



Wairoa River

# Literature Review

## Te Kawa Waiora

### Working Paper 1

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DATE                   **9 April 2021**

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**Paua Interface Ltd**

ON BEHALF OF       **Reconnecting Northland**

FOR                   **Waimā, Waitai, Waiora**

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## Literature Review

Te Kawa Waiora

9 April 2021 | Robyn Kāmira, Paua Interface Ltd



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## Literature Review

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*Figure 1: Kaipara Harbour showing the Wairoa River. 1852. No source given. Held in the Sir George Grey Special Collection.*

## 1 Introduction

**Te Kawa Waiora is an iwi/hapū inspired research project concerning the health, wellbeing and mauri of the Wairoa River and its tributaries in the Northland region of Aotearoa.**

**The objectives of the research include:**

1. To address questions of importance to the iwi, hapū and whānau communities of the rivers as the basis by which their contribution to increasing the health, wellbeing and mauri of the rivers may be achieved; and
  2. The development of meaningful knowledge derived from mātauranga Māori which can be used to inform farm environment plans of the Wairoa Catchment—these plans being a critical mechanism by which tangible change in the environment can be achieved.
- 

**The project is taking place in 2020-21 and the approach to the research includes the following:**

- Documentary research (including this literature review and bibliography)
  - Oral history research (including interviews and hui wānanga)
  - Sites visits (visits to sites of significance in the study area)
  - Taonga research (an investigation of material culture of relevance to the study)
- 

**Three questions have been posed as the foci of the research, as follows:**

1. What is the traditional tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) view of the river and its tributaries?
2. What is the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) view of change in the rivers since the 19th century?
3. What is the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) view of the river now?
  - What do they believe needs to be done now?
  - How can we measure the *mauri* of the river?
  - How can the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) help with improving the river and its tributaries?

Each of these questions are addressed through the mix of approaches noted above.

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## 1.1 This literature review

This literature review and bibliography is a contribution to the Te Kawa Waiora research project. The literature review locates and investigates written sources of information and knowledge (both primary and secondary) as a means by which to address the questions posed above and to provide support and context for conclusions that the research team will make toward the end of the project. The literature review was oriented particularly to the first two questions of the research as follows:

1. What is the traditional tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) view of the river and its tributaries?
2. What is the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) view of change in the rivers since the 19th century?

The reason for this orientation arose from an acknowledgement of the significant disruption in the intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge that has taken place since the 19th century. Whilst iwi, hapū, whānau and marae communities remain committed and connected to their waterways, their traditional indigenous knowledge (pre-European) has not been transferred as much as it once was. Fortunately, however, a large amount of traditional knowledge was recorded in written form so that, today, iwi rely on these written documents for information about their traditional culture and worldview. These documents include whakapapa books, letters, notebooks, petitions and more. They continue to be a rich source of information and knowledge about the traditional worldview and associated customs which this literature review is designed to understand. Hence, this literature review provides an overview of primary and secondary sources identifying potential responses for the questions posed in the research.

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A preliminary summary of the outcome of this research is as follows:

### Question 1:

#### **What is the traditional tangata whenua view of the river?**

The literature centres on concepts, ideas and practical uses that indicate the Wairoa River:

1. as a food source
2. as a source of fun and competition
3. as a means of transport for visits or attacks
4. as a safe haven in some isolated locations (from possible attacks)
5. is to be treated with caution (the Wairoa bore and Mangakāhia heavy swells)
6. as a vehicle for metaphors and proverbs (see Ngā whakataukī, proverbs and metaphors)
7. has otherworldly characteristics (taniwha, rāhui, tapu, atua)

**Question 2:****What is the tangata whenua view of change in the river since the 19th century?**

The literature centres on concepts, ideas and practical uses that indicate the Wairoa River:

1. as a food source but now with introduced methods, tools  
(e.g. farming, orchards, horticulture, fishing)
  2. as a means of transport but now for trade, community activities  
(e.g. events, stores, church, etc.), replaced canoes and walking, with horses,  
early stage “tourism”
  3. as an asset to be monetised (e.g. farming, forestry, land sales, trade, etc.)
- 

**1.2 Unique circumstances in 2020**

The arrival of Covid-19 from late 2019 and subsequent lockdowns presented unique conditions that affected the progress of this literature review. Travel and access to public places including libraries and museums were impacted by lockdown restrictions. The reader should note that this literature review largely includes materials that were accessible either as hard copy books able to be obtained by the writer, or as online resources. Materials that could only be perused in-person when Covid-19 restrictions allow, largely included unpublished and undigitised materials found in library and museum collections, but some collections, particularly non-text, were unable to be accessed. This could form a future activity.

In some cases, there are unpublished materials referred to in published materials, which would have possibly been accessible, however, due to lockdown restrictions they were referred to as “as cited in”—and can’t be listed as a primary source until the materials are confirmed by the writer in-person at their library or museum site.

### 1.3 Interesting examples

The materials revealed some unexpected finds. For example:

1. The unpublished notes and correspondence between Charles Halfpenny and George Graham—this non-indexed, non-catalogued 234 page manuscript was unexpectedly discovered in a non-public storage area of the Auckland City Library during inquiries. It turned out to be the richest source of information found during the development of this literature review and is unlikely to have been accessed for almost 100 years. In the notes, several historical accounts were recorded by young, novice researcher Cyril Halfpenny in conversations with local Māori informants Louis Parore, son of chief Parore (Kaihū), Brown Kena, son of Pita Kena (Poutō), and others. Halfpenny's work was meticulously overseen by experienced scholar George Graham, who also provided notes from his own research and recollections from his time living in the area. The materials relate to accounts between 925 A.D. to 1851 A.D. in the wider Kaipara area.
2. Ernest Dieffenbach records an old waka song he heard while socialising with tangata whenua on the Wairoa River one evening. This charming *Toiere* could be lightly edited to account for Dieffenbach's unfamiliarity with the language, and brought back into use.
3. The intriguing story of Tāporapora and accounts of its location in the past (once being at the harbour entrance) imply that the confluences of the Wairoa and Kaipara Rivers were once at the coast. Therefore, Tāporapora (and its whare kura) could have formed part of the banks of the Wairoa River. The implications of this are explained in this review.

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### 1.4 The author

Author of this literature, Robyn Kāmira, hails from Te Rarawa with affiliations to Te Aupouri, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Whātua and other Tai Tokerau iwi. She is a researcher of Māori language manuscript materials across several topics, particularly focusing on old manuscripts of historical and wānanga materials. She has penned several papers, articles, reports, book chapters, books, digital resources and learning materials, and reported back to whānau and communities on the findings.

## 2 Scope

*“Even there (in libraries) the information is sparse, indefinite and scattered.”*

*Graham’s letter dated 10 September 1926 to Halfpenny  
(Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 166).*

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### 2.1 Geographical scope

The geographic area described below represents the study area of the research. Broadly, it can be described as follows:

- Commencing at Poutō on the northern head of the mouth of the Kaipara Harbour
- Proceeding northward toward Dargaville and into the Wairoa River as it is popularly understood today.
- Proceeding in a northeasterly direction toward Tangiterōria
- Continuing northward and into the Mangakāhia and Wairua Rivers
- Following the Wairua River to its point of origin at Whakapara
- Following the Mangakāhia River to its point of origin within the Mataraua Forest

The study area includes various tributaries and other rivers that flow into the Wairoa, Mangakāhia and Wairua rivers. Some of these include (not exhaustive):

- Kaihū River
- Tangowahine Stream
- Manganui River
- Hikurangi River
- Ōpouteke River
- Awarua River
- Whakapara River

Some of the key features of the study area include:

- The seaward end of the Wairoa River today represents the northern branch of the Kaipara Harbour. This end of the river contains seawater.
- Wairua, Pūrua and Māngere Falls
- The Porotī Springs is near the Wairua River
- The confluence of various rivers including the Wairoa/Mangakāhia/Wairua and Mangakāhia/Awarua

**Marae and river tributaries from south to north:**

This list is not exhaustive and highlights those on the main streams of some of the key river systems of the geographical area.

**Wairoa River**

- Waikāretu, Poutō
- Naumai, Naumai
- Rīpia, Rīpia
- Kāpehu, Mititai
- Ōtūrei, Dargaville
- Tangiterōria, Tangiterōria

**Wairua River**

- Korokota
- Poroti
- Te Paea, Ngāraratunua
- Tau Henare, Pipiwai
- Whakapara, Whakapara
- Akerama

**Mangakāhia River**

- Parakao (Te Aroha), Parakao
- Te Tārai-o-Rahiri, Pakotai
- Te Oruoru, Pakotai
- Parahaki, Nukutawhiti

**Kaihū River**

- Te Houhangā, Dargaville
- Taita
- Ahikiwi
- Waikaraka
- Tamateuaua, Kaihū

## 2.2 Literature scope

The scope of this literature includes both published and unpublished materials. Some are online, while others can only be viewed in-person. Much of the older materials are not digitised or well-indexed and have to be viewed page by page. Many are also hand-written in an older version of te reo Māori and are provided predominantly as photocopies. The materials comprise books that combine whakapapa, waiata, karakia and historical accounts of battles, occupation and events. Alongside books, there are also loose letters and notes. The appendix at the end of this document contains a selection of photos intended to help the reader to visualise the materials.

The review focused on collections that could be accessed (including during Covid-19 lockdowns) both online and offline. It included a combination of in-person visits to the Auckland City Library, Grey's Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, desktop research of reputable online research providers for journals, academic publications and other research or historical materials.

The following are links to websites used extensively in this literature review:

- ↗ [\*\*Alexander Turnbull Library unpublished collections:\*\*](#) is a catalogue of their large collection of unpublished old manuscripts and other materials.
- ↗ [\*\*Auckland Council Libraries:\*\*](#) contains several large collections across all Auckland libraries.
- ↗ [\*\*Auckland Council Libraries Manuscripts Online:\*\*](#) is a catalogue as well as digitised materials held in Auckland including materials from the Grey's Collection. They have several collections that can be access in-person or online.
- ↗ [\*\*Auckland Museum collections online:\*\*](#) has over 800,000 records and 300,000 images.
- ↗ [\*\*JSTOR:\*\*](#) is an international online collection of over 12 million academic journal articles, books and primary sources.
- ↗ [\*\*National Library of New Zealand Catalogue:\*\*](#) contains National Library collections, Alexander Turnbull Library collections, Māori language collections and more.
- ↗ [\*\*New Zealand Electronic Text Collection - Te Pūhikotuhi o Aotearoa:\*\*](#) is part of the Victoria University of Wellington library. It has extensive digitised heritage materials including a large Māori-related collection.
- ↗ [\*\*Papatupu Block Committee Minute Books:\*\*](#) is a collection taken from a range of minute books useful for research.
- ↗ [\*\*The Journal of the Polynesian Society:\*\*](#) is a collection based at the University of Auckland, containing texts from scholarly study of past and present New Zealand Māori and more.

## 2.3 Key writers

The main sources of materials to date, are by European writers in the 1800s and even the early 1900s. Today, we may judge the European accounts as naïve or culturally ignorant. Nevertheless, they give clues as to the likely environment before the impact of Europeans changed the river forever. These writers captured what they believed to be a dying body of knowledge, triggered by their arrival and colonisation. Their materials include, (1) notes from personal experiences, (2) writings by other European writers they had studied, and (3) information gathered from Māori informants.

The very early materials tend to focus on descriptive accounts and observations, and less on a comprehensive historical, cultural, social or philosophical analysis. There is a sense of urgency amongst them to capture the knowledge from Māori informants ‘before it’s too late’. Thus, the writing can seem opportunistic at times and often lacks the comprehensiveness that the modern reader might expect.

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## 2.4 Māori writers and informants

While there were some Māori writers during the 1800s and early 1900s in the general area of this research, no explicit or substantial references to the Wairoa River or its tributaries was found in their literature. However, together they present a broad context which helps us to understand their times and perspectives more generally. For this reason, they are included for possible wider research. In addition, the named Māori informants are also included to recognise their contributions as primary sources.

