

Tararua – Pahiatua to Pukaha

Tararua – Pahiatua to Pukaha – Introduction

Te hekenga a tau is the Maori term for annual migration. We are starting our exploration of Ngati Hamua history within the Tararua area because this was where our tupuna spent the autumn/winter during their annual migratory cycle. It was a time of plenty because there was a lot of food. The berries were prolific, the birds were fat, the crops were stored and kai awa was safely preserved.

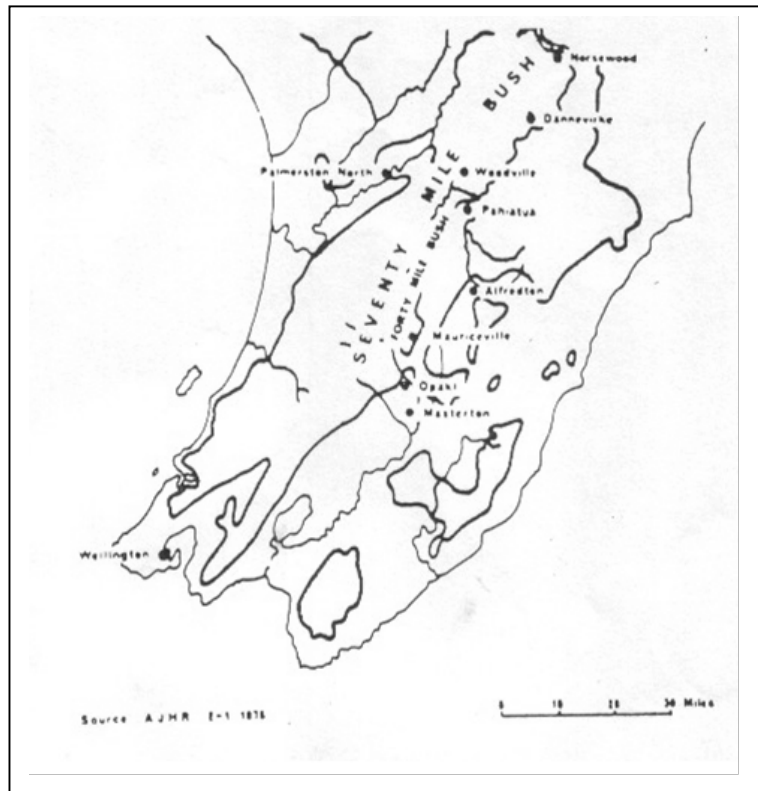
The 1876 map to the right shows Te Tapere Nui o Whatonga

Te Tapere Nui o Whatonga

Ngati Hamua moved through Te Tapere Nui o Whatonga for centuries, living in clearings while making use of resources.

It was still intact when Europeans first walked through the forest during the mid 1800s. Between 1872 and 1900 it was virtually destroyed. Only the 942 Mount Bruce reserve remained as a substantial remnant.

The following selection of extracts have been chosen to illustrate the forests grandeur and Ngati Hamua associations.



“Ngāti Hāmua and other hapū in its complex were spread throughout the Wairarapa, although centred east of the Tararua Ranges; from the Manawatū Gorge to Masterton, and eastwards to the coast.”

Ballara A, 1991 p217

“The vast area of bush westward to the Ruahine Ranges was about forty miles wide and seventy miles long, and this became the source of the name ‘Seventy-Mile-Bush’. The only access through it was by river or along tracks used for centuries by the Maori people who lived in or passed through the area.”

www.geocities.com/scandannevirke/danesarr.html 09/02/04

“In a report he stressed the fertility of the soil, the magnificent stands of Matai, Rimu, Tawa and Maire. One Rata was 66 feet in circumference and the trunk of another used by the Maoris [sic] as a sleeping place when travelling would comfortably accommodate eight to ten persons. The bush contained innumerable wild pigs, cattle, even horses while the pigeons perched in the trees like bees.”

