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Kupe		
	<p>Kupe was a rangātira, a great fisherman who lived in Hawaiiki. Surrounding Kupe's settlement were the traditional fishing grounds where Kupe and his tribe caught their fish. When the moon and tides were right, the fishermen headed out to sea and always returned with waka laden with fish of all colours and sizes-gifts from Tangaroa and Hinemoana which the whole tribe celebrated. The people gathered at the shoreline to greet them when they returned, to divide the catch so that each whanau had an even share.</p> <p>One morning when the fishermen lowered their lines at one of their favourite fishing grounds, they didn't get the expected tug on their lines. Instead, when they pulled their lines from the water, their bait had vanished. This continued through the morning and into the day, and not one fisherman caught a single fish. This had never happened before. Many of the tribe were upset when they returned. They secretly accused the fishermen of disrespecting Tangaroa and therefore causing their misfortune.</p> <p>Once Kupe had considered the happenings of the day, a hui was called. The whole island gathered around the evening fire to discuss the fate of their village. Kupe firstly spoke of his respect for the sea, of Tangaroa and Hinemoana, and how they had sustained their village since time began. Kupe also spoke of the fishermen who had generously fed and looked after their tribe since he was a young man, and how respected they were within the whanau. He committed himself to finding out exactly what had happened.</p> <p>Early the next morning, Kupe and the fishermen lowered their lines at their favourite fishing grounds only to have their bait taken as had happened the day before. Kupe tried reciting a karakia that would draw fish to his line, but when he pulled it from the depths of the ocean, his bait was gone.</p> <p>Kupe noticed a slimy substance covering his hook and recognised it as belonging to an octopus. He knew it would be useless to continue fishing and ordered the others to pull their lines from the water. Once more they headed back to shore empty handed.</p> <p>That evening Kupe set out to the other side of the island where a chief called Maturangi resided. Kupe knew that Maturangi had a pet octopus renowned for its huge size and influence in the sea world. Kupe described to Maturangi what had been happening at their fishing grounds, stating that it was the work of an octopus. He asked if perhaps Maturangi's pet could possibly know who was responsible.</p> <p>Maturangi looked at Kupe and laughed, "I don't tell my pet when to eat or what to eat. If it chooses to eat your bait or your fish for that matter, then that's what it does." Maturangi asked Kupe to leave.</p> <p>"Then I will slay your pet, Te Wheke o Maturangi, and it will never trouble my people again," Kupe stated as he left.</p> <p>"Unless it kills you first," was Maturangi's reply.</p> <p>Kupe gathered his people and began to build a canoe, a large ocean going canoe, which he called</p>	

Matahorua. When the vessel was complete, Kupe stocked it with supplies, readying it for a lengthy sea journey. Kupe's wife, Hine-te-Aparangi, their whānau, and many warriors and fishermen from the tribe boarded the new canoe and set out on their journey.

Te Wheke o Muturangi's tentacles broke the surface of the water first searching blindly for food, each one of its arms much longer than Kupe's waka. A tentacle with huge suckers gripped onto the side of their waka, threatening to capsize it. Kupe grasped his mere and slashed at the tentacle, cutting a huge hunk from its flesh. The wheke thrashed its arms in agony but Kupe struck out again. Te Wheke o Muturangi's enormous head emerged from the sea looming over the waka, as the warriors continued to attack the huge tentacle. Kupe pointed his mere at the wheke and chanted a spell, ensuring it would never again be able to dive to the depths of the ocean and hide.

Te Wheke o Muturangi was forced to flee across the surface of the sea. Kupe ordered his warriors into their sailing positions and the chase was on. The chase continued for weeks, across the vast Pacific Ocean. Kupe was running out of supplies and still Te Wheke o Muturangi managed to keep a distance between them. Finally, one morning Hine-te-Aparangi saw a long cloud in the distance, a sign that land was near. Hine-te-Aparangi named the land, Aotearoa, land of the long white cloud.

