

Between The Rivers

1863 - 2013

A Sesqui-Centennial Souvenir Publication



A PLAN
of the Country between
THE WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVERS
Shewing the
NATIVE REDOUBTS AT PIKO PIKO, PATERANGI
ORAKAU, AHAUPO & MAUNGATAUTERI.
Occupied by Lt Genl Cameron C.B. during the months
of January, February, March and April, 1864.

WAIPA 150 YEARS

150 years of an amazing district settled between two mighty rivers!

Waipa this year celebrates 150 years of history and as part of our commemorations we have gathered together a collection of short stories about historical, cultural and social events during that time. This booklet *Between the Rivers* captures life as it was and now is, it reminds us of things past and present and it records in one place some of our special moments as a district. As the newly elected Mayor of the Waipa District I am proud to have been a part of this history having grown up, been schooled and farmed in the district.

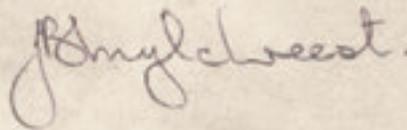
We've raised our family here and are proud of Waipa and all it offers. It hasn't always been an easy ride, we have had our share of difficult times with land wars, world wars, depressions and recessions but Waipa has grown from these tough times into a vibrant and resilient community, proud and strong. We have two thriving towns and picturesque villages and settlements in the midst of spectacular countryside that supports the New Zealand contribution to our primary export industries.

It is a district I am proud to live in and proud to be Mayor of.

Please join with me in celebrating our 150 years of progress, and walk with me through this important part of our history together.

Make time to read and enjoy this souvenir publication at your leisure. It's a great read and reminds us of those who came before and who planted the seeds of our success today.

Best wishes for 2014,



Jim Mylchreest
Mayor



Jim Mylchreest



www.waipal50th.org.nz

This publication was authored by Kingsley Field and Richard Stowers under commission by Waipa District Council. While every attempt has been made to verify historical information the Council and the authors cannot be held responsible for errors or omissions.

EVENTS CALENDAR 2014

FEBRUARY 2014

	Photographic Competition and Exhibition, Te Awamutu Museum – date TBC.
1-2	GP Hydroplanes, Karapiro. Phone Denise Moughan 027 250 3504
6	Waitangi Day. Launch of 150th Commemorations – Community Day, Karapiro. Phone Benjamin Hemi 823 3828
8-9	Kihikihi International Polo. Phone Alison Komene 825 9808
14	Waiari commemoration activities. Phone Tom Roa 027 703 8755 TomR@tainui.co.nz
14-16	Keyte Watson Memorial Polo Tournament, Cambridge. Email Heather Brooks titherbrooks@gmail.com
15	Cambridge Sevens (Men's), John Kerkoff Park, Cambridge. Email josh@hurricane-press.co.nz
16	Pukehoua (Baffin Street) Bridge anniversary celebrations. Email Sabina Owen Sabowen@xtra.co.nz
18-23	NZ Rowing Champs, Lake Karapiro.
21	Rangiaowhia commemoration activities. Phone Jenny Charman 871 4525
22	Avantidrome REV Cycle Festival, Cambridge High School. Email faye@uleisure.co.nz
22	Cambridge Sevens (Women's), John Kerkoff Park, Cambridge. Email josh@hurricane-press.co.nz
22-23	Bohemian Association celebrates Ohaupo's 150th Anniversary. Phone 027 787 4998

4-9	NZ Polo Savile Cup Tournament, Kihikihi Polo grounds. Email Allison Komene secretary.kihikihipolocub@xtra.co.nz
8	Te Awamutu Kite Day. Phone Benjamin Hemi 823 3828
12-16	Cambridge Autumn Festival. Email info@cambridgeautumnfestival.co.nz
15	Cambridge Kite Day. Phone Benjamin Hemi 823 3828
15-16	Defence of NZ Study Group. Annual Field Trip. (will follow the Path of War from Pokeno over the two days)
15-16	GP Hydroplanes, Karapiro. Phone Denise Moughan 027 250 3504
16	Waipa 150th Celebrations Brass Band Concert. Email Denise.Wilson@wintec.ac.nz
16	Waipa Fun Run & Walk, Cambridge. Phone St Peters Catholic School 827 6623
18	Commemorative Golf Croquet Tournament, Leamington Croquet Club.
19-23	National Veteran Car Rally, Te Awamutu and district. Email Reece Burnett reece.sue@orcon.net.nz
21-22	Ngutunui (Otorohanga district) commemorations.
22	TriMaori Sprint 2014, Mighty River Domain, Karapiro. Email trimaori@gmail.com
29	Avantidrome Home of Cycling official opening.
31	150th Orakau Commemorations (to 3 April). Email Tom Davis tldnz@xtra.co.nz
	North Island Rowing Champs – late March TBC.

MARCH 2014

	Uenuku return to Te Awamutu Museum – date TBC. Phone Te Awamutu Museum 872 0085
	'Land and the People' Exhibition, Te Awamutu Museum – date TBC. Phone Te Awamutu Museum 872 0085
1	Pirongia Festival Day. Contact John Wood 027 4778736 Bus. hours.
1	Commemorative Concert, Te Awamutu Brass Band. Email tabrass@xtra.co.nz
2	Waikato Child Cancer Toy Run, from Cambridge. Email Lou Brown louels@clear.net.nz

APRIL 2014

3	Orakau commemoration activities, Orakau and Kihikihi.
5-6	National Kayak Marathon Champs, Lake Karapiro.
6	'Golden Oldies' Luncheon, Ohaupo. Contact Annie & Bill Fullerton 823 6796
11-13	NZ Federation of Historical Societies Inc. Conference and AGM. (in Waipa District Council Chambers, Saturday)
11-13	Kihikihi International Horse Trials. Email Celine Filbee jackitup@inspire.net.nz
17-19	Barefoot Waterski Champs, Lake Karapiro.
18-21	Easter Weekend.

19-23	Vintage Car Club of New Zealand. National Veteran Car Rally. Te Awamutu Sports Club/ Albert Park.
24-27	NZ Pony Clubs Horse Trials Teams Champs, Kihikihi. Email Viv Johnston steve.viv@hotmail.co.nz
25	Anzac Day.

MAY 2014

	Trustpower Community Awards – TBC. Phone Andrea Duncan 823 3841
	Waipa ITO Awards – TBC. Phone Cathy Plowright 872 0030
1-4	Bike NZ Road Cycling National Champs, Cambridge. Email Stephen Cox Stephen@dynamoevents.co.nz
2-3	Waikato Ceroc Championships, Te Awamutu Event Centre. Email info@addictiondance.co.nz
31	Harness Jewels Race Day, Cambridge. Email promotions@cambridgeraceway.co.nz
31	Pirongia 150th Jubilee Weekend.

JUNE 2014

	Lecture Series; Te Awamutu, Cambridge, UOW Hamilton – dates TBC.
1	Pirongia 150th Jubilee Weekend.
1	North Island Squash Championships, Cambridge Racquets Club. Email manager@crc.org.nz
2	Queen's Birthday.
10	Matariki – TBC.
11-14	NZ National Fieldays, Mystery Creek Event Centre. Phone MCEC 843 4497

JULY 2014

	Waipa Networks Business Awards – TBC. Contact ceo@teawamutuchamber.org.nz
5-6	North Island Secondary School Cycling Champs. Contact Errol Newlands. Email errol@onyabike.co.nz
11	Laying down of arms (11 July 1881).
26	WW1 Declaration of War – Commemorative Service by Te Awamutu RSA.

AUGUST 2014

	Waipa Youth Awards – TBC. Phone Cathy Plowright 872 0030
24	Cambridge Half Marathon, 10km, 5km Run/Walk. Phone Paul Signal 021 802 529

SEPTEMBER 2014

27 Pirongia Craft Fair.

OCTOBER 2014

	110 Year Celebrations of Te Awamutu Bowling Club – date TBC.
1-5	Cambridge Rotary Club Annual Book Fair, Cambridge Town Hall.
27	Labour Day.
27	Giant Craft & Collectables Fair, St Andrews Church, Cambridge.
28	Te Awamutu Competitions Society Festival. Email Zilda Liddington lzliddington@xtra.co.nz

NOVEMBER 2014

	Te Awamutu Competitions Society Festival. Email Zilda Liddington lzliddington@xtra.co.nz
	Waipa Networks Sports Awards – TBC. Phone Sport Waikato 823 2510
	Classic & Kustom Car Show, Mighty River Domain, Karapiro – TBC.
	Waikato Mounted Rifles parade through Cambridge – date TBC.
	Waikato Fireworks Fiesta, Ohaupo.
	Waipa District Community Fireworks, Kihikihi Raceway.
11	Armistice Day.
15	Rosetown Annual Craft Fair. Contact Te Awamutu i-Site Visitor Centre
15-16	Armistice Weekend, Karapiro – TBC. Phone Liz Stolwyk 827 4178
29	Cambridge A&P Show, Cambridge Raceway.

