

*Rangitāne people have lived continuously in the Wairarapa region for 28 generations or some 7-800 years.*

Beginning with founding ancestors Kupe and Whatonga, they and their descendants have built up a rich history that is found in oral accounts, written records and of course in the names across the landscape.

Within these pages are origin stories of Rangitāne o Wairarapa. There is also information on where and how early Rangitāne people lived.

# Origins

## and early occupation in the Wairarapa

This book is one in a series of four written about the histories and whakapapa of Rangitāne people who have lived in the Wairarapa. The series includes (1) Origins, (2) Tupuna, (3) Ngāti Hāmua and (4) Te Tapere Nui o Whatonga.

These publications have been produced by Rangitāne o Wairarapa with the help of Te Puni Kōkiri.



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A small section is devoted to information about how these early Rangitāne people lived. Using information gathered by archaeologists we can glean a valuable insight as to where our ancestors stayed in the first centuries of their tenure.

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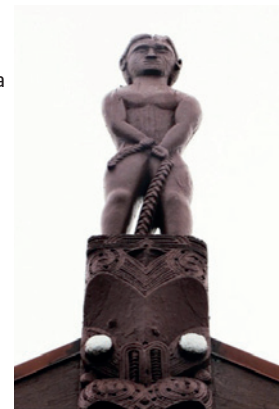
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*“Te tuara ko Ruahine, nga kanohi ko Whanganui a Tara, tetahi kanohi ko Wairarapa, te kauae runga ki te Kawakawa, tetahi kauae ko Turakirae”*

“Māui Tiki a Taranga”, Māui the coiled hair of Taranga is an ancestor of people who still live on islands throughout the Pacific Ocean. His skill as a sailor and the many places he visited led to him being described as a mischievous demi-god.

During one of his ocean adventures he discovered islands which he called Te Tiritiri Moana (New Zealand) as a reference to them being in the southern seas. These same islands became a part of New Zealand mythology through a story called Te Ika a Māui or the fish of Māui.

Māui is said to have hauled up a giant fish from the ocean. The fish became the North Island of New Zealand, Māui’s canoe (the South Island) and Stewart island the anchor of the canoe. The fish was the shape of a giant stingray with the tip of its tail being at Muriwhenua (North Cape) and Te Upoko o te ika (The head of the fish) being the modern Wellington and Wairarapa regions.



*“The back is the Ruahine ranges, with regard to the eyes, the salt water one is Wellington Harbour the other eye - the fresh water one - is Lake Wairarapa, the upper jaw is Cape Palliser and the lower jaw is Turakirae Head”*

(Source: Riley 1990: 78-4)

Here are well known places in Te Upoko o Te Ika:

### **Wairarapa Moana – Lake Wairarapa**

This is known as ‘Te Whatu o Te Ika a Māui’ or **‘the eye of the fish of Māui’**. This is the freshwater eye, the other eye is Wellington Harbour or Te Whanganui a Tara which is the saltwater eye.

**Kawakawa Palliser Bay** is known as ‘Te Waha o Te Ika a Māui’ or **‘the mouth of the fish of Māui’**.

**Turakirae Head and Matakītaki a Kupe** (Cape Palliser) are known as **‘the jaws of the fish’**.

**The combined Remutaka, Tararua and Ruahine ranges** that pass up the middle of the North Island are referred to as **‘the spine of the fish’**.

**The Tararua Mountain Range Lake** called Hapūakorari is known as **‘the pulse of the fish’**.

## Kupe

Approximately 28 generations ago, or sometime around the 14th century a man named Kupe sailed to New Zealand from Hawaiki. Kupe's wife Hineiteaparangi is credited with spying a cloud on the horizon and exclaiming, "He ao, he ao, he aotearoa" or "a cloud, a cloud, a long white cloud" from which the commonly known Māori name for New Zealand was derived\*. Aotearoa – Land of the long white cloud. The story that follows is well known.

Each day Kupe would set his fishing nets in a special place, content in the knowledge that by the end of the day the nets would be full of fish. One day his nets were empty, the next day the same. Kupe became angry and wanted to find out why the fish had gone away.

Kupe had a foe; a man named Muturangi with whom he had feuded for years. It came to be that Muturangi had a pet octopus (wheke). It did not take Kupe long to discover that this octopus was the reason his nets were empty. He fumed over this continual insult until one day he decided to slay either his foe or the troublesome octopus. On the advice of tohunga Kupe decided to kill the octopus and so prepared his canoe Matahorua to go to the sacred fishing grounds.

\*Actually whanau groups didn't have 'iwi/tribes' at least not in a day to day sense and while knowing their own lands in fine detail didn't have a notion of country as promoted when using the word Aotearoa.

Muturangi's octopus was sly and escaped an initial trap. While it lay a way offshore it incensed hundreds of smaller octopi to strip the fishing lines of bait. When Kupe and his men saw what was happening a great slaughter commenced. After a time the killing seemed fruitless because the big

*Te Ana o Te Wheke o Muturangi. The cave is situated in the reef beneath the lighthouse at Rangiwakaoma (Castlepoint).*



Octopus still lived. A priest named Peka-hourangi told Kupe that he should turn his attention to the great fish. Kupe agreed

and decided to pursue the octopus, capture it and kill it.

Kupe, in the waka Matahorua and his relation Ngake in the canoe Tawhirirangi then turned in the creatures' direction. The octopus saw the men coming and fled out into the ocean. Ngake followed while Kupe returned to Hawaiki to prepare for the chase.

