

Scott, Dick. *Ask That Mountain: The Story of Parihaka*. Auckland, New Zealand: Reed Books, 1975.

Dick Scott (1923- ____ A.D.) was born in New Zealand. Scott worked with a Maori farm operation before becoming a journalist historian of the town Parihaka and Pacific island tribes. Scott won the Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement in 2007.

Introduction. The government of New Zealand was not satisfied to have wiped out Parihaka. It went on to remove Parihaka, the home village of Te Whiti and Tohu, from the map, replacing it with a village named Newall, after the constable who arrested Te Whiti and Tohu. The government subsequently relented in this. Two newspaper articles from 1860 are reprinted. The first laments that burying so many Maori may pollute the settlers' wells. The second, a poem, tells of the scowl upon a Maori's face, one who had been murdered by a British soldier. It wishes all Maori would die with such a scowl.

1. Fire and Sword. In March 1860, the British warship *Niger* assaulted Warea, a mission village just north of Parihaka, with artillery for two days with limited success. A land force followed to finish wiping out Warea. The soldiers pulled down the residence and community house, and destroyed the machinery of their grain mill. The force ignored the hilltop retreat where 100 Maori fighters waited. The British deployed the force because Maori tribes had resisted government land confiscations. This war smoldered on for ten years. The Maori erected a toll booth with stiff tolls for government agents. They seized weapons from a grounded ship, and extracted tolls from the passengers. The villagers, Te Whiti among them, issued declarations that the sword must come first, then peace. Within three years (by 1863), the lands of all resisting Maoris had been confiscated forcibly. A Maori chief, killed in battle, was skinned so an army surgeon might make a tobacco pouch from his tattooed buttock. The Maori responded in kind, ambushing a British party, killing many and decapitating the bodies. Fifty Maori, assaulting a British fort head-on, were slaughtered. Tohu and Te Whiti were in the raiding party. The British sent a force to eradicate the Maori opposition under General Chute. He took no prisoners. The Maoris continued resisting. They hampered the survey of the confiscated land, suffering another round of mop-up assaults as a result. Only the center of the Taranaki region continued resisting, where Parihaka was located.

2. Village of Peace. Te Whiti abandoned armed resistance as futile, and taught peaceful approaches to conflict at Parihaka. Te Whetu disagreed; he killed a British settler, and then nine others. The whites considered starting a war, but relented. Another chief, Titokowaru, slaughtered some British, and the war against him proceeded. British soldiers and their Maori collaborators hunted down Titokowaru's men, beheading them for rewards per capita.

In Parihaka, guns were broken and people lived in peace. Parihaka maintained neutrality in the war, and did not sign the eventual peace treaty which transferred tribal lands to the British. Te Whiti planned a fighting peace, resisting incursions, while welcoming settlers. Tohu was his right hand, an able leader, but not a good speaker. The settlers would not have title to the Parihaka land. All land would remain the common possession of the Maori. Te Whiti laid a program of constantly asserting sovereignty over the land, while also suppressing violence from the Maori side. The Parihaka meetings occurred each month on the 17th. These grew in size, with Te Whiti entrancing the crowds. Eventually, the peaceful Parihakans made it possible for those who had previously fought the British to return to their lands.

3. Smoothing the Pillow. The British began trying to nibble apart the Maori lands where they have failed by arms. They loaned money to Maoris, and let them mortgage their land. They introduced alcohol, some of which was poisoned, and disease and bribery. Te Whiti encouraged Maori self-sufficiency, rejecting flour and sugar. No alcohol could be sold, but if available, it could be given freely to all. Te Whiti could not be corrupted. Te Whiti did not allow mocking mentally ill, blind, or crippled tribal members.

The local economy worsened, and the British thirst for land grew. They sought to confiscate the lands of chiefs who had earlier resisted. Some chiefs sold out their people for trinkets and personal security. Some Maoris resisted English efforts to survey the plains they sought, pulling up survey pegs. Promised reserves for the Maoris failed to emerge. Finally, the British offered the land for sale. Tohu dumped the surveyors and their machinery out of the area. The sale was delayed. Maoris from all over New Zealand flocked to Parihaka.

