

1979 ?

WHAKATOHEA OF OPOTIKI
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NGATI IRA

PP50: The Marae of Ngati-Ira is at Waioeka, the small settlement on the left of state highway 2 where it enters the sixty kilometre Waioeka Gorge.

There is an aspect of mystery about their origin. Although on one side their descent is as clear as tradition ever can be on such matters, there remains on the other story of a section of Ngati-Ira as a formerly powerful East Coast tribe, migrating top the Opotiki side of the mountains after being broken up by wars in their own territory. The heke of the major part of these Ngati-Ira down the eastern flank of the North Island is a saga which does not pertain to this history.

Dealing first with the generally understood tradition, Ngati-Ira are the descendants of Tamatea and derive their name from his grandson Irapuaia.

According to Ngati-Ira, Tamatea came from Hawaiki, his canoe was Tuwhenua and no people occupied the Opotiki lands when he arrived there however

PP51: people in occupation at the Motu, these were Tauwharanui and his followers.

Tamatea = Muriwai

Rangikurukuru
Irapuaia
Rangimatauriki
Tumatiatia
Tarararere
Te Ikapare
Te Uruariki

KOTIKOTI

KAIWHANAUNGA

MANUTAHU

Tamatea travelled up the Waioeka river and gave names of his choice to many natural features as he went. Still visible in 1889 when described in court was a peculiarly shaped stone like a small ladder or comb called "The Comb of Tamatea". It was partly in the water on the Tahora side of the stream. Further on, a remarkable all of water, or stone rapid, where the whitebait were in the habit of collecting O named Ngataierua after one of his daughters. Another daughter Te Tuhi was commemorated in the naming of a spot where red ochre was found; and Te Karoro o Tamatea, the seagull of Tamatea: this was a stone supposed to resemble a bird in shape and coloured white which caused it to be named after the seagull. The stream Tataweka which joins the Waioeka was named too.

Although this tradition of Tamatea as tipuna of Ngati-Ira seems straight forward enough, it is accompanied by the usual shadows of doubt cast from other directions which will be mentioned here without any presumption as to what the truth of the matter may really be.

Ngati-Ira say that Tamatea went to Whakatane where he found and married Muriwai, their off spring bring Rangikurukuru.

Tamatea's followers settled in Opotiki region and the

PP52:

first families descended from Muriwai and Tamatea were born here.

Te Whakatane also claim an ancestor named Tamatea. This was Tamatea Nukuroa who was the father of Roau, Rangiwaka and Ngataierua. It was he who named the feature on the Waioeka river they say. He came across country with a number of followers in search of land and the people dispersed in the process. His daughter Rangiwaka was left with one group at Te Wera on the Tahora block. Is this the same person as Tamatea Matangi, grandsire of Irapuaia? It would seem doubtful and yet Whakatane and Ngati-Ira elders one hundred years ago were saying that the two tribes had a common descent from Tamatea. Both could, to add to the confusion, named Haeora as a grandchild and yet he seems to appear only in.

WHAKATANE WHAKAPAPA

Tamatea
 Roau
 Haeora
 Rongomaepaoa
 Manuruhe

Further, both sources claim Ngataierua as a daughter of their Tamatea.

NGATI - IRA

TAMATEA (MATANGI)

NGATAIERUA (F) TE TUHI (F)

WHAKATANE

TAMATEA (NUKUROA)

ROAU (M) RANGIWAKA (F) NGATAIERUA (F)

Settlement of the Tahora area between the upper Waiotahi, Waioeka and Wairata and South commenced.

PP53:

In the time of Tamatea. When his grandson Irapuaia had reached a mature stage of his life, the settlers had sufficiently multiplied to attain an independent status and take the name Ngati-Ira. In Irapuaia's time and that of his son Rangimatauriki, occupation was permanent and complete. Development as separate hapu by Ngati-Ira and Whakatane started almost immediately, for a boundary between the two was laid down by agreement between Irapuaia and Haeora.

TAMATEA

RANGIKURUKURU
IRAPUAIA
(NGATI-IRA)

ROAU
HAEORA
(WHAKATANE)

Fortified and other pa that Ngati-Ira established in these times were Motuhara, Poroporo in the Maraetai area, and Pukaingatuwatawata on the western side of the Waioeka.

On the eastern side were Uenuku, Otunono, Pauanui, Otuheka and Raipaua.

For several generations Ngati-Ira and the related Whakatane dwelt and multiplied in harmony. But the pressures of expanding population had the inevitable consequences and it became necessary for one hapu to assume dominance.

