

# MĀKERETI - CULTURAL INVIGORATOR, ENTREPRENEUR and ETHNOGRAPHER (1873 – 1930)

This exhibit uses postcards of the period to illustrate the life of Makareti (aka Margaret Pattison Thom) and the impact she had on the survival and development of Maori culture and cultural tourism, much of which she recorded and eventually published, a record whose value continues to be recognised today.

Margeret Pattison Thom was born on 20 October 1873, to an English militiaman and a Tuhourangi Ngati Wahiao mother. Her father, William Thom whilst fertile, producing for Margaret a brother (Richard) and a half sister (Isabella) with his sister-in-law, ultimately left the relationship with Margaret's mother. Margaret was sent to Whakarewarewa to be brought up by her widowed great uncle and widower great aunt.

Her youthful years at Whakarewarewa, steeped in Maori language and culture, and her education within the heavily English influenced schools of the time equipped Margaret with the language, cultural and social skills to lead the development of tourism within the thermal reserve at Whakarewarewa and ultimately promote Maori culture to the world. She would ultimately move between names, being Margeret or Maggie for one audience and Mākereti for another; the latter mainly for family, friends and Maori gatherings. **For the purposes of this exhibit we will use Mākereti.**

She was ultimately to become so famous within New Zealand, in the period 1905 – 1912, that she graced the front pages of the newspapers, unheard of in most colonised Commonwealth nations for an indigenous person. On one occasion in 1908 a letter arrived in New Zealand simple addressed Maggie, New Zealand; and the post office staff had no trouble working out who it was intended for.

Mākereti would ultimately lead a number of Maori groups overseas, even being an invitee to the 1911 coronation of King George V, but would leave New Zealand in 1912 to pursue love and then education. She died in 1930 whilst completing her thesis for a BSc Anthropology. Against family wishes she was buried in England, rather than being returned to Whakarewarewa, and her life's record held at the Pitt River Museum in Oxford would ultimately be published posthumously.

**Rarity:** rare items, where <5 have been sighted by the exhibitor over 30 years of collecting, have a gold box.



Pia Ngarotu Te Rihi (Makereti's mother) washing clothes at Whakarewarewa. Note the pipe clenched in her mouth as she undertakes this task – the pipe-smoking Maori women were another novelty for tourists to observe.

Coloured collotype, *Washing Day, Whakarewarewa* #105, 1<sup>st</sup> series, T Pringle, c1906



MAKERETI BELLAS HAKAS PHOTOGRAPHY NZ PHOTOGRAPHY Rotorua  
GUIDES "BELLA" AND "MAGGIE," ROTORUA. Iles, Photo.

The Thom sisters, *Bella* (at left) and *Makereti* (at right). *Bella* is renown for having revitalised poi action songs, now a staple of concerts and an important factor in *kapa haka*.

The picture above, taken by photographer Arthur J Iles, was also used on souvenir merchandise like tin plates (as below).

Half-tone letterpress, *Guides Bella and Maggie, Rotorua* #124, Iles, Rotorua, 1904



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Makereti's brother Richard (aka Dick or Tiki) leading a haka with members of WWI Maori contingent. Richard was a well respected leader, having represented Maori in both a sporting, playing for Maori in both rugby and rugby league (incl 1908 Maori tour of Australia), and cultural sense.

Real photo postcard, *Maori haka*, 1919 - 1920



Makereti mimicking the Maori greeting of *hongi*, with a carved post on the front of a *wharenui*

Tinted photograph postcard

*Maggie, Maori Guide and Teko Teko*, AL series A152, Aristophot, London, UK, 1906

Postallu used (in England), 1908



Mākereti

Her Early Years

Relationship with Sophia (of Tarawera fame)

Of European and Maori descent, Mākereti was able to operate with confidence in both worlds. She began guiding visitors around the thermal reserve at Whakarewarewa in 1893. She proved both personable and engaging so became very popular with tourists and important persons alike.

The key leadership position at Whakarewarewa was that of the Head Guide. Te Paea "Sophia" Hinerangi Gray, who has established her reputation as a guide at Tarawera before the volcanic eruption destroyed that area's geothermal attractions, was informally appointed to that position by the government, who by the late 1890's had claimed the geothermal reserve at Whakarewarewa for themselves.