4. **Challenge of the Ploughmen.** In May 1879, the Parihaka Maori began a campaign of plowing. They plowed straight across settler's lands, which were confiscated Maori lands. They started before dawn and continued until dark, day after day. When consulted, Te Whiti said that they plowmen plowed to force a declaration from the government concerning ownership of the land. This was *pakanga*, non-violent resistance. The British locals rankled for a war of extermination. Even the friendly Maoris, they argued, should be killed. The plowmen continued, unarmed and undeterred. When Tohu was asked what to do if a plowman was killed, he said to bring the blood-soaked soil to Parihaka. Te Whiti proclaimed the Maori weapon was his tongue. In June 1879, the British constabulary began arresting the plowmen, who were unarmed and did not resist. Other plowmen took their places. Five plowmen went daily and were arrested. The next day, five more went. By August 1879, 200 had been incarcerated. The jails overflowed. Maori chiefs called a truce to make legal contest of the British confiscations. Te Whiti ordered the plowmen to cease. The government continued holding the plowmen without trial, and eventually passed a law to hold them indefinitely without trial. Te Whiti sent teams out to erect fencing. When the government formed a royal commission to look into the Maori land confiscations (consisting of two men who participated in the land confiscations and a northern Maori), none among Te Whiti's people would meet with them.
5. **Battle of the Fences.** The British sent two armies of road builders. Te Whiti welcomed them as outsiders and asked their leader to explain his actions at Parihaka. The British ignored Te Whiti, and began driving a road through the Parihaka region. The soldiers cut through Maori fences to drive the road. The Parihaka replaced the fence after the soldiers left, right across the road. The British took it down. The Maoris re-erected it. The British began arresting the fence builders, who persisted as though the British were not present, even when being abused. The British passed a new act permitting arrest for no reason at all. The road builders arrested all the able-bodied men of Parihaka. Then the old men and children came out daily and erected laughable fences. Finally, the government relented and told the soldiers to arrest no more. Public opinion turned against the government for prison abuses, including overcrowding and solitary confinement. In 1881, all the plowmen and fencers were released.
6. **Rising Storm.** The prisoners returned to Parihaka, and were publicly praised by Te Whiti. After a time, life in Parihaka returned to normal, with infrequent incursions by soldiers to make a bit of trouble. The governor of New Zealand asked Te Whiti to meet him. Te Whiti declined. The government continued cutting up the Parihaka lands and auctioning it. The Parihaka Maori continued fencing and plowing, heedless of the government's supposed auction of their lands to others. As elections approached, the government sought to whip up the populace to a Maori scare by misquoting Te Whiti and Tohu. The government prepared to invade Parihaka. The government gave Parihaka two weeks to surrender their land. Some public opinion ran against the intended murder of the Maori at Parihaka. The British settlers suffered war fever, and called up 2,500 soldiers, some drafted. Te Whiti and Tohu told the people that they would prevail by forbearance and by standing calmly on the land. Those who fled or fought would be killed by the British.
7. **Smite the Shepherd, Scatter His Flock.** On November 5, 1881, the British expeditionary force to Parihaka launched its secret attack. Their approach was met by spinning and skipping girls, singing, who would not yield the road. Finally, one captain physically picked up a girl and set her aside to make way for his troops. The soldiers found all 2,500 members of Parihaka sitting close packed in the center of town, where they had been waiting for the

attack since midnight. They sat in complete silence. The press had been banned, but five journalists made it to Parihaka in advance of the troops. Soldiers surrounded the group. Officers commanded Te Whiti to come to them, but he refused. The soldiers arrested Te Whiti and Tohu, who walked out of the village with them. With their prophets gone, the villagers of Parihaka went about their usual peaceful business, but now under British occupation. And the people continued to sit in the village square. The British aimed one cannon at the square and commanded the people to leave the square. They ordered persons from other villages to return to their own homes. The cannon would be fired in one hour. The deadline came and went; a few from outside the village left the square. The soldiers began a process of attempting to identify and drive out Maori from other villages. All resisted identification. Soldiers began pulling down houses, which process continued. Finally, a collaborator identified the outsiders. Soldiers began raping women, and syphilis spread in the village, which was formerly declared clean. The women were sorted and the outsiders forcibly deported. The British destroyed all the crops around Parihaka. The remainder of the Maoris continued to meet daily in the square. The British began random arrests. The British pulled down the Parihaka meeting house of Te Whiti, with difficulty. When the British left on November 22, they had arrested 2,200 people, 600 were allowed to remain, and twenty had left voluntarily. After their departure, the British continued their campaign by starving the remainder of the Parihaka Maori. No Maori were permitted to return to Parihaka, despite the starvation of those expelled. Winter was coming. Many would die. When the Parihaka Maori attempted to meet in their square, soldiers dispersed them and stole their food.

8. Prison and Exile. The Maoris who were taken hostage were tried on the north island and held there. On November 12, 1881, a trial tested Te Whiti and Tohu, charging that they incited insurrection against the Queen. The Maoris represented themselves ably. They were then held without decision by the court, presided over by one of the persecutors of the Maori, for six months. Then both prophets and their colleagues were transported to the south island. One Maori chief went on hunger strike, relenting only when forced feeding was imminent. A conscientious judge released a group of Maori held for trial for six months without substantial charge. The government enacted a new law holding Te Whiti and Tohu without charge or trial, and subjecting them to immediate arrest if found at their freedom. On the south island, the two were given street dress and shown the sites. The government repeatedly attempted to bribe Te Whiti with lands and honors, to no avail. Te Whiti said he had nothing to do with the government, and needed nothing from them. They may do as they please to him. Te Whiti said that the government had its thoughts and Te Whiti had his own. In March 1883, Te Whiti and Tohu were sent home with a warning not to gather the people at Parihaka.