Bagnall AG, 1976 p259

“So dense was the forest, that even in its clearest patches, the sky was seldom visible- with the result that travellers through it would often carry lanterns by which to see their way.”

McCallum A, 1985 p6

Te Raekaumoana

This story of the Rangitaane chief Te Raekaumoana is an important background to the naming of a number of important places within the Tararua area.

During the 1600s Te Raekaumoana lived at his pa Okahu on the Maungaraki ranges. His people were attacked and beaten at Okahu by the Ngati Kahungunu chief Rakairangi after they were wrongly blamed for killing a man called Te Aoturuki.

Te Raekaumoana had already left the pa after earlier receiving a vision. He called upon his guardian, Rongomai the giant eagle to carry him away so that he could plan his revenge.

The companions got as far as modern Pahiatua before parting ways. Te Raekaumoana went to his father n law Rangiwhaekawa at his home near modern Dannevirke and asked for help. They raised a war party which eventually defeated Rakairangi in a series of battles.

In this way both chiefs and their people were able to retain their mana by restoring a balance between them.

Pahiatua

As can be seen from the following material the site of Pahiatua was previously a village. The towns associations with Te Raekaumoana and Rongomai remain strong to the present.

Tangata whenua of the land have always called the area Keremutupou which means 'the water that flows through the buttocks of Rongomai'. The Keremutupou stream emerges from a spring in between two hills behind the town. It was the main water supply for tupuna and still flows through Pahiatua today

"The new Pahiatua hospital which was expanded in recent years has the name Waireka. The name 'Waireka' is in fact a reference to Rongomai and his "sweet running waters".

MH Gilbert-Palmer Wai166 statement of evidence 2004

"The Maori people first knew Pahiatua as Te Pahiatua and the stream meandering through the town was Keremutupo and Rongomai Hill at Rock Road Te Pane Atua. Pahiatua's founder Mr McCardle, was a friend of Koneke Pahiatua, a Maori chief, and it is probable that he named the town after his friend. Legend has it too, that Pahiatua, a camp or resting place of the spirit was named after the resting place of the atua who carried Rai-Kau Moana, a chief of the Rangitane tribe who escaped and fled when in 1625 the Ngāti-Rakairangi tribe broke into the lower Wairarapa and dispossessed the Rangitaane tribe. The atua had a permanent resting place at Rock Road, Te Pane Atua, where there was a cave 75 feet deep and six feet wide called Te Ana o Rongomai. This cave was later covered in by a major landslide. Maori settlement was the Ruawhata Pa at Ngawapurua on a rise on the Pahiatua side of the Manawatū River; Hāmua on the hillside behind the site of the old wooden church and Tutaekara on the main highway at Konini. The Tutaekara Pa was named Raupanui (blistered feet)."

Carle CJ, 1980 p38

Like many others the township was placed near an old Maori village and cultivation site. Our kaumātua tells us that the original name for this village was Te Pohatu. The wife of Te Whetuki, Te Kurukitangi, gave it this name. Te Whetuki was the younger son of Rangitaane.

Rimene J, *Pers Comm* 2004

Konini

Konini means fruit of the Kotukutuku. It is here that Te Ana o Rongomai (the sacred cave of Rongomai) was located prior to being buried by a landslide.

“The delay in final purchase of this block can perhaps be attributed to the presence of several sacred places and Pa sites within the area. At Konini one of the sacred places was given the name ‘Pahiatua’ which means ‘abode or resting place of the god or spirit’. Whatever reason for his reluctance, Mikaera Te Rangiputara of Tutaekara, a high chief of the Rangitān tribe, was among several chiefs who would not sell.”

Bentley BJ, 1980 p7

Te Pane Atua

Konini was also known as Te Pane Atua because when tupuna were coming up the adjacent Mangahao river they could see the faces of four atua etched into the rock around Te Ana o Rongomai.