Seventy-two people including Kupe, his wife, Hineiteaparangi and their five children left their home. Together with Ngake, the ensuing chase brought the voyagers across the Pacific Ocean to Aotearoa. The first place they spotted was Muriwhenua (North Cape) and then they stayed for sometime at Hokianga. Ngake had in the meantime continued to follow the octopus and so sent a message to Kupe saying that it had sought refuge in a cave. The Matahorua set sail down the east coast of the North Island until Kupe found Ngake at what we now call Castlepoint.

***...the reef became his body and the big hill his sacred head...***

Kupe immediately went to the cave but had to smash through the entrance and so startled the octopus which took off again. So the now giant creature escaped him again. This is how the cave underneath Castlepoint lighthouse came to have the name Te ana o te Wheke o Muturangi or The cave of the octopus of Muturangi. Before leaving Kupe named the high rock Matira (Castle Rock) or the lookout. He then named the reef Rangiwakaoma which means where the sky runs. By doing this the reef became his body and the big hill his sacred head so that anyone visiting that place would know that it was discovered by Kupe.

Kupe and Ngake did eventually catch up with Te Wheke o Muturangi in Te Moana o Raukawa (Cook Straight) near the entrance of Tōtaranui (Queen Charlotte and Tory Sounds) at the top of the South Island. After a long fight Kupe killed the octopus by hitting it between the eyes with his tōki (adze). To this day two large rocks remain

As you might guess there are many places throughout the Pacific that are associated with Kupe and his marathon pursuit of the octopus. The common thread of octopus sites are that they are places where dangerous water can be found. So if we look at the history of drownings off the Castlepoint reef one can see that the octopus is still present and its tentacles ready to pull someone to their death.

For this reason the reef is considered waahi tapu due to the reputation it has acquired as a dangerous place where numerous people have lost their lives. In this sense the word waahi tapu has a double-barrelled meaning. The first is as a 'caution' due to the dangers evident when being on the reef and secondly it is remembered as a place of death for many unfortunate individuals, The story of the octopus is another clever way of warning people to be careful.



and were named Nga Whatu (“the eyes” of) Te Wheke. Another Māori name for the South Island, Arapaoa, came about as a result of the downward blow that finished off the octopus.

It is believed that Kupe and his family stayed on in Aotearoa, some say for up to twenty years and some that he never went home. Regardless of the length of his stay there are still lots of places in Wairarapa and Wellington that retain the names that Kupe and his family gave them. Here are a selection:

**Matiu** (Somes Island) – named after a daughter

**Makaro** (Wards Island) – named after another daughter

**Mana** (Mana Island) – to commemorate Kupe’s skill and daring to cross Te Moana Nui A Kiwa

**Porirua** – where an old anchor was exchanged (“Pori”) for a new one

**Kawakawa** (Palliser Bay) – where Kupe’s daughter made him a wreath of kawakawa

**Raukawakawa** (Cook Strait)

**Nga Ra o Kupe** (The sails of Kupe) – where Kupe and Ngake had a sail making competition

**Rerewhakaitu River** – A southern Wairarapa east coast river named after Kupe’s son

**Mataoperu stream** – A southern Wairarapa east coast stream named after Kupe’s daughter. Mataoperu means thick lips

**Matakitaki** (Cape Palliser) – The full name is Te Matakitainga a Kupe ki Kaikoura ki te waahi i haere ai te tamahine a Kupe or The place from where Kupe gazed towards Kaikoura where his daughter had gone.



*Rangiwahakaoma with Matira or Castle Rock in the foreground where you can see the face of a man in certain lights*

## The Kurahaupō waka

**He kaihua ki uta, he toka hapūku ki te moana. “A bird snaring tree on land, a hapūku (groper) reef in the sea”. Or seek a land where you will have two food baskets, that of the ocean and that of the land, for food is the parent of all. Advice given to Whatonga by his grandfather Toi- te- Huatahi.**

The island of Ra’iatea (Rangiatea) in the Tahitian (Society Islands) was once known as Havaiki (Hawaiki), the original homeland referred to in Māori oratory. Toi te Huatahi was from Samoa but had moved to Rangiatea/Hawaiki as it was the centre of Polynesian religion, intellect, political governance and culture. A regular gathering at Havaiki called Te Hau Pahu Nui (The Great Discussion) saw leaders from across Polynesia meet at the sacred marae

Taputapuātea in a lagoon called Pikopiko-i-whiti. Each time the meetings convened a sea race between the islands of Ahu and Tuhua took place among the young people while the elders discussed important issues.

The races could take a year to complete and it is said that Whatonga, grandson of Toi had just completed the race when his waka was enveloped in fog and blown back out to sea. Toi waited anxiously for weeks but when Whatonga did not return the older man set sail to find him.

In the waka Arautauwhiti, Toi and a crew of 80 visited Samoa and then Rarotonga. As no one had seen Whatonga, Toi decided

to try the land that Kupe had discovered in the far south. Using Kupe’s instructions Toi sailed to the right of the setting sun by day and steered by Venus at night but missed New Zealand and found the Chatham Islands. After correcting his mistake Toi reached Whangaroa stayed with those people already established in the Hauraki

Gulf. Eventually he made his home above the modern town of Whakatane.

