

Mary Eleanor DELANEY  
Born 1849 Capetown

Died 1947 Hamilton N7

William  
Dormer  
Delaney  
1850 Capetown  
1907 NZ

LIFE ON THE FRONTIER

INCIDENTS NEAR OPOTIKI

The presence of Mrs Mary Eleanor Harrison, aged 87, of the Hamilton Age Beneficiaries Association social gathering on Thursday was of more than passing interest, for the guest has a very clear recollection of many interesting events in the early days. She came to New Zealand with her parents in 1861, and after a short period in Auckland the family went to Opotiki, where her father, Sir John Delaney, farmed for several years. Mrs Harrison was married in Auckland and then went to Wellington, afterwards returning to settle near Auckland, and then at Mercer, coming to Hamilton about 25 years ago.

Hauhau vs. Warpath

Mrs Harrison, in her recollections of the first few years of her life in New Zealand, talked of early pioneer life in the Bay of Plenty. How a breach of the discipline by her brother, a bugler in the militia stationed at the Waioeka redoubt, saved the infant settlement of Opotiki from almost certain annihilation during the Hauhau troubles that followed the Waikato War, is always a story listened to with keen attention. Mrs Harrison explained that one evening her brother, the late Mr William Delaney, was camped in the Waioeka Valley.

Although he was under orders not to leave camp he decided to visit his people in Opotiki township. He went to find his horse for the trip, and found it grazing a few hundred yards from the redoubt, but during his efforts to catch it a Maori, who had been hiding near by, sprang out at him. A fierce tussle ensued, and then the young bugler, realising his adversary was the stronger, broke away and dashed for the shelter of the redoubt. The Maori's companions held their fire, apparently in the expectation of catching him before he reached safety. Young Delaney gave the alarm and the militia took up their defensive positions.

Prompt Action

Residents in the township heard the firing that followed and they set about defensive action. Colonel St. John, officer in charge of the Opotiki defences, who had only arrived from Tauranga by the little steamer 'Sturt' that night, gathered a force to relieve the Waioeka redoubt, and soon had the Maoris fleeing for their lives. Mrs Harrison recalls that her brother, instead of being penalised for a serious dereliction of duty, was complimented for his action, which had probably saved the settlement from disaster.

On another occasion Mrs Harrison had an exciting escape. It was while travelling on horseback from Opotiki to Tauranga, accompanied by her brother and another companion. They had stopped overnight at Whakatane, intending to complete the journey next day; but heavy rain swelled the river Rangitaihi and the Kaituna and other streams. It was reluctantly decided by the two men to delay the departure from Whaka-

She said afterwards that she had a premonition that if they did not hurry along a party of Hauhau would attack them. So instant was she that her brother and their companion agreed to the journey being continued. The misgivings were well founded, for after their departure the boarding house at Whakatane where they had spent the night was attacked by a roving band of Maoris, who killed the occupants and burned the building. The journey to Tauranga was completed without any special incident.

On another occasion Mrs Harrison was refused permission to ride to Tauranga, and found out a few days later that a well-known settler, Mr Bennett White had been murdered by a Maori while crossing one of the streams on the journey. Such sudden raids by small bands of Maoris kept the settlers in a perpetual state of alarm and preparedness.

Michael W. NZ Herald 18 Sept 1937

DELANEY.—On September 16, at Auckland Infirmary, Michael Walter, of Veterans' Home; Maori War veteran; aged 80. Funeral from Veterans' Home 9 a.m. to-day (Monday).

VETERAN'S DEATH

MR. WALTER DELANEY

MAORI WAR SERVICE

A veteran of the Maori Wars, who had many interesting recollections of those stirring and historic times, Mr. Walter Michael Delaney, died at the Auckland Infirmary on Saturday at the age of 80. He used to claim to be the youngest Maori War veteran, for he saw action as a bugler at the age of 11, and when he took his discharge in 1877 as a youth of 21 he had had over 10 years' service.

His father, John D. Delaney, had served in the Kaffir War in Africa, being discharged on account of wounds. Later the wanderlust brought the family to New Zealand, John Delaney becoming Colonel Pitt's recruiting sergeant for the 1st Waikato Regiment.

As a regularly-recruited bugler, Mr. Delaney rode out at the age of 11 years with his father at the Waioeka Redoubt at Opotiki, when Kereopa made his raid. The following year he was attached as bugler to the Arawa force which went to Poverty Bay. In the ship St. Kilda he sailed to Poverty Bay, where he took part in the advance upon Ngatapu, Te Kooti's stronghold.

From Poverty Bay the boy soldier went to Taranaki, serving at the Nukumarua engagement. Later he was back in the Urewera Country during the chase after Te Kooti, and he ended his service in the Armed Constabulary.

One military episode of a quite irregular nature still remained for him. When Te Kooti was pardoned and granted his freedom, he proceeded toward Poverty Bay with a following, although his purpose was ostensibly peaceful. The Poverty Bay settlers were suspicious, and so determined were they that he should not again enter the country where he had wrought massacre, that they gathered a force to stop him at Motu, and in this force Mr. Delaney served.

The funeral will take place from the