Recognising that referral business was the best business Mākereti sold a lot of postcards of herself, many of which she signed, to those that she guided. This was the best form of marketing, as it allowed people coming to Whakarewarewa to identify their preferred guide.

Mākereti was to take over the role in 1901; recognition for the fact that she was the pre-eminent guide from Tuhourangi Ngati Wahiao, whilst Sophia was considered an outsider. The position was to stay within the Thom family until 1965, with Mākereti (1901 – 1912), Bella (1920 – 1939) and Mākereti's daughter-in-law, Rangitīria Denna (1940 – 1965) all holding the position and maintaining the standards expected by both Maori and the NZ Government's Tourism agency of their tour guides and concert groups working at Whakarewarewa.

Cards that she signed for tourist consumption are all signed *Maggie* or *Maggie Papakura*.

Aka "*Maggie Papakura*" she is reputed to have taken her 'Maori' surname from a nearby geyser.



Personally signed collotype postcard of Mākereti. Her hair is graced with a huiā feather, she is wrapped in a kiwi feather *korowai* and the *tiki* she is wearing is reputed to be over 500 years old. The photo was taken in 1893 but continued to be produced on postcards well up until the time she left Whakarewarewa (1912). Guide *Maggie (No. 5) Whakarewarewa*, Parkerson series, Printed in Saxony, Germany, c1905

Papakura Geyser, in the Whakarewarewa thermal field. It is believed that when Maggie was being harangued by a tourist wanting to know her Maori surname ("as she must have one"), she looked at the geyser which was nearby and told him that its name was her last name. At this time many Maori were adopting European surnames, usually translations of their Maori surnames, and it was not an uncommon question to ask. Collotype, *Papakura Geyser Whakarewarewa, Rotorua* Parkerson series, Printed in Saxony, Germany, c1905

Mākereti in a formal studio portrait, signed with a personal message; [translated] *a token of affection from your true friend* Maggie Papakura

Photogravure, undivided back Publ by Rembrandt Studios, Wellington, c1905 (Publisher details embossed lower left of card)

Rembrandt's used images purchased from a range of photographers ensuring they got coverage of people and events across the North Island of New Zealand. The original owner of the card (MAY MOORE) has written her name to identify her card amongst those that Mākereti was signing.

The first two Head Guides, Sophia and Mākereti sitting on the porch of *Rauru*. Whilst they were happy to be photographed together they had a very unhappy relationship. Photograph by E le Grice, coloured collotype, publ by CH Pawson, Rotorua, c1905 Printed in Saxony, Germany



Mākereti soaping the Wairoa Geyser, a practice (now discontinued) required to make it play on demand. Photogravure, #5R *Wairoa Geyser being soaped, Rotorua NZ* Muir & Moodie, Series of Views, Printed in Austria 1906



## Mākereti

Makereti's leadership was important to the development of guiding at Whakarewarewa. She was instrumental in the evolution of guiding attire and always represented her people and culture professionally.

The uniform, which evolved over time, eventually morphed into a blue or black shirt, with a black skirt and red head scarf. The use of the head scarf is attributed to the Thom sisters as below;

*[Maggie] and her sister [Bella] had an awful fight one day ... Bella got hold of her [Maggie] and she bit her on the cheek and she had to go around for quite a while with a scarf around her head and say she had a toothache while the thing healed.*

(Diamond, 2007)

Makereti was also actively engaged in helping develop the next generation of guides, from the younger women of Tuhourangi Ngati Wahiao.

Guides for regular tourists wore the uniform of the day. Under the influence (and direction) of the Department of Tourism and Resorts uniforms became a pre-requisite to help identify the guides and also to ensure they represented themselves properly.

Important guests were guided by the senior guides wearing traditional Maori clothing, usually incorporating a *piupiu* (a flax skirt, by the 20<sup>th</sup> Century commonly worn over the top of a black skirt) and *korowai*, a cloak, the most important of which is the *kahu haruru* made from the feathers of Aotearoa's national bird, the kiwi.



No. 203 Maggie Papakura, Maori Guide, Rotorua N. Z.

Makereti in "Mother Hubbard" style of guiding attire c1910.

Collotype, #203 Maggie Papakura, Maori Guide, Littlebury series

Postally used 1911



MAGGIE PAKAKURA, the Famous Whakarewarewa Guide.