***Whatonga had just completed the race when his waka was enveloped in fog and blown back out to sea***

After being blown out

to sea Whatonga had become stranded on an island. This island was inhabited by a chief who was also called Rangiatea. After staying with Rangiatea for some time Whatonga married his daughter. Being worried about him, Whatonga’s family sent his pet bird out to search the seas. When the bird found Whatonga the man realised that a string attached to his friend’s leg was a signal to come home and so he did. To show Rangiatea they had arrived safely Whatonga put a halo around the moon. This lunar halo was called Kurahaupō.

Despite being happy to be home when he learned that Toi had gone Whatonga decided to follow his grandfather. So he changed

the name of his canoe from Te Hauau to Kurahaupō and set forth with a contingent of people including two other chiefs who were called Ruatea and Popoto.

The Kurahaupō came to Cape Reinga and then sailed down the west coast to Mount Pukehaupapa above the Tongapurutu River in Taranaki. They stopped to talk with local people and discovered that a man named Toi had built a pa on the other coast. Taking heed of the advice given to them they made a course for the eastern side of the island where they stopped at a place called Maketu in the Bay of Plenty. Customary greetings were exchanged with Matakana, rangātira of the tangata whenua after which inquiries were made as to whether Toi was known in those parts. As it turned out their search was almost at an end as Matakana told them

*So he (Whatonga) changed the name of his canoe from Te Hauau to Kurahaupō...*

they would find Toi on a high ridge above a place called Kakahoroa (Whakatane). He gave them directions on how to find Toi's pa Te Kapu-te-Rangi and bid them farewell.

Whatonga found his lost grandfather and stayed with him for a while. But later he and others decided to venture further afield to find new lands upon which to settle. They sailed down the East Coast stopping at several places along the way including Tuparoa near Rautoria. During this time a whare wananga called Te Tapere Nui a Whatonga was established on Mount Hikurangi.

They finally settled permanently at Nukutaurua on the Mahia Peninsula at a place called Taka-raroa. Legend states that the Kurahaupō waka was then turned into a stone reef that can still be seen today.

## Dispersal of the Kurahaupō voyagers

Some time after their arrival Ruatea's people moved west. They are known as Ngāti Apa and still occupy the Rangitikei area. Whatonga's descendents spread out across the lower North Island while Popoto stayed at Nukutaurua.

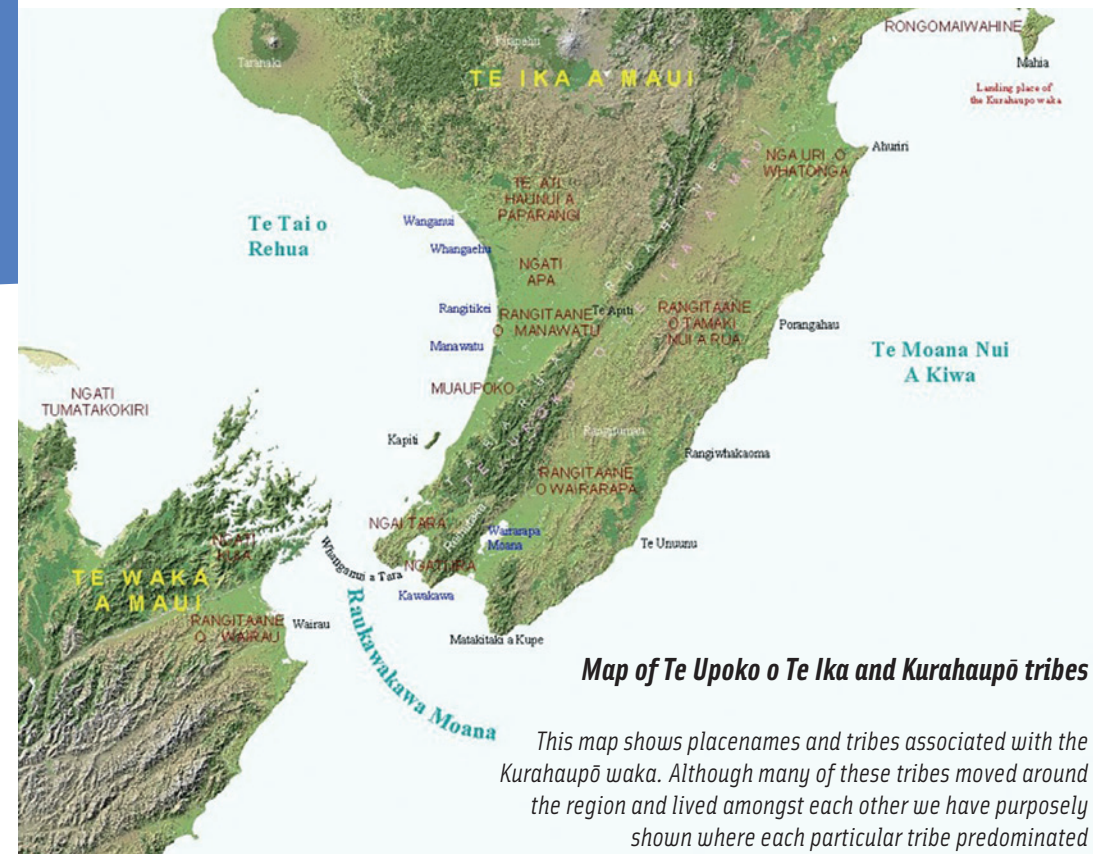
Eventually the descendants of the Kurahaupō waka spread throughout the lower North Island and top of the South Island. The iwi names of these people and their locations are

**Ngāti Kuia** settled around the Pelorus Sounds area. **Ngāti Tumatakokiri**, the people that Dutch explorer Abel Tasman encountered were around Golden Bay. **Rangitāne o Wairau** established themselves in Marl-

borough. Further north the **Ngāti Apa iwi** predominated around the Rangitikei area and **Te Ati Haunui a Paparangi** lived along the Wanganui River. **Ngāti Rongomai-wahine** were named after the ancestress Rongomaiwahine, mokopuna of Popoto and lived on the Mahia Peninsular. Some of her descendents followed the line of her and her first husband while others recognised their whakapapa from her second husband who was none other than Kahungunu.

