

WINTEC - A HISTORY OF THE LAND ON WHICH OUR CITY CAMPUS SITS

The hill upon which Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec) is currently sited is part of the traditional lands of the local hapū Ngāti Wairere, and it has considerable significance to that hapū.

In pre-European times the geomorphology of the hill was considerably different from that seen today. It was extensively modified in the 1930's, during the early development of Hamilton City.

The hill was originally part of a steep sided (1 in 14 gradient), long ridge or promontory that extended from what is now Ruakiwi Road down Hill street, Tristram Street, through to Garden Place and onwards to Victoria Street. A cutting was made through the ridge to allow the formation of Angelsea Street. Later the ridge on the river side of Angelsea Street was bulldozed away, thereby flattening the area for the development of what is now Garden Place and the central CBD around the Hamilton City Council buildings. The bulldozed earth was trucked away and used to fill various gullies, such as Waitawhiriwhiri gully to facilitate the formation of roads across these waterways.

Pre-European History of the Area

The promontory that was bulldozed away was known to pre-European Māori as Te Kōpū Mania O Kirikiriroa (the smooth belly of Kirikiriroa). The fertility of its soils was famous throughout the district and allowed the development of extensive cultivations of kūmara, and rauruhe (fern root), particularly on the northern slopes of the ridge. It dominated the landscape to the southern end of Kirikiriroa Pā between London Street and Bryce Street and was revered by Ngāti Wairere as a tribal landmark.

The lower parts of the hill were generally swampy areas where taro were planted and cultivated. There were also numerous water springs (puna) along the lower slopes of the hill.

A tūāhu (ceremonial altar) named Te Ahurewa stood on the peak of the ridge. This was established to maintain and protect the Mauri of the hill, its fertility and associated life sustaining properties. Tribal deities were believed to reside within the tūāhu. Ancient chants and rituals were performed at the tūāhu, calling upon the resident deities to bless the planting of the crop and ensure a bountiful harvest.

The hill was also an observation point from which pre-European Māori watched for the skies for the appearance of certain stars and constellations which marked the timing for different phases of planting and harvesting of crops.

Te Ao Katoa, a Ngāti Koura high priest of the cult of Io (the most sacred of ancient Māori religions) is believed to have performed one of the last ancient ritual on this hill, during his visit to Kirikiriroa, with King Tāwhiao, in July 1881. The ritual was performed to remove the tapu from the hill so that the Mauri of the hill would no longer be desecrated by Europeans walking on it, or by the housing that was being developed on the hill.

At various times, the ancestors of Ngāti Wairere who were buried at various localities on this hill were exhumed by Hakopa Te Waharoa (died 1877) and Te Puke Waharoa from the time of the arrival of the settlers in 1864.

In pre-European times the hill was covered with rangiora and other native trees and ferns with isolated stands of kahikatea and tawa trees. The berries provided food for a whole variety of native birds such as the kūkū (native pigeon) and the kōmako (bellbird), which were hunted and trapped in this vicinity. Periodically areas of this vegetation was cleared away and burnt to make an area for development of a garden for cultivation of crops. Most of the ancient Māori practices that were performed on this hill before Europeans came to the Waikato stopped around 1849 following the conversion of numbers of Ngāti Wairere to Christianity. Kirikiriroa Pā, positioned between what is now London and Bryce Streets, was the centre for the early Christian missionaries who undertook these conversions. Indeed, the first "church" in the Hamilton City area, named Tohikitierangi, was a thatched, raupō building constructed at Kirikiriroa Pā. This was used for Christian services by visiting missionaries. The work of these missionaries is demonstrated in a record from January 1849, when approximately 40 adult Ngāti Wairere were baptised on the canoe-landing site, on the bank of the Waikato River, below the Pā. This canoe-landing site can still be seen today.

Post arrival of Europeans.

The arrival of Europeans in the Waikato saw a major change in the crops that were grown on the hill. Maize, potato, tobacco, peach trees, apple trees, cabbages, corn, and pumpkin replaced the traditional kūmara and fern crops. These were not traditional or staple diets for Māori and were mostly grown to supply the ever-growing number of European settlers in the Auckland area.

It is believed that European concepts of farming and horticultural production were introduced to this area by Korehako, a European who was captured at Aotea harbour, near Kawhia by an Ngāti Koura war party. He was transported inland to Te Rapa Pā (by the Waikato Hospital) and later lived amongst Ngāti Wairere at Kirikiriroa Pā. Early European missionaries recorded seeing him in this location during the early 1840's, but noted his poor state of mental health.

Structures and associated features on the hill.

There were a variety of wooden structures associated with religious ceremonies, or food preparation stood on the hill in pre-European times, the remnants of some of these features, along with artefacts and kōiwi associated with their use and the occupation of the hill may well still be buried on the Wintec site while others may have long perished.