Hine-te-Aparangi, Kupe, and the whole whānau were amazed by the beauty of the new land they discovered. The stories they'd known as children of Maui fishing a great land from the sea were true.

Kupe landed his waka on the east coast of Aotearoa. His people explored the new land and gathered much needed supplies. Kupe took his dog, Tauaru, across land to the Hokianga harbour. They left footprints in the soft clay while walking around the shoreline. Over many years the footprints turned to stone and have remained there to this day.

When Kupe returned, the pursuit resumed down the east coast of the North Island to Rangiwahakaoma (Castle Point), where Te Wheke o Muturangi sought refuge in a cave known as Te Ana o te Wheke o Muturangi.

Kupe realised the wheke was trapped, but because it was late in the evening, he decided to wait for dawn before launching an attack. During the night Te Wheke o Muturangi slipped, undetected, through the black water of the night and back out into the open sea.

Kupe continued the chase, down the east coast until arriving at a huge open harbour, Te Whanganui-ā-Tara (Wellington Harbour). Kupe's whānau rested at the head of the fish, as Kupe and his warriors continued on the wheke's trail.

Kupe sailed into Te Moana o Raukawa (Cook Strait), a turbulent and potentially dangerous stretch of water between the North Island and South Island of Aotearoa. Knowing the turbulent waters would be an advantage to the wheke, Kupe chased it into the calmer waters of Totaranui (Queen Charlotte and Tory Sounds). Because of the many waterways and islands around those areas the pursuit continued for many days.

Kupe finally caught Te Wheke o Muturangi at the entrance to Te Moana o Raukawa from Totaranui, and the great sea battle began. The wheke lashed out with its huge tentacles at Kupe's canoe. Kupe and his warriors manoeuvred their canoe to avoid being overturned. Bracing himself with his legs, Kupe struck at the tentacles with his mere, but the giant wheke fought back, smashing another of its arms into the side of the canoe causing a huge gaping hole in the hull. Kupe threw a bundle of gourds overboard which the wheke mistook for a person and attacked. Kupe then jumped from his canoe onto the back of the giant

wheke and struck a fatal blow to its head. Te Wheke o Muturangi was finally defeated.

The eyes of Te Wheke o Muturangi were placed on a rock nearby, which to this day is called Ngā Whatu (The Brothers).

During Kupes long absence, Hine-te-Aparangi and her whanau were worried that Kupe had been slain by Te Wheke o Muturangi and would never return. Matiu and Makaro, his two mokopuna, slashed their breasts with shells as a mark of mourning. Their blood stained the rocks where they stood. These rocks are near the entrance to Te Whanganui-ā-Tara harbour, and are now named Pariwhero (Red Rocks).

Kupe did return safely to his whanau at Te Whanganui-ā-Tara after successfully defeating Te Wheke o Muturangi. They all travelled further up the west coast of Te Ika a Maui (The North Island) naming many places as they went, finally settling in the Hokianga to replenish their supplies and to ready themselves for their return to Hawaiiiki.

Te Wheke o Muturangi, which was thought of as a bad omen, had lead them to a new land they now called Aotearoa, a land Kupe knew future generations would call home.

This is the story of Kupe and the Giant Wheke.

From: <http://eng.mataurangamaori.tki.org.nz/Support-materials/Te-Reo-Maori/Maori-Myths-Legends-and-Contemporary-Stories/Kupe-and-the-Giant-Wheke>



