseback for Waimate, reaching there at 10 p.m.

"January 4th. Breakfast at daylight and walked to Hokianga. Arrived at Utakura at 2 p.m. and by the mercy of God arrived home about four, finding all the family quite well. Glory be to God for ever and ever. We went out in His name and came home under His blessing and feel more than ever the need of gratitude. God bless the absent branches of the family. I am now at home, at home."

KOPUA MISSION CHURCHYARD

Beneath the shade of overhanging golden acacia trees, surrounded by a neat white picket fence in the centre of a field of blue iris lilies, is the grave of the young wife of Rev. George Buttle.
REVEREND GEORGE BUTTLE

A contemporary of Miller, whose station was at Te Kopua on the extreme boundary of the King Country on the Waipa River. It was to this station that Miller struggled from the interior to consult a medical practitioner in Auckland.
THE GREAT RECEPTION WHEN MAORI GRANDCHILDREN MEET MISSIONARY'S GRANDCHILDREN

THE MORNING was dreary, with drifting white clouds capping Mt. Zion's crest, completely obliterating the recently erected Memorial Cross high up on the skyline, when through the thick, misty rain the Maori descendants of the Wakatunumutum Mission moved up the rising hillside to the chapel site, there to await the arrival of the missionary's grandchildren, accompanied by the Rev. G. I. Laurenson. The pealing of the old mission bell which called their forebears to prayer twice daily a century ago, mingling with the strident welcome cry of "Haeremai! Haeremai!" stirred the emotions.

An Elder, Mr. Taare Rewiti, delivered an eloquent Maori oration eulogising the heroic devotion of Frederick Miller ("Te Mira").

Mr. Pei Te Hurunui Jones, a well-known authority on Maori songs, legends and language, welcomed the Miller family to the scene of their grandfather's labour for the Maori race. This welcome was extended on behalf of the Ngati Maniapoto Tribe.

The singing of the hymn "Kotou Katoa Ra" by the Maori choir, and "O God Our Help in Ages Past" led by the Te Kuiti Municipal Band, was followed by the "Recessional" and the unveiling of the memorial tablet by Mr. Percy S. Miller.
The dedication and inspiring address by the Rev. G. I. Laurenson, Methodist General Superintendent of Home and Maori Missions, a requiem recital by Mr. Gabriel Elliott, terminated by the Doxology, and afternoon tea for all at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. E. T. Buckley brought to a close a unique and memorable historic occasion.

The following airmail messages were received from the parish and birthplace of Frederick Miller:—

"The parish of The Wood Chapel, Northern Ireland, where we have record of the baptism of the Rev. Frederick Miller and which includes the townland of Ballymaguiggan, which is the place of his birth, sends you greetings. We are happy to know that a son of this parish has been a faithful minister of Christ in your country. We are pleased you have erected a memorial to his name. May the blessing of God rest upon you on the day of the ceremony and always.

J. A. FAIR,
Rector of the Woods Chapel, Magherafelt, County Londonderry, N. Ireland,
May 4th, 1959."

Maori speech of welcome by Tari Tahinoi (Mr. C. Davis) to the "Millers",
being interpreted by Pei Te Hurunui Jones, who also delivered a welcome speech as a representative of the whole of the Maniapoto tribe.

Another greeting from Ireland read:—

"Greetings on this memorable occasion when you do honour to the name of my fellow countryman. It pleases me to know of his service to God in the extension of Christ's Kingdom in your country. I join with you in prayers, thanksgiving and fellowship for the memory of his name.

CHARLES MILLER, Islandbawn, N. Ireland."
From the Maori Land Court came the following message:—

Te Kuiti, May 21st, 1959.

"It is very commendable that the memory of this Christian servant who served his divine Father and his church and country so nobly in this locality should be perpetuated. Regret I shall not be privileged to attend the unveiling and dedication ceremony on Saturday next. The efforts of the memorial committee are most praiseworthy.  