DECEMBER 2014

	Christmas Festival, Cambridge Town Hall – date TBC.
6	Christmas street parade, Te Awamutu – TBC.
6	Kihikihi dressage – TBC.
6	Cambridge Christmas Parade – TBC.
13	Te Awamutu Christmas Parade. Contact Te Awamutu i-Site Visitor Centre
21-22	Hanon Cup Polo, Cambridge Polo grounds.
26	Boxing Day Races, Pirongia

Additional events / information to:
Andrea Duncan, Community Liaison Officer
andrea.duncan@waipadc.govt.nz Phone DDI: 07 823 3841

WAIPA – A RICHLY DIVERSE REGION

It may not be the biggest, but the Waipa District is certainly one of the most prolific and diverse regions in the whole of New Zealand.

Covering just under 1,500 square kilometres, and with a population of only 46,200, the district is set in the heart of the North Island's rich Waikato basin. It is divided into five separate wards – Te Awamutu, Cambridge, Pirongia, Kakepuku and Maungatautari. The district is bounded on three sides by rivers – its east flank by the Waikato River, its western side by the Waipā River, and to the south by the Puniu River. In the north the region butts up against Hamilton City and the Waikato District.

To the west the region is overshadowed by Mount Pirongia, just outside the district's western boundary, while to the south is Mount Kakepuku, and in the west is Maungatautari mountain. In the past decade Maungatautari has increasingly gained an international reputation as a major native wildlife conservation 'mainland island' centre. The 3,500ha bush-clad mountain has been ring-fenced with a completely pest-proof fence, virtually all pests and predators on the mountain have been removed, and the area has now become a breeding ground for some of New Zealand's rarest native species, especially birds.

Kiwi, tieke (saddleback), hihi (stitchbirds), kākā and takahe, along with tuatara, have all been reintroduced to the mountain, most of them after more than a century's absence. As well, native populations of bellbird, tui and kereru (pigeon), along with fantail, white-eye, pukeko and a range of introduced bird species are recovering rapidly. Thousands of visitors, including school groups and busloads of international tourists, now visit the mountain's specially-designed Southern Enclosure each year, and substantial facilities have been provided to cater for the growing interest.

Another major centre for wildlife and wetland conservation is being developed at the Rotopiko (Serpentine) Lakes, off State Highway 3 between Te Awamutu and Ōhaupo. There, a substantial National Wetlands Trust headquarters and visitor centre is being established, and a three-kilometre pest-proof fence has been erected around one of the lakes and a replanted wetland area.

But the region is also widely known for its major dairy-farming production. Two substantial dairy factories service this industry, one based in Te Awamutu and the other at Hautapu, just north of Cambridge. Millions of litres of milk are collected annually from the region's thousands of cows. As well, major sheep and beef farms cover much of the high country.

Elsewhere, a broad range of land-use includes such enterprises as blueberries, orchards, vineyards, deer and goat farming, and as well substantial amounts of grain, mainly corn, are grown throughout the region.

Both the towns and the rural areas of the district are renowned for their extensive plantings of exotic picture and native trees, which produce spectacular displays of blossoms and autumn colours in season. As well, the district is known for its 15 peat lakes, some of which are acknowledged internationally as the best of their type in the world. The largest of these, Lake Ngāroto, 108ha in size, is also home to the long-established Ngāroto Sailing Club. A large number of waterfowl and unusual native swamp plants also inhabit the lake and its surrounds.

While 65 per cent of its population is rural-based, Waipa District also holds two major vibrantly busy towns – Cambridge, on State Highway One, and Te Awamutu, on State Highway Three. Each has a rich history of early Māori settlement and also the early days of European settlement in central New Zealand. Te Awamutu particularly was known as a substantial centre of Māori settlement for several centuries before

Europeans arrived in the region. As well, within the district are the three villages of Ōhaupo, Pirongia and Kihikihi, each with its own rich history of both Māori and European development.

There are also three major secondary schools – Te Awamutu College, Cambridge High School, and St Peter's Cambridge School, just north of Cambridge – all of them co-educational and collectively catering to more than 3,500 secondary school pupils. As well, the district has several dozen primary schools, many of them based in rural areas.

Of special importance is Te Wananga o Aotearoa, the nationwide Māori university with its headquarters in Te Awamutu. Since opening in the mid-1980s, the wananga has established learning centres in more than 120 locations around New Zealand, and now provides guidance in the education of more than 300,000 students from a wide range of ages and ethnicities.

The district is also home to the widely-acclaimed National Fieldays site at Mystery Creek, north of Ōhaupo, and holds within its northern boundary the Hamilton Airport, one of the more important airports in the country. The National Fieldays site is the centre for the largest agricultural field days event in the Southern Hemisphere, bringing more than 120,000 visitors to the four-day event each year, including thousands of interested spectators and participants from around the world. More than 1,100 exhibitors gather to show off their wares, and the event brings millions of dollars in business and tourism to the region, and hundreds of millions of dollars in ongoing business to the nation.

The Cambridge area is especially well-known for its exceptional quality of stud horses, a number of which have won major international races. Numbers of the studs' horses are offered for sale each year at the Karaka Horse Sales, south of Auckland, and are frequently bought by major international interests. As well, polo and eventing are both major and popular

equine sports in both the Cambridge and Te Awamutu areas, often attracting national and overseas competitors.

Te Awamutu and Pirongia are renowned for their race meetings, the Pirongia Boxing Day meeting being widely recognised as a fun family day and drawing several thousand people each year to enjoy the relaxed and low-key pleasant event. Rodeo riding is another major spectator sport, this based at Kihikihi, and regularly drawing substantial crowds to watch the spectacular and rugged events.

At the Lake Karāpiro Mighty River watersports domain the New Zealand secondary schools' Maadi Cup Rowing Regatta has become an attraction which draws thousands of spectators and school teams from all over the

country. It is recognised as the largest schools' sporting event in the Southern Hemisphere and is held at Karāpiro every second year, alternating annually with Lake Ruataniwha near Twizel in the South Island. The Maadi Cup is the most prestigious of five major prizes competed for each year.

