

HISTORY OF NGATI IRA

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Hira Te Popo Te Tangata
Opeke Te Marae
Ngati-Ira Te Hapu
Whakatohea Te Iwi

Whakatohea is the tribal designation of the Maori people of O-potiki-mai-Tawhiti. (Paerata)

The hapu's are Ngai-Tama, Ngati-Rua, Ngati-Patu, Ngati-Ngahere, Ngati-Ira and Upokorehe.

Their tribal boundaries extend westward from Opape to Kutarere. The blood of Whakatohea is an infusion of Tangata-whenua, the original ancient people of the land were the descendants of the 12th Century Toi migration.

Nukutere which landed at Te Rangi (Opape) and Mataatua at Whakatane were the most prominent of the canoes which introduced the 14th Century Polynesians to this area Traditional history in general began with the advent of these immigrants.

The term "Muriwai's Mokopunas" used in reference to Whakatohea is an allusion to their descent from Muriwai of Mataatua canoe. The Ngati-Ira hapu who live at Waioeka are of East Coast origin being descended from a fragment of the once powerful tribe of that name who left that area several centuries ago.

Nga Urupa a Ngati-Ira

Opeke is a new area just above the marae. (1900)

Takutae is an old Urupa that stretches inland ($\frac{1}{2}$ mile). Many people as far as Terere and Kahikatea have been interred there.

The pa's and habitations - Opekerau is a high hill at the back of where the Waioeka School now stands. It overlooks the marae the flats the bush and even Whakaari (when the day is clear) and across the river where Ruahema and Matiti (pae maunga) stands tall above the rugged Interland, as well as all of Oamakura.

Evidence of Opekerau is still obvious such as the hangi stones, obsidian rocks, shells, rock shaped toki and digging implements. The people built their pa's on hills which were surrounded by trenches, which suggests that the safety of the people (whanau) were of the utmost.

Te Puia

Another pa, houses were made of raupo, kiekie and mud. (clay)
The distinct feature of this pa was the Niu pole that stood in the middle of the pa. Photos are readily available that will show this once old pa that stood on the now Rogers farm, where his cowshed now stands. Trenches are an obvious feature. The whole area was called Marowaiwai.

Opposite Te Puia is a road called Orongoiti to where Browns cowshed stood a pa called Parapua.

Another farm next to Browns owned by Abbots to where McCallions old homestead stood is a repo (swamp) called Rotohuka from there to another pa called Te Tarata. It was there that the first Calvary charge took place. This pa was quite unique because the stockade was built and surrounded by Cabbage trees and when the Calvary charged with their cannons the cabbage trees bent and catapulted the cannons from whence they came.

Hira Te Popo and his people lived at Te Puia.

He was a man of peace. They inhabited all of Waioeka and all of the flats, even told that Te Kooti lived at Te Puia also. During Volkner's death Hira Te Popo took his people inland (Waioeka Gorge) to a place called Maraetai.

They lived in exile 5 years. The rugged hinterland was ever their hunting ground and is so today.

When Hira Te Popo and his people came out of hiding all their lands were taken.

The Government gave to Hira Te Popo and others 100 acres across the Waioeka river Oamakura is the name of the whole area. Ko Ruahema te whakaruruhau o te ngahere me nga pa o reira. The Ngati-Ira settled across the river. Their pa's on the hillsides and whenever anyone died they took their tupapaku back across the river to lay at Opekerau and interred at Takutae.

Due to the frequent flooding the Governor gave a piece of land where the marae now stands. (In the year 1883)

Nga maara kai a Ngati-Ira.

Mai Matahanea (In gorge Woodleys farm)

Ki Hinerae (where log cabin stands)

Ki Whakatangi (Below the marae) and across to Oamakura flats. Ko enei nga mahinga kai. The furrows are still visible to the eye. Outlined is a map of the creeks and names and the sources of food got.

Opape, Pakihi, Waiotahe and Ohiwa were food sources of Kaimoana. Medicinal trees such as Kawakawa, Koromiko, Manono.