### 2.4.1 Hongi, Hāre aka Henry Matthew Stowell (1859-1944)

Hāre Hongi (also commonly called Stowell) was a Ngāpuhi interpreter, scholar and genealogist. He was born in Waimate North, his father was John Sheppard Stowell who married Huhana, daughter of Maumau. Hongi became a Māori scholar first as a member of a surveying party, then in the late 1880s as an interpreter in the Native Land Courts in Taranaki then the Native Land Department in Wellington. He contributed to the Journal of the Polynesian Society, gave broadcast talks, and published verse<sup>1</sup>.

### 2.4.2 Kāmira, Tākou (Himiona Tūpākihi) (~1876/7-1953)

‘Tākou’ (Himiona Tūpākihi) Kāmira was considered a tohunga, historian and genealogist—an exponent of tribal lore. He led a group of elders known as the ‘Wānanga’ or ‘Rōpu Wānanga’, who were charged with preserving traditional knowledge (Kāmira, 2019). He was a contemporary and close companion of Ngākuru Pene Hāre (see later).

Tākou was born and raised in Reena, east of Mitimiti in the North Hokianga. He was of Te Rarawa, Te Aupouri, Ngāti Kahu, Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Whātua descent.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://natlib.govt.nz/records/2235515>

Over the years, several of the manuscripts in his collection were removed and their whereabouts are unknown. What remains today is considered to be the largest single collection in the country—at around 2,500 pages. The topics include whakapapa, pakanga, lists of waka, instructions for planting and fishing according to the Māori maramataka, burial sites, waiata, karakia, historical accounts, and more (Kāmira manuscripts, 1902-1953 & Kāmira, 2019).

#### **2.4.3 Kena, Paraone (Brown) (~1880?-1937) (informant)**

‘Brown’ Kena was the son of Pita Kena, a respected “rangatira kaumatua” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 197), leader and exponent of tradition and lore who died 1 May 1903 at age 80<sup>2,3</sup>. Brown looked after the lighthouse on the North Head at Poutō and was a friend of Cyril Halfpenny (see later). Halfpenny dedicates sections of his notes to Kena’s contributions including ‘Some History of the Pouto Pa’ (pp. 50-52) and ‘The Legend of Rangikahui & Te Hana’ (pp. 59-61).

#### **2.4.4 Marsden, Māori (1924-1993)**

Rev. Māori Marsden was born in Awanui and lived at Te Kōpuru. He was of Ngāi Takoto, Ahipara, Te Roroa, Ngāti Whatua and Ngāti Wharara descent. He was one of the original claimants for Ngāi Takoto’s claim to the Crown.

Marsden was considered a scholar and theologian. He was an ordained Anglican minister and a graduate of the whare wānanga of Te Aupouri. He explored pre-Christian theology, divinity, the Māori worldview, and his Christian faith. Marsden was active in issues affecting Māori. Selections of his speeches were published in 2003 in *The Woven Universe: Selected writings of Rev. Māori Marsden*. He was a member of the 28th Māori Battalion and after World War II, he became the first Māori chaplain in the New Zealand Navy<sup>4,5</sup>.

#### **2.4.5 Parore, Louis Wellington (1888-1953) (informant)**

Louis (Lou) Parore was a Ngāpuhi and Te Roroa leader, interpreter and Land Court agent. He was born at Te Houhangā Marae, Dargaville and was of the hapū of Te Kuihi and Te Parawhau. His father Pouaka Parore was the leading chief of Dargaville and an acknowledged expert on tribal lore.

Parore attended Auckland Grammar School during 1904–5 and became a motor mechanic. However, he also accompanied his father to sittings of the Native Land Court. For 20 years, he participated in most of the important northern Māori claims against the Crown and became their leading advocate. He possessed a “capacious and logical mind, coupled with a deep knowledge of Māoritanga, treaty history and land law”<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/periodicals/PIPIWH19030501.2.8> [Bibliographic details Pipiwharauroa, Issue 63, 1 May 1903, Page 5]

<sup>3</sup> Pita was buried on a ‘Pā’ at the back of Poutō (not the Poutō Pa). His grave is surmounted by a statue of him in Māori costume, which was unveiled by Lord Ranfurly when he was Governor (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 201).

<sup>4</sup> <https://natlib.govt.nz/records/22520056>

<sup>5</sup> [https://en.everybodywiki.com/M%6C4%81ori\\_Marsden](https://en.everybodywiki.com/M%6C4%81ori_Marsden)

<sup>6</sup> <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4p4/parore-louis-wellington>

He was a foundation member and Vice President of *Te Akarana Māori Association*, where he became acquainted with the ethnologist George Graham (see later). He was involved in the 1929 opening of the Auckland War Memorial Museum as official interpreter. He advocated the protection of Waipoua Forest from milling and in 1947, petitioned Parliament asking, “That the song of the axe and saw in Waipoua Forest be stopped at once”. The area was made a forest sanctuary in 1952. Parore is buried at Te Wharau, Ōunuwhao, north of Dargaville<sup>7</sup>.

Parore was a key informant to Cyril Halfpenny and George Graham (see both later). His letters to Graham show an articulate and educated man who was interested in history but who would restrict what he gave to Pākehā writers.

#### **2.4.6 Pene Hāre, Ngākuru (Te Wao) (1858-195?)**

Ngākuru Pene Hāre was an older contemporary and close companion of ‘Tākou’ (Himiona Tūpākihi) Kāmira (see previous). He was of Te Rarawa descent and was born in Taikārawa near Mitimiti in the North Hokianga. He lived in Panguru. He was considered a tohunga, historian and genealogist—an exponent of tribal lore. He was a member of a group of elders known as the ‘Wānanga’ or ‘Rōpu Wānanga’, who were charged with preserving traditional knowledge (Kāmira, 2019).

While there were likely more, only one known 238 page manuscript of all his works remains, along with letters and accounts contained in the Kāmira Manuscripts. Topics include accounts of at least 62 Ngāpuhi battles, most of which took place between 1820 and 1840, whakapapa, whakataukī, karakia, waiata and more (Kāmira manuscripts, 1902-1953 & Kāmira, 2019 & Tipene, 2008).

(Note, in his letter to Apirana Ngata on 20 August 1943 (private collection of author), Ngākuru states he is 85 years old and his birth date is 7 June. This puts his birth year at 1858, which differs from official sources found online.)

#### **2.4.7 Taonui, Aperahama aka Abraham Taonui (~1816-1882)**

Aperahama Taonui was from Te Popoto of Utakura in the upper Hokianga. He was baptised by a Wesleyan missionary. He joined forces with Tamati Waka Nene against Hone Heke. Taonui wrote ‘He Pukapuka Whakapapa mō ngā Tūpuna Māori’, which narrates the history of Hokianga ancestors from Kupe, and helped John White compile his *Ancient history of the Māori* (1887–90).

In 1859, Taonui became involved in Māori politics, disillusioned by the refusal of the government to concede to Māori an effective voice in decision-making. By the mid-1860s, he was known in the north as a major prophet emphasising peace-making and unity. He wrote 12 manuscript books of scriptural exegesis. Some thought him too deeply Christian and sympathetic to the government, so he left Hokianga for the Wairoa River in northern Kaipara. He founded the Te Kotahitanga movement. His correspondence with Maihi Paraone Kawiti, a leader in the Kotahitanga movement in the Bay of Islands, was published as *He whakaaro nā Āperahama Taonui me Maihi Parāone Kawiti* in 1885<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4p4/parore-louis-wellington>

<sup>8</sup> <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/people/aperahama-taonui>

## 2.5 European writers

### 2.5.1 Buller, Rev. James (1812-1884)

James Buller was born in England. He joined the Wesleyans and he and his wife left for New Zealand in 1835 in the hope of taking up missionary work. He was ordained in 1844 and appointed to the Kaipara, a new station which he occupied until 1854. In 1839, he made an overland journey largely on foot to Port Nicholson to secure the site for the new mission station. In Wellington 1855-1860 and Christchurch 1860-1865 he achieved a position of prominence among the settlers. During retirement he spent four years in England and published *Forty Years in New Zealand* (1878) and *New Zealand Past and Present* (1880). He returned to New Zealand and died in Christchurch.

### 2.5.2 Cowan, James (1870-1943)

James Cowan was a journalist and historian and one of New Zealand's most widely read non-fiction writers. His father emigrated to New Zealand from Ireland in time to fight in the Waikato War, and James spent his childhood on a farm near Kihikihi that was part of land confiscated from Māori who had fought against the Crown.

The Cowan family were drawn into economic and social relationships with Māori and by the end of his schooling James was fluent in Māori. In 1888, he was employed as a reporter on the *Auckland Star* and was able to pursue his passion for bush exploration and research into Māori and Pākehā history.

After his first wife died in 1909, he took up freelance writing and wrote books. The most ambitious was *The Māoris of New Zealand* (1910). In 1913, he married Eileen Constance Stowell, daughter of noted Māori scholar and translator Henry Stowell (aka Hāre Hongi) (see previous).

The book for which he is best known is the two-volume *The New Zealand wars: a history of the Māori campaigns and the pioneering period* (1922–23), the two-volume *Legends of the Māori* (1930–34) co-written with Sir Māui Pōmare. Cowan was a strong supporter of the work of Te Puea Hērangi and Sir Apirana Ngata to rebuild tribal economies, and his attitude towards Māori was more sympathetic than most of his contemporaries<sup>9</sup>.

### 2.5.3 Dieffenbach, Ernest (1811-1855)

Some of the best early ‘scientific’ observations in the area were by German physician, geologist and naturalist Johann Karl Ernst Dieffenbach (known as Ernest Dieffenbach). He agitated for political reform and national unification and was imprisoned in Switzerland and eventually expelled<sup>10</sup>. He went to England and became a naturalist with the New Zealand Company. His political background likely influenced his outlook and he soon concluded that the Wakefield land purchase scheme would lead to speculation and quarrelling. He did not like what he saw of settler society, “*the imported race of shopkeepers ... who pride themselves on their ignorance regarding everything that belongs to the native inhabitants*”, and vehemently denounced the CMS missionaries for their land purchases.

<sup>9</sup> <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3c36/cowan-james>

<sup>10</sup> Retrieved 20 September 2020 from <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1d13/dieffenbach-johann-karl-ernst>

Perhaps this is why his contract with the New Zealand Company was not renewed. After just two and a half years, he left New Zealand for good (McLean, 1990).

Yet, he made a significant contribution, reporting fully to the company on his observations and methodically measuring tides, temperatures, heights and distances, as a guide for the newcomers. His book, *Travels in New Zealand*, published in London in 1843, was a meticulous account of the physical characteristics of the new country and the lives of its residents with penetrating and humane observations about the plight of the Māori before the “rising tide of European settlement”. Dieffenbach looked at New Zealand with the eye of a nineteenth century liberal. He picked the importance of land and language to the survival of the Māori people and made a strong plea for special measures to protect what he called “a magnificent race, people of a fine and gentle disposition” (McLean, 1990).

#### **2.5.4 Graham, George Samuel (1874-1952)**

George Graham was an accountant and native agent, helping Māori families with legal, health and housing problems, usually without charge. He married Mary Magdalene Hapi in 1899. Born Takurangi Kahupeka Hapi, she was the daughter of Pataka Hapi of Waikato and Whatarangi Ngati of Ngati Whanaunga. They separated in 1912, and George later formed liaisons with Te Wharetoroa Tiniraupeka of Ngati Whakaue and Te Arawa, and Mare Pōtatau of Ngati Mahuta.

Graham's family background gave him a lifelong interest in Māori history, language, culture and artefacts. He drew on the knowledge of many Māori informants, mostly from Hauraki and Auckland, to compile manuscripts, many in Māori with a translation by him, and collected the manuscripts of other authorities. He collected accounts of waka, waiata, whakapapa, taonga and tikanga. Perhaps the most significant manuscripts are translations Graham made of Tukumana Te Taniwha's 'Marutuahu', and Hoani Nahe's 'Hotunui'. Information also came from Paora Tuhaere of Ngati Whatua, Anaru Makihwara of Ngai Tai, and others. Graham was a member of the Polynesian Society and contributed several articles. His *Maori place names of Auckland*, edited by D. R. Simmons, was published in 1980.

Graham founded *Te Akarana Maori Association*, which fostered Māori knowledge in Auckland from 1927 to 1949. He was a prominent life member of the *Auckland Institute and Museum* and the founder of its *Anthropology and Maori Race Section* in 1922<sup>11</sup>.

