

Who are Rangitāne o Wairarapa?

***Ko Rangitūmau te maunga
Ko Ruamahanga te awa
Ko Kurahaupo te waka
Ko Rangitāne te iwi
Ko Ngāti Hāmua te hapū matua
Ko Te Ore Ore te marae***

Rangitāne o Wairarapa are an iwi whose home is in the Wairarapa Region of the North Island of New Zealand.

Rangitāne are the descendants of a man whose name was Rangitāne although sometimes he is known as Tanenuiarangi.

Rangitāne's father was Tautoki and his mother was Te Waipuna who was a granddaughter of the famous explorer Kupe.

Rangitāne's grandfather and Tautoki's father was Whatonga the captain of the ancestral waka Kurahaupo. Tautoki's mother was Reretua who was Whatonga's second wife.

Whatonga's first wife was Hotuwaipara. They had a son called Tara-ika. Tara-ika became the leader of an iwi called Ngāi Tara.

The people on the Kurahaupo waka stopped on the Mahia peninsular in the Hawkes Bay region before spreading out across the Lower North Island and top of the South Island.

At some unknown point in time the descendants of Whatonga started to use Rangitāne as their main iwi ancestor.

Rangitāne's children, grandchildren and so on became so large in number that they called themselves after more recent ancestors.

One of Rangitāne's great great grandchildren was a man called Hāmua. Hāmua was a special person because even today the main hapū of Rangitāne o Wairarapa is Ngāti Hāmua. A carving of Hāmua sits on top of the meeting house Ngā Tau E Waru at Te Ore Ore marae near Masterton. Te Ore Ore is Rangitāne o Wairarapa's main marae.

Ngāti Hāmua is a very large hapū with thousands of people today being able to show that Hāmua is an ancestor of theirs. Ngāti Hāmua's main rohe or land goes from the Waingawa River to the top of the Tararua mountain range north to in line with Pukaha Mount Bruce then to the far side of the Ruamahanga River valleys eastern hills then south to where the Ruamahanga and Waingawa River's meet.

Ngāti Rangihwakaewa are the main hapū of the land between Pukaha Mount Bruce, right up to Dannevirke. It is named after Te Rangihwakaewa who was the great great great grandson of Hāmua.

Ngāti Te Rangiwakaewa and many more hapū were all a part of a bigger Ngāti Hāmua family. Ngāti Hāmua also has places outside of the main areas but these are amongst the main lands of other hapū.

The people of Rangitāne o Wairarapa have lived in the Wairarapa Region continuously for hundreds of years. There was a time in the 1800s when the early European settlers came to New Zealand that not many of these new people including the government cared too much about details like who Māori were or how long they had lived at a place.

The new people wanted to set up a country that suited them and so many Māori lost their land, their culture and even their health. Rangitāne was affected too but a group of kaumātua decided to change this and so set up Rangitāne o Wairarapa in the 1980s. Since that time Rangitāne o Wairarapa has been very busy teaching Rangitāne tikanga, history, language, arts and helping all sorts of people.