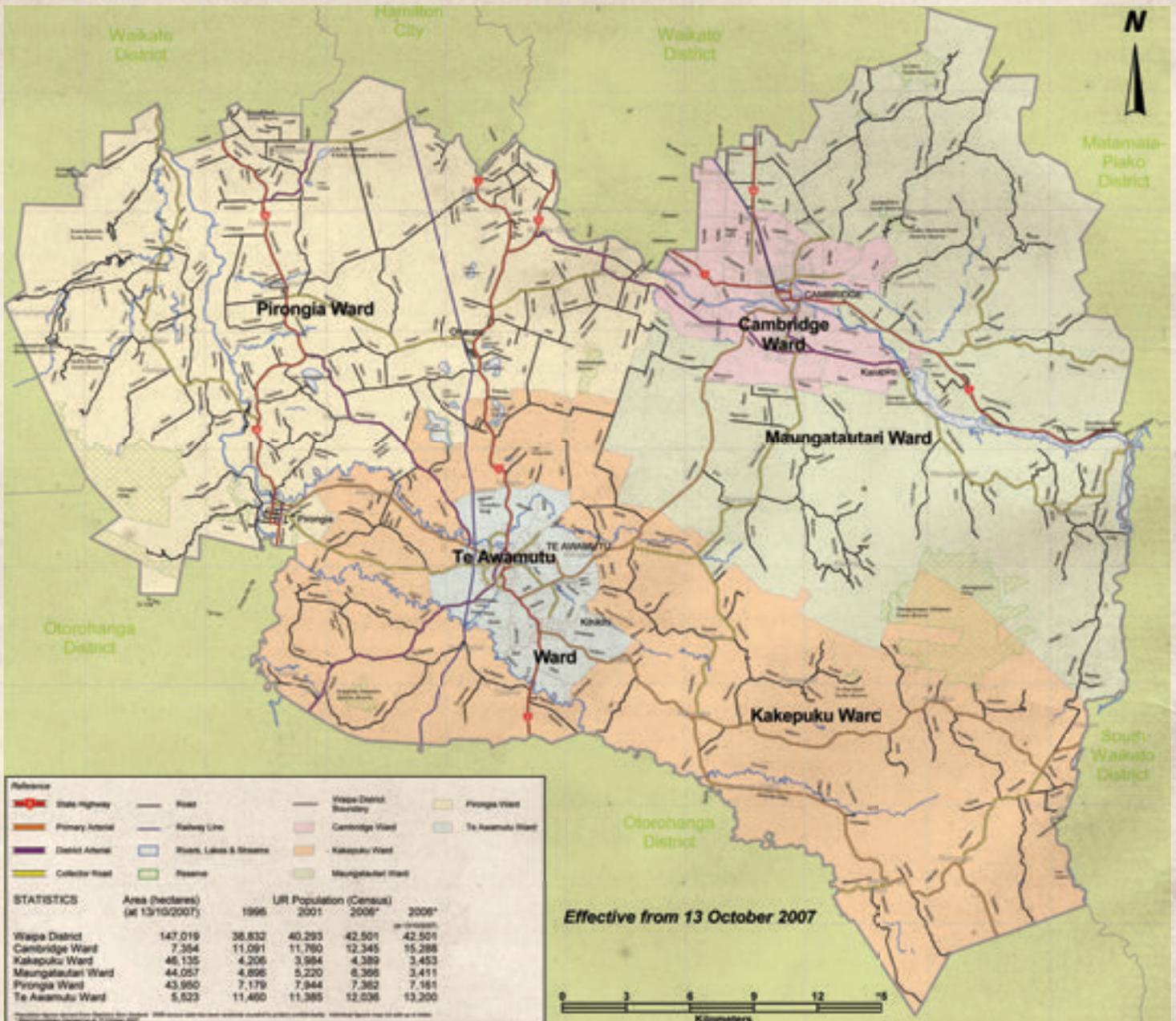
As well, the Karāpiro domain is home to other major national and international rowing competitions, and in early November each year a two-day weekend exhibition and display of militaria commemorates the nation's biggest remembrance of Armistice Day. Nearby Cambridge is also the national centre for Rowing New Zealand, Bike New Zealand and Triathlon New Zealand.

Te Awamutu, widely known as "The Rosetown", has spectacular rose gardens

that in season draw thousands of garden-lovers to the town. The town's museum also contains some unique and prized pieces of the nation's history, chief among them the Uenuku carving which dates back into the mists of Māori lore and legend. As well, there is an exhibition of memorabilia from local and internationally acclaimed musicians, the Finn Brothers.

Waipa District may not be big, but it embraces a massive wealth of history, interest and activity, and those who live there are justifiably proud to be known as residents of such a richly diverse region.

Below: Waipa district map. Updated information is not yet available because of a delay in the latest census.



WAIKATO'S WATERLOO

The great Ngāpuhi chief, Hongi Hika, with the near-exclusive use of muskets, waged genocide against Māori in the Bay of Plenty and Waikato. In the year he returned from England, 1821, Hongi Hika and his followers descended on the Thames area, capturing Te Tōtara Pā, and is said to have killed 1,000 Ngātimaru, although the actual figure is probably far less.

Mātakitaki Massacre

The fact that some warriors from the Waikato had helped to defend the Te Tōtara Pā gave Hongi Hika an excuse, if any was needed, to invade the Waikato the following year. The Mātakitaki Pā of the Waikato Tainui, situated on a narrow isthmus of land at the junction of the Waipā River and Mangapiko River, was easily accessible to Hongi Hika's war canoes in May 1822, and received the Ngāpuhi's full wrath with an estimated 1,500 inhabitants killed. It seems the majority suffocated or were crushed to death in the stampede to escape the pā through the narrow gates, when up to 2,000 Ngāpuhi fired a rain of bullets on the pā from close-by higher ground on the north side of the Mangapiko River, today the site of the Pirongia Golf Club.

Native accounts say that at the time, Māori numbered up to 10,000 people in the pā. No doubt this number is exaggerated, but as most of the Māori from Manukau and Waikato were taking refuge there from the Ngāpuhi, the pā must have been very populous.

The battle was the first in the Waikato where the musket overcame the taiaha. The Cambridge district seems to have escaped invasion on this occasion, perhaps because more current existed on the Horotiu (Waikato) River, making the Waipā River an easier option for Hongi Hika's canoes.

The Waikato Māori continued to live in fear of Hongi Hika's Viking-like raids

until his death in 1828. They moved further south and their war chiefs, Te Wherowhero and Te Kanawa, armed their own warriors with muskets by trading their much sought-after flax for firearms with early European traders through the ports of Manukau, Kāwhia and Mōkau on the North Island's west coast.

Mātakitaki Pā remained deserted after the 1822 attack. Today the pā is listed with the National Historic Places Trust. There are three pā in one at the site, called respectively Mātakitaki, Taurakohia and Puketutu – all with steep, almost precipitous, slopes down to the waterways, and with deep ditches cutting off the pā from the plain on the approach from the east.

Taumatawīwī Battle

Hongi's invasion of the Thames area drove the Ngātimaru tribe to the plains of the Horotiu – the Cambridge district that spanned from Tamahere to Maungatautari – effectively driving off the Ngatihaua, who resettled in the inland country north of Rotorua, and between the Waikato and Piako Rivers. While in exile the Ngatihaua established friendly relations with neighbouring Ngaiterangi of Tauranga, through whom they managed to obtain muskets. The Ngātimaru were also newly equipped with the weapons.

In 1830, after a period of fierce reprisals against the Ngātimaru, including murders and skirmishes, the Ngatihaua, under the brilliant leadership of Te Waharoa, were ready to win back their fertile ancestral lands for once and for all.

Meanwhile, Ngatihaua heard that other remnants of Waikato tribes, having obtained firearms through North Island's west coast ports, were planning to attack the Ngātimaru. Ngatihaua were hopelessly outnumbered in warrior strength; Te Waharoa could only muster 300 men, but nearly all were armed with muskets, well-trained in their use, and disciplined.

In preparation for battle, Te Waharoa appealed to the Ngaiterangi to lend him 1,000 men, not to be exposed to imminent risk, but merely to make a

show of force. Ngaiterangi consented. Te Waharoa then gave his men a rousing address, stating, "If we cannot conquer, we die, and our women and children shall be with us in either case."

Te Waharoa's modest force mounted Te Tiki o te Ihingārangi, today the "Crow's Nest" above Karāpiro Dam, and looked down on the Maungatautari plateau land above the Waikato River. Before Maungatautari Mountain stood Haowhenua, the Ngātimaru fortified pā situated on low slopes on the southern side of present day Luck-at-Last Road. Te Waharoa then led his force down onto the plateau land west of Karāpiro lake which includes the present day Mighty River Domain and farmland.

Seeing the Ngatihaua force approaching, the Ngātimaru, along with some Ngātipaoa, spoiling for a fight, left Haowhenua Pā to face the invaders in the open. They could well afford to do so, as they numbered 3,000 men, nearly all carrying muskets. Te Waharoa came up against the Hauoira Stream, a deep gut or gully that cuts across the plateau to the Waikato River. Today, the Maungatautari Road cuts across the stream just south of the domain, before levelling off on the Taumatawīwī plain on the opposite bank.

The Ngātimaru warriors lined the top of the opposite bank of Hauoira Stream. The long line extended in an 'L' along the stream for about 1½ miles, turning at right angles on the corner overlooking the river, to continue upriver for probably another 500 yards. The whole force was contained to the top terrace. Te Waharoa couldn't take them head-on, as he only had 300 men that could fight, so he had to come up with a battle plan to win the day.

C.W. Vennell, in *Such things were*, stated, "At this point, Te Waharoa could see from where he stood [opposite the angle of the 'L'] a group of rocks. The Ngatihaua chieftain was not only an expert with the long-handled tomahawk in hand-to-hand encounters. His knowledge of strategy and tactics, gained in a hard school, would not have shamed a Caesar, a Frederick the Great, or a Napoleon."