Tutaekara

Tutaekara kainga was located 1 Kilometre south of the State Highway 2 Mangamaire Road junction. Tutaekara is a shortened version of Te kara o te tu tae maire (the nice smell of the mire juice in the belt). The tu was a belt worn around the waist and containing the sweet scented juice of the maire and titoki. www.eketahunakiwicountry.co.nz

The meeting house at the once busy kainga was called Raupani which means blistered feet. The specific hapu of Tutaekara was called Ngāti Te Kapuarangi. Today the name Te Kapua o Te Rangi has been given to the Kohanga Reo at Pahiatua.

Image: Tutaekara Pa archive photo

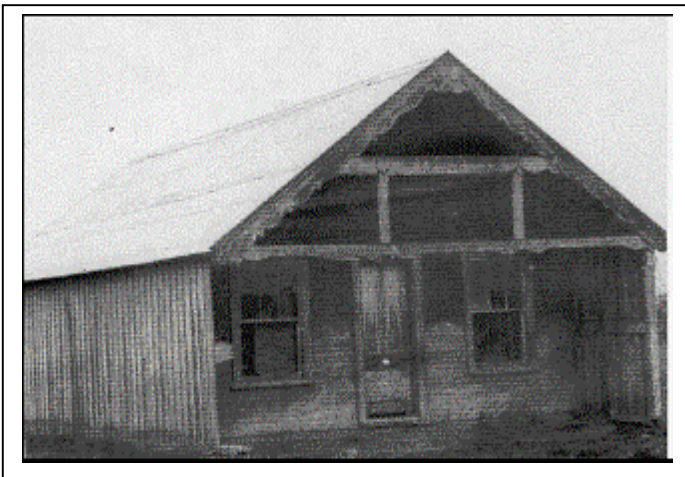


Image: Site of Tutaekara 1km south of SH2 junction



Te Hawera

The Hawera clearing and kainga was used as a winter residence by Ngati Hamua people for centuries. Entering the 1900s a township called Hawera was a thriving place but one with an ongoing problem. Mail kept being delivered to Hawera in Taranaki. The towns leaders asked local chief Nireaha Tamaki for help and so he renamed the town Hamua after his ancestor.

Today the remains of Hamua can be seen on State Highway 2 in between Eketahuna and Pahiatua. Although only a hall, and converted church are the only visible buildings.

“In 1846 William Colenso visited Hāmua village which was in a small clearing with a number of huts belonging to people of the Rangitaane tribe who once owned or claimed practically the whole of the Wairarapa. They had had troubled times in the previous generations and had only recently returned to occupy Ihuraua and Hāmua under a chief called Karepa Te Hiaro who died November 1849.”

Perry J, Pers Comm 2002



Image above: Portrait of Nireaha Tamaki

Nireaha Tamaki

Nireaha Tamaki was a Ngati Hamua chief who was born in the 1830s. By the time he died in 1911 he had become one of the most influential men of his time.

As a child he was instructed by knowledgeable kaumatua which once grown up saw him become recognized as an expert in tribal history

His efforts to fight to retain land on behalf of his people are still recognized internationally because he took a case to the Privy Council in England and eventually won.

He was also an entrepreneur having run a ferry at Ngawapurua, a bar at Hamua and several businesses within his peoples domains.

Image right: Nireaha's marae Te Poari (The Board)

and whareniui Te Mihi ki a te Kuiui

Inset: The Te Poari site today



Eketahuna

The town of Eketahuna was a Papakainga. The word Eketahuna means to run aground on a sandbank. The name refers to the fact that waka could go no further up the Makakahi (stream of freshwater mussels) stream than behind Eketahuna.

There is an old pa site called Otukirihau at the northern end of the town.

