

TO GOVERNMENT

UNDER SIEGE PART I

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rather than by a detached examination of alternatives. Another reason is a politically misplaced 'cultural sensitivity.'

There are numerous 'anomalies' in archaeology and anthropology that do not accord with orthodoxy. One example similar to the Rūmahanga skull is that of the 9,300 year old caucasoid Kennewick Man skeletal remains in America, which aroused controversy for many years because its ethnological origins were not of Amerindian descent, and therefore presented a challenge to the orthodox view of human settlement of the Americas. Native Americans claimed the bones belonged to them and wished to bury them, saying their cultural traditions forbade DNA testing. Eventually, a court ruling challenged the right of indigenous people of the present day to claim all remains on their land as their own and allowed scientists to study the skeleton. But even now, a simple wording change in the Native Graves Protection and Repatriation Act could see this, and other remarkable finds in North America, handed over to local tribes and lost.

Seeking help from the highest level

Academics from various universities in New Zealand who talk privately to veteran Northland researcher Noel Hilliam are astounded at his research material and indisputable evidence of habitation in early New Zealand. They encourage him to keep speaking out about the truth, but none will back him publicly. They are afraid to jeopardise their jobs and research funding by going against the relatively recent official belief that Polynesians were the first to settle in New Zealand. As more vital sites are poised to be forever lost as lands are handed over to Maori through Waitangi Tribunal settlements, Noel presses on. Thousands of people listen enthralled as he speaks to them at meetings throughout the country. In desperation, he has appealed for a media campaign to make more people aware of what is happening. He has written to Prime Minister John Key three times, urging that an Independent Commission of Inquiry be set up to protect our heritage. Finally, a reply came from Chris Finlayson, Minister of Arts, Culture and Heritage as well as Treaty of Waitangi Settlements, refusing an inquiry and referring Noel to a government website and material cited as "the latest evidence on these matters," not evidence, but theories put forward by selected historians, who dismiss all researchers and the clear evidence of those who hold a different view.

Noel comments: "You will learn the true early history of this country's earlier peoples from the Maori and original hand written records of the Land Court minute books. Those people based their recorded history on fact and had no reason to lie. The distortion of our history has come about over the last 30-40 years. When Governor Bowen came to the Northern Wairoa in the late 1860s, he met with 600 odd assembled Maori from all over Northland at Te Kopuru. He put it to those assembled the question of "who did these ancient skeletons belong to?" Maori replied they did not know who these early peoples were and to "do with them what you wish, they are not our people." This is recorded in Bowen's

papers and journals of the time, which can be read in the Alexander Turnbull Library. Around 60,000 of these skeletons were taken to Eden Mill in Auckland over three years and ground up for fertilizer - 'Bone Dust,' but there are still many more in sites around. They did not get them all." (The next episode in this series will feature Eden Mill.)

The government head is well and truly buried in the sand. Ministers clearly think of anyone with an opposing view as a crackpot and that denial and ridicule will make researchers like Noel go away. Noel is understandably reluctant to trust anyone connected with government bodies, after the disappearance of many important notified finds. Franklin elocal is proud to help him and others in their fight to save our country's heritage, with a series of articles revealing to our readers what we should all know. This is not a small, localised issue. Evidence uncovered has a huge impact nationally and internationally, on our entire understanding of the evolution of man. The power lies with public knowledge of what went before, so that when the global footprints are put together, a whole new picture opens up of human migration in past ages. We must ensure that our ancient footprints are not obliterated by an age of denial and ignorance.

Some of the archaeological evidence already lost has been listed by Noel, who has been compiling evidence of this country's earliest settlers since 1954 and is retired curator of Dargaville Museum. This list was in the letters sent to PM John Key and Chris Finlayson.

- 1) Waitaki River finds, 1860s of European skeletons, many of them found in European style graves buried face down—these remains are scattered through a lot of our universities in the country and as a news media report stated, were going to be given to Maori in August this year. These are not of Maori origin.
- 2) The heads that have been returned from overseas repositories given to the Maori without any scientific analysis being done, especially on the fair headed and red haired ones.
- 3) 24 Sept. 2005 between Patea and Hawera: skeletal remains unearthed in a swamp, wrapped in material not of flax and handed over to Maori. *Cont. Page 14*



Burial sites like this, containing Turehu skeletons, can only be photographed and kept hidden, in the absence of official protection and DNA testing for such finds