Studio photo of Makereti, taken in the clothing she wore whilst guiding Royalty and NZ Premier around Whakarewarewa in 1911

Colour tinted letterpress postcard, *Maggie Papakura, the Famous Whakarewarewa Guide* divided back, originally issued 1903. Harding & Billings

this is a later printing, c 1906

Postally used (Australia), 1908

## Guiding Attire

At right, Makereti with one of her protégés, Harata Poata.

The two were reportedly close, with Makereti actively mentoring Harata from a young age recognising her affinity for the traditional performing arts.

A studio portrait, probably taken in Christchurch whilst they were both at the International Exhibition there in 1906-07.

Photogravure

No photographer, publisher detail on the card

Postally used 5 Jan 1907



Makereti and her sister Bella with groups of younger women they are training under the watchful eye of Mita Taupopoki (below).

Makereti and Bella are credited with developing concert group performances as a highly valued component of the Whakarewarewa's tourism experience.



Guide Maggie, Rotorua

*ama qweh et amie amie  
Maggie Papakura*

Hand-tinted and personally signed collotype postcard showing Makereti wearing the cerise scarf she made a famous part of the guides' uniform. The pose is one that the NZ government used when they commissioned a bust of her by noted sculptor Nelson Illingworth in 1908.

Publisher unknown, c1906

An early card, printed in Saxony, Germany



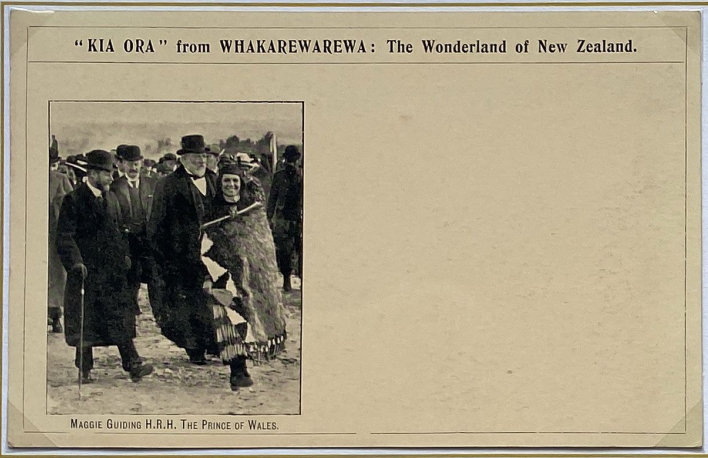
Guide Maggie & Bellas' Famous Poi Girls, Whakarewarewa, Rotorua, N. Z.

Hand tinted glossy photogravure, photo by C Parkerson. *Poi Dancers, Guide Maggie & Bellas' Poi Girls*, publ. by Raphael Tuck & Sons 1908

Images were taken in Hagley Park whilst at the Christchurch International Exhibition 1906 - 07

## Leadership





Guide Maggie, with HRH Prince of Wales and NZ Premier Sir Richard Seddon, guiding them through Whakarewarewa.



Image from reverse showing Maggie in the window of Rauru, (photo taken 15 Nov 1903, later used as a postcard and stereocard image by Beattie & Co)

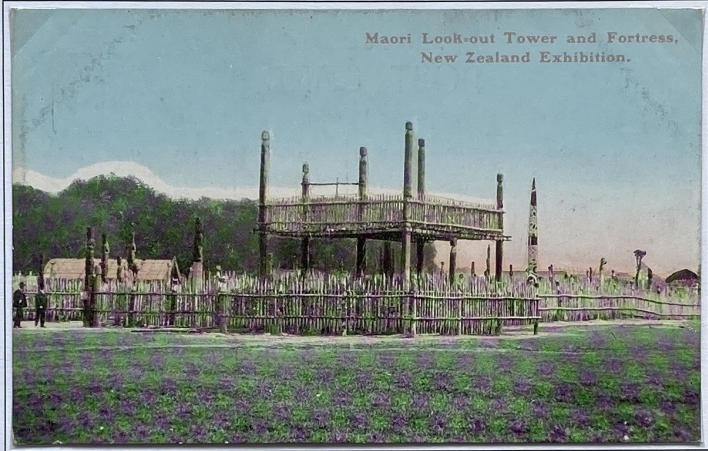


Guide Maggie

The image, made available to a number of postcard producers, was commissioned by the Dept of Tourist & Health Resorts in 1902, seeking to capitalise on her fame from the 1901 Royal Visit. Tinted photogravure "glamour" postcard, Maggie who guided the Duke of York, #153, Aristophot, London, UK, 1906

The Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York (later King George V and Queen Mary) made only the second visit to New Zealand by a British royal family member in 1901. They were hosted at Whakarewarewa where they were guided by Guides Sophia and Maggie. The well-photographed visit appeared in newspapers around the Commonwealth with this media attention playing a major part in promoting Whakarewarewa. The publicity that arose from this event was not only significant for Makereti but also Maori culture as a tourism opportunity.