Graham acted as Halfpenny's (see later) mentor. Graham presented himself as a Pākehā scholar. However, in a letter dated March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1926, Lou (Louis) W. Parore (see previous) notes his surprise that George has written he is also a descendant of Te Wairua. Parore reveals there is a "Toki Pounamu" from their shared tupuna Te Wairua in his possession (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 169).

#### **2.5.5 Halfpenny, Cyril James (1897-1927)**

Cyril Halfpenny was born in Wharehine, Kaipara. He was a young, novice researcher who gathered a substantial collection of notes from Māori informants in his locale, and research materials in letters to his mentor George Graham (see previous). His informants included Brown Kena (Poutō) (see previous), Louis W. Parore (see previous), Manihera (Tauhara), and others. Graham provided Halfpenny

<sup>11</sup> <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4g17/graham-george-samuel>

with guidance in the process of gathering information and encouraged and supported Halfpenny's acceptance into the Polynesian Society in 1926. However, Halfpenny unexpectedly died at age 29 before publishing any articles. Graham, with the permission of Halfpenny's widow, deposited his notes and their letters into the Auckland Public Library. His previously unseen notes contributed significantly to this literature review.

### **2.5.6 Keene, Florence Myrtle QSM (1908-1988)**

Florence Keene was a teacher, historian and author of many books and booklets about Northland and stories for children. She was a member of the New Zealand Women Writers Society, the Whangarei Historical Society, the Historic Places Trust Regional Committee, the Northland Regional Museum, Zonta Club of Whangarei, the Anglican Church and Northland Women Writers<sup>12</sup>. Her book *Tai Tokerau* (1975) was authenticated by Rev. Herepo Harawira (Ngāpuhi, Te Aupouri) and contributed to this literature review.

### **2.5.7 Polack, Joel Samuel (1807-1882)**

Polack was born in England after his family migrated from Holland. In 1831, he came to New Zealand and explored the Hokianga–Kaipara area, Poverty Bay and East Cape, negotiating and encouraging locals to grow and harvest marketable crops. He purchased several tracts of land from Māori chiefs and traded in flax, timber and general produce. He interested himself in public affairs and signed the 1837 petition to William IV requesting that the British government assume responsibility for the protection and government of European settlers. He saw unorganised European settlement as destructive of Māori society, and argued that only through systematic colonisation would the Māori survive<sup>13</sup>.

In 1837, Polack returned to England and advocated colonisation. He promoted his two books based on his experiences in New Zealand and became a member of the Colonial Society of London. After he returned to New Zealand, he continued his commercial interests in shipping, kauri gum, timber and mineral deposits, and continued to speculate in land. In 1850, he left for North America. As one of New Zealand's first Jewish settlers, he was isolated from the main religious bodies. He saw this as an advantage in his dealings with the Māori people, who did not identify him with a particular group. They called him Porake (Polack) or Waewaeroa (long-legs). Today, Polack is regarded as an impartial authority on New Zealand in the 1830s<sup>14</sup>.

### **2.5.8 Smith, Stephenson Percy (1840-1922)**

Stephenson Percy Smith emigrated from England with his parents as a child. He was a career surveyor and served in the local militia in Taranaki. His surveying brought him into frequent contact with Māori all over the North Island including the Kaipara and Northern Wairoa districts.

<sup>12</sup> <https://whangarei.recollect.co.nz/nodes/view/603#idx22479>

<sup>13</sup> <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1p18/polack-joel-samuel>

<sup>14</sup> <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1p18/polack-joel-samuel>

Smith recorded information about the traditional history and culture of the Māori people, which formed the basis for his later career as a scholar. He was considered by his contemporaries to be a leading Pākehā authority on the history and traditions of the Māori race. He was co-founder of the Polynesian Society in 1892, co-editor of the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, and its chief contributor until his death in 1922.

However, Smith was a self-educated amateur and in some areas, particularly the origins of the Māori and their arrival in New Zealand, his interpretation has not survived the “light cast on it by later historical and archaeological research” and he received criticisms of his use of source materials and editing of Māori traditions. Although it is now generally accepted that much of his work on the Māori is unreliable, his research provided a basis for the development of professional ethnology in New Zealand<sup>15</sup>.

## 2.6 Value and reliability of the materials

Early European accounts reveal the paucity of quality information, alongside a lack of experience and objectivity amongst some writers. There were few Māori writers at the time and of those, no information was found in their materials relating directly to the research questions.

Pākehā writers often asked Māori informants to contribute to their writings but they were not always named. Of those who were, their credibility as an informant is often only able to be determined by association. For example, Halfpenny (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927) sought the contributions of Brown Kena who was the son of the well-regarded chief Pita Kena. The assumption was that the son had sufficient knowledge passed to him to be able to contribute accurately. In contrast, no information was offered on another named informant, Manihera aside from mentioning his first name only. Others were not named.

In another example of the unreliability of the materials, historian Rawiri Taonui, in “The myth spreaders”, accuses S. Percy Smith of falsification<sup>16</sup> saying he combined several oral traditions into new ones, and falsely attributed much of the information to two 19th century tohunga (Taonui 2006)<sup>17</sup>.

Can we rely on the materials? Perhaps and with some discernment on the part of the reader, their writings still provide an invaluable insight into the past. However, discretion should be exercised and, where possible, the information should be confirmed from as many *primary* sources as possible.

<sup>15</sup> <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2s33smith-stephenson-percy>

<sup>16</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Percy\\_Smith\\_\(ethnologist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Percy_Smith_(ethnologist))

<sup>17</sup> [teara.govt.nz/NewZealanders/MaoriNewZealanders/CanoeTraditions/en](https://teara.govt.nz/NewZealanders/MaoriNewZealanders/CanoeTraditions/en), R. Taonui. ‘Canoe traditions’, Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 3 April 2006.

### 2.6.1 Māori writers and informants navigating their cultural boundaries

The Māori informants—occasionally named—who held knowledge in the geographical area of this research, were sometimes wary of revealing knowledge that would potentially put them in conflict with tapu, politics or other interests. For example, they considered that:

1. some knowledge they held was given with restrictions or in confidence and so should not be shared (see Parore example below)
2. the Pākehā researcher would not have the depth of the language or culture to understand or translate the more complex information (see Ngākuru Pene Hāre example below)

Parore example: In a letter dated 31 March 1926 to Halfpenny, Graham states he wrote to “young Parore” (see above Louis Parore) to ask if he would cooperate in recording ancient Māori history, but had received no response. Graham assumed some reluctance on Parore’s part (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 120). In a subsequent letter dated 14 April 1926, Graham explains that Parore is, “very conservative and diffident being under some kind of restriction not to publish much ancestral lore confided to him” and in so doing “merely leads to quarrels!” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 128). Graham was worried about knowledge being “buried with them and history being a blank page” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 128). Then, in Lou Parore’s letter from Dargaville to George Graham dated March 29<sup>th</sup> 1926, he writes, “I have a fairly accurate history of the maori (sic) wars of the Kaipara in which many of my people took part, but I think it is wise not to publish them, because what little is known now by the young generation is only being abused and causing a lot of ill feeling.” Adding, “Unfortunately for me, what has been revealed and imparted to me, by my old kaumatusas (sic) were in strict confidence, and are to be used only in self-defence or settlement of disputes,” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 169).

Ngākuru Pene Hāre example<sup>18</sup>: In his letters to Hāre Hongi in 1930, and the younger Apirana Ngata in 1943, Pene Hāre tells of the expertise required in both te reo Māori and English that would be required to translate his texts. He appears unwilling to give his knowledge to a Pākehā writer as he explains below.

To Hāre Hongi he says, “*Taku hiahia mehemea i patata mai tou kainga ki toku, kua mea ahau mau e whakapakeha nga korero o taku pukapuka. Ko te pukapuka ka hohonu tenei ona korero, me tona reo tapu.*” His wish is that if their homes were close together he would ask Hongi to translate his writings into English, and that the writings are deep and the words are tapu. He goes on to say it uses Ngāpuhi dialect and the writings span 4,000 years. Therefore, he would need to advise regarding the meanings and customs of each word.

It seems that Hongi may not have agreed to help translate Pene Hāre’s book. In his letter to Ngata, 13 years later when he was 85 years old, Pene Hāre says he has been writing for 20 years and has five books. He intends to write his last book on the history and accounts of the canoes of Ngāpuhi and the ancient incantations. He says he has not written about places with ‘evil spirits’, only about the deeds of our ancestors in good places. Again he refers to the language expertise required in both languages.

<sup>18</sup> Private collection held by Robyn Kāmira

*“Tino pakeke te whakapakeha inga kupu nunui o roto i te reo maori ma nga tangata tino mohio ki te reo pakeha.”*

He writes, “*Ko te kore tangata e kitea e ahau hei whakamaori hei whakapakeha hoki. Tino pakeke te whakapakeha inga kupu nunui o roto i te reo maori ma nga tangata tino mohio ki te reo pakeha.*” The Māori words are advanced and he requires a proficient Māori translator who is as knowledgeable in English. When he has completed his writings he will look for a person who will translate them into English, and if he cannot find someone in the Tokerau area then perhaps he will write again to Ngata.

Tipene (2009) also notes that, while distinguished for his prowess in English and history, Hongi sought Pene Hāre’s expertise on his translation work, te reo Māori and tribal history. In turn, Pene Hāre was intent on convincing Hongi to translate his ‘Ngā Pakanga o Ngāpuhi’—not only was Hongi a highly regarded interpreter, he was also Ngāpuhi, and had been schooled in the Whare Wānanga (Tipene, 2008).

### **2.6.2 Pākehā understanding the contributions of Māori informants**

The Pākehā writings are framed in the contexts of their times, locations and scholars’ experiences or motivations. The information in this literature review is sourced largely from materials created by Pākehā writers who regularly sourced their information from local Māori informants.

A key find was the notes, correspondence, and papers of Cyril Halfpenny. At his request, the more experienced George Graham assisted Halfpenny and soon became his mentor and trainer. His guidance is apparent throughout their letters as Graham encourages the younger man to always seek more rigour in his data collection and to reconfirm his notes and assumptions with his Māori informants (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927). This relationship helps to increase the credibility of the younger man’s writing as we follow the trajectory of his research and the challenges of his mentor.

In his letter dated 10 September 1926 to Halfpenny, Graham writes, “ancient Māori history is a well tangled skein – made more so now-a-days from lack of sources of reference. You will be lucky to pick up such and you must guard against inaccurate information by over willing native informants. I have always had to well weight any recently acquired knowledge of this kind – but still it is not advisable to undervalue such data” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 166).

Halfpenny notes in his letter dated 8 February 1926, “although the local Maoris (sic) are very exact in the details of the incidents related, they have no idea of the periods at which they occurred” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 174). In his letter dated 10 September 1926 regarding allocating dates to the information they receive from Māori informants, Graham says that “of course all such dates are conjectural, and are based on accepting the Polynesian Society’s well considered standard of computing 25 years to a generation. This has always been found to work out satisfactorily for reasons it would take too long to detail” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 165).

In contrast, Halfpenny notes in his letter to Graham dated 8 February 1926, “It has been a great surprise to me to find that even the younger generation if judiciously questioned can give quite reliable information. They know the name of almost every natural feature of the country for miles around, names quite forgotten by the pakeha (sic), but which can often be verified by consulting the survey map” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, pp. 174-5).

### 2.6.3 Pākehā writers criticising their peers

Writers with extensive or formal research experience and training were rare in the 1800s and early 1900s. Even those we now call ‘scholars’ often had no formal training or professional academic oversight. The conclusion of the author is that this led to a variability in the quality and accuracy of written records, which we must take into account today.

There was a notable practice of criticism amongst the career scholars as the examples below will demonstrate. However, generally, local amateur writers such as Keene and Halfpenny, had no academic agenda, and seemed to have avoided such distractions. They focused on collecting and preserving the accounts they could, without the pressure and competition of ‘over-editing’ and academic publishing.

