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ONEKAWA

Onekawa is an old pa site dominating the Ohiwa Harbour entrance from the hilltop on the eastern side. The earthworks are visible directly above the camping ground at Ohiwa.

During the Hauhau rising, troops were stationed in this area and Major Ropata, famous Maori war leader, converted the original pa site into a redoubt. There is no record of actions occurring here during the rebellion, but the position was occupied for tactical reasons.

Onekawa witnessed grisly scenes in the early 19th century when tribal warfare flourished. The Reverend Henry Williams stumbled upon one of these incidents when he paid his visit to the eastern Bay of Plenty on 8th April, 1828.

Williams left Tauranga in the missionary vessel "Herald" on 4th April and after looking at Maketu and Whakatane set out from the latter four days later to investigate a "river" about eight miles to the east. His "river" was the Ohiwa entrance. He returned to Whakatane the same day without setting foot on shore. He had been too shocked to do so, having seen on the beach below Onekawa "several dead bodies, some of which had been cut to pieces and others lying by remains of a fire." This was the result of a freshly fought battle between Ngatiawa and Whakatohea in which Hamai-i-waho of the former, chiefly son of the famous Apanui had fallen.

Onekawa first appears in history 500 years ago in the time of Repanga, son of Muriwai of Mataatua. In his old age, he was killed in an adjacent pa as retribution for the death of some children from Onekawa, who had fallen foul of their neighbours while following the innocent sport of kite-flying. Onekawa witnessed too, the final dispersal of Ngariki, shattered by the vengeful Ngaitai 200 years after Repanga.

OHIVA HARBOUR ENTRANCE FROM ONEKAWA