In 1906 a group of 500 Whakarewarewa and Whanganui were invited to participate in the NZIE in Christchurch, where they were to deliver cultural displays whilst living within a stockaded Maori village "Maoriland" and thermal area, built of cement, 'Wonderland' in Hagley Park for the Exhibition. Their presence was well photographed and featured in many postcards.



The Maori Village (in Hagley Park) with a look-out tower and surrounded by a palisade fence. Multi-colour letterpress, Maori Lookout Tower & Fortress, New Zealand Exhibition #229, Exhibition Series, published by Fergusson, Taylor & Co. 1906



Vignette of Mākereti staring out from a window in Nuku Te Apiapi, a tourism whare in Rotorua Showing the illustrated address side of NZIE exhibition related postcard; Hagley Park, Christchurch, 1906



View of the replica hot pool including Maori children 'living' in it for the benefits of exhibition patrons. Letterpress halftone, The Hot Pool #25, NZ International Exhibition series, published by Alva Studio, 1906. (part of the Smith & Anthony series marketed via postcard vending machines)



Mākereti with a number of other female Maori leaders, including Sophia (front left) and Bella (3<sup>rd</sup> from right) wearing kākahu (cloaks) seated around a replica hot pool. Collotype, Maori Women, Guides Sophia & Maggie in Group #6953, Gold Medal Series, published by Fergusson, Taylor & Co. 1906



Mākereti's fame brought with it international friends and the wealth to visit at least those nearby. She made a number of trans-Tasman trips developing relationships with friends and influencers within Australian society [which would later support some of her bigger ventures].



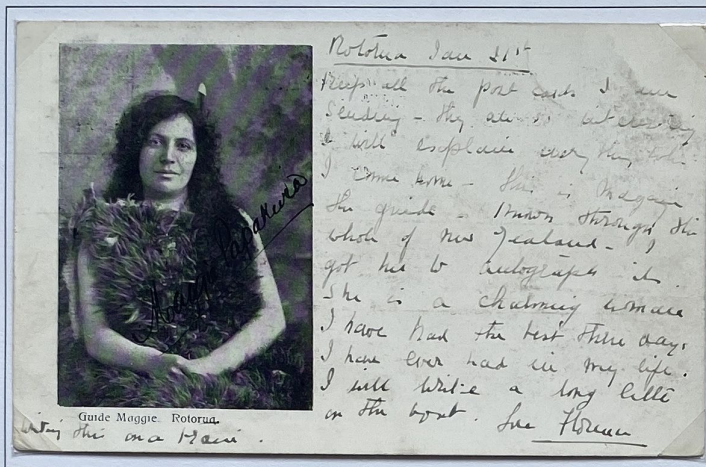
Card with a personal message from Makereti.

Possibly a winter photograph as Makereti appears to be wearing a coat in this studio picture. She has a brooch "Maggie" on the top of her scarf, which is knotted tightly under her chin.

Message reads; *All the thanks in the world to you.*

Another Parkerson card; he produced a large number of cards featuring Makereti between 1902 – 1906 by which time other photographers seem to have developed meaningful business relationships with Makereti.

Photogravure  
 Guide Maggie (No. 11) Whakarewarewa,  
 Parkerson series, protected 1907  
 Printed in Saxony, Germany, 1907



Portrait card of Makereti

Undivided back, halftone letterpress, *Guide Maggie, Rotorua*. Photo & published by Arthur Iles, Iles' Kodak Stores, Rotorua 1903  
 Postally used Jan 1906, late use  
 Message mentions meeting Makereti "She is a charming lady" and getting her to sign the card.



Makereti, with a child on her back, with another mother and baby and group of young children, posed on the thermal flat near the Parekohuru hot pool.