Ngai Tara and Rangitāne occupied land from Wellington to Rangitikei on the west coast and from Wairarapa to The Hawkes Bay on the east coast. Later the **Muaupoko iwi** of Horowhenua developed out of Ngai Tara and Rangitāne.

Although not as prominent in some areas as they were several centuries ago the descendents of the Kurahaupō people still live in these locations today.



**Map of Te Upoko o Te Ika and Kurahaupō tribes**

*This map shows placenames and tribes associated with the Kurahaupō waka. Although many of these tribes moved around the region and lived amongst each other we have purposely shown where each particular tribe predominated*



# Whatonga

**Whatonga and his wife Hotuwaipara decided to live at Te Kauae o Māui (near Cape Kidnappers). He built a house further inland which was named Heretaunga. The wider region where Whatonga settled is today known as the Hawkes Bay although the Māori name for the area is still Heretaunga.**

An event saw Whatonga venture further afield on more exploratory journeys. One day he went on a fishing trip. It was a good day with many tāmure (snapper) and other species being caught. Amongst the catch was a nohu (rock cod) that had sharp spiny scales. Whatonga brought the fish home and proudly laid them in front of his wife Hotuwaipara. She started to prepare the fish for a meal but cut her

finger on the nohu. Being of a very high rank, the spilling of her blood in this manner impacted upon the mana of Hotuwaipara. She was therefore extremely angry with her husband. Whatonga thought it best to give her space to calm down and so decided to take some time out. The couple's first son was born soon after and he was named Tara Ika (meaning fish spine) after his mothers' accident.

Whatonga sailed off on what was to become a trip of discovery and by chance when he met his second wife in Aotearoa, Reretua. He ventured down the Wairarapa coast stopping at Rangiwihakaoma (Castlepoint) to found Matirie pa (where the lighthouse is today), and then to Te Whanganui a Tara (Wellington Harbour) before sailing across to Te Waipounamu (South Island).

Finding no reason to settle in the South Island he returned to the North Island, paddling up the west coast until he came to the Manawatū where he followed a river inland.

At Apati (The Manawatu Gorge) he climbed up a high mountain in front of him.

When he came out onto the eastern side he was amazed to see a great unbroken forest in all directions. This was to become known as Te Tapere Nui o Whatonga – The great domain of Whatonga (or as settlers called it in the 1800s 'The Seventy Mile Bush'). The forest began at Opaki-Kopuaranga (just north of Masterton) and stopped at Rakautatahi (north of Dannevirke).

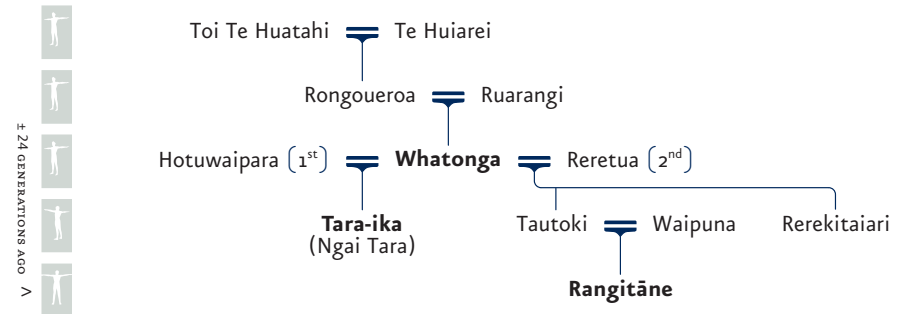
Because he had been away from home for a long time he missed his family. As he looked southward he could see the mountain he was on was a part of a range that kept going as far as he could see. Two points in the distance made him think of his wives so he named the mountains Tararua or twin peaks after them. Such was his longing for his family that Whatonga then returned home to Heretaunga.



# Tara and Tautoki

**As already mentioned, Whatonga's marriage with Hotuwaipara brought Tara Ika into the world. A second son called Tautoki-ihu-nui-a-Whatonga and a daughter Rerekitaari were born to Reretua.**

When the boys had grown up their father thought that it would be worthwhile for his sons to establish a presence in the lands he had explored further to the south. So Tara and Tautoki set forth on their own adventures. They went to the same places their father had gone but also explored the Ruamahanga River Valley too. This was how the Tararua mountains received two more meanings for the name Tararua. The first is the 'walkway of Tara' and the second is 'the span of Tara' which indicates that Taraika had a foothold on either side of the mountains.



After reporting back to Whatonga they decided that the great harbor at the bottom of the island would be the best place to live. So they settled there and named it Te Whanganui a Tara (The great harbor of Tara), which is known today as Wellington harbour. They initially lived on Matiu (Somes Island) before moving to Motukairangi (Miramar Peninsular).



*Matiu (Somes Island) in Wellington Harbour where Whatonga and his family lived*

As the population of Whatonga descendents grew boundaries were drawn to demarcate the main territories of both Ngai Tara and Tautoki (who all later came under the name Rangitāne). One version of the boundary is basically that Ngai Tara people occupied Wellington and the west coast as far north as Manawatū while Rangitāne people lived on the eastern side of the Tararua Ranges.