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Whātonga	
	<p>One day Whātonga captain of the Kurahaupo waka, from whom the Rangitāne iwi descend, went on a fishing trip to Te Mātau-a-Māui (Cape Kidnappers), the fishhook of Maui, where he caught many fish. In his kete there was a nohu (rock cod) that his wife Hotuwaipara cut her finger on. The couple's first child was named Tara Ika after this event to remind Whātonga of the accident. At this point Whātonga set off again on a journey of exploration. This time he travelled down the East Coast of the North Island, to the top of Te Waipounamu (South Island), Wellington and up the west coast until he came to the mouth of the Manawatu River. Following the river inland he came upon an extensive area of forest that became known as Te Tapere Nui o Whātonga (Seventy-Mile or Forty-Mile Bush) or the great district of Whātonga.</p> <p>He had been away for a lengthy period of time by now and was thinking about his home and family. As he walked out of the forest into a clearing the clouds overhead parted revealing two peaks on a mountain range. His thoughts turned to his two wives Hotuwaipara and Reretua, imagining that the mountains represented their reclining bodies and so called the mountains Tararua after his two wives. Following this event Whātonga began the long walk home to Heretaunga.</p>



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Haunuihanaia	
	<p>Popoto and his wife Nanaia had a son called Haunuihanaia who was the ancestor of the Te Ati Hau a Paparangi people of the Whanganui region. Haunui had reason to pursue his errant wife Wairaka who had run off with a slave. He set out from his home at Te Matau a Maui following the path of Wairaka and her lover across the island and down the west coast. After exacting his revenge he decided to go home via the East Coast. Haunui named many of the landmark features that he came across during his journey.</p> <p>He started back towards Te Mātau a Maui. He climbed a high mountain and on reaching the top he sat down to rest. There he thought about what he had done. He named the mountain Remutaka - 'to sit down'. It is now known as Rimutaka. As Haunui sat there he saw a lake before him. When he looked towards the lake the reflection of the sun caught his eyes and made them water. It was this incident that led to the name - Wairarapa. It was not so much the glistening water but the reflection of the sun that caught his eye and made them water. The full saying is found in a number of old waiata that have been left behind, 'ka rarapa ngā kanohi ko Wairarapa' – his eyes sparkled hence Wairarapa.</p> <p>After resting a while Haunui stood up and saw in the distance, at the northern end of the valley, a high mountain standing alone. He concentrated on this mountain as a navigational landmark and named it Rangitūmau - meaning 'standing up to the sky' or alternatively 'holding up the sky'. Haunui descended Remutaka and travelled into and up the valley. At the first river he came to he discovered a whare or maemae, the walls and roof of which were thatched with Nikau Palm leaves. He named this river Tauwharenikau - 'the house made of nikau'.</p> <p>At the next river crossing he sat down on a bank to rest and as he looked down into the water he imagined he could see Wairaka's face which made him sad. This river he named Wai o Hine Wairaka – 'water for his woman' referring to the tears he shed. We know it today as the 'Waiohine' that passes just north of Greytown. He named the next river - Waiāwangawanga, āwangawanga meaning uncertain or troubled because the river appeared to go in all directions with many bends. We know this river today as Waingawa and it still retains its many braided channels.</p> <p>At the next river he tested the depth with his tokotoko/walking stick and gave it the name Waipoua. Another term for tokotoko is pou and wai is water. The final river that Haunui named was Ruamahanga meaning 'twin forks' which can refer to the many tributaries that join the river or also to a waka-inuwai (bird snare trough) that he found placed in a fork in a tree by the river.</p>

Haunui returned home on his god Rongomai, a giant eagle that is today seen in the form of a meteor, but before doing so visited Rangitūmau to look back over the land he had come from.



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Ngarara Huarau

This is the story of a taniwha called Ngarara Huarau who was also called Mokonui. The story happened near the Ruamahanga River in the Gladstone area, southeast of Masterton.

Ngarara Huarau was a huge lizard that originally lived in a cave at a place called Marokotia which is in the Pacific Ocean. He became fed up with his life and decided to visit his sister who lived in the Wairarapa valley. As he was leaving some of his scales rubbed on the rough edges of his cave and it is said that these became Tuatara.

So he ventured across Te Moana nui a kiwa in search of his sister Parakawhiti. When he knew he was close he turned up the Pahoa River and followed it until he reached the Wainuioru River. He then turned into the Marumaru stream until he reached a place called Mauri-oho where upon he jumped to the top of the Maungaraki Mountain.