- A belt was waiting.
- From my generation everything was lost.
We made our own games.
- I had hands with Teao, being close under the pine tree up by the school.
- A taniwha by the 1st bridge, nobody could wack him because of nanny.
- We would clean our legs before church bell, some would spit on their legs because of creek being too far.
- Wi Piko didn't need a bell he would whistle.
- As I started getting older I started mixing with the people on the Pai.
- Everytime there was a tangi it would take a whole day to catch the horses bare feet to cart fire wood.
- Everybody had their own jobs.
- Today getting bigger and bigger sometimes too small for many who came.
- We have no Koroua but uncle Bob.
- We would run through matze to pluck it.
- Dancing was the main thing in our days.
- Te Rere was a big place.
- I've seen alot of people come and go.
- Matahanea a marae century look out place, run from hill to hill. Could spot many things to warn tribe.
- Matiti and Amokura locations for Hira Te Popo
- Pipara further down gorge
- Matahanea - trading post.
- Hinerua area - good for eeling.
- Pararakau - Nobody lived there.

- Margetai - was the biggest area used for tribe.
- Owhiritoa - Raŕging Station where Alan Turner lived. Got birds and eels.
- Maungapumarumaru - water played alot in stream, trout.
- Kairakau - Alot of flax. Scattered place through, roads with metal.
- Te Karoro o Tamatea
- Wairata Stream - Coloured pebbles.
- Oponae streams - Breeding place of pigeons. If feathers scatter you loose the land, you have to bury them.
- Around the corner from Oponae is Hapea. One of Muriwai and Tamatea daughter named after rock. Woman shaped from waist down. Legs open, ~~whitebat~~ whitebat enter into womb to spawn when legs close. When legs open the whitebat exit the womb
- Comb of Tamatea - Shaped like a tikitiki with a comb sticking out. Above Omakoro - Ngati Ira stayed, had another across the river. Matamoe - A mountain with lake on - can get medicine, blind eels and many food.
- All the food was shared, nobody starved.
- Next generation after grandparents road was built.
- Grandparents worked hard plucking corn and milking cows, they would get a little bit of money and meat.
- 1920-30 Te Kooti was on this marae, he had a

Those in Wharenui were the lame ones.

Everybody kneel, stand.

Wharenui used to be full

If there was something wrong the bell would ring - bell played a big part.

At night we would race to church.

After church it was hard because elders used to talk about Kehua.

Moreparks were like protectors to us.

In old days toilets used to be close to cemetery, no door.

Koka tree not far from cemetery where they buried the money from 12th.

A banker came every day.

The boys dug the money up to buy some buns for a penny.

Apple tree where building is below cemetery - Korua used to plug them before ready, tree fruited.

A lot of things were respected.

Grew up in Otara went to school with Martins, Mitai, Hedley etc.

Started school - had glasses, went to Waioeka and the kids broke them.

Nanny said "I'm not going to buy any more?"

My love is always here, we are not going to always dwell in the past.

MAC KUREI - Hira Te Popo was a man of peace at the time of the killing of Rev. Volkner

Built a Tarata marae.

Where Jimmy Browns Shed is, built a fortress.

Had 1 canon with heaps of calvary.

Fort was built of green cabbage trees.

Te Pua - A new pole where people prayed for strength.

Lost 20 men.

Fled into Gorge up by Wairata at Oponae called Maraetai.

Two women were guiding place called Sea gull rock. (~~Tamatea~~ Te Karoro o Tamatea).

They sat on rock.

Ropata knew where they were.

The women were off guard cleaning each others hair from nits.

Ngati Ira were exiled for five years, when they got came out they got nothing.

Land was flat.

Government gave them 100 acres - where log cabin is and up to black hole area.

When somebody died they crossed river.

SATURDAY 26-1-1990

went to pay our respects at Moke and Clifford MokoMoko unveiling, it was held at Waiotahi marae.

MAC KUREI - Used to sneak around to Anstis to steal billy of cream.

Steal geese and turkey eggs, couldn't run too fast.