M. S. BROOK, Judge."

Apologies and greetings were read from the following:—

Mr. K. W. Low, Mayor of Te Kuiti.
Rev. L. Gilmore, Secretary, Wesley Historical Society, Auckland.
Rev. E. W. Hames, Principal, Trinity College, Auckland.
Mr. T. G. M. Spooner, M.A., Principal Te Awamutu College.
Canon Wi Huata, Waikato Maori Diocese, Te Kuiti.
Rev. W. R. Francis, Hamilton.
Rev. Eruera Te Tuhi, Senior Maori Superintendent, Aratapu.
Sister M. W. Nicholls, Maori Mission, Auckland.
Mr. K. C. M. Norris, Secretary, Historical Places Society, Hamilton.
Mr. Swarbrick, Te Awamutu Historical Society.
Mr. and Mrs. Motu, Ratana Pa.

Unveiling the tablet at the Memorial Cairn erected to the memory of Frederick Miller by his
grandson, P. S. Miller, on 23rd May, 1959.
SITE HELD IN TRUST SINCE 1897

A Maori Land Court Order has been made granting the title to the Maori burial ground and site of the mission station at Wakatumutumu on which the Miller Memorial cairn and cross was unveiled and dedicated on May 23rd, 1959. This order was made at a sitting of the Maori Land Court at Te Kuiti on September 28th, 1897, before Walter Edward Gudgeon, Judge, in the partition of Maraetaua Block, cutting off an area of 2ac. 0 0 for purpose of mission site and urupa (cemetery). The following trustees were appointed of the Wakatumutumu urupa:—

1. Hari Te Wahanga, Male Adult.
2. Kiore Ropiha, Female Adult.
3. Mama Wirimu, F. Adult.
4. Ngutungutu Te Kohuwai, F.
5. Ngaraukura Hakopa, F.
6. Patupatu Kepa, M.
7. Rangihuia Wirimu, F.
8. Te Kauta Parerahi, F.
9. Wahanui Huatar'e, M.

NOTE.—The whole of these are now deceased and fresh trustees must be made by Succession Orders of the Court, which has been requested by next of kin.
"THE CANNIBAL ISLANDS"

Before New Zealand became a Crown Colony, which eventuated twelve months after the coming of Miller, into that hitherto unpenetrated dark area known as the Rohe Potae, it was one of the islands of the Polynesian Group known as "The Cannibal Islands". Although the "Rongopai" (or the Gospel) had been preached around the coasts of the Islands for a period of twenty years, it had not yet reached the wild, dark forests of the interior.

It was in these remote parts where the greatest supply of food existed that the wildest savages of the tribes lived and fought each other for possession of "eel weirs" in the streams and "bird-snaring trees" of the forest where the native pigeon assembled to fatten on the luscious berries of the rimu, matai and kahikatea. These fights for supremacy and possession usually terminated in a feast on human flesh. Into this area, covering eight thousand square miles, where a white man's foot had never trod, Frederick Miller, aged twenty-four, with his young wife Susan, and babe of twelve months, boldly entered with no other protection than a deep-rooted faith in the Divine providence which by the power of the Holy Spirit enabled them to lead a savage race from darkest heathendom into the light of Christian civilisation.

The fearlessness of the missionary deeply impressed the savage mind. His skin was of a different colour and therefore he could not be an enemy. His great knowledge, and the possession of clothing and articles they had never seen before, which looked good to their eyes, persuaded them he must be an "Atua" (a god). Thus he became their "Man of God" and was revered and protected.

Reception of the grandchildren of Frederick Miller at the mission rite at Wakatumutumu. From left: Mr. D. G. Taylor, Mrs. D. G. Taylor (Miller), Miss F. N. Miller, Miss W. L. Miller, Mr. Percy S. Miller, Rev. G. I. Laurenson, R. Ormsby (interpreter), R. P. Emery (welfare), Mrs. P. S. Miller (obscured), third from left.
The extreme isolation of the mission station established at Wakatumutumu, the hardships endured, and the harrowing scenes these two missionaries were called to witness will never be known. History is silent. Suffice it is to know that into this benighted country John Whiteley, Frederick and Susan Miller, these three godly soldiers, like a "mighty army" led the Church of God. Owing to its complete isolation no photographic records of the missionary or his station were ever made beyond the word picture of the station given in the journal of the Rev. Richard Taylor before mentioned. For a period of eight years the Millers laboured faithfully at Wakatumutumu, where Frederick Miller passed to his reward. His uncoffined remains were carried by his native converts to a place pointed out by him for burial.