Another version names the west coast island of Kapiti as a boundary where an imaginary straight line was drawn from Kapiti across to Rangiwahakaoma (Castlepoint) in the east. Ngai Tara occupied all the land to the south of the line and Rangitāne to the north. The full name of Te Waewae Kapiti o Tara raua ko Rangitāne literally means the boundary of Tara and Rangitāne.

Whilst we acknowledge that these boundary lines existed at some point the histories and whakapapa tells us that Ngai Tara & Rangitāne people were constantly moving around the region and often marrying into each others hapū. Many early pa and garden sites in Wairarapa are associated with the descendents of Tara while the Muaupoko people of the west coast derive their main lines of descent from Tara but significantly several of their hapū have strong lines through the Ngāti Hāmua hapū of Rangitāne. There are also east and west coast branches of Rangitāne.

## Rangitāne

**Rangitāne is the ancestor of Rangitāne o Wairarapa. The people of Rangitāne have lived in the Wairarapa from the time of Whatonga until the present.**

Rangitāne (including Ngai Tara) held sole mana whenua for centuries. From approximately the early 17th century Rangitāne began to gift some lands to their whanaunga and were involved in rare battles. Today Rangitāne maintains mana whenua in rohe throughout the Wairarapa, exclusively around Masterton.

Rangitāne who was also known as Tanenuiarangi or Rangitānenuiarangi was born about 24 generations ago. Tautoki and Te Waipuna, a great granddaughter of Kupe were his parents.

Rangitāne is known to have been born and bred at Heretaunga. He also lived at Rakautatahi at the northern end of Te Tapere Nui o Whatonga with his grandfather, on Matiu and in his parents pa Parangarehu (Fitzroy Bay) in Wellington Harbour. Oral history records that he fought in battles alongside of his father and uncle but not much more is known about his life.

As a man he had a pa on the site of the Whakatu Freezing Works near Hastings. Today there is a marae called Kohupatiki that is situated near to the old freezing works. The people of Kohupatiki chose to call their whare tupuna 'Tanenuiarangi' after

Rangitāne. He and Whatonga also had pa in the Tamaki Nui a Rua area.

His first wife was called Mahue and they had a son called Kopuparapara. It is through this line that many Wairarapa families come from. His second wife Mahiti bore him Whetuki. When Rangitāne died his remains were buried in a cave on Kahuranaki mountain in Heretaunga.

*“Te tini whetū a ki te Rangi,  
ko Rangitānenui ki te whenua”*

*“As numerous as the stars in the sky so are the myriad’s of Rangitāne on earth.”*

It was said that Rangitāne was fleet of foot. Something that could have two meanings, the first is the obvious, that he himself could move quickly. The other meaning may relate to how the people of Rangitāne spread across the lower North Island. So the saying “Te tapuae tahi” was used to describe Rangitāne.

Rangitāne is described as a silent tupuna, a person that is not mentioned much in histories himself but there is no argument that his descendants occupy nearly 700 years of New Zealand history.

It is pertinent to mention that although the descendents of Kurahaupō crew dispersed around the lower North Island many of the people later consolidated under the Rangitāne name. This is significant as it shows the prestige that Rangitāne held across a large part of the lower North Island and top of the South Island.

**...his descendants occupy nearly 700 years of New Zealand history**

## Haunui a Nanaia

KO REMUTAKA TE MAUNGA

KO TE REREWĀ

KO TE WHAKAMANA

KO HAUNUI A NANAIA, NGA RANGĀTIRA O TE MOANA NEI TE MOANA O WAIRARAPA

**This is the story of Haunui a Nanaia (Haunui) another of the Kurahaupō waka migrants. It explains how many of the rivers, mountains and features throughout the lower North Island were named. Some place names are spelt slightly differently to those we are familiar with today but are still recognisable as the places that Haunui passed during his adventure.**

There are other meanings for 'Wairarapa' and 'Ruamahanga' but these are not a part of a wider story that serves a practical purpose as in the Haunui legend and possibly that is why those other meanings are more obscure and not in common useage today.

Haunui left a visual map that would help people to navigate the main Ruamahanga River valley. To read the map all you had to do was to know the story.

### **The legend of Haunui a Nanaia**

Popoto, one of the chiefs of the Kurahaupō waka, and his wife Nanaia had five children, the youngest of who was named Haunui a Nanaia. Haunui (for short) was known as being mischievous and there is a story that he was left behind as a punishment when the Kurahaupō left for Aotearoa. This did not stop Haunui who hid unnoticed out of sight, but anyway he did

**Haunui splashed the waters with the flat side of his taiaha, stirring the water**

arrive here with his family and later married Wairaka. The couple lived at Te Matau a Māui or 'the fishhook of Māui' now known as Hawkes Bay.

Some time after, Haunui decided to venture further afield and so left Te Matau a Māui to find a suitable home on the west coast. While he was away Wairaka eloped with a man of lowly rank called Weka. When Haunui returned from his journey he learnt of his wife's betrayal. Immediately he set off in pursuit of Wairaka and her lover.

Haunui followed her trail westwards over the mountain range to the western side of the North Island. Eventually he came upon a large river, which he named Whanganui, or the 'big wide river'. From here his pursuit continued south. He travelled on until he came to another river. Haunui splashed the waters with the flat side of his taiaha, stirring the water. The river was named Whangaehu meaning 'turbid

water'. Further on Haunui crossed a river on a tree that was lying across it. He named this Turakina, which means, 'to be felled or thrown down'. He then increased his speed and forded the next river he came to on tip-toes, hence the name Rangitikei – 'the day of stretching legs'. He stopped at the next river he came to because he felt exhausted. He held his heart and gave it the name Manawatū meaning 'heart standing still'.