Whakatane initiated proceedings by murdering Te Uruariki of Ngati-ira a challenge as to who should occupy. Te Uruariki's mana was assumed by his sons Kotikoti, Kaiwhanaunga and Manutahi and a succession of clashes commenced which embroiled other personalities of Whakatohea and saw the sons of Te Uru Ariki ranging far into Tuhoe territory.

It was in these times that Ruaumoko the Ngati-Patu ancestor became allied with Ngati-Ira. Whakatane were defeated by Ngati-Ira on the Oamaru Block and also at

PP54:

Pokerekere on the Western side of the river. Kotikoti was responsible for the latter with a force which started its march from korotahi near the coast. Pawero, a principal of Whakatane, was killed by Ngati-Ira as a further consequence of an attack on his people at the instance of Ruaumokos Ngai-Tu grandsire Kahopu. An so, as the links between Ngati-Ira and Whakatane became weaker, land titled to the evolving Whakatohea was becoming more clearly defined.

During these struggles Whakatane lost, on the Eastern side of the Waioeka, land rights which they had enjoyed in common with Uru Ariki. Ruaumoko campaign extended over the Southern area embracing Te Uruariki.

And a most important link was forged when Taunahora, son of Ruaumoko, was espoused to te Rahu who was the daughter of Kotikoti. Manutahi, another of Uru Ariki's sons acquired (to use a euphemism) rights to game and land occupation at Maraetai which Ngati-Ira continued to enjoy until the days of confiscation.

The conquest of land by Ngati-Ira from Te Whakatane in their days of dissension was accepted by the courts as having been proved within the bounds stated in the court judgement which reads thus:

That part of this Block Oamaru
lying between Waioeka River
on the other side
and a straight line
on the other side
drawn from the summit of Moanui
to the point where Tutaetoko Stream
crosses the confiscated boundary
and by a line
from the summit of Moanui
following the boundary
of Motu Block
towards the Koranga river
until it reaches
Te Uruariki stream
and thence by the course
of the said stream
to its junction
with the Waioeka River.
This land all lies
on the Eastern side
of the Waioeka
and consists of about
65,000 hectares
of what can be accurately
referred to as
"real tiger country."

A similar area on the western side of the Waioeka was recognised as belonging to the Ngati-Ira descendants of

PP55: Kotikoti, Kaiwhanaunga and Manutahi and its limits were described as follows:

The piece beginning
 on the confiscation line
 at Te Ahikumara
 near Pukenui o Raho -
 then along the Confiscation line
 east to the Waioeka River -
 then up that river
 to the peg of Oamaru Block,
 where its South West boundary
 joins the Waioeka River
 then by a straight line
 West by South to the junction
 of the Ruatehuia and Kahunui streams
 then ascending the Kahunui stream
 to its junction with Tataweka stream,
 then by a straight line
 due west to (point S)
 marked on plan Boundary line of Block (tahora)
 then up along the Boundary line
 north to Kaharoa (trig)
 thence along eastern boundary line
 of piece A
 to the commencing point
 on the confiscation line.

As mentioned elsewhere, there was continuing strife with Tuhoë involving Kotikoti, Kaiwhanaunga and others of Ngati-Ira and at the same time there were visitations by the Southern tribes to content with.

There was in the time of Kariahoupapa, a clash with war party of Ngati-Kahungaunu and whanau a kai. This occurred at a Kainga named Kahunui, situated well up to the head waters of the Waioeka and close to the limits of Ngati-Ira territory. The interlopers paid for their indiscretion with the death of two leaders named whareamoā and Tuata.

In the late 18th century the last fight between the two peoples occurred when the allied tribes penetrated as far north as Tahora Pa. This time they lost their chiefs Te Peru, Rearea and Pokare, and Ngati-Ira continued in residence.

The bodies of the chiefs killed in this venture were taken to Poroporo where they were cooked and eaten. This was the case of the biter being bit with a vengeance, for this war party had come not with the intention of retaliation or occupation but for the express purpose of slaughtering men for food.

PP56: Sporadic flare-ups with trespassers from within the Whakatohea federation were always likely to occur. One of the last of these was with Ngati-Patu on the Tahora Block. Taukuru, Whakaka and Rotokopia of Ngati-Patu were involved in this incident. Ngati-Ira suffered losses and two young children carried away by Rotokopia with cannibal intent were saved at the instigation of Whakaka.

RUAUMOKO

PAKIRA
HINERUKU
TAUKURU

HIKA PAKURANGI
HERETAUNGA
WHAKAKA

This incident may have been the last, occurring in about the late 1830's.

As happened with other hapu, it appears that Ngati-Ira left their traditionally settled lands and moved towards the coast at some stage in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is most likely that this movement took place after the Europeans, and more particularly the missionaries, showed up. The last internal battles were fought at this time, also the raids by the northern tribes. Until the outbreak of politically induced trouble with Europeans, arising from the Taranaki land dissension, there seems to have been a gathering of Whakatohea in the Coastal areas and what are now the rich dairy flats were split up between the various sub-tribes under accepted boundaries.