"In that deep grave, without a name,  
Whence his uncoffined clay shall break again,  
Most glorious thought!  
Before the Judgment day."

(The Burial of Moses.)

The tolling of the “Mission Bell”.  
This bell was the actual bell used in the mission station a century ago.  
Tolled by Naki Ngatawa, grand-daughter of a pupil of the mission.
As a result of these combined missionary labours the Gospel continued to win its widening way from sea to sea and from shore to shore. It was the work of God and nothing could overthrow it. The translation of the Bible into the Maori language and the teaching of reading in the mission schools wrought marvellous changes in the lives and habits of the Maori race. Men, women and children were found around the fire by night reading from a coveted single copy of the Scriptures.

At this same period the Rev. William Woon described a Sunday gathering on the west coast at Mangamuka, Hokianga, when fifty-three large canoe loads from all parts of the northern coast assembled, making a congregation of a thousand. Some of these had travelled fifty miles. And thus it came to pass when Sir George Grey visited England in 1854 he expressed the opinion that out of one hundred thousand Maoris in New Zealand not more than a thousand remained outside the pale of Christianity. Lands were being freely given by Maoris for religious purposes — churches were being erected and schools were crowded.
THE HORROR AND DISASTER OF WAR

What a dark page followed this great missionary triumph! Intertribal war between Taranaki and Waikato broke out, followed by war with the Pakeha settlers caused by blunderings and misunderstandings in dealing with sales of Maori lands for which the New Zealand Land Company was largely responsible.

Slaves captured and carried away from Taranaki to Waikato, on being liberated and returned through the influence of the missionary, found their native soil occupied by a Pakeha settler placed there by an iniquitous English Land Company. Thus the ill-considered and ill-advised war between Maori and Pakeha broke out, carrying with it destruction and the utter desolation of existing Maori mission effort and the death of John Whiteley.

Hence it came to pass, through the influence of Miller and Whiteley, all the leaders of the Maniapoto tribe — all those who have guided Maori thought and culture in the King Country down the years — were educated at the Wesleyan mission schools.

Wahanui Huatare, who opened the King Country for the Government railway line to pass through, attended Wakatumutumu and Three Kings College. Hori Ngatai, of Te Kuiti, learned to read and write at Te Ahuahu. Pepene Eketone, Anaru Eketone, Ormsbys, the Turners, and Anihana's all attended Wesleyan Mission Schools.

It was John Ormsby who took a leading part in the negotiations which led to this restricted area being opened up to Crown settlers. Here, in this benighted area, the Maori population had remained sullen, silent and segregated for a period of forty years after the confederated tribes had pledged their allegiance to the British Crown by signing the Treaty of Waitangi, and sixty years after the first missionary had proclaimed "the Gospel of Good Tidings to all People" nearby that very spot.
This is a late photograph of the Rev. John Whiteley, who appointed Frederick Miller to Wakatumutumu in the year 1840. Whiteley was at that time in charge of the coastal mission station at Te Ahuahu, South Kawhia. Whiteley's missionary service, a period of thirty-five years, ended in an untimely and tragic death. Here let it be recorded, John Whiteley never met his death at the hand of a Maori, as is erroneously believed. . . . The man who fired the ill-fated shot was a Pakeha Maori personally known to the writer. Two of his family are still residing in the King Country. This correction is now made to put right a general belief "that John Whiteley, after thirty-five years of poured-out strength for the Maori people, was basely and barbarously murdered by them. Such an act would be unthinkable to the Maori He was the "Man of God" whose death would spell complete annihilation to their forces.