Te Waharoa placed 20 picked men of his

own Ngatihaua on the extreme right of his allies who lined the north bank of the Hauoira Stream, with orders, on a given signal, to charge across the gully regardless of the number opposed to them, so to incite the Ngaiterangi allies to follow. He then divided the remaining Ngatihaua into two bodies of 140 men each. The left detachment crept through the fern to the edge of the chasm, and lowered themselves by ropes to the bottom. They then climbed the papa cliff on the opposite bank, emerging on the lower terrace (now under water), then ran in loose order to a clump of rocks at the end of the terrace. They halted there for a moment to gain their strength, then charged up the slope at the extreme end of the enemy's line, turning it as they fired and hacked.

Meanwhile, the right-hand 140 Ngatihaua advanced close to the waterfall (also now under water), and kept up a hot fire on the 'L', the angle formed by the terrace edge and the gully. Then, shouting his battle cry, Te Waharoa and the 140 men easily crossed the stream just below the waterfall on the angle of the enemy's line and charged up the slope. On hearing the battle cry, the 20 men on the extreme right charged across the gully, and in the enthusiasm of the moment, and the natural love of Māori for battle, many of the Ngaiterangi allies followed them!

The left column of Ngatihaua continued to storm back along the ridge, rolling up the enemy's line, until it met up with the right column near the angle. The united force, flushed with success and the prospect of victory, started a rout not stopping until the enemy gained the safety of their pā. The Ngatihaua and their allies then immediately retired out of musket range.

Ngatihaua lost about 70 killed and 90 wounded. The enemy lost 440 killed and about as many wounded. The enemy, however, still had over 2,000 men that could fight another day. Not wanting to be overrun and have his dead desecrated, Te Waharoa had his dead cremated at the clump of rocks that evening. But during the night, the Ngātimaru negotiated a peace resulting in them being 'escorted' back to their Thames homeland.

Consequently, Karāpiro takes its name from the funeral pyre – Kara meaning rock; and piro, in this context, meaning putrid smell. The battle became known as Taumatawīwī, and is looked upon today as Waikato's Waterloo. Also, the Māori Land Court honours all land titles in the region from the date of the Taumatawīwī battle, when the region was reconquered by Ngatihaua.

The rocks that the left column ran to, and later used as a cremation site, were flooded when Lake Karāpiro was formed in 1947. About 20 years later further rocks were removed from the swimming area near the rowing headquarters to make way for the rowing course for the 1978 World Rowing Championships. One of these rocks was emblematically situated at the Maungatautari Marae, in Hicks Road, to honour the 70 Ngatihaua dead, and others at the Mighty River Domain.



The Kingmaker

Wiremu Tamihana Tarapipipi Te Waharoa, the Kingmaker, was the second son of Te Waharoa.

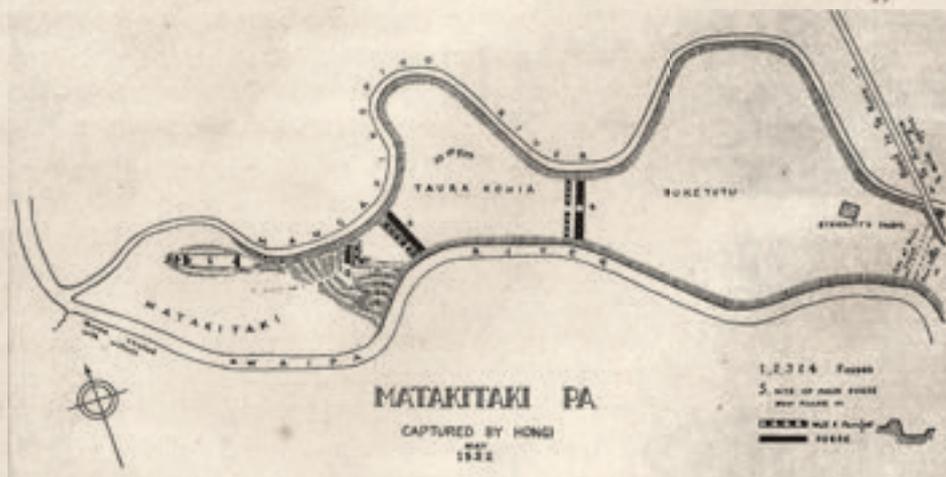
Wiremu Tamihana fought in the Musket Wars and was a cannibal. In the 1830s he converted to Christianity (baptised William Thompson), and learnt to read and write in the Māori language. After his father died in 1838, he became a leader of the Ngatihaua, taught in a school, established farming in his community, and traded produce with Pākehā.

There is no doubt Tamihana was a highly intelligent man with a creative mind keen to learn from the British. In the late 1850s, Tamihana was largely responsible for the establishment of the Māori King Movement, which aimed to unify rebel Māori. He was able to persuade several iwi to join the movement, and Potatau Te Wherowhero of Ngāti Mahuta became the first Māori King.

Throughout the invasion of the Waikato, Tamihana attempted to negotiate with Government forces, but to little effect. After the war he actively campaigned against the resultant confiscation of land, as well as laid a taiaha at the feet of Brigadier-General Carey in an act of 'surrender' at Tamahere on 27 May 1865. He died in 1866.

Left: Wiremu Tamihana, the Kingmaker, attempted unsuccessfully to negotiate with Government forces during the invasion of the Waikato.

Below: Mātakitaki pā, site of the 1822 massacre.





Above: Tamihana lays down his taiaba before Brigadier-General Carey. The act of 'surrender' took place on a foot track near present-day Tamahere in 1865.

FOOD BASKET OF AUCKLAND

The period before the Taranaki War, and subsequently the Waikato War, was an era of peaceful harmony, wheat, fruit and vegetable growing, flour-milling, and canoeing expeditions down the Waipā and Waikato Rivers to the city markets of Auckland. These farm-settlements of the Rev. John Morgan's making were in their zenith of prosperity during the 1850s, when Auckland prices for produce were high.

In February 1852 a party of European travellers visited Waipā. They canoed up the Waipā River as far as Te Rore, then travelled overland to Te Awamutu and Rangiaowhia. With the group was Heywood Crispe, who later became a Mauku settler and volunteer rifleman. James Cowan, in *Frontier Town*, recorded him some years later: "There was a line of whares erected on

the crown of Rangiaowhia Hill, from which we could obtain a fine view of the surrounding country, and it all had a grand appearance in our eyes. There was a long grove of large peach trees and very fine fruit on them...

"A large portion of the ground round the hill was carrying a very good crop of wheat, for the Māoris believed in that as a crop, and they used to convert it into flour at the various flour mills they had. It was of a very good quality, and some of the Waikato mills had a name for the flour they produced, a good deal of which was put on the Auckland market, being taken down the [Waipā and] Waikato, via Waiuku and Onehunga."