Several comments in the literature about the scholars and writers contributing to this literature review, support the idea that the quality and accuracy was variable. Some examples:

1. Graham implies in his letter of 10 February 1926, that John White’s work might be of a lesser value as he was not “much invested in that district, as he came little in contact with that people” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 107).
2. Graham also questions Henry Hook, co-author of the then upcoming book *The Albertlanders* (1929) based in the wider Kaipara area, and his selection of materials. Graham states Hook had not acknowledged Māori enough, adding, “there are always a type of European settler to (sic) dislikes the coloured man, and it is very doubtful if settlers in the Kaipara ever really were in any danger from Māori neighbours as such ... often a so called Māori misdeed was really a garbled story to hide up retaliation for something done by the European.” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 120).
3. Halfpenny says of Mr E. S. Brookes, “Mr Brookes had, unfortunately, his own preconceived views on these matters, and did not always approach them with an open mind. For instance, it was his opinion that the Tainui was beached on his property, and remained there for some time. He therefore tried to make the Maori accounts fit in with his own ... I can see that many of his deductions are based on a very slight foundation.” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 190).
4. Elsdon Best, a high profile scholar and founder of the Polynesian Society privately complained about Cowan’s “facile” translations and “very ordinary knowledge of the Māori tongue”<sup>19</sup>. He also criticises Māori scholar Hāre Hongi (aka Henry Stowell) declaring that he is, “not quite reliable” claiming that he changes dialect and makes alterations to make certain statements agree with his own view. Yet, Best diminishes confidence in his own work when he reveals the ease at which informants’ responses can be manipulated. He says, “a matter of great importance is the way in which questions are put to the native. In this respect, one has to be extremely cautious for you can get any information required from a native if you can put certain leading questions in a certain way” (Craig, 1964, p. 150).

<sup>19</sup> <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3c36/cowan-james>

5. In an editorial note to Hongi's 1920 article 'The Gods of Māori Worship', editor S. Percy Smith in an unusual move, surprises his readers, writing, "Authors are responsible for their respective statements – Mr. Hare Hongi is responsible for the views set forth in this interesting paper" (Hongi, 1920, p. 24). Best and Smith, two important figures in the publications of the Polynesian Society both imply that Hāre Hongi is untrustworthy when he challenges them and thus sought to discredit their only challenger—and certainly their only Māori challenger at the time (Kāmira, 2018).
  6. J. Z. Smith attacks Hāre Hongi calling him a, "Māori half-breed with the British name of H. M. Stowell" and, "an exceedingly eccentric and often unreliable scholar" (1982, p. 69). He also takes aim at Pākehā scholars implying they have fabricated information saying that their work is a "more eloquent witness" ... among the "old British colonial hands clustered around the Polynesian Society, than it is among the Māori." (1982, p. 77).
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### 3 Question 1: Traditional tangata whenua view of the river

#### 3.1 Summary

While no written accounts of the rivers prior to European arrival were found (note, they would have had to be written or informed by Māori), there are very early accounts from the first Europeans. We can glean from these some idea about how tangata whenua viewed and approached the rivers before significant European impact had occurred.

The literature from the 1800s and early 1900s shows the European writers were keen to capture the practical aspects of Māori lives and histories, but the ‘spiritual’ aspects often eluded them.

As readers today, we need to consider how time has shaped our views of spirituality (tapu in particular), environmentalism and culture—it becomes clear through the early accounts that this has evolved.

While we tend to view concepts of, for example, environment and spirituality as distinct, particularly when we deal with modern agencies such as Councils and Government—the literature reveals that traditionally these concepts were embedded within each other and could not, or should not be separate.

The reader must attempt to extract from the passages the conceptual layers no matter how implicit. This can be done by exploring the described behaviours and reasoning. Or, by investigating the location of settlements, their proximity to food sources and access to transportation (especially using the rivers), and the advantages and dangers associated with those locations, and the degree to which they would be defended, attacked or even abandoned.

However, the most valuable indications of traditional tangata whenua “views” are embedded in whakataukī, sayings that reveal, in metaphorical terms, the deeper perspectives of the rivers.

The literature does not answer this question directly but sets in place a foundation by which a wider study might help to satisfy this question.

**In summary, the literature supports the following traditional views of tangata whenua that the river:**

1. is a food source
  2. is a source of fun and competition
  3. is a means of transport for visits or attacks
  4. is a safe haven in some isolated locations (from possible attacks)
  5. is to be treated with caution (the Wairoa bore and Mangakāhia heavy swells)
  6. is a metaphorical tool for deeper thinking (see whakataukī proverbs)
  7. has otherworldly characteristics (taniwha, rāhui, tapu, atua)
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### **3.2 Rangatiratanga**

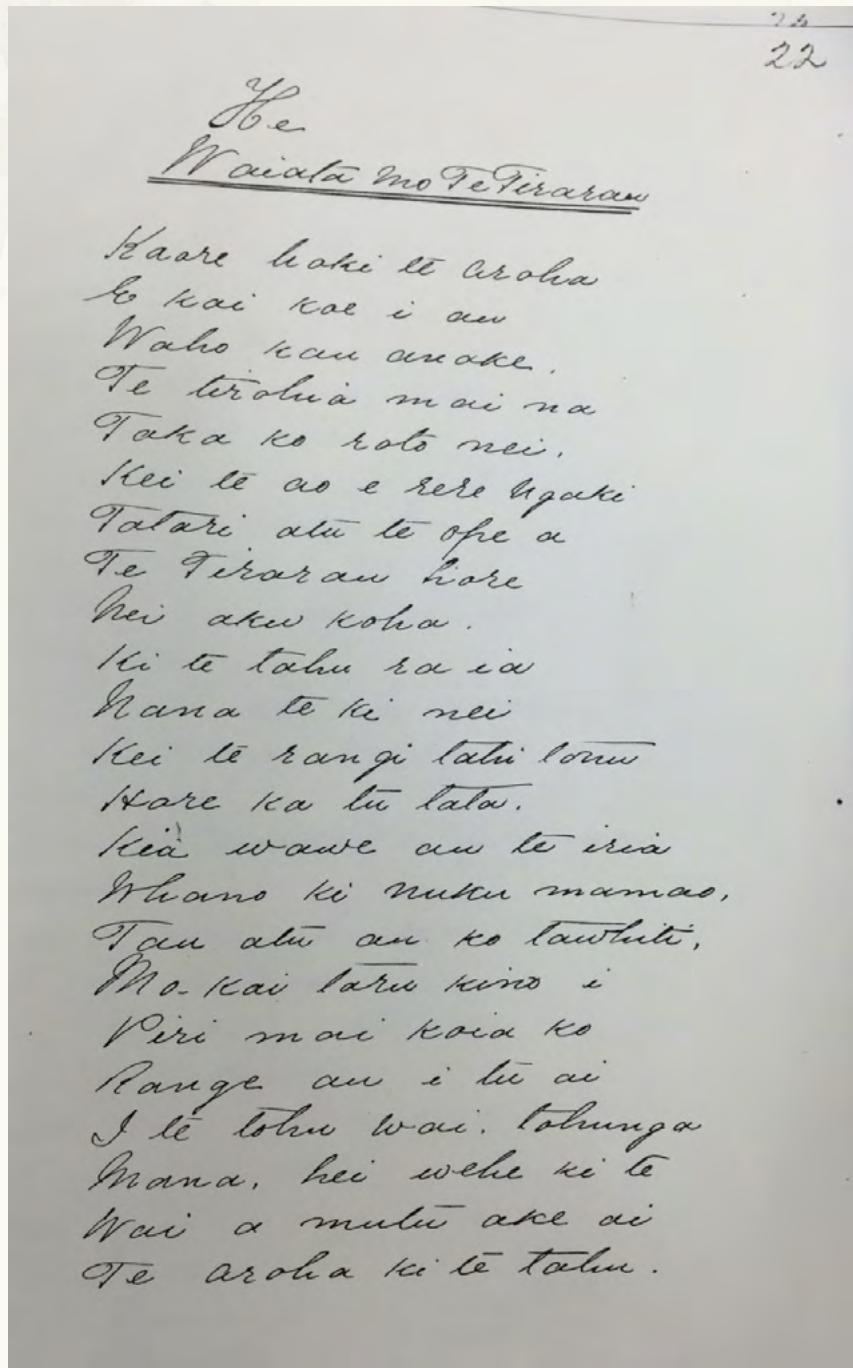
Mold (2016) compiled a brief overview of the rangatiratanga, leadership in the wider area of this study as follows:

“It has been said that those who descend from ‘Toa’ and his first wife became the Hapu Te Roroa. Those who descend from ‘Toa’ and his third wife propagate the Hapu ‘Te Uri-o-hau’ who lived about the Northern Wairoa River. Those descended from ‘Toa’ and his second wife ‘Hei’ adopted the Hapu name Te Kuihi. From this Hapu we had emerged the Paramount Ariki/chief Parore Te Awha who descends from the grandson of Toa ‘Taramainuku’: The second cousins of Parore, Tirarau and Taurau of Maungakahia and Tangiterōria descend from the sister of Taramainuku: her name was ‘Haumu’. Parore Te Awha, the grandson of Taramainuku, by birth right and seniority inherited the lands of Waipoua, Tutamoe, Maunganui and the Kaihū Valley with the help of Haumu the sister of Taramainuku, who remained faithful to the Ngati Rangi Hapu. Taramainuku and his sister Haumu owned through marriage and bloodlines all the lands South of Waimamaku to Mangawhare then East to South Kaikohe and Mangakāhia and down to Tangiteroria. The son of Haumu was Kukupa who inherited land near Whangarei: that is why his sons Tirarau and Taurau had occupation over the lands South of Kaikohe to the Northern Wairoa River. This was all arranged within the compounds of Ngapuhi so they could have claim to all of the hinterlands of central Northland giving them access to the East and West Coasts and the Hokianga and Kaipara Harbour’s. This in turn would help them to control Ngati Whatua who kept encroaching onto these lands” (p. 26).

There was only one entry found in the literature that described how this worked in practice. In this example, the way in which Te Tirarau enacted his position as leader in the Wairoa River area was captured in this account by Rev. Buller in April 1845. He writes:

**Tirarau and Kāwhiti**

"Tirarau has rendered some good offices, not the least of which was in April 1845, when, by his firmness, he prevented Kawhiti and his powerful tribe, flushed with victory, from making an attack on Auckland on the Whau side, which would probably have been most disastrous. Kawhiti's plan was to come across from the Bay, proceed down the Wairoa, up the Kaipara, and to fall on Auckland in the grey dawn, from a quarter whence no enemy could be expected. He was nearly related Tirarau. His letter was couched in highly figurative language. For instance this: "I have sown here the bag of seed which came from you, at Kororarika (sic, Kororāreka);" Meaning thereby a bag of gunpowder, which he had long before received from Tirarau, and which he had used in the destruction of Russell. But Tirarau acted uprightly throughout that war, and refused permission to his relative to come within his boundary for any hostile purpose. The booming of the cannon at Ruapekapeka could be heard. Every night, at the sound of a large bell, the people would meet to hear from a courier the events of the day; but throughout the whole, there was no cause of alarm on the Wairoa; although every resident from Whangarei fled in terror to Auckland" (Rev. J. Buller in Christian Times, 1871, p. 84 in Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, pp. 88).



**Figure 2:** He Waiata mo Te Tirarau, held in Grey NZ Māori Manuscripts 14, p22..

The above waiata refers to Te Tirirau, the son of Kūkupa and Whitiao. He was born probably in the late 1790s. Although often referred to as a Ngāpuhi leader, Tirirau was closely related by marriage alliances to Te Uri-o-Hau, a group with links to Ngāti Whātua. He also belonged to Ngāi Tāhuhu and Te Uriroroi, and was leader of Te Parawhau, of Whāngārei. He had authority over the area south and west of Whāngārei Harbour, and extended to Kaipara Harbour. He lived in Tangiterōria, between Whāngārei and Kaipara harbours.

In 1835 he signed the Declaration of the Independence of New Zealand, sold land and timber and distributed the proceeds as he wished. Te Tirarau was active on behalf of his people in later years. He farmed, using horses and ploughs, and had a European-style house, although he preferred not to live in it. In the mid 1870s he built a church, and a road to Whāngārei was opened from his settlement. He died in 1882 and there is a monument to him at the Tangiterōria marae.

### **3.3 Ngā whakataukī, proverbs and metaphors**

Whakataukī, sayings, help to deepen our understanding of the value that was afforded the rivers in the study area before the arrival of Europeans. For example:

**Ko Wairoa tangata e haere, ko Wairoa ia, e kore e haere**

The Wairoa people depart life, but the Wairoa current never leaves

This references the mortality of people and the permanence of land and water as exemplified by the Wairoa River. Stowell (nd) translated this as, “Dwellers on the riverbanks depart (to be no more seen), but the current of the Wairoa river remains to flow” (Riley, 2013, p. 537). Stowell (nd), also, cited in Kawharu & Pfeiffer (2008, p. 178).