Feeling weary Ngarara Huarau found a place to hide from which he could satisfy his mighty appetite. Unfortunately for the local Ngai Tara people the taniwha craved for human flesh. Many vicious and fatal attacks occurred thereafter with the place being called Hautua-pukurau o Ngarara Huarau. Once his appetite was satisfied the taniwha moved down to Te Ana o Parakawhiti, The cave of his sister Parakawhiti.

By now the people living within the vicinity of the deaths were aware of the cause of their losses and determined to rid themselves of the vile creature. While they tried to offer the taniwha gifts their efforts were to no avail. Instead more and more people went missing.

The people employed a famous warrior named Tupurupuru to destroy the taniwha. Tupurupuru and a handpicked group of aids soon worked out that Ngarara Huarau had made himself a lair above the Kourarau stream. Upon inspection the track to the lair was found to be narrow and lined with kahikatea trees. It was time to employ a plan that would rid the people of the monster.

At the cost of a number of unfortunate warriors the trees bordering the track to the taniwha lair were cut almost through. This took some time but when the trap was set the plan was put into action. Tupurupuru

sat observing the movements of Ngarara Huarau until one day the taniwha returned to his home tired from a days plundering of villages down on the flats by the Ruamahanga River. Once he was sure that the creature was fast asleep inside his lair Tupurupuru moved stealthily up to the entrance and there tethered his dog.

The brave man had immediately turned and ran as fast as he could back down the track. Upon seeing its master leave the dog raised a din that awoke the monster from a deep sleep. This disturbance incensed the taniwha so that he rose to destroy the source of the noise. As the dog was only loosely tied it broke free and ran off in the same direction as its master, with the taniwha closely behind. The monsters massive tail twitched like an angry cat swaying to and fro as he thundered down the valley. In the process the huge kahikātea began to topple all around the monster so that the great weight of many trees crushed Ngarara Huarau. While he was not immediately killed his injuries were grievous. This provided Tupurupuru and his men with the chance to chase the mortally wounded creature to the Uwhiroa swamp where he became stuck in the soft ground. Eventually he sank below the surface, breathing his last breath in the process. The remains of Ngarara Huarau the villainous taniwha lie beneath Uwhiroa to this day.

Some people say that Ngarara did die on straight away. They say that the limestone cliffs at Kourarau are his some of his bones and the hills are his outstretched toes.



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Te Aitu-o-te-Rangi	
	<p>Te Aitu-o-te-Rangi was born about 1820 and was the daughter of a chief - Te Whatahoronui. Her people were of Ngāti Moe at Papawai, in the Wairarapa - a hapū (sub tribe) of Rangitāne and Ngāti Kahungunu. Her parents and grandfather, Muretu, lived at Te Ureta, Waka-a-paua and Wharehanga - areas situated on the western side of the Ruamahanga River near present day Martinborough.</p> <p>Te Aitu-o-te-Rangi means “misfortune of the sky”. It has been told that the day she was born the sky was red/orange in colour.</p> <p>When Te Aitu was about 14 years old the mighty warlord Te Rauparaha led an invasion on the Wairarapa and killed the chief, Te Whatahoronui. Te Aitu and a cousin, Wī Kingi Tū-te-pakihi-Rangi, were captured and taken as slaves on Kapiti Island. Being of high born status Te Aitu was forced to become one of Te Rauparaha's slave wives.</p> <p>Two years had passed and a European named John Milsome Jury came across a chance meeting with Te Aitu while whaling in NZ. He was immediately spell-bound by the now beautiful 16 year old slave princess. The feeling was mutual and the couple concocted a plan to escape from Kapiti Island and flee to Te Aitu's ancestral homelands.</p> <p>One night when it was very dark John Jury stole a small whaleboat from the ship he had sailed in on and rowed to a pre-arranged meeting place to collect Te Aitu. Both of them manned the oars, and together they pointed the boat across Cook Strait towards Palliser Bay.</p> <p>All night they rowed determined to reach their destination. At last the wind changed to the south and John was able to hoist a makeshift sail. Into the big southern bay they sailed, with Te Aitu pointing the way</p>

towards the Lake Onoke bar.