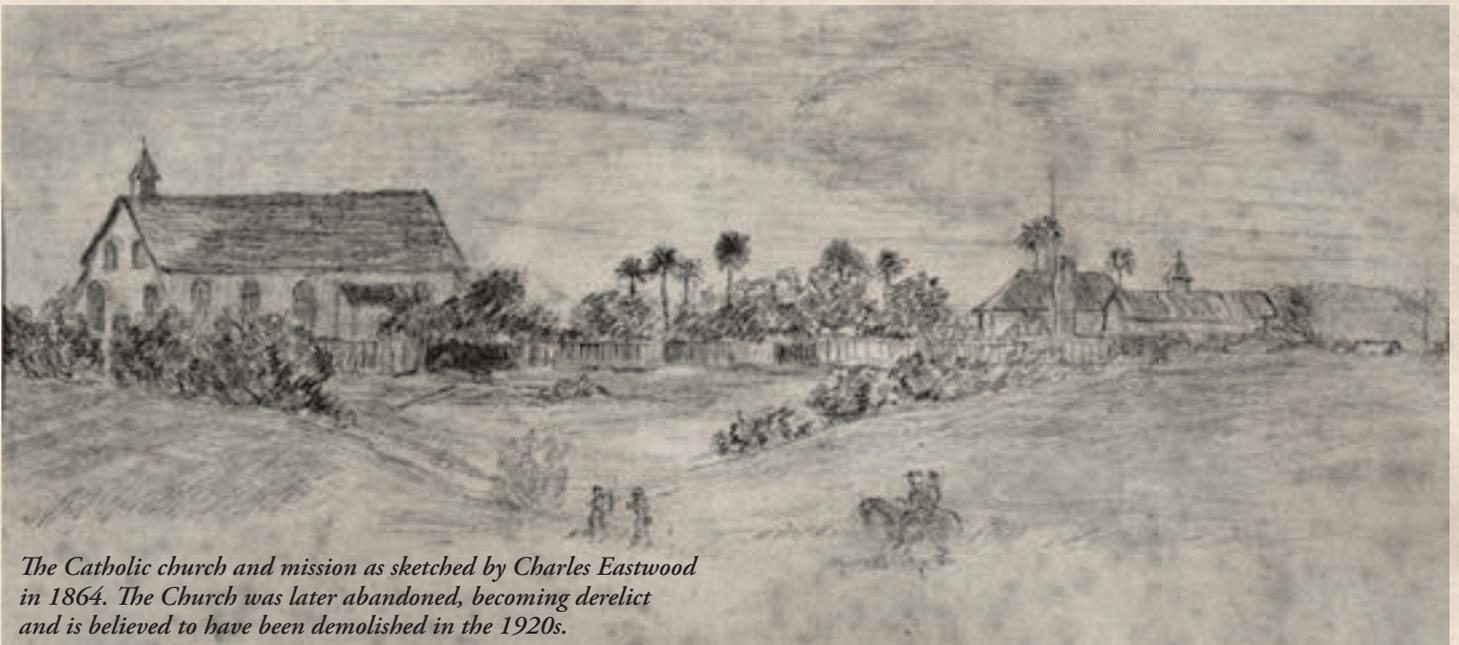
Just before the Waikato River mouth, produce was landed on the north bank and toted overland to the lower reaches of the Manukau Harbour, then again by canoe to Onehunga. It is known that waka kopapa, or small Māori canoes, could navigate a stream from the Waikato River, virtually to where Waiuku is today, leaving just a short distance to be covered by foot or horse.

Crispe continues: "We spent several days in our camp on the Rangiaowhia Hill, taking walks and viewing the country. We attended the [horse] races, which afforded some good sport, all being managed by the natives, assisted by some

Pākehā-Māoris of the neighbourhood. They were white men living a Māori life. Some of them had been well-brought-up young men, rather wild perhaps, who had drifted away from home and had taken up an idle life among the natives."

The Māori cultivations and fields spread further than just Rangiaowhia and Hairini. "We rode some distance round to view the country, the Māori flour mills, and cultivation. There were a lot of good cattle and horses about, and the crops of wheat and patches of potatoes were particularly good, although no bone dust [blood and bone fertiliser] was used in those days."

The local Māori were extremely hospitable to their 'guests,' providing meals and whare for sleeping, as well as gifts of pork, fruit and vegetables. Rangiaowhia was a tranquil place, with its comfortable thatched whares shaded by groves of fruit trees, dotted along the crown of a gently-sloping hill, among cultivated fields of wheat and vegetables, and its flour mills operating near running water. The variety of fruits included peaches, almonds, cherries, apples, grapes and quinces, and vegetables included potatoes, kumara, maize, melons, pumpkins and marrows. The steeples of two churches, the Roman Catholic Church and mission, and St Paul's Church, dominated the skyline.



The Catholic church and mission as sketched by Charles Eastwood in 1864. The Church was later abandoned, becoming derelict and is believed to have been demolished in the 1920s.

The Catholic mission station, with a church and school, was established by Bishop Pompallier in 1844. During the attack on Rangiaowhia in February 1864, Māori took refuge in the church before escaping towards the swamp to the rear of the church, towards Maungatautari. The church was later abandoned, becoming derelict. It is believed to have been demolished in the 1920s. The graveyard is still in existence today.

St Paul's Church

St Paul's (Anglican) Church was built for Ngāti Apakura, being one of the many churches established under Bishop Selwyn. Built between 1852 and 1856 of timber donated by Māori, it and St John's Church in Te Awamutu are two of the oldest surviving buildings in Waipā today. The church was part of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) station at Rangiaowhia, which was founded from the nearby CMS mission at Ōtāwhao prior to 1844. It was erected as a beacon of Protestant Anglo-Saxon culture, countering the influence of the adjacent Catholic mission and bolstering the mana of CMS missionaries as the town expanded.

Two of its windows depict St Paul's encounter with a magician, which may reflect hopes for Christian victory over the perceived 'supernatural' traditional beliefs of the church's predominantly Māori congregation. The richly decorative character of the windows

contrasts with the spartan nature of the rest of the interior, where no pews were originally provided.

Local skills were fostered, with a missionary teacher, Taati Te Waru, being commissioned to add a steeple in 1857-58. This occurred at the same time as the Kingite movement began to emerge, with Potatau Te Wherowhero being proclaimed King in Rangiaowhia in 1857.

The church sheltered Māori during the attack on Rangiaowhia by British and colonial forces in February 1864, although most are believed to have sheltered in the nearby Catholic church. With the settlement subsequently abandoned, the building remained empty until it was repaired by the Anglican Diocese in the 1870s. St Paul's, as it became known, was then used as a parish church and briefly as a

Government school. Today, surrounded by rolling fields, it continues to be used for church services, weddings and burials.

The name Rangiaowhia

Rangiaowhia has been spelled in a variety of ways, ranging from the curious "Rangahaphia" as recorded in an Auckland newspaper of 1851, to "Rangiaohia" and "Rangiawhia." Seemingly, the elders of Ngāti-Maniapoto pronounced and wrote the name as "Rangiaowhia."

Below: Ōtāwhao mission school on the site of present-day Te Awamutu. The mission was established by the Church Missionary Society.



Missionary school at Otawhao.

AT WAR IN THE WAIKATO

The road to Pāterangi

In a proclamation to the Māori Chiefs of the Waikato, dated 11 July 1863, Governor Grey asked them to stop their “evil acts” against “peaceable settlers”. These settlers were pushing deeper and deeper into the bush south of Auckland with the intention of gaining free farm land. A few also worked land in the flood plains between the Waikato and Waipā Rivers and around Raglan.

Grey requested for the free passage of Europeans (non-Māori, or Pākehā) in the Waikato district, in particular for movement on the Waikato River. He also stated: “Those who remain peaceably at their own villages in [the] Waikato, or move into such districts as may be pointed out by the Government, will be protected in their persons, property and land. Those who wage war against Her Majesty, or remain in arms, threatening the lives of her peaceable subjects, must take the consequences of their acts and they must understand that they forfeit the right to the possession of their lands guaranteed to them by the Treaty of Waitangi; which lands will be occupied by a population capable of protecting for the future the quiet and un-offending from the violence with which they are now so constantly threatened.”

It was obvious that whichever direction Māori chose, they were to lose under the monopolistic mentality of the Colonial Government. So they decided to continue their present course and ignored the proclamation. European settlers deep in the Waikato at this stage were not troubled by the Māori.

Adding pressure to the possibility of war, the Colonial Government had already recruited the Waikato Militia with the promise of land after a period of active service. Condition No. 10 in the terms of enlistment stated: “Every settler

under these conditions, who upon being relieved from actual service, receives a certificate of good conduct, will be entitled to one town allotment and one farm section.”

With the heavy commitment of a town allotment of one acre, and a farm allotment of 400 acres for a field officer down to 50 acres for a private, spread over 2,000 militiamen, and to rid themselves of the crippling monthly wage bill, the easy option for the Government was the inevitable invasion of the Waikato at the earliest opportunity. Also, an invasion suited Europeans living in Auckland, as they too desired the fertile land south of Drury, land they believed the Māori had little need for.

A slanted article, which appeared in the *Daily Southern Cross* (Auckland daily newspaper) on 6 October 1863, in part stated: “If the lands are now taken from the Māori, through the fortune of war, it is a result for which the Māoris alone are responsible. They have had to choose between British citizenship and independence; and they have made their decision... They are either British subjects in rebellion, or they are an independent nation, making war against England. In either character, they must take all the responsibilities. If they are rebels in arms against their legal Sovereign, then their lands are justly forfeited to the Crown.”

These words were a self-convincing effort to justify an imminent invasion. The choice of words might not be so strong had the British regiments not been garrisoned in Auckland. With undertones of land confiscation, Governor Grey ordered Cameron to cross the Mangatawhiri River, the recognised border of the Waikato, on 12 July 1863.

