

How we lost our land.

After In^{Feb} 1865, Rev Carl Volkner was killed in town by Hauhau movement, Kereopa from Wairoa.

No Ngati Ira took part but the Hauhau did stay at the Ngati Ira pa, Te Puia, the triple headed pa up Warringtons Rd. Hira Te Popo knew the government would send troops so ^{quickly} built Tarata Pa on the flats. This pa was made of green cabbage trees so as to deflect the cannons, and on the flats they erected a ~~big~~ nui pole.

Hira Te Popo and his allies from Waimana were determined to stop the cavalry entering their lands.

The Wanganui cavalry, under Lt Colonel St John, took food, horses and supplies from the local town hapu.

They came up the straight, with 1 old canon from town and bombarded Tarata Pa.

The Ngati Ira & Tuhoe came down from Te Puia, prayed around the nui pole then advanced.

The cavalry mounted their horses, drew their swords and charged the warriors. Twenty Ngati Ira & Tuhoe were killed in this the only cavalry charge in N.Z.'s history.

During the night the men in Tarata Pa, cut the lashings at the back of the pa and retreated across the river & back into the Gorge.

Hira Te Popo, and the Ngati Ira & Tuhoe also retreated up the Gorge to ^{the} Oponae / Wairata areas and built many pa there. For the next 5 years they battled the troops & only lost 1 battle. At Oponae when the troops destroyed Te Kooti's pa.

In 1870 the Ngati Ira came out of the bush and found that all land 12 miles from the sea was confiscated. They now only owned from Matahania Sth to Matawai. This land was allotted in 1906 to the pakeha, as the Maori owners could not pay their land

taxes. The government gave us some 100 acres as long as we obeyed their rules. Lost was the flats forever. We lost our land only because we did not want the troops in it, not for doing anything illegal.

Why did we lose our land?

They say we helped kill Volker in 1865.

That's why they took our land.

It was Kereopa and the Hauhau of Wairoa

They killed him.

Te Kooti did stay with us.

Is that a crime.

We built Tarata pa after the killing

For we knew the troops would come.

We built it of green cabbage trees

The cannon balls bounced off the green stockades.

Our friends the Tuhoe of Waimona came and helped.

The cavalry arrived by ship.

They burnt ^{our} villages, homes, ships & our flour mill.

Stole our horses and crops.

Used their weapons to come up the straight.

In Tarata our warriors stood tall, ready to die

Hira Te Popo and his Tuhoe friends watched from Te Puia Pa.

The troops must not enter our lands.

We've done no wrong.

Tarata stood firm against the cannon.

Warriors from Te Puia came down, prayed at nui pole
Then charged.

Mounting their horses, drawing swords the troops charged
Twenty of our men died in NZ's only cavalry charge.

The pakeha had won.

We lived in exile for 5 years.

Oponae & Wairata our new homes.

Up here in the bush, we did repel the troops.