**Te awa i tere ai te taniwha, he piko he taniwha, he piko he taniwha**

The river in which taniwha swim, at every bend a taniwha, at every bend a chief

This is a Ngāti Whātua saying relating to the Wairoa river (Riley, 2013, p. 537).

**E kore koe e puta i ngā toretore o Waihī**

You will not be able to pass through the rough waters of Waihī

Waihī is the area at the mouth of the Wairoa River where it runs into the Kaipara Harbour. Here the water is very rough and a high sea prevails at this location. The whakataukī suggests you will be unsuccessful in your venture. (Grey, 1857, p. 5) also cited in Riley (2013, p. 537) and Kawharu & Pfeiffer (2008, p. 166).

**Tāporapora whakatahuri waka, whakarere wāhine**

Tāporapora which overturns canoes leaving women bereft

While Tāporapora is not at the mouth of the Wairoa River today, information found during this literature review, prior to Tāporapora “slipping” into the sea, suggests that the Wairoa River mouth was at the coast where the Kaipara Harbour entrance is today. Tāporapora may conceivably have formed part of the south-eastern bank at the mouth of the Wairoa River.

The whakataukī refers to the account of Rongomai, captain of the Māhūhū canoe, who took a wife from Toko-o-te-rangi’s people at Tāporapora. It is said he neglected some ceremonies before going fishing. His brother-in-laws were jealous and used “witchcraft” to cause his canoe to capsize when crossing the Tāporapora channel and he drowned. The saying remains relevant due to the many lives lost in crossing the Kaipara channel (Kawharu & Pfeiffer (2008, p. 183).

### 3.4 Visual landscape, flora and fauna

Polack (1838) provided the earliest written observations from his journey on one of three canoes. He offers these enchanting descriptions of the Kaihū River:

“At the earliest dawn, I was awakened by the sweet voices of the many beautiful birds, that literally filled the bushes, whose varied notes echoed throughout the adjacent bush until sunrise. It was a lovely morning: the heavy dews that had fallen during the night gave a freshness to every thing in nature. At 5 A.M. we started from our resting-place; and, after a short travel, soon arrived at the place where the canoes lay anchored amid a quantity of reeds alongside the banks of the Kaihū” (Polack, 1838, p. 145).

“Hitherto the banks on either side presented solely flax bushes, whose tall waving leaves rose to the height of twelve feet; the shale<sup>20</sup> growing between the tufts, which bear the flowers and seed, rising to the height of twenty feet, which overhung the sides of this silent river” (Polack, 1838, pp. 146-7).

“The banks of the country were covered with dense flax bushes, which apparently nourished as luxuriantly in the most exposed as well as sheltered situations—in marshy or alluvial soils—the most argillaceous<sup>21</sup> or tophaceous<sup>22</sup> spots” (Polack, 1838, p. 149).

And this of the *Mangakahia* River:

“... with difficulty we pursued the course of the Maungakahia (sic) river, hidden from each other by the heavy oppressive fog that arose from the marshy lands and mud-banks on either side of the river ... several times we got foul of the banks, and it was not until the sun had risen high in the heavens, that the nebulous vapour had partially cleared away, which discovered to us that the flax plant was as prolific on these banks as we had hitherto seen on the Kaihū ... we passed several patches of splendid forest, whose lofty trees grew within a very few feet of the river’s brink” (p. 157).

His writings were not those of a trained and objective observer and he was no specialist in the study of peoples and cultures. However, we gain a rich description of the rivers, their banks, the dangers, and the kinds of human activities on the river prior to European impact (Polack, 1838, p. 150-3):

“We ... entered with our canoes the river of Mangakahia, whose tortuous course flowed full forty miles further, trending to the northward. Here we met with a heavy ground swell, that tossed our canoes about like rushes, and yet we were full sixty miles from the sea.”

“Though the slight breeze was in our favour, the swell now rose in topping seas, and made it imperative we should land; but the banks of the river were of soft blue mud, that skirted the shore full a half mile inland, covered with mangrove-trees, and we

<sup>20</sup> Soft finely stratified sedimentary rock that forms from consolidated mud and can be split easily into fragile plates

<sup>21</sup> Of rocks or sediment, consisting of or containing clay

<sup>22</sup> Sandy, gritty

could perceive no place in view tenable even for the weight of a cat. To perch on the mangroves for the night, without fire or food, was not a very inviting prospect; to remain in our canoes was to court a watery grave; however, by continually baling with our tiaru (sic, probably tīheru, used to bail water out of a canoe), a utensil for clearing water from canoes, we managed to advance another mile; when, through a grove of the aquatic mangroves, we espied a small spot a trifle elevated above the surrounding banks. To get to this place of safety was equally our object and difficulty; the natives, on landing, sinking in the soft mud up to their knees at each step they advanced; at last they effected to reach the mud-bank; the smallest of the canoes was brought alongside the one I occupied, into which I stepped, with the boxes containing presents, bedding, &c. Some branches of the mangroves were then placed on the bank, and the canoe propelled over them by the natives, to the bottom of the elevation, of which we took possession for the night”

“The spot we occupied might have been sixteen feet square, formed of mud and branches of the young mangrove, which had originally arrested the soil from distant banks; it was surrounded at high-water, and the spring-tides covered it. At the lowest ebb, the largest canoe was despatched, to enable our divers to search for the provisions lost by the upsetting of the canoes, which had been carefully packed up in baskets, after the native method. They returned some time after, successful, all the baskets having been recovered”.

“A quantity of palm-branches were procured from the neighbouring bush, to make houses for the night; a large fire was also kindled, furnished by the mangrove bushes around us; and the little trypot<sup>23</sup>, which had sunk when the canoes were upset, had been regained, and was put in requisition, as the mud-bank we now occupied was too damp to admit of a native oven”.

“Our domicile was so small, that it was necessary to dispense with the dance, as a false step would have sunk the performer up to his chin, in the soft aquose mud that surrounded us on every side. One of our lads, named Motuihu, was an inveterate sleep-walker; him I had fastened to a stake, that partly served to support the shed my natives occupied” (Polack, 1838, p. 150-3).

Just a few years later, German physician, geologist and naturalist Ernest Dieffenbach arrived to collect the earliest ‘scientific’ observations on record (Dieffenbach, 1843). On the width and accessibility of the Wairoa River prior to any significant impact from European settlement, he wrote, “Small vessels can go up the Wairoa as far as ... eighty-five miles from the heads of the harbour, where there is a depth of twelve feet; but only fifteen miles lower down, at the farm of Mr. Forsyth, the river has water and a clear channel for vessels of any burden, and also anchorage close in-shore” (Dieffenbach, 1843, p. 265). “The inlet, which is joined by the Kaipara proper, is navigable for large boats as far as the tide runs up” (Dieffenbach, 1843, p. 268).

<sup>23</sup> a pot used to render whale oil from blubber

Dieffenbach also observed the Kaipara and Wairoa rivers as follows:

"The harbour consisted of several arms, which receive streams of fresh water ; the westernmost of these is the Wairoa. At the point where you first fall in with this stream in coming from the Bay of Islands, and 130 miles from the heads of the harbour, its breadth and depth are those of the Thames at Richmond. It is navigable for canoes about eight miles above this place, where their farther progress is prevented by rapids" (Dieffenbach, 1843, p. 265).

And provided a detailed description of the Wairoa River banks and surrounds.

"The hills in the upper part of the Wairoa River consist of the stiff whitish clay which characterises kauri-land, here and there with a basis of a hard argillaceous<sup>24</sup> slaty rock : lower down, on the left bank, are steep hillocks of basalt, surmounting which are the ruins of some ancient fortifications; on the right shore, and towards the sea-coast, is a soft ferruginous<sup>25</sup> sandstone ; inside and round the northern head the cliffs expose layers of lignite<sup>26</sup>, generally four feet in thickness and superimposed to the height of about twenty feet by a white slightly consolidated sand, which softens by exposure to the water, and on a near examination is found to consist of decomposed pumice stone, of which large globular boulders are still compact. The lignite consists of half-carbonised wood, besides kauri and pohutukawa, remains of tree-ferns, indistinct impressions of smaller ferns, and a kind of *typha*<sup>27</sup> all which plants are still found in the island" (Dieffenbach, 1843, pp. 269-270).

"Flocks of the kaka (parrot) were cawing among the trees. Their grating, hollow sound, together with the cooing of the dove and the screaming of the owl, had a depressing effect" (Buller, 1878, p. 62).

"As on the Hokianga, so here, are valuable forests of the Kauri pine. In going across the country, I have rested on the apex of a lofty mound, bare of trees, from which I had a wide outlook. As far as the eye could range, there was but a vast sweep of silent and sombre woodland, with the river, like a silver thread, winding through it" (Buller, 1878, p. 63).

Regarding the silt of the Wairoa River, Fordyce (2009) wrote, "detritus has been carried down in abundance since time immemorial, evidenced by the great deposits of alluvium along its banks." (p. 19) pointing to the fact that large volumes of silt were apparent even before the changes brought about by the settlers.

<sup>24</sup> Of rocks or sediment, consisting of or containing clay

<sup>25</sup> containing iron oxides or rust, reddish brown, rust-coloured

<sup>26</sup> soft brownish coal showing traces of plant structure, intermediate between bituminous coal and peat

<sup>27</sup> genus of tall erect herbs that occur in fresh and salt marshes, and have sword-shaped leaves and monoecious flowers in dense spikes with the staminate uppermost

Dieffenbach wrote, “the banks of all these rivers are bounded by hills of no very great height, which do not generally reach to the banks, and are often more than a mile distant from them”. He continued, “The banks are level, and consist of a somewhat clayey and fertile soil. The Wairoa continually carries down a quantity of this soil from the higher to the lower parts of the river, in consequence of which its waters have a yellow appearance. In the upper part of its course a beautiful and fertile valley joins it, which begins in the neighbourhood of Hokianga” (1843, p. 265).

He further added, “The banks of the Wairoa, with the exception of those parts which are of very recent formation, and of the portions which have been cleared by the natives, are covered with a thick forest of timber-trees of all descriptions, but especially the kauri-pine, which is always in the greatest profusion in hilly situations. I am not acquainted with any place in New Zealand where these trees are more plentiful, of greater height and diameter, and of easier access” (Dieffenbach, 1843, p. 267).

“It is very serpentine in its course, and forms a number of paddocks of alluvial land; these are at present swampy, but a little drainage would effectually lay them dry. This low land is here and there covered with groves of the kahikatea-pine and the puriri (*Vitex litoralis*), but in general only fern and flax grow on it” (Dieffenbach, 1843, p. 268).

Rev. J. Buller described the banks of the Wairoa saying, “extensive forests of the kauri pine clothe its banks on the upper part” (article by Rev. J. Buller copied in Halfpenny & Graham (1927) from the Christian Times (Christian Times, 1871, p. 85)).

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### 3.5 Scarcity of population and abandoned villages

Polack (1838) observed there were few people living on the Mangakāhia River:

“Here was an article growing in wild, luxuriant abundance, amply sufficient to employ the energies of thousands of a civilised, industrious people; but this place was deserted, and not an inhabitant was to be seen. The very names of many tribes, originally belonging to the soil, had passed away from human remembrance” (p. 147).

“Several places we passed were pointed out to me as having been particularly populous. The only remembrance left of human beings having tenanted the place, were a few rotten sticks and decayed rushes, and, in various spots, pieces of old canoes standing perpendicular and solitary, grotesquely carved, as a monument to an illustrious man departed. These deserted spots -- villages no more -- from the lone, unbroken silence around, gave me sensations undefinably unpleasant” (p. 147).

James Wallis, the first missionary to arrive at Tangiterōria in 1836 to establish the mission, lamented that residents were too far away to attend his services. He noted few inhabitants were evident when he made his foray up the river, finding only 300 to 400 people in the wider surrounds (Fordyce, 2009, p. 36). Two years later, his successor James Buller, also noted the district appeared devoid of human habitation (Buller, 1878, p. 25).

