OTAKI HISTORICAL SOCIETY (INC.)

HISTORICAL JOURNAL VOLUME EIGHTEEN

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Editorial

The Otaki Historical Society is pleased to present its 18th Journal. When Rangiatea was burned down on 7 October the text had been printed, but a number of hands, Maori and Pakeha, put together an interim acknowledgement of Rangiatea. Its full significance must be left to a later time. We realised with some astonishment that although the graves of Rangiatea and its restoration in 1950 had been covered no substantial article had been written about the church itself. It was there with us.

With the resignation of Barbara Swabey from the committee an era has ended. Not only has Barbara written dozens of articles for the Journal but she was the mentor and advisor to all those involved in the publication; her dining room table was chartered every year as a layout bench, her sitting room was the setting of many a committee meetings and her collection of New Zealand history books an informal borrowing library.

The Journal has had three editors only - Rev Gordon Dempsey, who with this wife Helen Dempsey, was the prime originator of the Society, Ross Macpherson, who also became the first editor of the New Zealand Historical Societies' journal *Legacy*, and myself. There is no obvious successor on the horizon and the question of the Journal's future rises. The only certain project is the completion and issue of the index to the 18 Journals.

Should the Journal continue in its present form? Should the Society continue to publish, but in a different form, say smaller single topic monographs? Should the Society concentrate its energies on the further collection and proper storage of photographs? This will be discussed by the committee and recommendations made to the membership early next year.

In the meantime I am still astonished at the sense of its past that old established families of Otaki carry with them. Scratch an Otakian and you will find a historian. It has been an honour to be part of this continuous recording of an old town.

Margaret Long
Editor
31 October 1995