Cameron’s forces fought a costly pitched battle at Rangiriri on 20 November before entering Ngāruawahia in January 1864. They then followed the Waipā River on foot with the intention of capturing the rich cultivations around Te Awamutu and Rangiaowhia. They crossed the northern boundary of the now Waipa District Council at Koromatua on 27 January 1864. Cameron used steamers to convey tents and stores up the Waipā River.

The column consisted of the Forest Rangers scouting out front, 12th, 40th, 50th, 65th and 70th Regiments, cavalry and artillery, and packhorses. The force followed a Māori track and occasionally glimpsed the distant enemy positions around Pikopiko where three Māori flags could be seen flying.

On the following day they came up against two Māori positions, the first situated on high ground at Pikopiko (laying across today’s Meadway Road near Lake Mangakaware), and the second larger fortification at Pāterangi (laying across today’s Bell Road at its highest point). Pāterangi consisted of a system of six earth redoubts in a semi-circle, connected by a network of saps and trenches. Effectively, the two positions cut the foot and cart tracks that followed the high ground from Tuhikaramea and Te Rore towards Rangiaowhia and Te Awamutu.

With the steamers unable to progress further upstream because of rapids, Cameron amassed his forces at Te Rore and commenced a month-long standoff in front of Pāterangi. Apart from cavalry and Forest Ranger patrols, and long-range desultory fire, the campaign had reached a stalemate. Cameron didn’t want a repeat of Rangiriri, and was starting to have second thoughts about his troops doing the Colonial Government’s dirty work.

Governor Grey, who had travelled to Te Rore by steamer, found Cameron “an impatient, ill-tempered, injudicious old man”, and was much annoyed at what he considered unnecessary delay, pressing Cameron to assault Pāterangi immediately. Cameron refused. The Governor became more urgent and ordered Cameron to make an assault, to which Cameron bluntly replied, “Go to hell.” These words were clearly heard by troops outside Cameron’s tent.

Meanwhile the camp at Te Rore grew to the size of a small town. William Race of the Forest Rangers reflected on camp life: “Much mirth was to be found on the level banks of the river, such as improvised cricket matches between the Blue Jackets [Royal Navy sailors] and a scratch team of mounted men and Forest Rangers, also athletic games

in which the officers of each corps heartily joined in. No other duty was ours except reconnoitring expeditions into the surrounding locality, and as it was the season for water melons and peaches, we were indeed welcomed on our returning for the luscious fruit we brought with us.”

Ambush on the Mangapiko

While at Te Rore Cameron's force was involved in an engagement along the banks of the Mangapiko River, a short distance northeast from present-day Pirongia. About one mile south of the fortifications at Pāterangi, the Mangapiko River, which flows west to the Waipā, doubles back forming a loop pointing to the north. At the 'neck' of this loop is an ancient Māori earthwork fortification named Waiari, comprised of three large parapets with ditches, which in 1864 were overgrown with thick manuka and fern.

At the northern end of the loop was a swimming hole frequented by parties of soldiers on the hot summer days. On 11 February 1864, a 40th Regiment bathing party arrived for a mid-afternoon swim. Meanwhile a Māori raiding party, concealing themselves in the undergrowth near Waiari in preparation for a night attack on an advance camp that evening, were surprised to see an under-protected swimming party approach them. They could not resist the temptation of firing on the bathers and the small detachment of covering soldiers.

The sound of shooting soon brought reinforcements from the 40th and 50th Regiments' camp along with Captains Jackson and Charles Heaphy (Auckland Rifle Volunteers). Von Tempsky and a detachment of Forest Rangers also arrived. Under pressure, the Māori fell back to the protection of Waiari pursued by the soldiers.

The Forest Rangers crossed the stream and entered the undergrowth. Von Tempsky related, “On our hands and knees we had to creep, revolver in hand, looking for our visible foes. The

thumping of double-barrel guns around us announced soon that we were in the midst of the nest... There were strange meetings in that scrub. Muzzle to muzzle, the shot of despair, the repeating cracks of revolvers and carbine thuds.”

The ancient fortification was cleared in the late afternoon, and the soldiers returned to their respective camps. The retreat was orderly with the Forest Rangers covering the rear.

Both sides lost men. The British dead are buried in a small plot with a headstone, under an ancient oak in a field inside a bend on the west side of Bird Road.

Captain Charles Heaphy of the Auckland Rifle Volunteers, a staff surveyor, was awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery during the action, the only one awarded to a colonial soldier during the New Zealand Wars. While trying to rescue a wounded soldier, Heaphy received a volley from very close range – five bullets grazing and contusing him.

Invasion of Rangiaowhia

Cameron believed that if the Māori pā at Pāterangi and Pikopiko were bypassed and the source of food at Rangiaowhia captured, then the two fortifications might fall without a fight. Having procured guides, Cameron decided on a night march. Preparations were made and a large force of over 1,200 men – both on horse and foot – left Te Rore on the Saturday evening of 20 February 1864, after darkness had fallen. The rest of the force was to follow with the luggage the following day.

Strict silence was enforced. No bugle had sounded, the tents remained standing, and the cover of the moonless night was perfect for a night march. Once past the old pā site at Waiari, the column crossed fern ridges in the direction of Te Awamutu. It was not known whether the old pā of Ōtāwhao, closer to Te Awamutu, was occupied. The Forest Rangers scouted on ahead but found it empty. By now they could hear the cocks crowing in Te Awamutu, and the steeple of St John's church came into sight.

The Colonial Defence Force Cavalry was ordered to the front and after passing the mission station at Te Awamutu, they advanced on Rangiaowhia. By this time the men on foot had fallen behind.

On sighting the village the troopers commenced to gallop. A few Māori rushed out of whare firing on the attackers. The cavalry pursued them over the kumara and corn plantations. By this time the Forest Rangers and about 100 men of the 65th Regiment had arrived. They were told that Māori had taken refuge in the Catholic church at the far end of the village. On reaching the church, von Tempsky ordered the encirclement of the church, but an order came through from Cameron to release them. The freed Māori, mainly women, children and elderly men, escaped across the nearby swamp in the direction of Maungatautari.

Then the action centred on a whare with a sunken floor, close to today's intersection of Puahue and Rangiaowhia Roads. The ten Māori warriors who were holed up in the whare fired through the raupō at the invaders. The firing into the whare intensified, but the occupants were relatively secure because of the sunken floor. Some, including Colonel Nixon, rushed the entrance, only to be gunned down. Nixon died of his wounds two months later. Then the whare caught fire, presumably caused by muzzle blast (or nearby whare, with the flames leaping to the roof of the occupied whare). The occupants must have seen the approaching fire, but they didn't surrender.

One Māori emerged from the doorway, but even with the cries from the officers to “spare him,” he was gunned down by soldiers revenging the deaths of their comrades. As the fire intensified, another emerged from the door, stood upright, and fired his last two shots at the troops. He died in a hail of answering bullets. Yet a third emerged, but was gunned down while taking aim at the soldiers.

Māori later claimed that the British murdered them at Rangiaowhia, especially the group surrounded in the whare. Officers argued that McHale of the Colonial Defence Force Cavalry, who was sent into the whare to take



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them prisoner, was first to be fired on, and killed. The Māori surrounded in the whare displayed a grim determination and dogged resistance. They certainly were admired by the troops for their nobleness, spirit and resolve not to become prisoners, preferring death to confinement.

When the Māori at Pāterangi realised that they had been outflanked, they hastily travelled to Hairini determined to avenge the storming of Rangiaowhia. Early the following morning, 22 February, an outlying picket was fired upon on the north side of the Mangaohoi Stream. A request came back to camp in Te Awamutu for reinforcements, resulting in a running skirmish that lasted several hours.

**Held up in
Te Awamutu**

Rewi Maniapoto was at this time at Kihikihi, a village about three miles south of Te Awamutu. The British attacked the village on 23 February and the Māori fell back to the south and southwest over the Puniu River. The British soldiers burnt the carved meeting house before returning to Te Awamutu. The Māori, realising the position was not held, returned and reoccupied Kihikihi, so the British once more occupied it the following day.

