

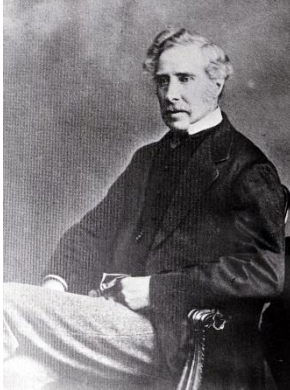
2. Countdown to war

The Government saw the movement as a threat rather than a partnership opportunity. Tensions were made worse by rumours that the Kingites were going to attack Auckland. Governor Gore Brown began building defensive positions around Auckland and amassing troops. This process was continued when Sir George Grey became governor in 1861.

His consolidated force consisted of:

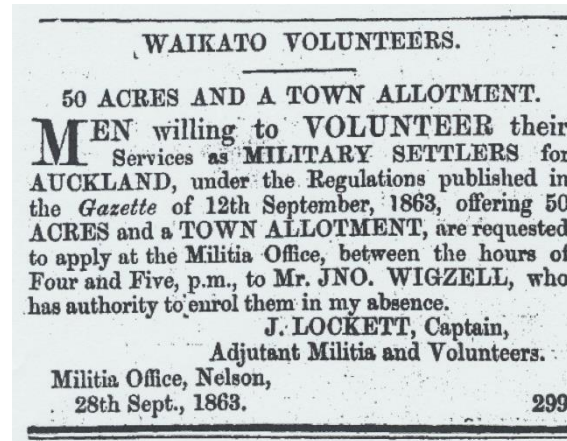
- Imperial (British) troops
- Sailors and marines
- Two units of regular colonial troops (the Colonial Defence Force and the auxiliary Forest Rangers under the leadership of William Jackson and Gustavus Von Tempsky)
- Auckland and Waikato volunteer militia
- Māori who sided with the Government.

Grey believed that an offensive would neutralise or destroy the Kingites and bring the added benefit of opening up the Waikato to European settlement. The fact that the Waikato militiamen enlisted to become military settlers with land grants at the end of the conflict, certainly indicates there was an expectation land would be confiscated.



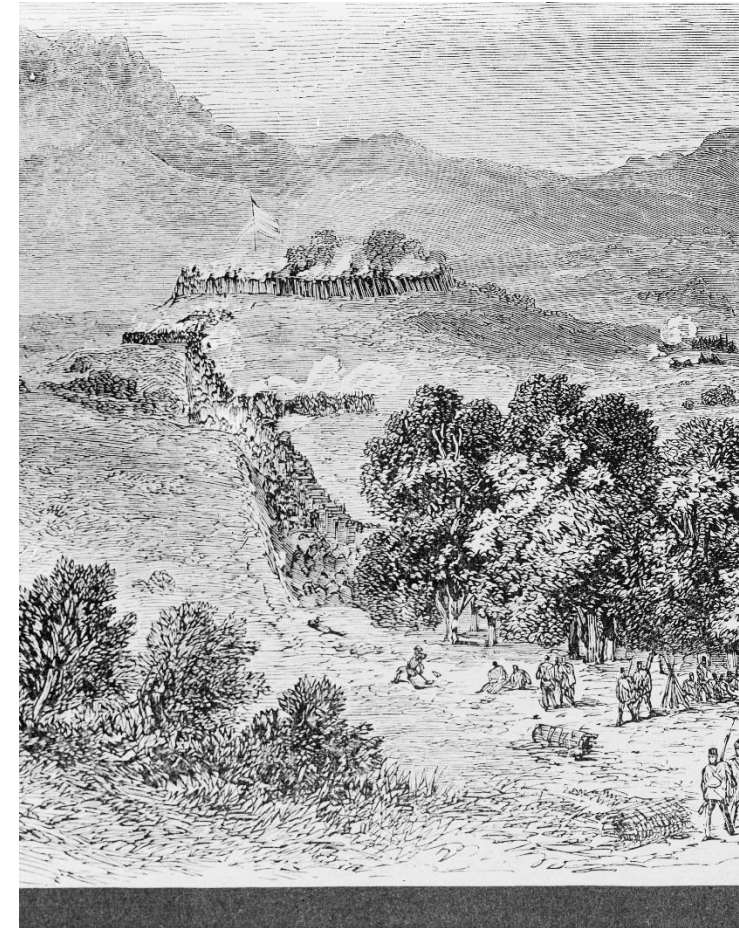
Sir George Grey
Te Awamutu Museum collection

It was the members of the 3rd Waikato Militia who were promised land, and encamped at Cambridge in 1864, who formed the beginnings of the town we know today.



Advertisements like this started to appear in the papers around New Zealand and in Australia in late 1863. This one is from a Nelson newspaper.

The Waikato Wars



Carey, George Jackson, (Colonel), 1822-1872. [Carey, George Jackson] 1822-1872 : Ōrākau pah ; taken by the British troops on the 2nd of April / [sketch by Brigadier-General G. J. Carey] - [London] ; Illustrated London News, 1864.

The years between 1845 and 1872 were strained by a series of conflicts between Māori and the colonial government. This was mainly due to the growing number of European settlers seeking to obtain land (by fair means and foul) from increasingly reluctant Māori landowners.

1. The Kīngitanga movement

As the conflicts spread, many tribal leaders believed the only way to stem the tide was to unite and create a political body overseen by their own 'king'. They envisioned that the Kīngitanga or King Movement would work alongside the colonial administration but have its own system of laws and maintain peace among Māori. The king's authority would extend over Māori lands south of the Mangatāwhiri River near Pōkeno. Wiremu Tamihana, who became known as the 'king maker', played a leading role in negotiating the formation of the Kingitanga movement. He was a Ngāti Hauā chief who became a committed Christian, and was a pacifist. As well as the land issue, Māori felt treated as second class citizens, seen as inferior by the British settlers, half of whom in 1857 were unable to read. Eventually Pōtatau Te Wherowhero reluctantly agreed to be King and was crowned in June 1858. Pōtatau died in June 1860 and was succeeded by his son, Tāwhiao.



Mounted photograph of King Tawhiao Matutaera Pōtatau Te Wherowhero
Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 258-1



Wiremu Tamihana
Cambridge Museum collection



Rewi Manga Maniapoto, of Ngāti Maniapoto, wearing a cloak and holding a mere, with huia feathers in his hair.
Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 7-A5893

3. The Waikato invasion

The Waikato War began in July 1863 after Governor Grey announced that armed posts would be established throughout the Waikato to maintain peace and order. Those who opposed the move and fought against the British would "forfeit the right to possession of their lands". On 12 July a British force, under the command of Lt General Cameron, left their base at Queen's Redoubt (Pōkeno), crossed the boundary into Kingite territory, and attacked Māori positions to the south. Despite a huge advantage in numbers and resources the invading troops (outnumbering Māori 4:1) were slowed by guerrilla attacks. As the troops slowly progressed south down the western side of Waipā, they met more determined and concentrated resistance. Rewi Maniapoto led the Māori attack against the Government forces. The Waikato Wars culminated with the attack on Rangiaowhia in February 1864 and the battle at Orākau (known as Rewi's last stand) in March 1864.



Gustavus von Tempsky of the Forest Rangers
Te Awamutu Museum collection



Major William Jackson of the Forest Rangers
Te Awamutu Museum collection