Colour tinted collotype, *Group of Maoris at Whakarewarewa, FT Series No. 1038*  
 Publ Ferguson & Taylor, printed in England 1905

Makereti always took with her a significant volume of NZ postcards to use as a cheap and efficient means of communication, as evidenced by the cards shown here addressed to a noted Sydney singer, Miss Pearl Lord, when Mākereti was holidaying there in the winter of 1905.

*Hope mother and self are well. Please send me Miss Petersen's address. Kia ora and aroha na.*

*[good health and love]*

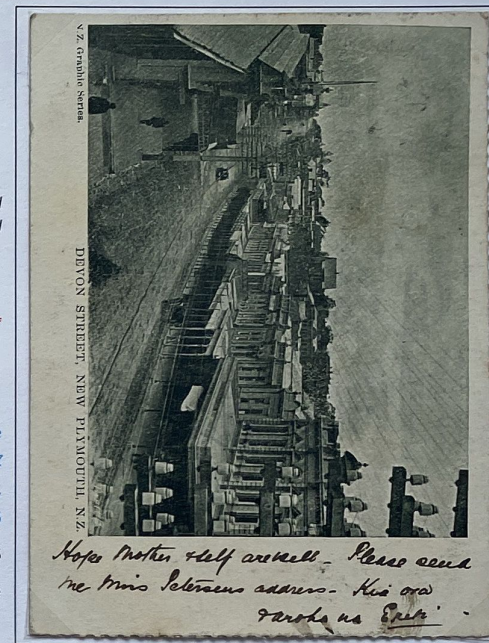
Ereti\*

\*Ereti = nickname for **Makereti**

Letterpress halftone  
 Devon Street New Plymouth NZ  
 NZ Graphic series,  
 Brett Publishing Auckland, 1905

Postmarked Sydney 21 August 1905

This card is the bottom left card from the perforated sheets they were produced in.



*Hope mother self are well. Please send me Miss Petersen's address. Kia ora aroha na Ereti.*

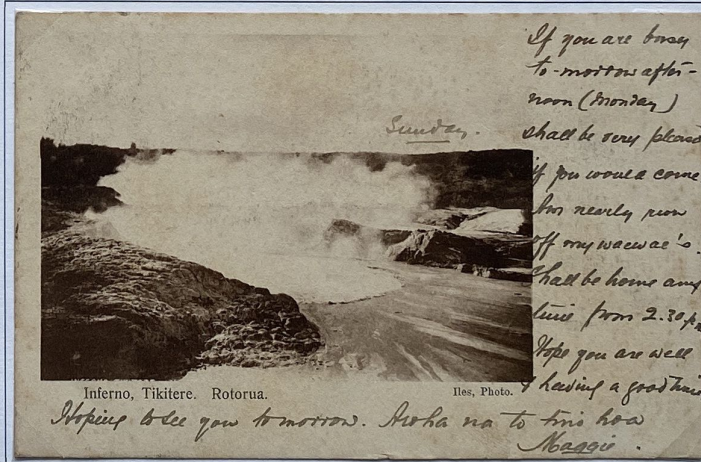
Posted Sunday 27 Aug 1905

Translations in [brackets]

Sunday

*If you are free tomorrow afternoon (Monday) shall be very pleased if you would come. Am nearly run off my waeae's [feet]. Shall be home from 2.30pm. Hope you are well and having a good time. Hoping to see you tomorrow.*

Aroha na to tino hoa



Inferno, Tikitere. Rotorua.

Iles, Photo.

*Hope to see you tomorrow. Aroha na to tino hoa Maggie.*

Collotype, *Inferno, Tikitere\**. Rotorua. Photo & publ Iles, Rotorua 1905

Postmarked Sydney 5.30am 28 Aug 1905, would have been delivered that morning.

\*Tikitere was another (smaller) thermal area between nearby Lakes Rotorua and Rotoiti



## Mākereti

Makaereti's fame meant that her *whare* (houses) were sometimes used as backdrops for postcard photographs. She was also asked to pose on other tourism intended carved *whare*.

*Tukiterangi*, a small house, was Mākereti's first home at Whakarewarewa. The only carving on it was a *koruru* (carved face) at the apex of the roof joists. A flagpole was added in 1904, whilst *kowhaiwhai* (painted panels) were added in 1905–06 to enhance its appearance.