Ngati-Ira became embroiled in the Hauhau campaign to a greater extent than any other of the Whakatohea hapu and with the advent of the military forces were obliged to return to their ancestral groups up the Waioeka River. It was at this time that they re-occupied places like Maraetai, and even as far back as Te Uruariki;. Food cultivation was

PP57:

re-established in places which were considered safe from the troops and Ngati-Ira remained there until the fighting ceased. They then went through the tribulation of land confiscation and a gradual return to the coast. Their earlier vacation of the land led some litigants to claim later that they had never owned it, but had only gone there as refugees during the Hauhau campaign. The court, however, in the face of traditional evidence, took a different view and recognised the claims of Ngati-Ira on both sides of the Waioeka.

Although inter-hapu warfare had virtually ended 30 years earlier, there was what amounted to a brief resumption of it in the unhappy events of the Hauhau rising. This came about when member of other hapu probably small groups took up arms iguanas Ngati-Ira on the side of the government forces.

When Ngati-Ira attacked Te Papa, Ngati-Ira suffered more severely than other branches of Whakatohea who were present. They were apparently in the situation of a forward company in a battalion position to make a military analogy, and suffered the request fate of forward companies in being over run. Despite their reverses here and some pretty rough handling in the Hauhau affairs, they were still at the end of it all a comparatively numerous people which indicates what their original strength must have been before the advent of guns, white men and other predatory influences.

The other aspect of Ngati-Ira history which may not be authentic is included here because it was apparently considered so by historians at the turn of the century.

Investigations in the course of preparing this history disclose no confirmation of it from currently available Whakatohea sources, but such may emerge at some time. As with most traditions there are various versions and conflict of detail but the general theme is as follows:

PP58:

The eponymous ancestor of Ngati-ira
was Ira Kai Putahi.
He was the son of Uenuku
the renowned high priest of Hawaiki.
Takarita, his wife,
had committed an act of indiscretion
for which she was killed
by her husband.
Her heart was removed,
Cooked and fed to the child

Who thus derived his name of
 Ira, the heart eater.
 Ira's daughter Hine-kau-i-rangi
 came to Aotearoa as a passenger
 on Horouta under the captaincy of Paoa.
 In the vicinity of Ohiwa,
 the canoe struck a reef named
 Tuki-rae-kurikeri,
 was capsized and damaged
 and the passengers had to
 swim for the shore.
 Paoa set off to explore
 the interior where he performed
 some super human feats
 which resulted in the establishment
 of the Waioeka and Motu Rivers.
 By the time he returned,
 the canoe had been repaired
 and continued its voyage
 around the Cape to Waiapu
 where the people
 settled and flourished.
 A tradition expression describes
 them as numerous on land
 as are the petrels on the ocean;

Ko tini o te pekeha
 Ki te moana,
 Ko Ngati-Ira ki uta.