Camp life in Te Awamutu must have been like any frontier town, with its abundance of men and few or no women. Cricket and athletics helped break the monotony. But with little or no alcohol available and an abundance of army pay in their pockets, the men would have to invent their own entertainment. William Race wrote, "The Imperial troops were flushed with several months' pay, and therefore it changed hands amongst themselves at their favourite game of brag or poker and various groups daily and nightly gambled pretty freely at those games. Piles of coppers, silver and sometimes some notes or gold were mixed plentifully in those heaps."

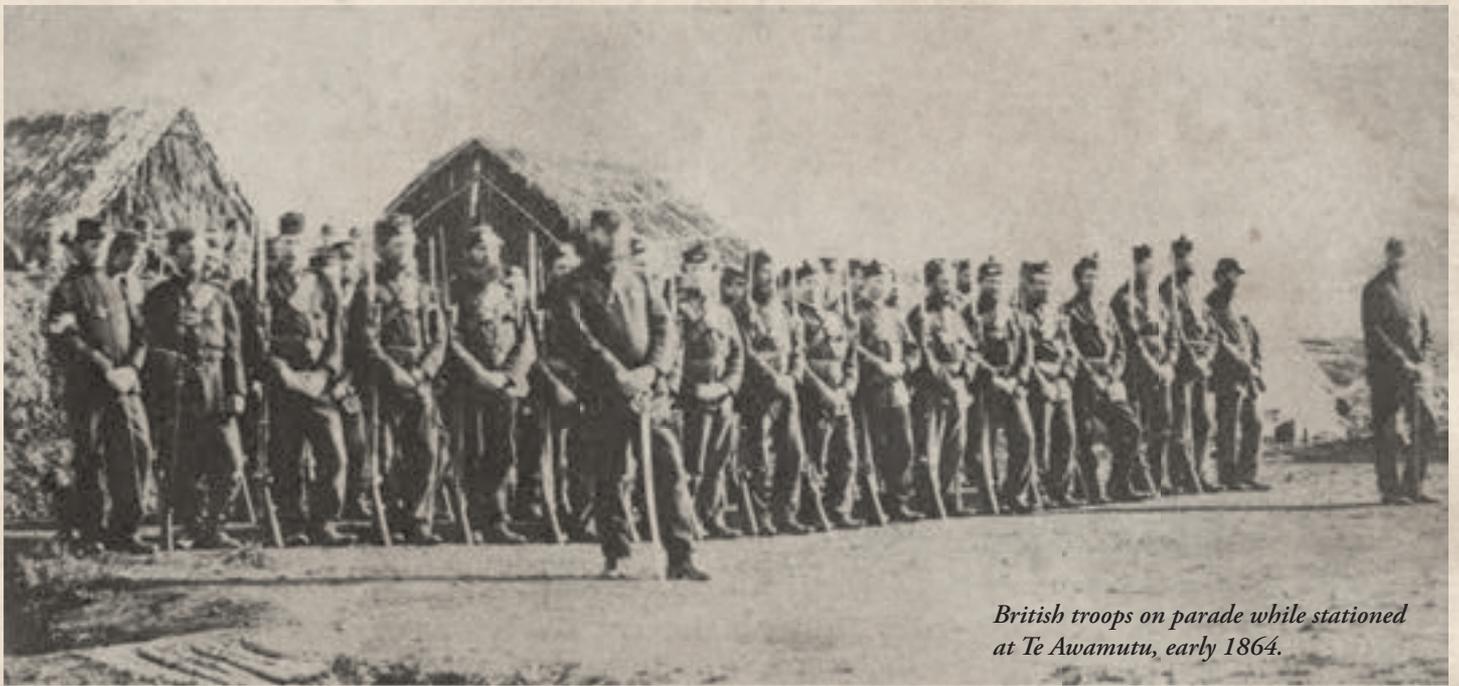
The threat of surprise attack from the Māori caused General Cameron to maintain constant pickets on the perimeter of the town. Part of the large mission house at Te Awamutu was converted into a hospital for the wounded and sick. Typhoid fever was prevalent at the time. The other part of the mission held some Māori prisoners. At one time up to 30 women were there, but they were soon liberated.

**A reconnaissance
at Pukekura**

Cameron considered attacking two Māori pā at the foot of the Pukekura hills, a few miles south of Cambridge. The two positions were close to each other, with the easternmost pā, Te Tiki o te Ihingārangi pā, lower on the slope and immediately above the rapids on the Waikato River. These sites can still be observed today, near the Crow's Nest, overlooking the Waikato River and Karāpiro dam.

Cameron first moved against these fortifications from his new camp at Pukerimu on 2 March. With about 1,000 troops, he concentrated on Te Tiki o te Ihingārangi pā. The troops halted about 1,200 yards in front of the modified ancient earthwork. The defenders raised their red battle flag, followed by a few defiant rifle shots. The flag was then lowered and some Māori performed a haka on the parapets.

Cameron had no intention to attack as he didn't know the ground before the pā, and experience had taught him to expect obstacles. He then ordered the column to retire to Pukerimu redoubt. This upset the Māori who again made loud demonstrations on the parapets, firing shots. Cameron was convinced that the two positions were strong and well designed. Unlike Pāterangi, they would be difficult to outflank, with the Waikato River immediately to the left and the steep bush-clad slopes of the Pukekura hills and Maungatautari mountain to the right.



British troops on parade while stationed at Te Awamutu, early 1864.

ORAKAU – A DESPERATE STAND

A large number of Kingite Māori under Rewi Maniapoto commenced to construct a strong earthwork at Orakau (in Māori: the place of trees) about three miles east from Kihikihi during late March 1864, and later made a historic stand against the British troops.

Rewi believed the position would be too exposed to British field guns and argued for a site closer to the Mangaohoi Stream and the kahikatea forests, which would afford them an easy escape if needed. But he succumbed to the pressure from other chiefs. The main work measured about 80 feet long and 40 feet wide with the narrow sides facing east and west. Nearby, there was a good supply of food and water available to the garrison.

The pā design was an earthwork with an external ditch and broad parapet. Inside was another ditch well traversed against enfilading fire. Many of the traverses were converted into bunkers partly covered as protection against artillery fire. The outside parapet was about six feet thick and six to eight feet above the ditch. This was laminated using alternate

layers of soil and fern, giving it added strength against artillery fire. At strategic positions, long horizontal rifle loopholes were constructed and surrounded on the sides and top by timber. A short trench led out from the northwest angle to a small outwork. At the time of the first assault this outwork was not completed being only three feet deep.

Another work was planned for the neighbouring rise called Karaponia (meaning in Māori: California) about three hundred yards to the west of the Orakau earthwork. It was proposed to construct another pā here with connecting parapet and double trench, but due to the rapidity of the British advance this never eventuated.

The defenders consisted of about 50 Māori of the Ngāti Maniapoto tribe, but the bulk of the defenders came from the Urewera tribe – who had come 150 miles to fight the Pākehā – and from the Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Te Kohera and other west Taupo tribes. In all, only about 310 Māori defended the pā, including about 20 women and children, presumably caught in the pā when hostilities started. Rewi Maniapoto was placed in supreme command.

The defenders were poorly armed. Most had double-barrelled guns (tupara); there were a few flintlocks and some modern Enfield or similar rifles taken from Europeans during earlier hostilities. Fifteen such weapons

were brought from Taranaki. Some Māori warriors carried only tomahawks and traditional weapons. There was a shortage of powder in the pā, as most of it was still in nearby Orakau village when the British attacked. There was also a shortage of food and water inside the pā once the siege began, although some young men stole out on the first night and returned with provisions. But well before the siege ended the defenders were to run out of water – an important factor in the ending of the siege.

The first sighting of the earthwork construction was made by two surveyors on the morning of 30 March 1864 from a hill near Kihikihi. A rider carrying the information was sent to Brigadier-General Carey stationed at Te Awamutu camp. After a reconnaissance, Carey organised a three-pronged advance on Orakau for that night. This display of urgency was because General Cameron was only a few hours away at Pukerimu camp, near Cambridge, and Carey wanted to control the attack personally, fearing Cameron's intervention before the battle commenced. He had already noticed Cameron's sympathy for the Māori cause and feared Cameron might procrastinate and stall the attack.

Day One – 31 March

The right-flank column of about 275 men went via Kihikihi, then turned south,

crossing the Puniu River and heading along the south bank to Waikeria before re-crossing the Puniu River and heading north. This eventually brought them to the southeast corner of the pā. The centre column of 731 men were joined at Kihikihi by the 1st Regiment Waikato Militia and virtually followed today's Kihikihi-Arapuni road to Orakau. The left column of 113 men left the new Blewitt's redoubt at Rangiaowhia, crossed the Mangaohoi Stream, passing through kahikatea bush and swamp to reach Orakau.

