

*Opotiki paper published 1962*  
**\* LANDSCAPE ALTERED**

**Deep Channel Now Runs Where Ohiva Township Once Stood**

Although Opotiki residents new think nothing of the ten mile trip to Ohiva for an hour's cockling, an afternoon on the beach, or fishing at the harbour mouth, they would hesitate at the thought of travelling there by horse-drawn vehicle for an evening's entertainment.

There is at least one elderly Opotiki lady who recalls just that. She says that, when she was a girl, she would make this slow progress to Ohiva with a party of friends to where the deep harbour now is, cross the narrow strip of water by ferry, and continue to Ohope for a dance. They all returned to Opotiki just in time to start work the next day.

In those days and earlier a long boat, the horses swimming small settlement flourished at behind. On one trip this ferry Ohiva, which was a main point man was drowned and soon on the road from Auckland to afterwards the Opotiki County Opotiki and the East Coast. For Council started the official ferry which took coaches across — the horses still swimming.

At one time the land had been owned by the Arawa Maori to whom it had been given by the Government in recognition of their services against Te Kooti. Traces of Maori pa can be found today by any who care to climb the neighbouring cliffs for the hour which can be obtained.

Te Kooti himself is said to have died here and been buried on one of the islands in the harbour. An Opotiki resident has found evidence also of moat in the district in tall-tale heaps of their smooth crop stones.

**BUILDING REMOVED**  
 Little by little the sea encroached while the land on the Ohope side was being built up. One by one the buildings were removed before they were washed away until only the

An interesting sidelight on the Ferry Hotel is that it was once kept by the "Crusoes of Sunday Island" of the story by Elsie K. Morton.

Thomas Bell, father of the Crusoe family, was hotel keeper at Ohiva at the same time as his friend, John Ayeval, of the First Waikeato Regiment, was teacher at the Ohiva school.

Before the ferry service was established an Ohiva resident took the mail and any passengers over the harbour by row.

When he sailed through the heads forty years ago, Captain W. T. Gash, of Parnell, says that, even then, there was little left but some fishermen's cottages and an old shed on the wharf.

**Memories Revived**

An interesting visitor to Ohiva yesterday was a daughter of Captain Moir, licensee of the Ohiva Hotel about 1908.

She has been staying at Ohope but came over to Ohiva for the day to view the harbour where the hotel used to stand. Her mother and father were responsible for setting up the school at Ohiva.

Captain Moir followed Mr Henry Lyle as licensee of the Ohiva Hotel and Mr Lyle to take over the place at Ohiva.

*The Ohiva paper published 1962*

wharf remained and that, too, eventually disappeared. A man who has known Opotiki for over 80 years believes that the coastline in this area dropped as much as 18 inches at the time of the Napier earthquake and, if this is so, it would certainly have hastened the Ohiva erosion.

Exceptional storms, one of the worst of which about 40 years ago drove waves right up on Vedder's property, washing pots and pans from a camp site there, sucked still more land into the sea until today the deepest part of the Ohiva harbour is the area near where the group of commercial buildings once stood.

**LAND CONNECTED**

Many Maoris contend that at one time the Ohiva spit and the area of land reaching out from Ohope were connected and that the harbour mouth was much farther east at the foot of the Ohiva bluff. When scouring started in the present channel, large numbers of totara trunks were found and carried away by farmers and this would appear to substantiate the story that the harbour mouth was once dry land.

About five years ago this township was almost isolated when erosion caused the road at the foot of the cliff to fall away for some distance. The County Council eventually took over, and has recently partly sealed a road over the hills which had originally been built by a local farmer, the late Mr O. Reeve, and which now gives access to an increasingly popular beach resort.

*NO TIDAL EASE*

After the Ohiva wharf was dismantled, due to erosion of the sandspit, about the end of the First World War, a wharf, the existing one, was built at Kutarere in 1922, to provide for the needs of this rapidly growing area with its butter and cheese factories at Waimana, Waiotahi, Cheddar Valley and Nukuhou.

"In view of the substantial increase in the traffic over the wharf the Opotiki County Council, which is the controlling authority, has decided to extend the wharf itself, and the buildings thereon, and as the Government has made such free extensive use of the wharf, the Council and the Ohiva and District Progressive Association have requested a State grant of £850 for the work.

**FULFIL PREDICTIONS**

"The steadily increasing volume of traffic over the Kutarere wharf is beginning to verify the predictions that were made when the wharf was opened. Kutarere has already become the port of the fine dairying valleys of the Waiotahi, Cheddar, Nukuhou and Waimana, but the limit of the port's usefulness has not yet been reached.

**OPTIMISTIC**

"Speaking at the opening of the wharf, the Hon. J. B. Gow, who was then chairman of the Opotiki Supply Council, said the creation of a wharf was 'one of the best things that had happened for the whole of the hinterland.' Mr Gow also conveyed a message from Mr K. S. Williams, M.P., who said the wharf would be 'a boon to the Urewera country.'

Mr W. Reid, chairman of the Whakatane County Council, declared that the Kutarere wharf was 'the natural outlet for the whole of the country drained by the Waimana River. Large areas of this country have not yet been opened up, but the time is not far distant when the Urewera Valley and adjacent country will be dotted with homesteads. The settlers will unobtrusively dispatch their products and receive their stores at the wharf on account of the via Kutarere — their natural outlet.

"The quantity of goods handled between April 1st and November 15th, 1923, was 1432 tons, apart from large quantities of bridge-building material that were landed at the wharf on account of the P.O. Works Department for use on a new road into the Urewera Country.

"From the date of opening until March 31st, 1923, the amount taken in wharf charges was £295. Since then, up to November 15th, 1923, a similar amount has been taken, with an additional amount of £159 outstanding, and four and a-half months of the current financial year still to go.