

Whakatōhea Deed of Settlement Signing

Speech for Signing Ceremony

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He Taonga He Taonga...

Ko Daniel Arapeta Paruru tōku ingoa, ko Ngāti Rua rāua ko Ngāti Patumoana ōku hapū tuturu o te Whakatōhea. Kei te tautoko au ngā mihi kua mihi o tēnei rangi, ki a koe Kingi Tuheitia Potatau Te Wherowhero te Tuawhitu, ka mihi ki a koe e te ariki nui me to kāhui tokomanawa o te Kingitanga e manaakitia i a koe, tēnā koe, tēnā koutou. Kāti ra ki a koe e te Minita Little, ko koe te māngai o te Karauna i tae mai ki tēnei o tātou kaupapa nui mō te Whakatōhea, tēnei anō te mihi ki a koe me to tira. E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā kārangaranga maha o te motu, tēnā koutou katoa.

In the past few years, I have facilitated the Komiti Whiriwhiri Hitori, our research committee comprising whānau from each of the hapū. Our task was to oversee the scripting of the Historical Account, a document outlining the events and actions that saw Whakatōhea rise to prosperity, and then to fall due to the actions of the Crown.

Today's acknowledgements and apology from the Crown come to us through the efforts of our tīpuna who carried the weight of their iwi to rectify the wrongs of the past. And as we reflect on our history we must remember we are still here – the descendants of those who suffered through Raupatu. We would be here all day if I attempted to read the Historical Account, and therefore I'll cover off a few key points and their relevance to this place here, Whitikau.

The traditional rohe (territory) of Whakatōhea is bountiful in kai. Ōhiwa Harbour, in the west of the rohe, is home to the so-called 'Ngā Tamāhine a Te Whakatōhea - the daughters of Whakatōhea' – a local name for the rich abundance of kaimoana provided by the Harbour. Pākōwhai and Ōpōtiki sit at the centre of Te Rohe o Te Whakatōhea near the confluence of the Waiōweka and Ōtara Rivers. Together with the Waiōtahe, the estuarine habitats of these awa provide a plentiful supply of fish and shellfish. On the eastern side of the rohe, from Ōpape to Awaawakino, the rocks abound with mussels, pāua, kina and koura.

Whakatōhea did not attend the gathering of chiefs at Waitangi in February 1840. Instead, copies of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and agents sailed to visit other iwi around Aotearoa. The trader James W. Fedarb, master of the schooner *Mercury*, was responsible for taking a treaty sheet around the Bay of Plenty. On 27 and 28 May 1840 seven Whakatōhea Rangatira signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi, in Ōpōtiki.

Which Whakatōhea Rangatira signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi?

Tauātoro - Ngāi Tamahaua, Ngāti Ngahere;

Te Takahiao - Te Ūpokorehe;

Te Āporotanga - Ngāti Rua;

Rangimātānuku - Ngāti Rua;

Rangihaerepō - Te Ūpokorehe, Ngāi Tamahaua;

Wi Akeake - Te Ūpokorehe and

Whākia - Whakatōhea.

Following the signing, the Crown's agent gave the Whakatōhea Rangatira gifts of pipes and tobacco.

Up until the late 1850s the growing Pākehā settlement at Auckland traded extensively with Māori coastal settlements. Whakatōhea and the Auckland settlers had a significant trading partnership. The iwi developed a thriving economy, largely based on flax, agricultural produce and pigs. Whakatōhea grew extensive crops of wheat, maize, corn, kumara and potatoes on the rich alluvial plains surrounding the Ōtara and Waiōweka Rivers. Thousands of pigs were reared on the surplus produce. Whakatōhea soon realised the advantage of controlling the transport in Auckland trade. From the early 1840s, they acquired their own fleet of small schooners and cutters. At least 22 ships were registered to Whakatōhea owners, comprising a significant proportion of the New Zealand registered vessels over that period. Given that the majority of Māori owned ships were not registered, it is likely Whakatōhea owned many more vessels than officially recorded. So many Whakatōhea men sailed on trading vessels that by 1849 most of the male population of Ōpōtiki were reported to have visited Auckland and/or the Bay of Islands.

By 1864 Whakatōhea had developed a thriving agricultural economy, embraced technology, built infrastructure, and developed political organisations to deal with economic and social change. Following the death of Reverend Carl Volkner in March 1865, five British navy boats arrived in the Ōpōtiki Harbour carrying 515 soldiers who bombed Pākōwhai village and attacked anyone that

resisted. After the invasion, the Whakatōhea people vacated the area to take shelter on the surrounding hills. Many were killed. A scorched-earth policy was enforced by the Crown, taking away any existence of Whakatōhea occupancy of these areas. Shortly after, the Crown attacked Te Tarata Pa, where mostly Ngāti Ira ancestors took up arms to defend themselves.

In the end, Whakatōhea lost at least 55 people and 144,000 acres (58,200 hectares) of the Tribe's most fertile land, which they had used to prosper after the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The motivation of the Crown to find suitable land for settlement using the NZ Settlement Act 1863 led to the subjugation for many years of the Whakatōhea people and their manamotuhake – self determination.

We are fortunate to still have several traditional names of this area, that were recorded by a Ngāti Ngahere kuia, Mei Poha. Mei remembered key sites around the Opotiki township area for which we are very grateful for. Mei married Paku Edwards, who was born in 1850, and was 15 years of age during the invasion. Mei and Paku's daughter was Tarati Carrington, known to us as nanny Dolly. In the late 1980's a grandson of Paku, Claude Edwards, led Whakatōhea's claims process and pulled together a research team, that comprised Julie Williams, Patuwahine Maxwell, and others. The team travelled with nanny Dolly to visit the sites that her mother Mei had written down. Some sites in close proximity to this site here are Mātangīpuhia, that belonged to Ngāti Rua, the name of the kaumatua flats. Near St Josephs school is Piritoriaua, a pa belonging to Ngai Tamahaua, in the vacant lot on Kelly street is Pouata, a section of Ngai Tamahaua, close to Rerekau Urupa. Across the road stood a whare called Tātaia, then where the Shalfoon and Francis shop is today use to stand a Wharenui belonging to Ngāti Ira called Te Hokowhitu.

On their journey they arrived here to Whitikau. Whitikau is the original name of this site, which was an Island, long ago. A traditional Māori house, Araiteuru, once stood here, and was occupied by Ngāti Ngahere Hapū of Whakatōhea. The main river course flowed where the skate park is now, close to the back of the buildings, where boat sheds used to be. Although for many years it was recognised as Volkner's Island, the original name is now being returned, on Whakatōhea's request.

I therefore thank and acknowledge the many whanau who over the generations have given their time freely to correct the wrongs of the past. In more recent years I want to acknowledge uncle Ranganui Walker who drafted the first version of an historical account, which laid the foundation for what was to come, and more recently, uncle Robert Edwards and Graeme Riesterer who have steered the tribe to this auspicious occasion.

Having the signing here at Whitikau is symbolic for many reasons and this land has witnessed many events – we have seen the survival and the flourishing of our tribe with Ōpōtiki in the centre of the rohe, then the prosperity of our people during the early years after the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This location here also witnessed the invasion of the british forces that led to the Raupatu of Whakatohea, and now the reconciliation of Whakatohea with the Crown. However, Whitikau is symbolic of the journey we are now on, from Trauma to Transformation. And perhaps we can utilise this term to assist us on the next phase of our Whakatohea history – Whitikau – Kia whakawhiti Te Whakatōhea rere kau ana ki te ao hou.

No reira tēnā koutou katoa.