To young John it seemed like they were headed for certain disaster, but as they neared the coast, sure enough the bar was open and in they sailed through. To John Jury's further surprise the little lake gave way to the huge, shallow expanse of the shimmering Lake Wairarapa. Te Aitu urged her whaler on until at last they came to the entrance to the Ruamahanga River.

Meanwhile, back at Kapiti Island an enraged Te Rauparaha had awakened to find his beautiful captive missing. He immediately assumed she had escaped and her intentions would be to head towards her homeland. The warlord summoned 60 of his most ferocious warriors, launched his big war canoe and seating himself in the stern, pointed his big canoe towards Cape Turakirae . The 60 paddles dipped in accelerating unison and were gaining on the little whaleboat. However, they were unlucky on approach to the Onoke bar, for the turbulence threw many warriors overboard and they were drowned. But despite this Te Rauparaha commanded his warriors to continue the pursuit.

The lovers and their whaleboat had scarcely reached the comparative safety of the Ruamahanga River when they were terrified to hear across the still waters of Lake Wairarapa the triumphant paddling song of the Ngāti Toa - Te Rauparaha's war canoe.

In desperation, Te Aitu directed John to leave the main channel and pull into a quiet backwater behind a little totara-clad island. The boat was beached, screened by a tangle of fallen trees, and the occupants quickly hid in the thick bush at the waters edge.

Nearer came the throbbing chant as the warriors drove the big canoe on. Breathlessly the pair waited amongst the trees - wondering if their pursuers would take the channel.

Trembling, Te Aitu clung to her whaler as Te Rauparaha and his war canoe sped past their island refuge and on up the river.

For three days they dared not light a fire, nor even scarcely move lest their wily enemy was lying in wait for them.

Then, to their immense relief, they spied the big canoe drifting silently down river. In the stern sat a sullen Te Rauparaha looking neither to the left nor right, as empty handed he made his way back to Kapiti Island.

With the danger past Te Aitu showed John the way up the Ruamahanga and into the Waiohine River. Coming ashore at the Kuratawhiti clearing. At last they were at their destination - Te Aitu's ancestral homelands. She gestured to the land around them and explained to John that what was hers was his and she offered this for their future home.

Te Aitu then went to an aged totara stump and took from it a flax kete (woven basket) containing a greenstone hoe which her people had hurriedly placed there before fleeing from Te Rauparaha's invasion. This was a tangible symbol of family ownership.

John Jury and Te Aitu-o-te-Rangi married and had four children. The first was Hoani Te Whatahoro, who recorded many tribal traditions, laments and songs. A daughter, Annie Eliza Te Haereaute, who married Joseph Oates, was born in 1846, and another son, Charles Joseph Te Rongotumamao, in 1850. A male child, born in 1854, did not survive.

Te Aitu died in the 1850s, probably in 1854. There are several different accounts of her death. The most

likely one suggests that she caught measles during the epidemic which swept through the east coast districts of the North Island towards the end of April 1854. Charles Bidwill made her coffin and she was buried either at Ngapuke or Waitapu, old villages near Martinborough.

John Jury farmed and continued to farm Waka-a-paua after Te Aitu died by right of his wife's claim to her ancestral land. John Jury died on 6 August 1902 at his daughter's house at Taumata.