He continued his journey and waved his taiaha in the air to strike.

He gave the name to this particular spot Ohau – 'the place of Hau or windy place' referring to the wind he created with his taiaha.

Further along the way, when he knew his chase was nearing an end, he arranged his taiaha ready for battle, then struck it into the ground. He named this place Otaki – 'the place where the stick was struck in the ground'.

Haunui began feeling lonely and at the next river he named it Waimehameha – 'lonely or forgotten water', now known as Waimeha. He looked about for a way to continue. This place he called Waikanao as his eyes glistened like a mullet when he looked about. It is known today as Waikanae. He soon came to a barrier of rock at the southern end of the beach. Here he gave the name Paekakariki – 'perch for parakeets'.

The cliff barred his way so he drove his taiaha into the cliff and made a hole to the other side. He walked through and came out the other side finding his wife and Weka at Pukerua Bay – 'place of two hills'. He quickly

killed Weka but had decided that Wairaka should endure a longer punishment. Haunui told her his feet were sore and dirty. He asked Wairaka to go to the sea so as to fetch him some water. She did so but Haunui, upon seeing the water, declared it was dirty. He bade her to fetch more water, which she did several times, but on each occasion Haunui again said the same thing that the water was dirty. She went deeper and deeper to find clear water until eventually she drowned. Haunui then proceeded to recite

**Wairaka's lifeless body started changing shape until eventually she turned to stone**

mātāpou or powerful incantations. Wairaka's lifeless body started changing shape until eventually she turned to stone. She remains at the same spot today in her rock form at the south end of

Pukerua Bay. In this way Haunui caused his errant wife to pay an eternal penalty.

His revenge enacted Haunui decided to go home. He started back towards Te Matau a Māui. 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 nga kanohi ko Wairarapa. His eyes sparkled hence Wairarapa.



After resting awhile 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 Rangitumau, 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’.

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. His mind went back to his wife, whom he had turned into rock. Haunui began to grieve and the tears he shed dripped into the water. This river he named Wai o Hine Wairaka – ‘water for his woman’, referring to his tears. It is now called the Waiohine. A second version for the meaning of Waiohine is that Haunui saw his other wife Hine Rakahanga who was still in the Hawkes Bay.

Haunui a Nanaia also named the river just south of Masterton known today as Wain-gawa. When he arrived at this particular river it appeared to go in every direction

(semi-braided). The river looked like it did not know where it was going therefore he named it Waiawangawanga, awangawanga meaning ‘uncertain and troubled.’



*Carving of Haunui anaia  
by Takirirangi Smith*

*This carving was completed in November 1990 in honour of the famous ancestor - Haunui. It now resides in the boardroom of the Rangitāne o Wairarapa Inc offices at Te Haamua, Cornwall Place, Masterton.*

At the next river he tested the depth with his tokoto-ko/walking stick because it had been raining and gave it the name Waipoua. Another term for tokotoko is pou and so the river became known as Waipoua, wai meaning water.

At the next river he looked around for a crossing and found a waka-inuwai or bird snare placed between two forked branches, (these snares were placed around drinking troughs to catch birds). Because Haunui discovered the trough he named the river Ruamahanga – ‘twin forks’. During his journey Hau saw the Ruamahanga fork in places where tributaries joined

with the main river so that the name of this great body of water was aptly applied for a number of reasons.

Haunui continued on until he reached his landmark, Rangitumau; at the summit he looked back over the land he had traversed. At the other end of the expansive he saw glistening in the distance the beautiful lake that had caused tears in his eyes. This confirmed for him the name Wairarapa, which today is used to describe the whole region.

At this point Haunui was determined to reach home faster. He called upon his god Rongomai who according to legend was a large eagle. Haunui then climbed upon the back of Rongomai. As they flew north Haunui saw a bay out to the west of the Tararuas whose water was discoloured. Haunui thought it looked like the rubbish

around the rim of an umu or oven. He named this bay Paraparaumu – ‘rubbish around the oven’. Eventually he reached home. Rongomai also returned home and it is said that today we can see him as a meteor in the night skies.

*This is an explanation of the stone walls* on the shore at Whatarangi, Te Humenga, Te Kawakawa, and as far as Ngawi and beyond, as well as the beds (ie; gardens) of kumara, karau, taro that were marked out with stones. (Some gardens were) ten chains long, and some were five chains long, and one chain across. These labours were undertaken by the people (that lived there) prior to Ngāti Kahungunu, by eight generations. Previously, (this land) was occupied by Ngai Tara and Rangitāne. That was the time when the land was utilised extensively for food collection.

**From the manuscripts of Hoani Paraone Tunuiarangi**

## **Early occupation of the Wairarapa**

**Rangitāne kaumatua say ‘we’ were the first identifiable people in the Wairarapa even though there may have been earlier people and others stayed for a while or passed through. It is generally agreed by Māori, historians and archaeologists that the descendents of Whatonga lived pretty much undisturbed for many generations, possibly between the 14th to early 17th centuries. In between the founding ancestors and the 16th century names of people and detailed events that shaped their lives have been lost to time.**

But right along the Wairarapa coast from Mataikona in the north to Palliser Bay in the south physical remains of early communities are found. These might be human bones that sometimes have jewellery on them, stone rows that were used for gardening, mounds used for growing vegetables, rubbish pits or earthworks that were part of building foundations.