THESE STRUCTURES INCLUDED:

- **WHATA** - (Drying Platform). These were essentially raised flat platforms. Kūmara and gourds were laid out on them to dry in the sun, thereby preserving them for future use. What were still in use in Aotea and Hukanui up to the mid 1930's.
- **WHARE PORA** - (Manufacturing houses). Whare pora were houses specifically constructed for the preparation of flax (muka) and the manufacture of textiles and garments from flax fibres. In the whare pora women, and sometimes men, scraped the flesh from the leaves to extract the strong fibres. These were then woven in the whare pora into korowai (cloaks), other garments, kete (baskets), lashings, cords and ropes. Manufacturing flax into lashings, cords and particularly ropes for sailing ships provided Māori with an important economic base once Europeans arrived in the area.
- **KĀUTA** - (Shed for storing firewood and hāngī stones). Kāuta were open sided, wood framed sheds with thatched raupō roofs. They were used for storing firewood and hāngī stones to keep dry. Often, in bad weather, the hāngī would be constructed and the food cooked under the kāuta.

- **WHATARANGI** - (A platform for offerings). Food was placed on whatarangi as offerings to Māori deities to seek their help in warding off mākutu (curses or witchcraft) placed on the area or location by other tribes or opponents. At other times offerings were made in whatarangi during traditional planting and harvest ceremonies to ensure the bounty of the crop.
- **PĀTAKA** - (Elaborately carved, elevated storehouse). Pātaka were especially sacred and venerated by pre-European Māori, because they commonly contained taonga (precious and sacred artefacts) which were highly valued by the chief, as well as food.
- **POU HĀKARI** - (Platform). A pou hākari was a triangular platform, covered with a thatched roof, raised up on three poles. They were used for storing or displaying food and were commonly erected within gardens and cultivations as part of a hākari (feast).
- **TŪĀHU** - (Ceremonial shrine). Ngāti Wairere deities were believed to reside in tūāhu. They had a variety of shapes and construction depending on the origin of the deity that they commemorated. One form of tūāhu derived from the Ngāti Wairere practice of giving a chief who was slain in battle the status of a deity. These chiefly deities were commemorated by construction of a tūāhu which was a fenced off area in which the preserved tattooed head of the chiefs were displayed, mounted on sticks. Other tūāhu were simply earthen mounds with talisman stones placed on their surface. Tūāhu were usually fenced around their perimeter to keep dogs out. The fences also protected the tūāhu from damage by pigs, once they were introduced by European settlers.
- **WHĀNGAI-HAU** - (Ceremonial Ovens). Pre-European Māori constructed umu (in ground ovens) for cooking food. The whāngai-hau was a special ceremonial oven, used only for cooking the bodies of slain enemy warriors prior to consuming their flesh.
- **MAURI** - (Stone objects) which were sometimes planted within special gardens, used as talisman for sacred rituals associated with gardening.
- **TAUMATA ATUA** - (A carved figure) which houses a sacred spirit, which protects the area.
- **UMU** - Ovens used for the cooking of various food items for domestic purposes.
- **PUKE-AHU** - Small sacred mounds that were used for the planting of kūmara tubers and other crops, usually grown in rows.
- **KIRIKIRI** - Gravel soils prepared for gardens. Commonly termed "modified soils" by archaeologists.
- **UKU** - Clay.
- **TAUPA** - An ancient pre-European term used locally for describing cultivations, which is now, obsolete.
- **TAPAAHI** - Hollowed depressions where soils were excavated for the formation of garden soils.

- **RUA-KŪMARA** - Underground storage pits for kūmara and other food crops.
- **MARERE** - A sacred umu (oven) associated with the planting ceremonies for the kūmara.

OTHER ITEMS MAY INCLUDE:

Shattered hāngī stones, agricultural implements, fresh water mussel shells and associated middens, obsidian flakes, stone tool implements and introduced European items used from the time of European contact such as clay pipes etc.

Hapū who were associated with the area or cultivated the hill.

The hill and surrounding area that was renowned for its cultivation and produce was developed by Ngāti Wairere and its hapū (sub tribes). They are:

1 NGĀTI WAIRERE

The renowned warrior Māhanga was a descendant in direct line from Hoturoa, the captain of the Tainui canoe. Māhanga lived at Purakau Pā, located at the confluence of the Waipa River and Kaniwhaniwha stream, south of what is now Whatawhata. He had two daughters, Waitawake and Tukotuku.

Kokako was a chief whose origins linked back to another canoe, the Mātaatua canoe. It is believed that he was responsible for the drowning of Tūheitia, Māhanga's father. As a result Māhanga and Kokako were continually in dispute and were warring adversaries. Kokako had several children, the most famous being a son named Tamainupo.