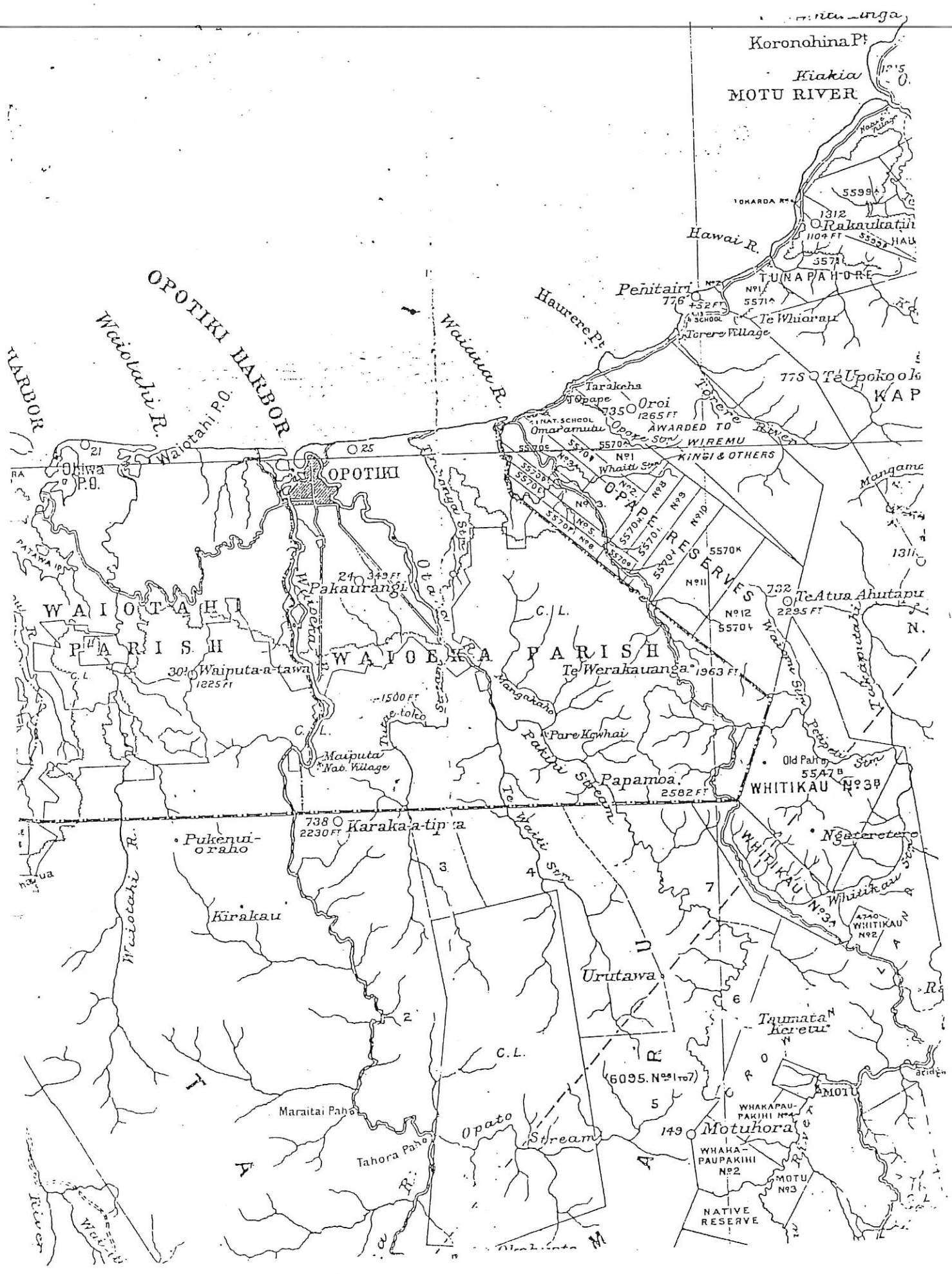
Eight generations after Ira, the tribe suffered a crushing defeat at Pakaurangi, a waterless fortress where they had been invested by Aitanga-a-Hauti. They were split into three divisions, some escaping to Kaiora near Whanara and others finding refuge in the Huiarua mountains. The men kept on fighting and in once campaign were allied with Ngai-Tai, but their reverses continued at the hands of Rongo Whakaata and others. The final defeat was at Anaura, their victor being a person named Kahukuranui. After this, the dejected and dispossess Ngati-Ira dispersed from the East Coast for all time.

A major group of the survivors migrated down the Coast to Wairapa, some eventually finding their way to the Wellington area.

Another party arrived in the Waikato where they fell to Ngati-Maniapoto. And a remnant, under the leadership of Ngaherehere, declared that they would return to the landing place of their ancestral canoe

PP59: to the Bay of Plenty. It is they who according to this tradition are progenitors of the present Ngati-Ira.

What is more likely is that these refugees from the East Coast Ngati-Ira found haven amongst the Mataatua descended Ngati-Ira of Opotiki. The latter would have been firmly established in their own right by the time the survivors of Pakaurangi and other disasters arrived.



Koronohina Pt
 Kiakia
 MOTU RIVER

Hawai R.
 Te Whiarau
 Torere Village

OPOTIKI HARBOR
 Waiotahi R.
 Waiotahi P.O.

Hauere Pt

Penitairi
 776 + 52 FT

778 Te Upoko o Is
 KAP

HARBOR

Ohawa P.O.

OPOTIKI

Tarakaha
 Topape 735
 Oroki 1265 FT
 Omapamutu
 AWARDED TO
 WIREMU
 KINGI & OTHERS

WAIOTAHU
 PARISH

WAI O HAU
 PARISH
 Te Werakauanga 1663 FT

732 Te Atua Ahutapu
 2295 FT

30 Waiputa-a-tawa
 1225 FT

24 Pakaurangi
 349 FT

Maiputa
 Nab. Village

738 Karaka-a-tipua
 2230 FT

Pukeni-oraho

Kirakau

WHITIKAU N°38
 5547 B

Ngaderetere

Papamoa
 2582 FT

Urutawa

Taumata
 Keretu

Maraitai Pah

Tahora Pah

Opato Stream

149 Motuhora

WHAKAPAU
 PAKIHU N°2

WHAKA-
 PAUPAKIHU
 N°2

MOTU
 N°3

NATIVE
 RESERVE