*Tuhoromatakaka*, Mākereti's second residence, was commissioned in 1907 and completed in 1910. The main carvings were almost immediately removed and taken for use on display *whare* on concert party tours to Australia and the U.K. in 1909 - 11. The carvings followed Mākereti to England in 1912 when she married Richard Staples-Brown.



Pia Ngarotu, Mākereti's mother, wrapped in a *kahu haruru*, standing on the porch of *Tukiterangi* undivided back, sepia collotype, *Maggie's Home, Rotorua*, photography and publication by Arthur Iles, Iles' Kodak Store, 1903



Mākereti sitting on the porch of *Tukiterangi* with her dog, after the flagpole and *kowhaiwhai* panels were added.

Photogravure, *Maggie at home*, Parkerson's Series, printed in Saxony c1906



Mākereti, wrapped in a *kahu haruru*, wearing a 500 year old *pounamu* (greenstone) *hei tiki* around her neck and a rare *huia* feather in her hair, sitting on the porch of *Tukiterangi*

Photo taken before the name of the *whare* and the *kowhaiwhai* patterns were painted onto it in 1905-06.

Collotype, #4190 *Maggie, the Famous Guide of Whakarewarewa* Muir & Moodie, Series of Views, Printed in Germany, c1908

## Whare (home, houses)



*Tuhoromatakaka* upon its completion in 1910.

They were repatriated to New Zealand in 1947 and used in a *whareniui* (*Hinemihi II*) on the nearby *Hinemihimarae* at Ngapuna.

Embossed collotype, *Maggie's Carved House, Whakarewarewa NZ#R.7*, Gold Medal Series Fergusson Limited, Printed in Germany, c1910



Mākereti, wrapped in a tagged *korowai* posing by the main *pou* (post) on the porch of *Rauru*, a *whare* built for local hotel owner Charles E Nelson.

Real photocard, #476 *Maori Maiden* Industria series, Fergusson Ltd, 1908

Postally used March 1908



Mākereti

Two seasons at Clontarf, Sydney 1909 – 1911

The Coronation & World Tour

Late in 1909, Mākereti, her sister Ihapera (Bella) and Tuhourangi Ngati Wahiao leader Mita Taupopoki led a group of 50+ Maori from Whakarewarewa to Clontarf (Sydney, Australia) where they established a Maori village and provided concerts as a tourist attraction on behalf of the Balmain New Ferry Company. BNFC controlled the ferry access to the remote Clontarf location selling combination tickets (ferry and entry fee) from which Mākereti and her group were paid a share. A local photographer was commissioned to take photographs for postcards.



The group outside the wharenui *Te Arohanui o Tuhourangi* [The Love of Tuhourangi] they erected at Clontarf. Group includes one of NZ's first Maori MP's, Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck, back right).  
 Real photo, #13 Family Group, one of 2 recorded examples.  
 This image was also used promotionally in the 1910 Christmas Day edition of Sydney's *The Sun* newspaper

In 1911, along with Mita Taupopoki Makereti led a group of 25 who had been invited to participate in King George V's 1911 coronation celebrations. The plan was to take the group on a world tour after the Coronation exhibition.

Mākereti, appreciating the usefulness of postcards, as both advertising and tradeable souvenirs, arranged the printing of a set of 10 cards, on light card, depicting various members of the group in a range of poses.

As the exhibition wasn't financially successful the group was forced to travel and perform in local communities; advertising was printed onto the message side and they were mailed out to community leaders in advance of planned performances.

They were also invited to attend the Henley regatta where they paddled the *Te Arawa* waka.

The exhibitor published the first articles on these card issues  
 [Postcard Pillar #94, 2012 & #134 2022]



A group photo of 23, all of the group except Mita Taupopoki; Maggie in the front row, in a kiwi-feather *korowai* and her trademark cerise scarf. Includes all of the group except Aporo Taiawhio (who had died on the voyage over) and Mita Taupopoki.  
 The photos were on studio images, photography by Argent Archer, a recently bankrupt photographer. Published as multicolour letterpress cards by Miles of London, 1911.  
 The styling of the images gave a European look to the people, potentially to counter a general disaffection of the English people for indigenous subjects of other nations. This reduces facial definition making it hard to identify many of them.

