



TOP Archaeological excavations at Hohi mission station, the first permanent Pākehā settlement, founded in 1814. Excavation is a careful process of uncovering remains of past human activity by removing accumulated soil layers one at a time so that items recovered can be placed into a sequence of events. In this area of the Hohi site, archaeologists discovered the first school in New Zealand, opened in 1816 and demolished in 1824, and a subsequent building that was probably a storehouse (see Chapter 4).

Photograph by Ian Smith

BOTTOM LEFT A dark soil layer is exposed by erosion at Wairoa Bay, Bay of Islands. Shells and bones (midden) indicate that meals were prepared here; fragments of bottle glass in the upper centimetres indicate that this continued into the Early Colonisation Period. This site was almost certainly part of Te Pahi's village (see Chapter 3).

BOTTOM RIGHT A piece of black obsidian close to fragments of a Willow pattern plate and metal brackets at Te Puna mission station, Bay of Islands, points to continued use of traditional Māori stone-tool technology within the mission settlement (see Chapter 7). *Both photographs by Angela Middleton*

Introduction

Uncovering the Pākehā Past

Archaeology is often associated with the distant past in far off places: Egyptian pyramids, ancient temples in South America, Celtic or Roman ruins across Europe, all capture the imagination of journalists, novelists and film-makers. Or, through the lens of archaeological documentaries, there are fascinating glimpses of human origins in the bones and tools of our earliest hominid ancestors.¹

But archaeological discovery across the world is a much richer field than this: often local and immediate, and attentive to the recent as well as the remote past. Archaeology can uncover stories about the places we inhabit, through the artefacts, structures and landscape modifications hidden beneath our feet. Parts of those stories may be remembered through written documents, pictures and oral histories; archaeology adds to that narrative and sometimes challenges it, bringing its own kind of evidence and broad perspective. And sometimes it shows that our recent past is not as familiar as it might at first seem.²

In New Zealand, archaeological research has contributed significantly to our understanding of the origins and arrival of our first human settlers, the Polynesian voyagers who landed in these South Pacific islands in the thirteenth century. This book takes the archaeology narrative in a different direction, by examining the first nine decades after the indigenous Māori people were joined in these islands by new immigrants. These newcomers were predominantly of European descent, and those who stayed to live in New Zealand are generally referred to as Pākehā. (The term is used flexibly here to include also the early Europeans who came but did not stay, because of their role in the shaping of subsequent Pākehā settlement.)

The account begins in 1769 with the first non-Māori footfall on these shores and extends to 1860, by which time Pākehā were numerically dominant. This was a time of significant change, not only in the composition of the human population but also in the ways people utilised the resources of the land and sea, where and how they chose to live, and how and by whom they were governed. It was also a time of 'becoming', when new cultural patterns emerged as indigenous and immigrant groups were shaped by their interactions with each other.