“The natives, in the immediate locality, were not numerous, and lived in scattered kaingas, or villages, a few families together. Wars had desolated the territory in former days. The leading chief, Te Tirarau, lived near to my station; his place was called Te Aotahi. He claimed possession by right of conquest. He, and his people, were glad to have a missionary near them, but did not care to listen to his teaching. Only a few of them would come to the services” (Buller, 1878, p. 64).

### 3.6 Wairoa river mouth, Tāporapora & whare kura

#### 3.6.1 River mouth location

The *changes* of the location of the mouth of the Wairoa River should be considered due to accounts relating to Tāporapora. A *ngutuawa*, river mouth is the part where the river debouches<sup>28</sup> into another river, lake, reservoir, sea, or ocean<sup>29</sup>. The ngutuawa is less defined by a fixed boundary than implied, and for Māori perhaps signalled by its banks and where the river and its current visibly emerge into a larger, broader space. In the case of the Wairoa River, there is literary evidence that the location of its ngutuawa changed during earlier occupation by Māori.

Halfpenny & Graham’s (1927) notes on the dates are unresolved. They record that around 1350-75, the ancient people of Tāporapora were displaced by the Arawa settlers, there was the sinking of Tāporapora, and the Māhūhū canoe arrived (p. 33-5). From other scattered notes it appears that this is the order (years not clear):

1. Ancient people occupy Tāporapora.
2. Tama-te-kapua and his Arawa people displace those people and grow cultivations.
3. The Māhūhū arrives and occupies Tāporapora and builds a whare kura.

During the Arawa occupation, Halfpenny & Graham wrote, “The space of flat land which extended from the Muriwai even to Karioi was called Papa-kiekie and the kumera (sic) was cultivated on it. In the days when this flat land was occupied with the cultivations of the kumara crop, the descendants of Tama-te-kapua occupied the banks known as Taporapora, in the Kaipara harbour” (1927, p. 36-7).

The tradition of the Māhūhū canoe states that people settled at a place called *Tāporapora* at the mouth of the Kaipara Harbour (Smith, 1897). This is believed to have been around AD 1300 to 1350 (Parnell, 2004, Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 34). It was occupied for years but then the place was “shaved off by sea” and “all were carried away” (Smith, 1897, p. 2).

Parnell (2004, p. 4) related a version that stated that a *taniwha* named Kaiwhare “raised a terrible tempest which shook the whole coast”, and the land was swept away. Another version pointed to the destruction of Tāporapora by “a meteorite that came from the south-east” (Parnell 2004, p. 3). Also, a tsunami cannot be entirely ruled out (King, Goff, Skipper, 2007, p. 64).

<sup>28</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debouch>

<sup>29</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River\\_mouth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_mouth)

Of the Māhūhū and its crew, Halfpenny & Graham stated, “Mahuhu is the canoe of Ngati Whatua, and Rongomai was the chief. Rongomai and his people settled at Taporapora, but while out fishing one day, Rongomai’s waka (canoe) capsized and he drowned. His death was deemed to be caused by his failure to undertake the appropriate *karakia* (invocation) before leaving to go fishing. Following his death, some of his people left the area in the Mahuhu canoe and created a great storm that destroyed the island of Taporapora and killed all the remaining people living there” (Halfpenny, 1927, p. 36).

Whatever the extreme event may have been, we can determine where the Tāporapora of old may have been located in this version offered by Halfpenny & Graham (1927) who recorded the “sinking” of Tāporapora as told by an unnamed Māori informant.

“In those days, the Wairoa (river) was separate from the Kaipara (river) in its confluence with the sea, as the flat called Taporapora was situated between the mouths of those two rivers. It is only in the years since that Taporapora has been swept out to the sea and the mouths of the rivers Wairoa and Kaipara have become one” (Halfpenny, 1927, p. 36).

“A widespread subsidence of land took place and the Taporapora bank sunk, forming the Kaipara Harbour. Much flat land which extended outside the present west coast between the Kaipara and Manukau also disappeared” (Halfpenny, 1927, p. 42).

“The space of flat land which extended from the Muriwai even to Karioi was called Papa-kiekie” (Halfpenny, 1927, p. 36).

The Māori informant indicates the confluences of the Wairoa and Kaipara rivers were once at the sea. Smith’s (1896) description also indicates the proximity of Tāporapora to the sea. “The Mahuhu canoe (finally) landed at the mouth of Kaipara, and the warriors who came in her settled down on the mainland *at the entrance to Kaipara*, at a place named Taporapora. But that part has become sea in these later days” (p. 2).

In *The Great Northern Wairoa*, Bradley wrote that Governor-General Charles Fergusson stated there was a low-lying island at the mouth of the Kaipara which has long disappeared. Around 1150 A. D. two peoples settled there and lived undisturbed for over five generations. As time went on others arrived and named the island Tāporapora. The time of the exact disappearance of the island is not known but is thought to be in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It is known that considerable changes took place in the outflow of the rivers and there is evidence that the seaway has silted up (Bradley, 1982, p. 10).

In his 10 February 1926 letter to Halfpenny, Graham recounted his time living in Tauhara, north of Poutō, where he once landed on the “sands of Taporapora” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 105). Halfpenny wrote, “On the mainland adjoining, I have found, amidst huge shell heaps and middens in the drifting sand, bones, centuries old, chalky and rumbling, of men, moas, dogs, fish and seabirds ... near by is the site of an ancient workshop. There is a large block of hard sandstone, worn smooth and a flat by much rubbing and grinding of stone axes and tools, small sharpening stones similar to those used at the present time, thousands of chips and fragments of stone axes, bone fishhooks in the making, and blocks and chips of flint and obsidian, which it have been brought there from other districts. At intervals parties from this district make pilgrimages thither, and usually return home with curios and relics” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 176).

What can we understand by these accounts? If the mouth of the Wairoa River was once located at the present day Kaipara Harbour's mouth on the sea coast, then any literature referring to that part of the harbour could be applicable to the Wairoa River in more distant times.

Can we ask then, whether the mouth of the Wairoa River once spilled its waters directly into the sea? If so, then any accounts relating to Tāporapora might be considered to be accounts relating to the once-extended banks of the Wairoa River. In light of this possibility, accounts from the North head of the Kaipara Harbour and Tāporapora is included in this literature review for consideration.

### **3.6.2 Whare kura**

Keeping in mind that an earlier configuration of the Wairoa river mouth was possibly positioned at the present day Kaipara Harbour's mouth on the coast before Tāporapora slipped into the sea. This could have meant that Tāporapora formed part of its banks.

Halfpenny & Graham (1927) noted that those who arrived in the Māhūhū canoe built a whare kura on Tāporapora that housed all their sacred property for many generations (pp. 31, 36-37). “The marae and temple ... were very sacred because all their sacred property was kept there for many generations” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 36).

This account is consistent with Keene’s (1975) who wrote that the Māhūhū arrived in the Kaipara to settle on Tāporapora, which in those days was opposite the entrance to the Kaipara. The Mahūhū crew built their whare wananga, also called Tāporapora, to house all their sacred treasures (p. 45).

While he doesn’t name his source, Smith recorded the following (Smith, 1896, p. 2):

“The Mahuhu canoe (finally) landed at the mouth of Kaipara, and the warriors who came in her settled down on the mainland at the entrance to Kaipara, at a place named Taporapora. But that part has become sea in these later days ... Here stood the Whare-kura, or temple, of that people, at Taporapora ... That place (Taporapora) was shaved off (*taraia noatia*) by the sea, and the land disappeared together with the Whare-kura, the *atua*s (gods) and the *tikis* (images)—all were carried away by the sea” (Smith, 1896, p. 2).

In a letter to Halfpenny dated 10 September 1926, Graham wrote “It was the custom on deciding to settle permanently in a place to erect a permanent ‘tuahu’ (place of ceremonial) and also a ‘marae’ – a sacred area wherein was located the tuahu and sacred houses, etc. Hence Taporapora was so occupied by the Mahuhu people who have ever merely occupied what was already in similar occupation by the prior people – ‘Te Tuahu-o-Toko-o-te-Rangi’ was in existence and so named prior to Mahuhu’s arrival” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 165-6).

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### **3.7 Non-physical characteristics**

Tangata whenua considered the rivers to be physical places that provided transport and food, for example, but they were also imbued with forces that were not easily explained. The European writers attempted to describe these but struggled to comprehend them.

### 3.7.1 Tapu

Polack attempted to capture his understanding of the influences of these ‘otherworldly’ forces in his narrative of his canoe travels along the Kaihū and Mangakāhia rivers in the 1830s (Polack, 1838, pp. 147-51).

“I was answered by the plaintive ti-ti-ti of the Kori-maku bird (sic, probably korimako, bellbird), who sat perched on a raoui (sic, probably a rāhui pou), whose original carving had long since been obliterated, and covered with ivylike moss. The canoes were hastily paddled past this spot, as the poor Korimaku (sic) was instantly recognised as the Atua, or spirit, of the chief, whose bones had been buried long since in the sepulchre<sup>30</sup> below. I was told by Tamaroa, who was well learned in the traditions of these parts, that the monument we had just passed had been erected to the memory of a great warrior chief of Kaipara, named Tamiteri, who had fallen in battle, fighting the tribes of Waikato. His body had been recovered, but the head had been purloined by the enemy, who had preserved it after the native fashion. It was added, he had become a river-god, and kept at this station, upsetting canoes, and playing divers feats of a similar nature, such as causing the river at times to be impassable, by raising heavy swells, as some satisfaction for the detention of his head ... our companions in the canoe listened with the most eager attention to the truths uttered by this chorographer” (Polack, 1838, pp. 147-8).

“When this object was no longer in view, the paddling suddenly ceased, and a consultation was held as to what the departed Tamiteri had said in the form of the korimaku (sic). The conclusions of these people were various; some construed the communication into an approaching storm; others were divided on the opposite side of the question, conceiving it signified a calm: so that either course of weather would give just pretensions to the Atua’s predictions. I congratulated myself that the bird had caroled with its usual clear note; for I verily believe, had his throat evinced any hoarseness, it would have caused us no little delay. I became continually fearful of the croaking of frogs, who congregate in the adjoining marshes in great numbers, from the ridiculous superstitions of these people” (Polack, 1838, pp. 148-9).

“After paddling about five hours, we landed at a deserted village called Nagnereri<sup>31</sup> (sic) ... dinner was soon prepared, and I sat down with an appetite that bade fair to rival that of my messmates, who did ample justice to the repast. After our packages were ready to be placed in the canoes, a deputation waited on me, requesting I would stay at this place for the night, though the ebb-tide was in our favour. This petition arose from the fears engendered by the lay of the Korimaku; I arose from the tree I sat upon, and ordered them to make ready to depart immediately. I was reluctantly obeyed; but it was supposed, as the Europeans had never given Tamiteri cause of offence, when living on earth, it was unlikely his spirit would trouble them; we accordingly took our places in the canoes” (Polack, 1838, p. 149-50).

<sup>30</sup> Monument cut in rock or built of stone, in which a dead person is laid or buried.

<sup>31</sup> Correct name not known.

“We again hastened on our course, leaving the long river of Wairoa to our right, which led to the mouth of the Kaipara, and entered with our canoes the river of Mangakahia, whose tortuous course flowed full forty miles further, trending to the northward. Here we met with a heavy ground swell, that tossed our canoes about like rushes, and yet we were full sixty miles from the sea. I felt surprised, as the day was particularly calm; the natives were in a fearful state, attributing this common occurrence, of what was perhaps an overfall, to my obstinacy, in having disregarded the injunctions of Tamiteri” (Polack, 1838, p. 150-1).

“These people who, from practice, are very expert in the management of their canoes, on the least alarm become quite helpless; it was so in this instance. I was enabled to keep those who were in my canoe from feeling dispirited, but it was otherwise with the occupants of the other canoes; a heavy swell caused them both to lurch and capsize, by which unpleasant accident all our provisions went to the bottom of the river. The natives, who generally swim exceedingly well, soon righted their canoes, but the loss of the provisions was a serious calamity; few could feel the accident more than these people” (Polack, 1838, p. 151).

Polack also described these unexpected events on the same journey (Polack, 1838, pp. 158-61).

