

* Historical Society Members Visit Old Ohiva

Members of the Whakatane Historical Society assembled recently at old Ohiva when Mrs E. D. DuPont outlined briefly the early history of the locality. She said she came to Waitohi in 1902 and at that time there were only five houses in the locality along with an hotel, store and post office at the eastern entrance to Ohiva Harbour. For many years previously, Major Rushton was the only resident. The first licensee was Robert Black and the first teacher Mrs Ducker who opened a school in 1906.

In the early 1900's, home-made butter fetched 6d a pound, but as the return was 3d and after allowing for the cost of boxes and packing, there was nothing to it. Eggs sold at 6d a dozen and poultry 3s each. More money was obtained with oysters, selling at 1s a sack in Auckland during the closure of the beds there in 1904 because of outbreak of typhoid. A local freezing works was mooted, but the idea was abandoned in 1914.

Busy Port

In early days, Ohiva was quite a busy port with ships calling three or four times a week. It was important as an alternative to either Whakatane or Opotiki when each was bar-bound. The coach, a buggy and two horses used the beach from Opotiki to Ohiva until 1906 when a causeway across the Waitohi flats enabled a roadway to be built along the cliff-foot, but that length between the Waitohi River and Ohiva entrance has been damaged by heavy seas, twice within 50 years and is now abandoned.

In that year, livery stables was established at Ohiva, the journey to Rotorua taking one

has been, the scene of many drownings; there is a six-knot current and the bar is dangerous.

Ohakana Island has been variously known as Bates Island, after an Opotiki newspaper proprietor, and Goodwins Island. Urutana Island has been known as Duckers Island and was noted for its mangroves and oyster beds. Hokiangā Island was always sacred and Mrs Du Pont recalls hearing much beautiful singing at spiritual conventions. The point opposite Hokiangā was commonly known as "billy-goat point." At Onekawa pa site, on top of cliffs above old Ohiva, Major Ropata had installed a rifle range and many Mauser bullets have been picked up at this spot.

A detailed map drawn by Mr Ken Moore and showing most of the old pa sites, kainga, redoubts, old and new wharves, old and new roads was appreciated by members who were thus able to follow early all the landmarks and other points on the ground.

* OHIWA ISLANDS RICH IN HISTORY

MAY 16, 1972.

Members of the Opotiki and Whakatane Historical Societies combined at the weekend for a visit to Hokiangā and Uretara (Ducker's) Islands, in the Ohiva Harbour.

Hokiangā, at the end of his name only and then in the late 1860s there was a land court hearing and it upset him greatly to find that the Resident Magistrate was none other than Will G. Mau, a son of his old antagonist.

Even up to 1875 there was much wrangling, legal and otherwise, concerning the island, and as was the case with many another land speculator of the day, Black had entered into a transaction which could not stand the cold wind of official scrutiny.

It seems that in 1850 Black and his family left Uretara and went to Auckland, but returned later to take up residence as a trader at Matata, establishing stations at Matapahi, Onapu, Ormalo, Raukoko and Te Kaha. In later years he settled at Otara in Opotiki in 1851.

Murder of Surveyor — Pitcairni: On March 2nd in 1869 Robert Pitcairn was killed by Te Kooti's men on Uretara Island. Pitcairn was in camp on the island shooting kuaika (godwit), but on this day he had been away and upon his return he fell into ambush. Drawing his canoe up to the beach he was met by a woman, his housekeeper, who took care to carry his gun; hidden nearby were four Hauhaus and one of them set upon the surveyor, who was tomahawked.

Ducker: The island took on this name after a Mr Ducker who ran a store near where the Ohiva Hotel formerly stood — there being quite a settlement in an area of what is now all mudflats.

There was the hotel, a wharf, a small jetty, but went ashore and the vessel was lost — years later he was to claim that the cargo and vessel amounted to \$2000. At the time of the wreck, a European named A. J. Nicholas was living on Uretara Island busy building a small trading vessel. Naturally Black met Nicholas and arranged with him to purchase the island and a kind of purchase was drawn up, but was not conclusive — for in time Nicholas and Ohiva and the land deal became a dispute.

After fifteen years, later Black re-

Bones of a Ship:

From the notes of the late B. V. Cottrill, he states:—South of Hokiangā up north records show that the first shipbuilding venture took place on Uretara Island in 1839 by three men, A. J. Nicholas and two brothers, master mariners, Richard and Robert Waddy. The island was an early trading post and had a good kauri house. On this island the bones of a ship were once visible and it is said the captain purposely ran his boat ashore, married into the local Maoris, who ate the crew and took the gunpowder they wanted so badly.

War Veteran Biddle:

The Maori War veteran Biddle grew several acres of wheat on the island and wattle, a curse on Ohakana Island, was introduced by Ducker, to produce lan for the leather industry. Ducker also raised chickens, selling them for 30c a head. Ducker also took the first cows to Fiji.

Gun Running:

In 1861 the Government and authorities of the day had a real problem with the trading and buying of firearms and so the revenue schooner Zillah was commissioned to detect gun running in the Bay of Plenty. Ohiva Harbour was searched a number of times as it was considered that such trading took place there.

The Cutter Nimrod:

Built at Uretara by Messrs Nicholas and Waddy Bros. in 1842. Lost at Toluaga Bay 1845. Its weight 19 tons registered, of a length of 31ft 4in, a beam 13ft and a depth 5ft 8in.