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EDITORIAL

WELCOME TO the twenty-fourth instalment of the *Otaki Historical Journal.*

If a museum is successfully established in Otaki (see the report in this issue) it will have stories to tell that rival those of any other district.

Inevitably, many of its themes would be about the effect of Maori/Pakeha interaction: trade, whaling, musket wars, the impact of Christianity, and the imposition of imperial rule. It would portray Kapiti/Horowhenua as a centre for the spread of European ideas and technology adapted by Maori to their own purposes and in their own ways.

The museum could demonstrate this in tangible things such as weapons and tools, clothing, housing, gardening and farming; but also in the realm of ideas, values and spirituality – in political ideas (such as the Maori King Movement), in religious movements and in educational experiments. These ideas and values are vigorously alive today in Te Wananga-o-Raukawa, the restoration of Raukawa marae, and the resurrection of Rangiatea Church.

In this Journal you will find echoes of such themes in the first group of articles, all relating to the fascinating years from 1847 to 1851. In them, our region and its people are viewed by an army engineer, by a group of schoolboys, and through the art of a naval captain.

In Pakeha history, an Otaki museum would portray the effects of the town's position astride New Zealand's main north to south routeway and of being within easy reach of the national capital. The former has determined the shape of Otaki; the latter has led to the setting up of many institutions that have served the needs of government and of the population of Wellington city. In this issue we visit a house that was built to cater for foot, horse and carriage travellers in 1848. We also discover that Bridge Lodge started its life to give poor families a respite from the urban blight of mid-century Te Aro.

Also in this issue we celebrate the lives of Otaki's most famous son and of its favourite doctor; record our last flaxmill and its founding family; and see our region through the eyes of a child on his way to school in 1914, and of a newly-fledged teacher in 1937.

And so, for the twenty-fourth time, Otaki Historical Society offers its annual window on the past. The writers and the editorial team hope that members of the society will spread the news to non-members – and that many non-members, wherever they may live, decide to become members!

'Things that have happened are always there, so long as someone knows about them.'

Penelope Lively, City of the Mind