Māhanga's daughter Tukotuku married Kokako's son Tamainupō, and they settled at Te Kaurere, a papa kāinga along the banks of the Waitetuna River that runs near the Raglan deviation.

Tamainupō and Tukotuku had only one son, Wairere. The birth of the son was so significant that after Kokako baptised Wairere in the Waikato River, he made peace with Māhanga at Purakau Pā. To mark Wairere's birth the ancient name of the river was changed from Te Awanui O Taiehu to Waikato - Waikato meaning "to pluck water" and refers to the motion of sprinkling water on the child during the Tohi (baptism ritual). Wairere's baptism ritual was performed at Taipouri Island near Huntly. In later life Wairere had several wives who produced many sons, daughters and numerous descendents. In his old age, Wairere travelled southwards to the Taupō district and married Hikataupo a Chieftainess of the Ngāti Tūwharetoa and died there. From Wairere and Hikataupo, descend the dynasty of Te Heuheu, the paramount chiefs of the Ngāti Tūwharetoa of the Lake Taupō Districts.

2 NGĀTI KOURA

Paoa, a Tainui chief, lived at Kaitotehe Pā opposite Taupiri mountain with his first wife Tauhakari. They had three children: two sons Toapoto, Toawhane and one daughter, Koura after whom this hapū was named. Through the intermarrying of Koura's descendants with people from Ngāti Wairere, Ngāti Koura became closely aligned with Ngāti Wairere.

Following Koura's birth, Paoa's brother Mahuta visited him at Kaitotehe Pā. As this was a time when food was scarce the people of the Pā could not offer Mahuta a proper feast. Taking this as an insult to his brother, Paoa left Kaitotehe Pā, abandoning his first family, and moved to the Hauraki district. There he took a second wife named Tukutuku and with her had two sons, Tipa and Horowhenua.

In his old age, Paoa returned to the Waikato and searched for his first family, eventually finding them at Te Hoe O Tainui. However, the second family resented Paoa's actions and as a consequence there was a battle outside the Pā in which Tipa and Horowhenua killed Toawhana and Toapoto, Koura's two older brothers.

Tipa and Horowhenua then challenged any one inside the Pā who was bold enough to come out and fight them. Koura, armed with a Taiaha named Hua Katoa, came out to answer the challenge. Because it was a woman who answered their challenge Tipa and Horowhenua realised that they had killed all of the senior male line of Koura's family, but did not realise that Koura was indeed their half sister. As there was no more male line and they would not fight a woman, Tipa and Horowhenua declared peace between the two families.

Koura buried the sacred Taiaha, named Huakatoa, on the peak of Mount Hangawera. At the same time she declared that all the lands from Mt Hangawera to the West should be invaded and taken from the Ngā Iwi who lived there. This was achieved by her grandson Hotumaeua, the renowned warlord, who thereby established the traditional lands of Ngāti Koura.

Koura had several husbands, one of whom was Waenganui, a famous war Chief whose descendants, Ngāti Waenganui, live at Parawera. When Koura died her bones were deposited in a burial cave named Katokato near Taupiri. The location of this cave is still known to her descendants.

3 NGĀTI HANUI

Hanui was the third child of Maramatutahi and Paretahuri. Maramatutahi was the son of Wairere's third wife Tukapua. Paretahuri was the eldest child of Hekemaru and Hekeiterangi and the elder sister of Mahuta and Paoa.

Hanui became one of Ngāti Wairere's greatest hand-to-hand combat warriors. It was Hanui and Hotumaeua who conquered the Ngā Iwi people of this region and claimed large areas of their lands for Ngāti Wairere and their sub-tribes. On his death Hanui was buried at Karamu Pā in Gordonton. In the late 1880's his bones, and those of Hotumaeua, were exhumed under the supervision of King Tawhiao and Te Puke Waharoa, to protect them from possible degradation during the land wars. They were reburied at Taupiri mountain. The location of these burial sites is still known to a few of their living descendants.

4 NGĀTI NGAMURIKAITAU

This hapū derives its name from an event that occurred sometime during the 1600's. Following an unidentified battle, a number of dead warriors' bodies were placed in a canoe moored on the Waikato river to await their burial. However the canoe broke it's mooring and floated down stream, where it was seized by a group of Māori as it floated by. They cooked the decomposing bodies in a specially constructed Umu (oven) and ate them. From then onwards this group were known as Ngamurikaitau, the name describing the eating of these decomposing bodies.