A combination of whakapapa, archaeology, oral and written history places these sites in the period of exclusive Rangitāne occupation. Stone rows/walls in Palliser Bay and up the east coast are also found at Fitzroy Bay in Wellington, on Kapiti Island and in the Marlborough Region of the South Island. The only iwi known to have lived in all of these places is Rangitāne.

In a report published in the Te Ao Hou magazine during 1968 a Barry Mitcalfe clearly acknowledges that the sites he and a team of students assessed around White Rock were of Rangitāne origin. (See Te Ao Hou No.65 1968 p40) Frustratingly for Rangitāne o Wairarapa numerous other published books and reports fail to acknowledge this simple fact.

Today a number of hapū rightfully claim that areas along the coast belong to them, some such as the Ngāti Hinewaka hapū of Ngāti Kahungunu do a fine job in looking after waahi tapu in their rohe. But all of these people arrived in the Wairarapa after early Rangitāne people had lived on the coast for centuries, left after natural events and or their own mistakes made life tough and then came back when the climate was better. Regardless of what has happened between the time the places were being used and now the sites are still associated with Rangitāne ancestors.

### ***Why did early people live on the coast***

Coastal river mouths provided fresh water, reasonably flat land to grow vegetables, an ocean to catch fish and forests to catch animals or gather wild foods. Most of the materials needed to make clothes, implements, tools and shelter could be found nearby.

Prehistoric Māori extensively occupied the eastern coastal platform about 700 years ago. Settlements and gardens were established on friable soils at stream mouths and up stream valleys. Birds, fish, shellfish, and gardening were the basis for the subsistence economy (Leach and Leach, 1979).

**Paleotsunami investigations-Okoropunga and Pukerua Bay GeoEnvironmental Consultants 2002 p.6**

### **Places**

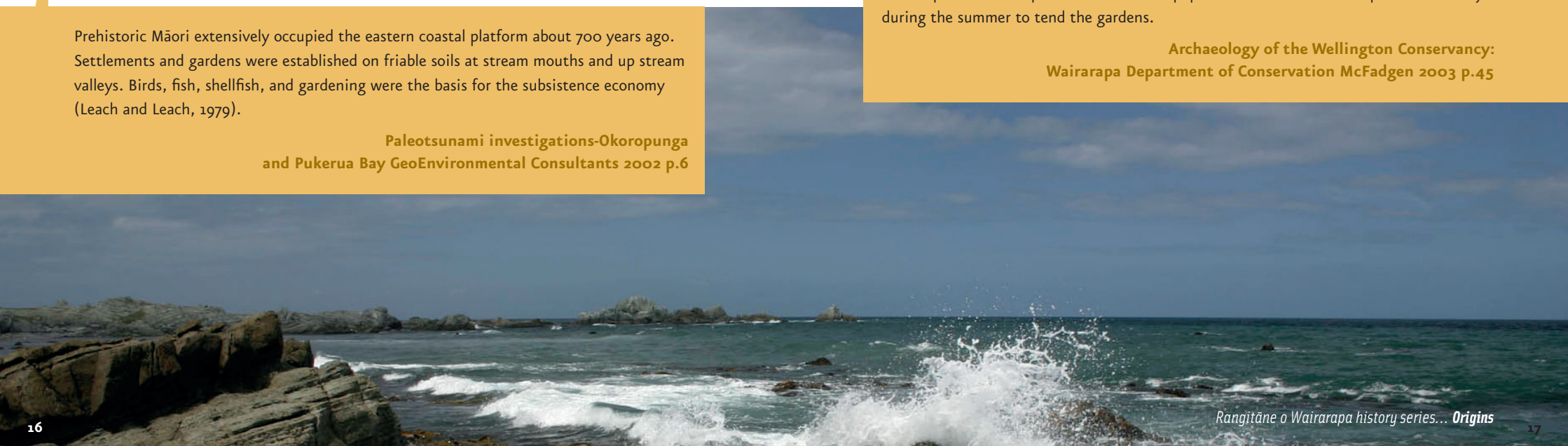
There are many places around the Wairarapa, some that are inland, that can be used to show how Rangitāne of today are a part of a continuing legacy that was created hundreds of years ago. The place names already mentioned in this book are prominent examples of this.

Many outstanding stone row systems and pa sites are right beside main coastal roads but either people do not know where they are or cannot see the tell tale signs on the land. This situation is especially so on the eastern side of Palliser Bay where there are places where the road goes straight through stones rows.

Extensive archaeological work has occurred within Palliser Bay where carbon dated features point to many of the sites as being occupied by Rangitāne. In the case of a place called Waiwhero early physical features align to Rangitāne people while a significant event that occurred later belongs to Ngāti Kahungunu.

The Palliser Bay investigations (B.F. Leach & H.M. Leach 1979a) provide the best picture of what the early part of the prehistoric period was probably like. Palliser Bay was first occupied sometime in the mid 14th Century (Appendix 2) and was abandoned in the 15th Century (Goff & McFadgen 2001). The principle focus for settlements was at the mouths of streams and rivers, and seven such locations have been identified in Palliser Bay (Leach 1981). A second focus for settlement was up the river and stream valleys. Leach (1981) suggests that people moved between the coast and valleys seasonally, spending summers at the coast, gardening and fishing, and wintering inland to avoid storms on the exposed coastal platform. It is possible that a small population was maintained up the river valleys during the summer to tend the gardens.