The Princess & the Come-ashore Whaler - A legend from the 1830s by Frank Fyfe



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Hāpuakorari – The lost lake of Tararua

Heading southwest from Pukaha (Mt Bruce) there is a place of significance in a small lake that Māori know as Hapuakorari. It has been located near the headwaters of the Ruamahanga River in the Tararua Mountains for time immemorial. Few people have probably even heard of it but for those that have it is hard not to become fascinated. This is in no small part due to the many stories that have been attributed to the lake and the name Hapuakorari. It is almost mythical, as you will see pieces of information that delve into the realms of stories such as King Solomon's mines, within other stories we find a touch of Shangri la and overall the recent history is full of mystery.

Hapuakorari was said to have been a place of unparalleled beauty, a sacred place shrouded in mysticism. For a start a legendary bird, the Hokio, lived by the lake in the company of the Kotuku (white heron), Huia, Kereru and Kaka. Living between beautiful Beech and huge Rimu trees were a variety of rare plants, all surrounding a pebbled beach on the water edge. Within the crystal clear waters massive two headed eels swam.

History of Hapuakorari

During the 19th century one of the Wairarapa regions most enduring mysteries was to first locate, and then determine, the true identity of the lost lake of the Tararuas, known to tangata whenua as Hapuakorari. There was a certain mystery about the lake that drew European explorers to search for it. During the period of early European settlement the Rangitāne and Muaupoko tribes along with the Ngai Tahu, Ngāti Hāmua and Ngāti Moe hapū held fast to oral histories based around Hapuakorari. The meaning of Hapuakorari can be broken into two parts. Hapua, being a lake or lagoon and Korari, meaning flax sticks. Therefore Hapuakorari is literally 'The Lake of the flax sticks'.

The name Hapuakorari came from huge flax bushes that grew around the lake that were said to tower up to 30 feet high and had stalks as thick as a mans leg. It is said that the prominent Wairarapa chief Tunuiarangi, Major Brown kept one of these stalks at his meeting house – Nukutaimemeha in Carterton. It was also said that a table in the house had legs made of the flax stalks. He kept these examples to show anyone who was sceptical of the flax's existence. Several live pieces of the Hapuakorari flax were planted on the edge of the flowing stream at the site of Rathkeale College near Masterton.

On the eastern side of the Tararua Mountains, ancestors of the Ngāti Hāmua hapū talked about how when the sun shone directly onto Hapuakorari the reflection shimmered down into the central Wairarapa valley. For this reason the lake became known as the 'pulse of the fish'. This relates to Te Ika a Maui or The fish of Māui (The North Island of New Zealand) where Palliser Bay is the mouth of the fish and Lake Wairarapa the eye.

Members of a prominent Ngāti Hāmua family of the Masterton area were said to each possess a gold nugget. The nuggets were said to have come from seams of gold found near the lake. Today the nuggets have disappeared. However some of our kaumātua today who are the children of the brothers who possessed the gold remember their fathers showing them the nuggets. From the stories handed to our kaumātua there was a suggestion that the lakebed had at one time been covered with both gold and diamonds and that this was the reason for the pulse of the fish.

The name 'the lost lake of the Tararuas' was given in part due to unsuccessful attempts of early European explorers to locate it but equally many Māori failed in bids to find it as well. One explanation as to why no one could find Hapuakorari is found in its status as a sacred place. There are certain points around the Wairarapa that transmit powerful energies that can be utilised by people versed in the appropriate ways to communicate with atua (the gods). Hapuakorari was one such place that was used as a retreat by Tohunga who would go to the lake in order to commune with the atua, gather plants for medicinal purposes and to draw upon the energies of the lake. As the lake was a place of extreme sacredness Tohunga would not disclose its location. If a person that did not hold the correct status neared the lake the atua would send down a heavy mist that would keep the lakes identity a secret.

A group of unidentified Wairarapa Māori was fleeing from the western side of the Tararua Mountains back into the Wairarapa. In hot pursuit of these people were parties of a Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Raukawa, and Te Ati Awa alliance who were looking to recapture and then slay the escapees. Upon nightfall the fleeing party took refuge on the island in the middle of Hapuakorari to avoid detection from their assailants.