“On turning a bend in this serpentine river, we suddenly came up with two large canoes; in one of them sat a venerable decrepit chief, full dressed, and decorated in the native fashion; his hair was tied up in a bunch behind, and ornamented with the O (sic) feathers. The tattooing on his face was scarce discernible, from the quantity of kokowai with which he was bedaubed; it had also been made use of to sprinkle his garments; a tiki of green talc hung suspended from his neck, and a large waka kai, or ear ornament, cut from the downy part of the breast of the gannet, floated in the wind. I judged this ancient noble to have passed his eightieth year, yet he had the strength to steer the canoe he sat in, which was a very large tewai (sic) of the red pine; he was assisted in paddling by two young lads, who were his grandchildren, and five old ladies, who, I was informed, were the only surviving wives of the venerable polygamist. The ladies were bedaubed, cap-a-pie<sup>32</sup>, with a mixture of kokowai and shark’s oil; and the strong nature of the latter was such that I was sensibly relieved by being paddled to windward” (Polack, 1838, p. 157-8).

“The second canoe contained males only, of all ages, and by the particular attention paid to their dress, I was convinced they were all chiefs; their hair had been neatly collected, and tied in a bunch at the top of the head, decorated with the feathers of the uia nui bird (sic, possibly the huia). Their ears were garnished with handsome dried skins of the Piwakawaka bird, or the tooth of the sand shark, pending from the lobe. Three of the chiefs stood up erect in the canoe, brandishing a hani<sup>33</sup> spear, or the tomahawk. Kokowai and shark’s oil had been lavishly bestowed on all the party: their dresses consisted of the

<sup>32</sup> From head to foot

<sup>33</sup> An older name for a taiaha

kaitaka<sup>34</sup> and karowai (sic, korowai<sup>35</sup>), made of the silky flax, and covered with dog-skin mats, or neris' (sic) made of rushes, as protection against rain" (Polack, 1838, pp. 158-9).

"On perceiving our three small canoes, they immediately flew to arms, but were agreeably surprised to see a European among their own friends. There was much greeting on both sides. We learnt that the large canoe was tapued, and all that was in it, consisting of some old muskets, several paddles, garments of all kinds, and a large fishing net, somewhat the worse for wear. Among others of these sacred trifles, was a fern-pounder and a stone, together with several old sticks that had formed part of a shed belonging to a deceased chief, and which were also tapued. These several things, including a large canoe, were to be deposited in a Wai tapu (sic, probably waahi tapu), some short distance inland at Kaihu, as offertories that would prove grateful to the manes of the departed warrior, whose bones were to be exhumated" (Polack, 1838, pp. 158-9).

"This ceremony was called a Haihunga (sic, probably hahunga). I offered some presents to these people, but they were rejected, as all these sanctimonious folks were strictly tapued; they doubted not, if any of them touched food, or any thing else, while under the interdiction, the Atua would destroy them ... I was nevertheless informed, it would be lawful to place a little tobacco in the canoe that was untapued; and I did so accordingly, with care, lest I should put the grateful narcotic in the wrong place. We then saluted each other, took to our paddles, and a sudden bend in the river soon hid us from view" (Polack, 1838, pp. 159-60).

"Our party struck out with their paddles manfully, and the canoes flew through the water in quick style. We passed several raouis (sic, possibly rāhui), painted red, which had a pretty effect amid the green bushes. One district we passed was highly tapued, from the cause of an accident that befell a chief, in the act of giving help to some of his people, while dragging out of the bush a log which was to be hollowed to form a canoe. A branch of some tree that had been previously severed, fell, and struck him with much force on the shoulders; he was not long in recovering: but the forest was tapued, and it had remained so some years previously to our arrival. Had the country possessed its proportion of inhabitants, a tapu of this kind could not have existed" (Polack, 1838, p. 161).

### 3.7.2 Wāhi tapu

There are several references to wāhi tapu but only a few offer clues as to their whereabouts.

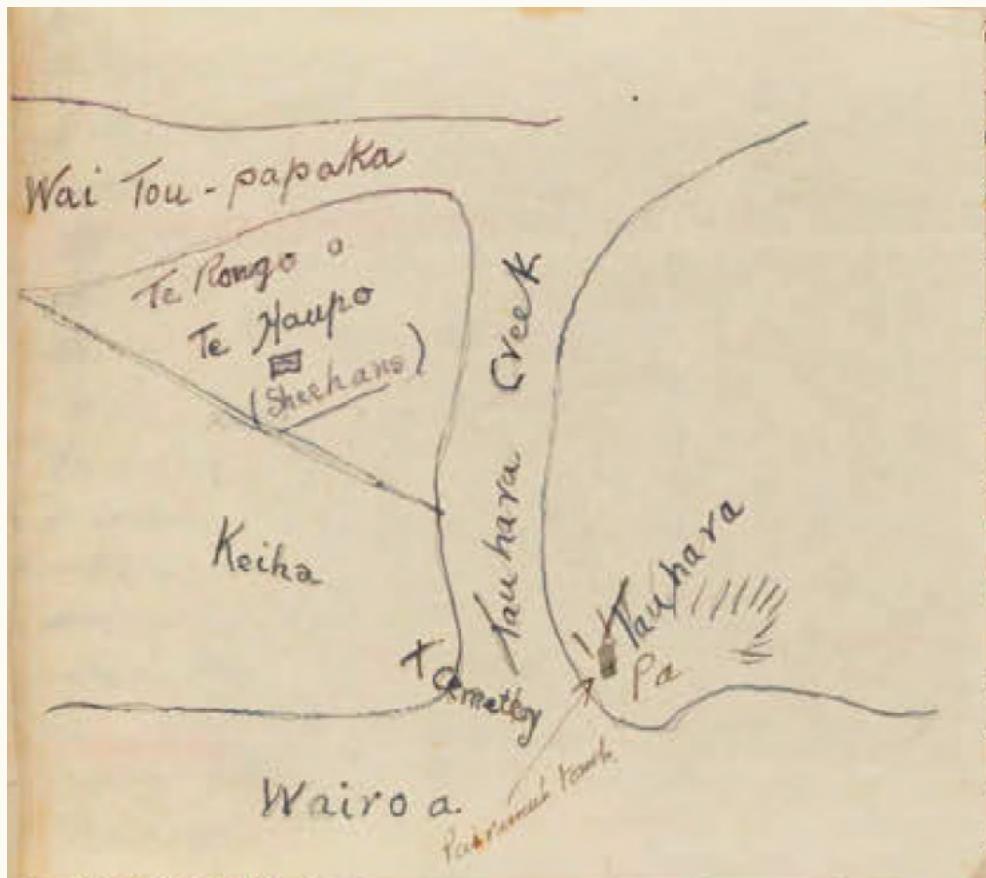
In a letter to Halfpenny dated 14 April 1926, Graham said of Tauhara, "at the mouth of that creek was old cemetery site, the wind uncovered human remains very often. In fact all of coast line has been at numerous spots sand dune internment sites. I remember a bone-scraping gathering thereabouts (hahunga) about 1881, and was told it was the last event of that kind" (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 130).

<sup>34</sup> Cloak made of flax fibre with a tāniko ornamental border

<sup>35</sup> Cloak ornamented with black twisted tags or thrums

In another letter to Halfpenny dated 16 February 1926, Graham noted that Tauhara Point's "Pare-o-Tonga" referred to the cliff-front and Tauhara is the pa. There is a legend that says when the *tīhi* (pinnacle of the pa) falls into the sea, a result of gradual erosion, then some dire calamity will result such as the death of the surviving chieftains. He explained, "North of Tauhara is a prominent cliff front where there is a cave or fissure wherein the dead people of rank were interred" (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 111).

Halfpenny conveniently provided a hand drawn map (below) (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 111).



**Figure 3:** Hand drawn map by George Graham showing Tauhara and the burial ground  
(Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 111)

## Literature Review

### Te Kawa Waiora

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### Tauhara

On the Wairoa River and Tauhara, Polack (1838) described the following:

“The north-west head of the (Wairoa) river was about three miles distant ... The valley of Te-Taohara (sic, probably Tauhara) was strictly tapued. Here was fought the last battle with the unfortunate tribes of this river, the remnant that was saved being taken for slaves. The groves that formed the Wai-tapu, for the bones of the miserable slain, lay in front of us as we landed. On this beach the vanquished were devoured.

On my advancing near the Wai-tapu, the natives, in a piteous tone, begged me not to go near, as the spirits (wairua) of the place would kill them, or at least make them ill, for having brought a white man to this village of the dead. I moved away from the place, which from its solitary and dreary aspect, together with the details given me of the former unhappy people, and the treacherous manner in which they were murdered, gave me a great dislike to the spot. The clear notes of the little korimaku (sic) bird, hopping among the branches of the Wai-tapu, struck on my ear like a primitive requiem to the departed, of whom not a descendant existed in the broad lands of their birth containing the treasured cemeteries of their ancestors” (Polack, 1838, p. 201-2)

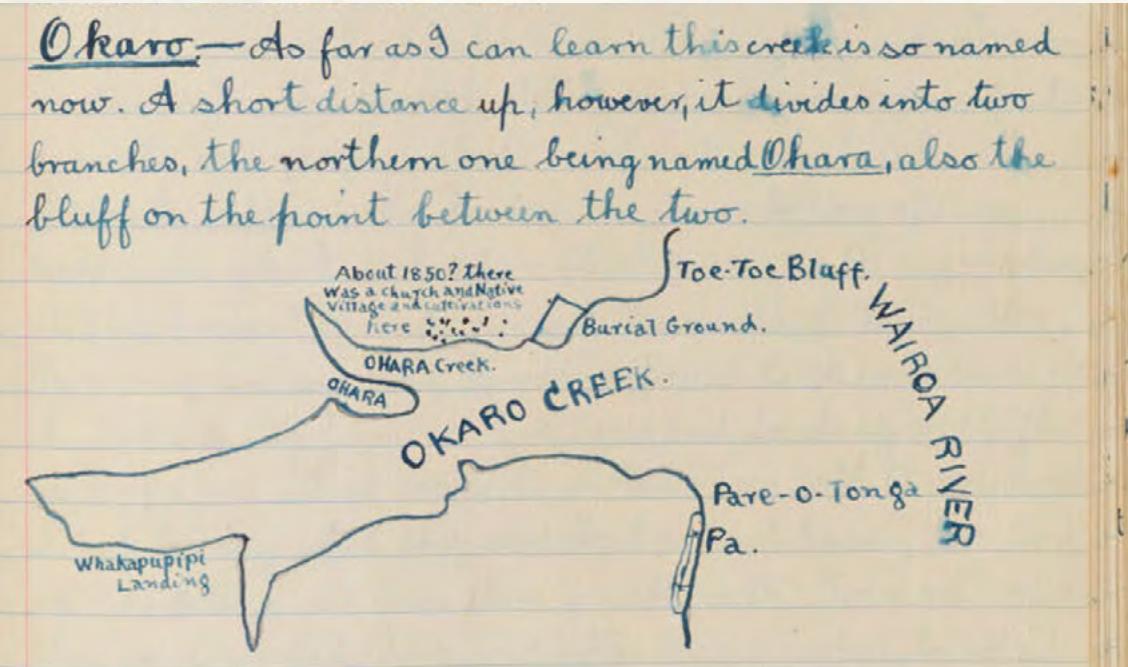
### Pou

**Ra-Pouto** Rock – meaning “The day the post was set up”. “A chief of Waiohua was drowned here, and a post set up to commemorate his death. The post was to mark a Rahui to indicate a tapu against fishing there, but it was disregarded and led to a murder to avenge the sacrilege. The hapu of this chief was known as “Te Aki Tai” because the drowned man was dashed ‘Aki’ against that rock by the tide ‘Tai’” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 19).

### Wairoa burial cave

Halfpenny explained that Māori informant Brown Kena told him that shortly before his father’s death in 1903, he had organised an expedition to the burial cave at the Wairoa, where Hau was buried (probably Hau-moe-warangi<sup>36</sup> who settled on the north end of the Kaipara entrance at Poutō). “It was said that with his bones was laid his greenstone mere, and by this they would know which was he. However, when they entered the cave they were unable to find the mere, so collecting some bones, which they concluded were those of Hau, they returned home. These, Pita buried on the hill where he himself is not interred, but as Brown Kena remarked, it is very doubtful if they are the bones of Hau as many people were buried in the cave. The mere had apparently been removed” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 197).