The centre column were the first to reach Orakau, arriving at dawn of 31 March. On entering the village they were fired at by Māori skirmishers. Immediately, about 25 Forest Rangers and 120 men of the 18th Regiment attacked. Captain Ring of the 18th Regiment fell mortally wounded. The Māori held their fire until the attackers were within 50 yards, then fired volley after volley. Unfamiliarity with the ground immediately in front of the pā and heavy volleys from the defenders caused the attack to falter and retreat.

The charge was sounded for a second attack, which included reinforcements from the newly-arrived 40th Regiment, but again the attack was repulsed. The two attacks well illustrate the failure to reconnoitre the pā and surroundings.

Carey realised by now that the pā was a formidable fortress and decided to besiege the site (now that the other two columns were on the battlefield) and soften it with artillery fire. Two Armstrong guns were positioned on the Karaponia ridge about 350 yards distant and fired into the pā. Being well constructed with fern and soil parapets, the pā proved resilient to shell fire.

A sap was started, working towards the northwest corner of the pā. Gabions (woven baskets to contain soil) were brought from Te Awamutu, and later made on site, to protect the parapets of the sap from enemy fire. The British and colonial units positioned themselves in a perimeter around the pā, as well as marksmen being placed in the sap behind the diggers.

At midday Māori reinforcements were

observed in the distance coming from the east and making for the forest between Orakau and Rangiaowhia. A Māori in the pā communicated in high-pitched yells with the new arrivals across the swamp. A detachment of soldiers were sent to cover the reinforcements.

More troops arrived in the afternoon, including 50 more Forest Rangers, many of them volunteering to work in the sap.

Day Two – 1 April

Early on the second morning a further 220 troops arrived from Te Awamutu. Artillery fire continued all day. A party of defenders rushed the east perimeter (the opposite side from the sap), but were repulsed by strong fire from the Forest Rangers.

Some artillery shells were lobbed into the Māori reinforcements across the swamp preventing any attempt of theirs to break the siege. Also, the defenders began running out a counter-sap to outflank the besiegers' sap. The firing from each covering party became fierce.

The particularly hot day made conditions within the pā difficult because of the lack of water and a mounting list of wounded and dead. By the end of the day their supply of lead was also running short. That night Rewi Maniapoto instructed his men to fire short lengths of fruit-tree branch during the hours of darkness to conserve the lead supply. Also, under cover of darkness, one warrior courageously stole through the British lines to retrieve a gourd of water for the wounded.

Day Three – 2 April – the massacre

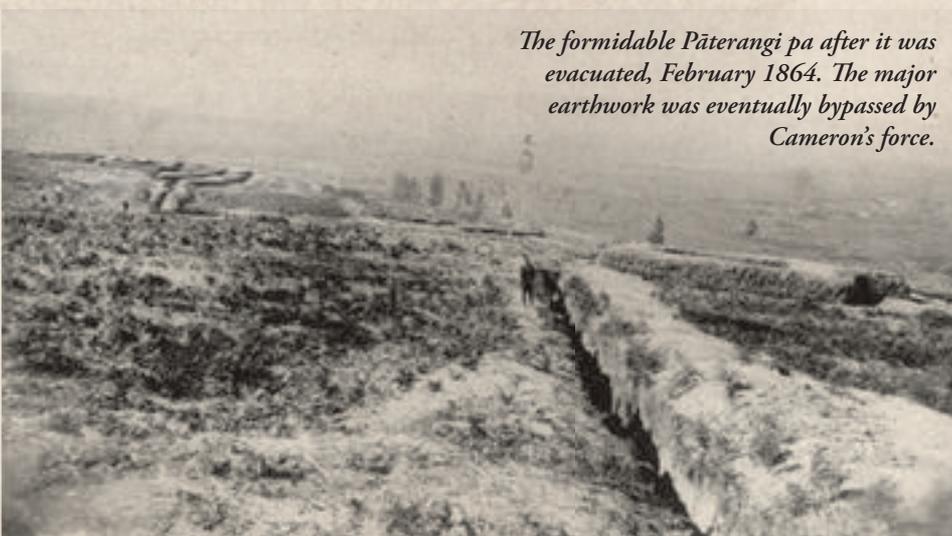
In the early light of the third day, another hot day, the Māori held council and decided to abandon the pā due to the lack of water. But the recommencement of rifle and artillery fire soon stopped the breakout. A rush by some Māori at the sap in the morning was turned back.

Soon after noon General Cameron arrived from Pukerimu Redoubt and took command. He immediately called a halt and invited the defenders to surrender. Ensign William Gilbert Mair, who acted as staff interpreter, spoke with the defenders under a white flag, promising safety for the garrison.

Accounts of what was actually said on the day differ slightly. Mair's account is generally accepted as the most accurate. The answer came a few minutes later from the defenders, "Ka whawhai tonu matou, Ake! Ake! Ake!" – "We will fight on for ever and ever!" Mair next requested that the women and children come out. There was a short deliberation and the answer came, "Ki te mate nga tane, me mate ano nga wahine me nga tamariki." – "If the men are to die, the women and children must die too."

Other words were also exchanged. Finally a bullet grazed Mair's right shoulder. He reported back to Cameron, who was greatly impressed by the stubborn determination of the Māori who preferred to risk death rather than face the horrors of seemingly permanent incarceration in a coal-hulk anchored off Auckland.

The formidable Pāterangi pa after it was evacuated, February 1864. The major earthwork was eventually bypassed by Cameron's force.





Above: Memorial for the British dead at Waiari, located in a field on the slopes of Pāterangi.

Governor Grey mentioned the lasting damage to Māori being kept prisoners on the *Marion* (the fate of Māori capture at Rangiriri) in a letter to the authorities in London: “The natives distinctly state that the reason why they would not accept the terms offered to them by General Cameron at Orakau was because they feared they would all be taken to Auckland, as prisoners were from Rangiriri, and perhaps never be liberated.”

An Armstrong gun was pulled into the sap in the early afternoon to pound the parapet from close range. Because the sap was now close to the post and rail fence (about 30 yards from the parapet), hand grenades could be tossed into the pā. Soon the sap joined the outwork and the battle entered its final stage.

Finally, the Māori broke cover. They amassed and rushed the southeast

perimeter, opposite the sap. Immediately, soldiers rushed from the sap into the pā and fired into the last of the retreating Māori. Once through the perimeter, the escaping Māori headed south towards the swamp pursued by all the soldiers in the vicinity. The soldiers could not fire at the running Māori as the cross-fire endangered comrades in the neighbouring perimeter. It is reckoned Cameron re-distributed his troops during the morning, leaving a gap in the perimeter through which he hoped the defenders would escape.

Von Tempsky yelled, “Run, men, run! Cut them off! Cut them off!” The Forest Rangers, mounted Royal Artillery and some Colonial Defence Force troopers pursued the Māori for a distance of about six miles. They soon caught up with the Māori and cut them down or shot them with their carbines.

It was not until the next day that the soldiers fully realised the terrible outcome of the pursuit. Probably fewer than 50 out of about 300 Māori escaped unscathed. About 160 Māori were killed or died of wounds. Rewi Maniapoto managed to escape unwounded, escorted by a protecting ring of devout supporters. The British casualties for the battle totalled 17 killed and 51 wounded.

In the initial charge into the pā two women are known to have been bayoneted by Imperial troops eager for revenge – although it has been said that the women were hard to distinguish from the men. Most of the native

women were saved from slaughter by the protection of a few Forest Rangers. One woman was found dead clasping a Bible to her breast. Bibles were found on several dead and wounded Māori.

Most of the Māori dead were buried near where they fell in several mass graves. Nearly 40 men and women were buried in the pā. The soldiers just tumbled the parapet in over the bodies.



Māori defenders inside the Orakau pā reject Ensign Mair’s invitation to surrender.

Below: Māori survivors of Orakau at the 50-year commemorations in 1914. (l-r): Te Wairoa Piripī, Hekiera te Rangai, Pou-Patate Huihi, Te Huiia Raureti, Matiu te Munu and Te Wharurangi Parekawa.