A pa once stood near the lake following early European contact with New Zealand. We know this because those living at the pa had a special duty to perform that aided in communication between relations on either side of the mountains. The people of the pa were able to utilise the musket to warn others further down either side of the Tararua of impending trouble from approaching strangers. During a time of bereavement a musket served the same purpose in that shots alerted those on the west that someone on the east had passed away.

In 1873, the Government purchased the Tararua Block from two tribes (Rangitāne o Wairarapa and Muaupoko) and three hapū (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Moe and Ngāti Hāmua). The 114,500-acre block had a 1000-acre reserve set aside within it. This reserve was called Hapuakorari and was established to protect the sacred lake. Again the lost lake notion came into play as while the reserve was formally established it could not be surveyed, as no one knew exactly where it was.

The Government was so interested in finding Hapuakorari that a £200 reward was offered to the person that found it. Mr. Charles Bannister and two Māori friends called Mundy (from Akura) and Akitu or Jacky launched an expedition to find the lost lake during 1885. Although they did not succeed Mr Bannister has left a fine account of their travels that can be found in book form in public libraries. Other unnamed settlers

took up the challenge to find Hapuakorari and no doubt for some to claim the £200, but not one party found the elusive lake.

As no one was having any luck finding the lake there came a point where Māori and some European supporters asked for the 1000 acres to be exchanged for land on the plains or alternatively for compensation by cash. In both cases the Government said no and the mystery of the lake continued.

In 1898, Messrs Duckett and Harris found a small lake hidden in bush near the headwaters of the Ruamahanga River. A small island sat in the middle of the lake. Many people thought that finally the lost lake had been found. Certainly Māori on the eastern side of the Tararuas supported this theory as potential compensation for the land depended upon Hapuakorari being in the east. But Māori on either side of the mountains, and even a few elderly bushman, had stated that Hapuakorari lay in between the headwaters of the Otaki and Ohau rivers, many miles from where the Ruamahanga started.

In 1928 a group of pakeha explorers found the remains of a small lake on the western slopes of the Tararuas. Although drained, it sat where Māori and the old bushman had described it, south of Waiopehu overlooking Horowhenua. Still surrounded by flax and beech trees it had disappeared to become a dried up bed but still recognisable due to the long depression left on the ground.

The hill that the lake sat on is called Oriwha or the cleft, chink or scar. Modern technology supports this name as parallel fault lines run either side of the ridge. It is believed that at some point between 1905 and 1928 (when the last recorded person saw the lake with water and when it was later found drained) seismic activity had caused the lake to disappear. Hapuakorari on the western side of the Tararua was set to have fed the Otaki River. Today, despite the absence of the lake, an underground fissure near the old lake still feeds the river.

From the history and stories handed down to us it seems that the two lakes have somehow taken on a dual identity as both became known as Hapuakorari. At the time when compensation from the Government was an important issue chiefs from either side of the Tararuas really wanted to prove that the lake was on their side of the mountains as it was the key to getting a better deal for their people.

There are key differences between these two lakes. The eastern lake has a rock or island in the middle of it, the western lake doesn't. The western lake has flax, the east does not, and both have beech trees. It seems that the western lake was in fact Hapuakorari although this does not imply that the eastern lake is any less important to the people on the eastern side. It merely means that the true histories can be separated and individual parts attributed to the correct lake.

There is a third lake that has not been pinpointed or no longer exists. This third lake and the other two were at one time connected by the presence of a Taniwha. This Taniwha was called Tiokerere and took the shape of a flax plant. His roots travelled between the three lakes and more latterly connected up with Tirohanga (Hidden Lakes) as well. The old people would say not to cross the root or stamp on it lest you were asking for trouble.

In the pursuit of trying to find the lake it is told how a local Ngāti Hāmua man once came down off the mountains and was partially blind thereafter. As well as the aforementioned tribes and hapū who had gone to the lake in earlier times Te Arawa from the Bay of Plenty are said to have visited the lake.