**Archaeology of the Wellington Conservancy:  
Wairarapa Department of Conservation McFadgen 2003 p.45**



The Makotukutuku River in Palliser Bay has an array of sites from the ‘washpool’ on the beach to earthworks several kilometers inland. The Ngāti Hinewaka hapū of Ngāti Kahungunu reconstructed a whare by using the remains of a 16th-century whare (house) in the Makotukutuku Valley. The whare was built using traditional materials and methods and is housed in Te Papa, The national museum of New Zealand.

Further north on the east coast there are places like Pukaroro or Okoropunga on Te Awaite Station and Waikekeno near Glenburn Station that have extensive stone row systems, mounds and storage pits. At Hiwirikiriki and Tora there are other similar features and interestingly dendroglyphs (tree carvings).



*The Makotukutuku wharepuni at Te Papa*

Here is an excerpt from the Aweha Conservation Estate – Tora, Archaeological Monitoring Report by Victoria Grouden, Amber Aranui and Christen McAlpine. It concerns the wider southern coast but summarises the Rangitāne/Ngai Tara connections.

McFadgen provides radiocarbon dates for the stretch of the Wairarapa coastline from Flat Point to Cape Palliser (2003: 32-35). The dates from the Te Awaite site that lies to the north east of the development indicate occupation there during the 15th century. Dates from the Te Oroi site to the south west of the development indicate occupation from the 15th – early 16th century AD. Radiocarbon samples from the Okoropunga stonefields, also to the south west, dated from the mid to late 15th century. While just outside of this area, at Palliser Bay to the south west of the development McFadgen infers that the radiocarbon dates indicate an initial occupation date of sometime during the mid 14th century. The date provided for site S28/189 means the site has a 95% probability of being occupied between 1450 and 1630 AD. This indicates that this site would have been occupied at roughly the same time as the Te Awaite, Te Oroi and Okoropunga stonefield sites.

**Aweha Conservation Estate – Tora, Archaeological Monitoring Report by Victoria Grouden, Amber Aranui and Christen McAlpine Opus Consultants 2009 p. 30-31**

Wherever people live they will also die. Pre european human bones and sometimes their possessions have and continue to be found along the Wairarapa coast. Sometimes the story becomes a newspaper article, sometimes the bones are secretly removed (which is not recommended) and other times the finder quietly re buries the bones.



*Whakataki is in the foreground of this photo while Matira is the high hill in the distance*

Castlepoint is well known for its scenery and the range of activities that can be done at the beach. What is not so well known is that the sand hills on the beachfront between Matira (Castle Rock) and Okau Bay to the north are akin to one large urupa (cemetery).

While some Māori have known about the status of the area it has come to the attention of archaeologists, police and the wider community through wind erosion leaving bones and artifacts exposed.

During 1975 and 1976 a group of archaeologists including historian Keith Cairns examined the large sand hill by the Castlepoint camping ground after several skeletons were found. Cairns wrote a detailed account of this investigation in a paper titled ‘Moa –Hunter Burials at Castlepoint Wairarapa Coast’. The age of the human remains and the description Moa Hunter (earliest humans through to c15th century), which is now largely dismissed as a theory, point to the people of the urupa being of Kurahaupō descent.



## Summary

Rangitāne people have lived in the Wairarapa since the days of Kupe and Whatonga who lived 28 and 26 generations before 2012. Many of the places these men named are still in use today whether it be the commonly used name of a geographical feature (eg Tararua mountains) or a road sign (eg Rangiwahaoma).

Some stories of these founding ancestors and their descendents have survived through to the present. Some of these stories remain oral histories and some have been written down. Other stories are found in and on the land where modern archaeologists continue to contribute to adding more knowledge of how and where our ancestors lived.

The greatest testament to the early Rangitāne ancestors legacy is that thousands of people alive today have Rangitāne bloodlines.

The descendents of Rangitāne live all around the world but there are still many resident in the Wairarapa. These people are living on and caring for their ancestral rohe so that traditional relationships between the land, sea and people are maintained.

*The photo and sketch are of Pukuroro on the east coast. The following list are of other significant sites where Rangitāne/Ngai Tara lived in early times*

Moikau house 1180

Kawakawa walls 1261

Pararaki walls 1279

Washpool level II (1350)

Black Rocks walls (1390)

Whatarangi walls (1405)

Waiwhero walls (1475)

Pukaroro (1400s)

Okoropunga (1400s)

Castlepoint sandhills (1400s)

Washpool walls and level III (1540)  
terrace house (1539)

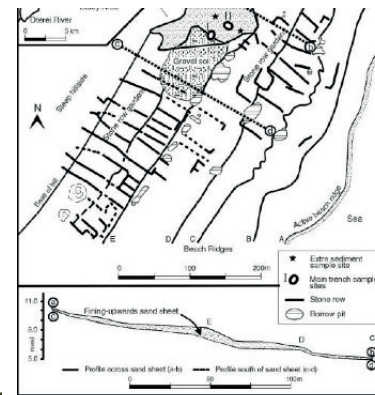


Figure 2: Okoropunga. Archaeological site with associated sand layer. Transects a-b and c-d are given at base of figure. Simplified after McFadgen (1980b)

Paleotsunami investigations-Okoropunga and Pukerua Bay GeoEnvironmental Consultants 2002 p18

*Pukuroro at Te Awaiti, the stone wall complex is clearly visible.*