We refrain from recording the name of the person responsible for the murder, who was well known to the writer, because two of his family are still residents of the district. The main object is to remove the cloud which has overshadowed the family of a respected paramount chief whose name perpetuates the founder of a great Missionary Church.
FAMOUS CHIEFTAIN
Rewi Maniapoto at the meeting-house, presented to the tribe by Te Koti.
Although Cannibalism in New Zealand ceased about the year 1846 the barbarous trading in human heads still continued. Believing the end will justify the means, with diffidence we publish a sordid exhibit of thirty-two human heads of New Zealand inhabitants bartered by traders and held in a museum in London. Others are known to be on exhibition in a town in Austria. We pray that the conscience of the Christian Church will be stirred to assist us in our demands to have these human heads returned to their native soil for Christian burial.

These are actual Maori heads as a result of a cannibal feast. These heads were smoked, cured and traded for European goods, and are now housed in a London museum.
SOWING THE SEED

The pictorial caption illustrating past and present methods of sowing seed seemed applicable as a classical cover to an epic story. Millet's immortal picture graphically describes how the seed was sown when Frederick Miller founded the Mission Station at Wakatumutumu in 1840. The illustration on the back cover depicts the method adopted by E. T. Buckley, the present owner of the land on which lies the deserted mission station — a beautiful farm which was an area clothed in fern scrub and bush only six short years ago.

The New Zealand historian, James Cowan, in his book "The Old Frontier" — meaning the boundary of the King Country — states: "The missionary combined temporal with spiritual. He did not confine the sowing of the good seed to the Gospel brand. On his visits from Kianga to Kianga he took his little dog, and to the dog's neck was tied a little bag filled with grass and English clover seed which was allowed to drop out a seed at a time through a tiny hole.

Early cultivation, showing the use of ko. Planting of kumaras at Wakatumutumu.
Small steel handmills were supplanted by water-powered flour mills. In the early fifties it is recorded over fifty thousand bushels of wheat went by canoe down river for sale in Auckland. The first two bags of flour ground at the first watermill were delivered to Governor Grey for Her Majesty Queen Victoria. How hath God prospered us down through the intervening years! What spiritual and temporal blessings we have inherited! The bush and fern tracks the weary feet of Miller trod are now transformed to tarsealed highways over which high powered transport speeds at fifty miles an hour.

We who were privileged to have been born and share a part in the early sowing of the pioneer seed now look back with deep gratitude to God for both Seed Time and Harvest. Never before in the history of Christian Missions has a human life been more sacrificially and completely outpoured in the leading of a primitive, heathen race to the light of Christian civilisation than that of Frederick Miller of Wakatumutumu.

THEY WHO GO FORTH BEARING PRECIOUS SEED SHALL COME AGAIN REJOICING;
BRINGING THEIR SHEAVES WITH THEM.

N.B.—It was the writer's privilege to establish the first European Church in the area in 1903. Today there are fifty places of worship spread over the King Country.
A Maori Chief of Wakatumutumu and his wife in their native costume.

NOTE

The "King Country" was so named because it was here the Maoris segregated under King Tawhiao to establish a kingdom, make their own laws, and promote their own culture as opposed to the Pakeha way of life.

"In this way the pioneer missionary scattered seeds of civilisation which spread over many parts of the wild country side." To this day, in many of the old villages there is to be found a beautiful sward that goes back to the missionary and his little dog. Fields of golden corn which spread across the land laborously dug in by means of the Maori "ko" (wooden spade), all came as a result of a few handfuls of wheat tied in the stocking foot of the missionary's wife, carefully planted and replanted until sufficiently multiplied to supply each chief with the foundation of a crop.
Early Maori settlement of Te Kuiti near Wakatumutumu after the coming of the missionaries.

The Publisher acknowledges the loyal co-operation of the Nelson Irving Studios in the production of the Memorial Dedication illustrations despite rain and blizzard with such satisfactory results.

See also


for further information.
PRESENT METHOD OF SOWING THE SEED IN THE KING COUNTRY