Ngāti Ngamurikaitau warriors took part in the famous Hingakaka battle, fought near Ohaupo close to the shores of Lake Ngāroto. This was one of the largest pre-European battles. Detailed descriptions of this battle are given in Dr Pei Te Hurinui Jone's book "Potatau" and Professor Bruce Biggs' book "Nga Iwi O Tainui".

Apart from being fierce warriors, Ngāti Ngamurikaitau was renowned for making a particular type of rain cape called Pureki, woven from very rough flax fibres. The hapū was also renowned for the special rites and rituals that they performed prior to going into battle.

5 NGĀTI PAREKIRANGI

Parekirangi was a direct female descendent of Wairere. Ngāti Parekirangi is a small hapū whose traditional lands are now part of Hamilton East.

Pirihi Tomonui was one of Parekirangi's more recent descendants of note. He was a significant member of King Potatau Te Wherowhero's Rūnanga (parliament) and fought against the British troops at the battle of Rangiriri in 1863. Pirihi Tomonui died at Tauhei in 1891. He was responsible for the dismantling of the large meetinghouse, named Wairere, which stood at Te Rapa Pā, now Cobham Drive, near the Waikato Hospital. Another famous chief of this hapū was Iraia Papoto, a fully tattooed war chief who fought against Te

Rauparaha in 1816. Iraia Papoto in his old age died from injuries sustained after falling from his horse in 1879. He is buried at Tauhei. It is believed that he had no direct issue.

6 NGĀTI IRANUI

Iranui was the second son of Wairere from his first wife Hinemoa. He was famous as a cultivator of Kūmara on his land at Taupiri. Because of this fame, Ngāti Mahuta attacked and drove him away so that they could occupy and cultivate his fertile land. He later occupied Mangaharakeke Pā, located behind the Anchor Dairy factory site at Te Rapa and "farmed" a number of cultivations within what are now the Hamilton City boundaries.

Iranui was not only a renowned farmer but was also a warrior of note. He led a war party to attack a famous warrior - Rangipotiki - at Aotea Harbour on the west coast. Iranui killed Rangipotiki and hung his body up on a Karaka tree for a time, before cutting it up and distributing parts to various people in the war party.

In retaliation, Rangipotiki's hapū from Aotea Harbour raised a war party that came to Mangaharakeke Pā where Iranui lived. At that time they did not know the specific identity of the people who had killed Rangipotiki. As part of the traditional greeting ceremony at the Pā, Iranui served them cooked human flesh, including parts of Rangipotiki. The leaders of the war party recognised some of Rangipotiki's tattoos on the flesh that they had been given to eat and hence realised that Iranui, their host, had killed Rangipotiki.

Iranui managed to escape from the Pā, pursued by the war party from Aotea Harbour, and swam across the Waikato river. As he travelled along one of the walking tracks to Te Papanui, which is now the Five Cross-roads area, he was caught by the Aotea war party and killed. In retaliation for having killed Rangipotiki, they degraded his body and mana by hanging him upside down from the post of a Pataka (carved food house).

7 NGĀTI WAIKAI

Waikai was the youngest daughter of Maramatutahi, but at present little is now known about her. Her brother was Hanui, the famous warrior described above. From the vast lands that he conquered, Hanui set aside pockets of land for Waikai to settle. This included the present day Puketaha and Chartwell areas.

8 NGĀTI TE AO

Little is known about the origins of this hapū. They occupied Whatanoa Pā, located close to the Waikato Stadium and Waitawhiriwhiri Pā above the Fairfield Bridge. They were attacked by Hanui and Hotumauea who killed their main chief, Taiko. The preserved, tattooed head of Taiko, along with the heads of Mohihotuhotu and another unidentified Ngāti Wairere chief were uncovered when an excavator broke into a burial cave in the bank of the Waikato river during the construction of the foundations for the Fairfield Bridge.

9 NGĀTI PARETAUA

Is a sub-tribe of Ngāti Wairere: Paretaua was one of the wives of Hanui. Little is known about her except that a hapū bearing her name lived at Opoia Pā, near the Claudelands Bridge. It is believed that she was buried at Karamu Pā at Hukanui alongside Hanui, her husband.

10 NGĀTI HAUMI

Currently little is known about the origins of this hapū. However it came under the leadership of Hakopa Te Waharoa, a senior chieftain of the Ngāti Wairere in 1850. It is believed that the name of Ngāti Haumi derives from an upended prow of a canoe, which was used for storing human remains. After the 1863-1864 Waikato Land Wars, Hakopa Te Waharoa settled on his ancestral lands at Hukanui (Gordonton) in 1864. Hakopa Te Waharoa uplifted ancestral remains from burial grounds and caves within Hamilton from 1865. He died in 1877.

Wiremu Puke

Ethnographic Researcher

Nga Mana Toopu O Kirikiriroa