9. Pass Laws and Pilgrimages. The government anticipated that the long incarceration would break Te Whiti's influence in Parihaka. It did not. Two months after his return to Parihaka, police officers assaulted Te Whiti. The single white feather represented the ongoing struggle against the white government. A pass was required to travel in the Parihaka region. Gathering on the village green was forbidden. The government began leasing out portions of the land "given" to the Maori two years earlier by the West Coast Commission. The Maori refused the rents from the illegally rented lands. With their lands carved up, Te Whiti and Tohu started a new strategy of pakanga (non-violent resistance). They initiated protest marches against the government's land policy. First, all of Parihaka marched south, village to village, gathering protesters along the way. Later, they marched north, reestablishing ties with those villages. The region was unsettled. The surrounding Maori supported the protests with money, good, and fighters. Still, Parihaka could not mount an island-wide march.

The Maori began building temporary villages on the largest of the leaseholder's estates. After one was built, they erected a second. The government intervened in the building of the second, eventually overwhelming the Maori with a large police force. Builders were arrested. The constabulary invaded Parihaka to arrest Te Whiti. Te Whiti was tried and convicted of forcible entry, riot, and malicious injury to property, for which he served three months in jail and was ordered to pay a fine. Te Whiti undertook a tour of his province's villages. Police continued harassing Parihaka, arresting individuals on flimsy charges. People refused to pay

the dog tax (five pound per), and let their dogs chase tax collectors. The government let the law lapse, since its enforcement cost more than its collections. The government withdrew its army stations in favor of a “one constable” approach to policing. Reinforcements could travel in rapidly by rail, if needed.

A white storekeeper sued Te Whiti for two hundred pounds. Te Whiti claimed that many of the goods he purchased from this man were spoiled and returned to him. Te Whiti refused to participate in the legal proceedings, and the police arrived to arrest the aging Te Whiti, now past sixty years old. During incarceration, Te Whiti’s wife died. The government refused to let him attend her funeral. After his release, Te Whiti continued his refusal to pay. Another arrest order was issued, but the magistrate found the Te Whiti had no money to pay. The suit was abandoned.

10. The Liberal Embrace. Despite political changes, political matters only got worse for the Maori. The new Liberal government ignored Parihaka, and continued seizing land for whites. The Liberal prime minister traveled to Parihaka to visit Te Whiti. They jibed, and the prime minister betrayed a woeful ignorance of Maori concerns and traditions. The politician was castigated in the press, but he boasted of the million acres of land his administration had confiscated from Maori peoples. The government bought another two million acres in the next two years. Other Maori formed a Maori parliament to defend native interests. Te Whiti did not participate. Many Maori continued to resist dog taxes, which the press whipped into a national emergency. Some chiefs were arrested for their refusal, and put to hard labor in public places. Individual Maoris protested, some with violence. But no large planned actions were afoot. Some Maori peacefully pulled down government fences. They, and their spouses, were jailed. Some again plowed. They too were arrested without resistance. Ninety-two plowmen were given two months hard labor. None would answer the court’s charges, instead pointing to their white feathers. Eventually, more than one hundred plowmen were jailed; their loved ones were refused visitations. The prisoners refused hard labor, and eventually the government gave up and released them. Te Whiti welcomed the released prisoners, and honored them with many of the Maori from the region at a great festival.

11. Preposterous Ghosts. The New Zealand government generally believed that the Maori were doomed to extinction. Parihaka resisted the census-takers, and welcomed, but put no reliance on, newspapermen. One, Baucke, Te Whiti liked. Te Whiti told a parable: Two men sit beside each other, one in the sun, the other in his companion’s shadow. Eventually, the chill man asks his companion to move. The man in the sun declines. The chill man objects and shoves his friend roughly out of the way. His friend’s dignity is injured; the sunny man, now irked, strikes his cold companion. They fight. This is how beasts relate. The white man shoved us, so we resist. I still resist today. Te Whiti rhapsodized the blessings of peace and evils of war. He then pointed to the volcanic mountain behind them. Ask that mountain, Te Whiti said. The mountain sees all.

Upon Te Whiti’s death, Baucke staunchly defended Te Whiti’s openness, peace, simple life void of ostentation, and his work as a mediator. Te Whiti had said he suspected there were good newspapers, but he had never read one.

Parihaka continued to build. It had running municipal water. Electricity arrived at Parihaka before it did at the capital. Tohu died in 1907. Te Whiti died in 1907. Both were buried in the Maori tradition.

To the end, the Parihaka Maori refused rents from lands leased without their consent. When the thirty year leases of Maori lands by whites ran out, the Maori sought to reclaim their lands. Even when the people received the land, they soon sold to whites, losing the land forever. A Maori politician, Maui Pomare, was instrumental in these losses. In the end, Parihaka was no longer viable, though it retains its symbolic significance, recalling the Maori struggle against invading Europeans and Te Whiti’s nonviolence.

Appendix A: Portraits of Te Whiti. Both Te Whiti and Tohu resisted, throughout their lives, having the photographs taken.

Appendix B: *Taranaki Drink Trade.* The government intentionally made drink available in the Parihaka region.

Appendix C: *Hiroki's Last Letter.* Hiroki, who killed a soldier who surveyed his land without permission and killed his pigs. Hiroki was hung, after writing to his family justifying the murder.