The following extract comes from an 1853 report from surveyor W Mein Smith to Commissioner of Crown lands Donald McLean

“here we found ourselves on the edge of a high bank, the river running below us and we soon emerged from the bush onto a piece of open land nearly square in form, containing from ten to twelve acres covered with fern and koromiko. This place is called Eketahuna...”

www.mtbruce.org.nz/colenso_40milebush.htm

retrieved 17 September 2008

Waiwaka

Waiwaka is south of Eketahuna. A bridge that crosses the Makakahi river is identified as Waiwaka.

When travelling south Te Waiwaka was the last Papakainga before moving into Te Kauru, the upper Ruamahanga valley.

The word Waiwaka is a misspelling of Wi Waaka who was a Ngati Hamua chief that had a cultivations and kainga in the area. He is also recorded as having helped early settlers.

An equally appropriate meaning for the name is Te Waiwaka or wet canoe



Image Hapuakorari The lost lake of the Tararua'

Hapuakorari

Hapuakorari means The lake of the flax sticks but is also known as the lost lake of the Tararua's

Legend describes it as the pulse of Te Ika A Maui because its gold and diamond covered bottom shimmered down into the valley as sunlight pierced its crystal clear waters. The Hokio (Haasts Eagle), Huia, Kokako and Kaka lived around its edges. Giant two headed tuna swum around surrounded by giant flax and ancient trees. It's location in the Tararua mountains near the headwaters of the Ruamahanga awa meant that it gave off special energy. Only tohunga could visit the lake.

Later written and oral history reveals how the lake was used as a place of refuge, rest place and as a communications post to warn people in the valley of impending danger.

Due to the stories of the lake and possibly because Maori would not disclose its location by the later 1800s adventurous pakeha launched expeditions to find it. Curiosity got to the point where monetary rewards were offered to anyone who could find Hapuakorari.

Pukaha

Pukaha Pu = wind, kaha = strong. The mountain Pukaha was once one of many that were used for hunting birds, fishing and gathering berries within Te Tapere Nui O Whatonga. But it was also important as a navigation point when moving northward up the valley. The Maori land referred to in the following quote are the Makirikiri blocks at Hastwell.

Today, this forest remnant serves as a poignant reminder of the great forest that once existed. Pukaha Mount Bruce (PMB) is one of only three significant remnants of this dense lowland podocarp forest; and at 700m it stands as a significant landscape feature...

In the 1870s the Crown purchased the greater part of the Seventy-Mile Bush and the bush was subsequently surveyed, sold and cleared. The PMB block (942 hectares) was retained as Forest Reserve; bounded by Māori land across the north-eastern boundaries, and otherwise by farms in private ownership."

Field D, 2003 pp3-4

Other place names

Kaiparoro Kaiparoro was a loud and violent wind from the ranges, that was followed by heavy rain which usually caused flooding in the Kaiparoro and Rongokokako area. Kai = eat, paroro = the wind.

"Ka hu te paroro, paroro kuri, ka kai, ka waipuke te whenua."

"The howling dog of paroro that eats the land, when you hear the howling dog move to high ground, paroro is hungry."

Nireaha Nireaha was named after Nireaha Tamaki

Rongomai Rongomai is one of the old gods of this area.

Mangamaire Mangamaire = maire river.

Mangatainoka Manga = river, tainoka = native broom shrub.

Ihuraua Full name: Te tutakitanga o raua ihu (the meeting place of their noses).

Putara Full name: Te hau tangi putara (the wind that cries like the trumpet). Putara = trumpet. www.eketahunakiwicountry.co.nz/information retrieved 17 September 2008

Makuri Ma = white, kuri = dog

Moroa Moroa means a big wide clearing. Today it is known as Alfredton

Teawahanui Teawahanui means the big bow and in this instance refers to a small stream near the Opaki Kaiparoro Road - Dorsetts Road conjunction, south of Mauriceville village. At this place the Kopuaranga River used to arch in a wide bow prior to being diverted for roading. Today there are pre European earthworks and storage pits near here.

Tawera Tawera is the name of the mountain to the west of Mount Bruce. The State Highway 2 road cutting bisects the two mountains.