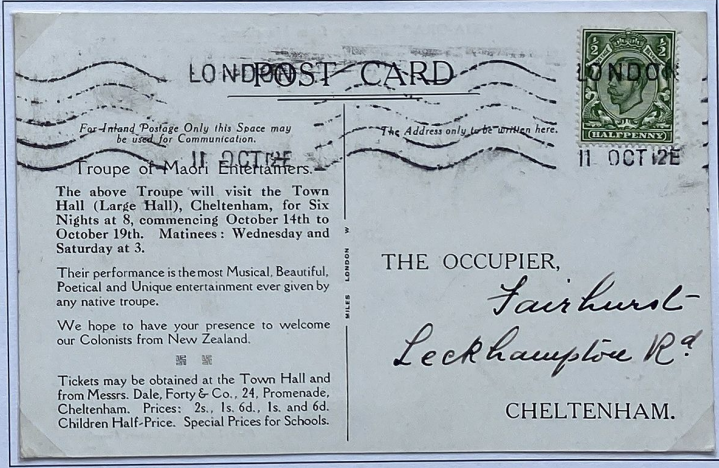


Makereti and sister Bella with a number of the younger women who were at Clontarf.  
 #16 Choir of Girl Singers, One of only 2 recorded examples

The real photo postcards were printed on local (Empire Trading Co) postcard stock to augment the NZ produced cards the Whakarewarewa group brought with them to sell.



The *Te Arawa* waka (canoe) paddled at Henley regatta in July 1911.  
 This event was the highlight of Henley that year and commanded significant publicity for the group.  
 Photogravure, R10 Maoris at Henley 1911, John Hawkins, UK, 1911



Example of advertising printed on reverse of card (same front as above right).



Mākereti

Following the negative reaction at Whakarewarewa to the Coronation tour in 1911 – 12 Mākereti moved to England where she married (and later divorced) Richard Staples-Brown. The marriage did not work out so well, with Mākereti returning to New Zealand for a period of 6 months in 1926, to visit family and recover following protracted divorce proceedings. In 1927, back in England, she commenced study at Oxford University but suffered a ruptured aortic artery and died in 1930. Mākereti was buried in Oddington Cemetery in the UK, much against the wishes of her whānau. A memorial carved by Tene Waitere was erected in Whakarewarewa and unveiled on 9 August 1931.



Mākereti, in a taniko bodice, piupiu (flax skirt, with a short feather korowai over her shoulders, standing in front of the carved doorway of Nuku Te Apiapi, Nelson's second carved whare.

Real photo postcard, photographed and published by Arthur Iles from a postcard series of guides all posed in front of this door, 1926

Iles and Mākereti had a long relationship so it is not unusual that he would capture the only image of her taken during her 1926 visit to New Zealand

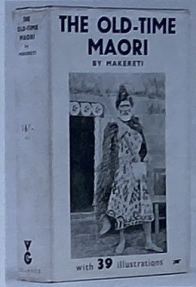
Mākereti's memorial at Whakarewarewa

The memorial now has two additional plinths added to it to commemorate; her son (William Francis Te Aonui Dennan) who died in 1942 and her daughter-in-law (Rangitīaria Dennan) who died in 1970.

Real photo

In Memory of the Famous Guide - Maggie Papakura, Rotorua Iles, Rotorua, 1932

Mākereti's uncompleted thesis was later published as a book *The Old-Time Māori* in 1938, leading to her recognition as one of New Zealand's foremost female ethnologists (her status enshrined in a 2022 *Women in Science* stamp issue).  
On 2 November 2022 Mākereti was recognised on the highest value of a New Zealand Post stamp issue "Women in Science" (below). The citation for her inclusion in the issue states:  
*Mākereti Papakura was an anthropologist whose posthumously published work, The Old-Time Māori (1938), is now widely acknowledged as the first published scholarly work of ethnography written by a Māori scholar.*  
A fitting epitaph for one of Maoridom and New Zealand's earliest leaders.



Bibliography

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- The Hot Lakes Guides, John Cresswell, MF Printer & L. Ion (2008)
- Mākereti Papers, Manuscript Collection, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK (visited 2019)
- KIA ORA – Greetings from Maoriland, Postcard Pillar #94, p5 - 6, Bruce Chadderton (Feb 2012)
- Postcards issued to support the Maori village at Clontarf in Sydney (1909 - 1910), Postcard Pillar #135, Bruce Chadderton (Feb 2022)