<sup>36</sup> Note, spelling as shown in Brown Kena’s account in Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 51



**Figure 4:** Hand drawn map by Cyril Halfpenny showing the Okaro Creek off the Wairoa River and the burial ground (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 199)

### 3.7.3 Four taniwha (Wairoa River)

#### Rangiriri & Pokopokowhititera

Cowan (1910) included an account from his informant Te Rore Taoho of Te Roroa. He wrote:

“It is apparent that as the Ngai Tamatea and related people moved down the Kaihu valley and into the Northern Wairoa area, they carried with them – in time-honoured Polynesian fashion - their cultural treasures and markers which they deposited in their new homes. Thus did they manage to localise and keep old history alive. Perhaps the most awe-inspiring of those treasures was the folk memory of the rakau tupua (demon log) Rangiriri, which became relocalised in the Northern Wairoa river from its old homeland of Whatuwhiwhi, Doubtless Bay. Accustomed to move up the Northern Wairoa river against the ebb tide, when Rangiriri had a kawau (shag) perched on its back it was an unfailing omen of the pending death of an important Ngai Tamatea descended rangatira” (p. 213).

Te Roroa historian Garry Hooker<sup>37</sup> wrote of the two taniwha present in the Wairoa River (Hooker, 2014):

“Ko Rangiriri te rākau e ngāu (sic) i te ngaru”

Rangiriri is the great tribal taniwha of Te Roroa. He lives in the cave named Te Rua-o-Rangiriri in the Northern Wairoa river. From there he ventures forth to challenge waka and other vessels, logs and taniwha like Pokopokowhititera. He journeys to the home of Pokopokowhititera at Kaipara Heads to fight Pokopokowhititera, just as Pokopokowhititera journeys up the Northern Wairoa river to fight Rangiriri.

Usually in the form of an enchanted log, rakau tupua, Rangiriri can be seen moving up river against the ebb-tide or down river against a strong flood-tide. For he is not bound by the rules of the river and can call upon his all-powerful mana Maori to disregard them. At times the rakau tupua will be proceeding up river with a kawau pu (black shag), perched on its back. That is an unfailing omen of the pending death of an important Te Roroa rangatira which has existed for centuries. But one must be a descendant of the right tupuna to see and recognise these tohu (signs).

Rangiriri's home originally was at Whatuwhiwhi, Doubtless Bay where he lived in the pool Te Kopua- a- Rangiriri (The Deep Pool of Rangiriri). When Te Roroa's Ngai Tamatea tupuna migrated to the Northern Wairoa district from Muriwhenua, Rangiriri came with them. It is said by some Ngati Whatua that Rangiriri and Pokopokowhititera are taniwha of Ngati Whatua but that is not correct. It is only Pokopokowhititera who is a taniwha of Ngati Whatua and of Te Uri O Hau. Rangiriri is a taniwha of Te Roroa alone” (Hooker, 2014).

Keene (1975) contributed this account:

“There was a tapu tree called Rangiriri upon which Pokopoko, one of the most powerful and dreaded Taniwha of the Ngatiwhatua, put a deadly curse. This tree floated up and down the Northern Wairoa River, and if by some mischance it became stranded by any kainga, someone in it was sure to die before many days had passed. If any foolhardy or ignorant person cut a bit off the log, or even a minute piece of it, he would die within a very short time. So it was not surprising that people shook with fear when they saw the log Rangiriri, anywhere in the vicinity.”

“At the end of Tokerau Beach at the mouth of a stream which flows into the sea at a place called Parakerake, near Whatuwhiwhi, is a kind of whirlpool known as Te Kopua Rangiriri which mean resting place of Rangiriri. In this is a piece of tapu wood that constantly swirls backwards and forwards, never leaving Te Kopua Rangiriri, and it is claimed that it is part of the tapu tree, Rangiriri, in the Northern Wairoa. It is still believed that anyone daring to touch or cut this piece of wood will suffer a terrible death” (Keene, 1975, pp. 45-46: Informed by Rev. Herepo Harawira).

<sup>37</sup> Noted in some places the spelling is Gary. This spelling, Garry, is consistent with his Te Roroa court and tribunal documents and obituary.

Scott (1995) shared an account of a Māori local (identified only as Maurice) living on Taniwhanui Point, where Rangiriri, a taniwha, was said to manifest itself as a black log floating in the opposite direction to the tide. “Local Māori used to put an offering on the riverbank, anything, to calm the taniwha. Even now, if you’re on a boat, you don’t open a can of beer until you’re past this point. Typical seaman superstition!”

### **Hoeroa & Takutai**

Fordyce explained that Māori interpret the Wairoa River bore as a visible sign of a taniwha known as *Hoeroa* (long paddle). In some versions of this story, a second less conspicuous wave rapidly follows the first, called *Takutai* (seashore). “Hoeroa and Takutai were ancestors who paddled their canoes, laden with fish, up the Wairoa River, which was without life until then. They released kani (mullet), patiki (flat fish) and tamuri (sic) (snapper) into the river as a food supply for their descendants. The double wave is evidence of the regular visits made by the brothers to their marine realm from their home at the river mouth” (Fordyce, 2009, p. 16).

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### **3.8 Fun on the river (Wairoa, Mangakāhia)**

In a rare account of recreational use of the river, Dieffenbach (1843) in Vol. 1. Chapter XIX. Wairoa, Kaipara, recorded the following:

“The first natives I fell in with were a cheerful and industrious set, near the head of the Wairoa, who were cutting and squaring kauri-trees in a very workmanlike manner. They all left their work on my arrival, as the evening was approaching, and accompanied me to the banks of the river, where they had temporary habitations. The children amused themselves with rowing-matches, their parents cheering them on, or taking part in the race” ... “The little boys dipped their oars into the stream with astonishing precision, to the measure of the following boat-song, which was chanted by one of the party” (Dieffenbach, 1843, pp. 261-262).

Dieffenbach recorded the *toihere*—a “paddle timing” song:

“He Toiere.  
E toia ana pehia ; ana kokiri e tiaia ; e rumakina, e te wawati ; tena, tena, tena te rae ra ; e watia, e te ihu, e waenga, e te kei, e tango katoa ; e ana te kaha ko te rite, ko te rite, tena wina, tena wiua, e tiaia, tiaia, ana toia, toia, toia ; taki, taki wakarere ; he ruru kou koua ; tena tangohia, e te rae ra tango mai, he piko tango atu, tena kia mau ; ae koia ia ; tena kia puta ; koiri, koiri watia ; uere tai tua, kia rite, tena toia, toia, toia, e kia ngoto i, i, i, i pai rawa ; kia rite, takoto wakawiria ; e ka mahue, e ki te wana toia, toia, toia.

**A CANOE-SONG.**

Pull, push, launch, dip, bend, turn, Now, now, now. The point there : bend, at the head, In the middle, at the stern ; Now pull all together. Be strong all together, all together. Dip quickly, now dip quickly, Dip, dip, dip. Now pull, pull, pull, Taki, taki, taki ; Now fetch the point there ; Now take in a reef. Take out a reef ; Now hold fast. That is it. Now let it emerge. Koiri, koiri, watiia. All together now, Pull, pull, pull ; Dip deep, i, i, i, i. Very well ; all together ; Lie down ; twist it ; Let it go. Be strong, pull, pull, pull" (Dieffenbach, 1843, pp. 262-3).

The evening's entertainment continued. "We afterwards sat around the fires, and song followed song until the night was far advanced" (Dieffenbach, 1843, p. 263).

In another example of entertainment on the Mangakāhia River, Polack (1838) wrote this account:

"Here we commenced an animated race, in which the females displayed equal agility with the males, joining in chorus, and keeping the necessary time required. I also amused myself by paddling, which is fatiguing at the commencement; but a little practice accustoms any person to the exertion" (Polack, 1838, p. 146).

Polack (1838) also described their arrival at Mangakāhia Valley by canoe:

"A number of canoes, handsomely painted and decorated with feathers at the stem and stern, pendant in garlands, were lying off the settlement. We approached unobserved; but no sooner had my escort discharged their muskets, than hundreds ran down to the beach in a turbulent manner to know the cause. As soon as friends were espied, with a European among them, mats were waved, the "airemai," (sic, haere mai) or welcome, was shouted and screamed from all quarters by the inhabitants of this primitive capital, the dogs adding their yells to the clamorous din. Numbers swam off to us, to haul the canoes on shore; others threw small stones and sticks at us, which is accounted another method of welcome" (Polack, 1838, p. 160-1)

Polack, when taking shelter on the muddy banks of the Mangakāhia River:

"A distribution of tobacco put them all in good humour, and the pleasures of native song were substituted for dancing. The music of the country was produced, to while away the hours we had tediously to pass in this singular and unhealthy place. I was pleased in being able to add to their amusements, by the gift of that primitive instrument termed a jew's-harp, which was received as an inestimable gift, and essayed upon by each of the company: a recital of the day's adventures was chanted in chorus ... several tales of the relentless Tamiteri were also related, and implicitly believed by these simple people, as credenda not to be disputed" (Polack, 1838, p. 153-4).

### 3.9 Waka, canoes, as basic transport

Polack described the canoes, the manner of using them, and the performance of crew and vessel alike on the Kaihū and Mangakāhia rivers (1838, p. 145-6):

“These native boats had nothing particular to recommend them. The largest was appropriated for me, and a seat was constructed in the centre. They were without topsides, and, when loaded, were within two inches of the water, so that the least restlessness of any sitter within filled them with the fluid ... As soon as we were all seated in our places, the three canoes started in company, and were steered down the (Kaihu) river with great rapidity” (Polack, 1838, p. 145).

“Our helmsmen commenced the usual boat-chant, which, with trifling practice, enables every person to keep exact time with his paddle; the singer is joined occasionally in a chorus by those who keep stroke, at which time additional force is given to the paddle. The celerity<sup>38</sup> with which a canoe is made to pursue its course often astonishes the stranger” (Polack, 1838, pp. 145-6).

“The river took a devious course, and was at this place very narrow; our canoes were also much impeded in their progress by the many branches and stumps of trees that had fallen in the water, and blocked the course of the unfrequented river. In one place an immense rata tree had fallen across, and caused us all to quit the canoes, and draw them over this broad impediment. After we had passed the distance of a few miles, we got clear of these annoyances; and the stream which had hitherto been but a few yards in breadth, now expanded to some width” (Polack, 1838, p. 146).

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### 3.10 Te Hana’s swim

In considering the location of the Tāporapora in olden times and the proximity of the Wairoa River mouth, this well-known account of Te Hana and Rangikahui is included. The account may have occurred some 250 years ago, in 1926, when informant Brown Kena dictated this to Halfpenny as follows (Kena, 1926):

“Te Hana, was a young chieftainess who resided at Mahipatua near Lake Humuhumu. She was a puhi, or betrothed maiden, her intended husband being a chief from Rangitane Pa, named Rangiwhapapa. Now, Te Hana was a beauty, a great beauty. The fame of her charms spread abroad, from end to end of Kaipara, and from far and near the young chiefs came to Mahipatua to strive to win her.

At Oparu Pa, on Okahukura, lived Rangikahui and all his tribe. As soon as he heard of this wonderful maiden, he set forth in his canoe to Tauhara and crossed over to her home.

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<sup>38</sup> Speed, rapidity, quickness

When he arrived, he and his men were received as guests, with hakas and shouts of welcome.

Te Hana, with her maid, lived in a state of tapu, and was therefore unable to join in the festivities. She could, however, see all that went on, so Rangikahui danced and did all he could to display his personal attractiveness before her. Te Hana looked upon him, and said to herself, "this is indeed a great man; the best and most handsome in the party."

Two weeks passed by, and then Rangikahui, feeling sure that he had won her, decided to return to his home. When the time of parting came, and farewells were being said, Rangikahui cast a spell (atahu) over Te Hana, which filled her with irresistible love for him.

Now as soon as he had departed the spell began to work in her mind, and she thought of him continuously. Try as she might she could think of nothing else, until at last, feeling that she could bear it no longer, she said to her maid, "Come! Let us go."

Taking with her the maid and a pet dog, she fled to Tauhara. On arriving at the beach, she said to the maid, "You swim first with the dog, and I will come after; but be careful to swim on, and on no account, look back." Then throwing off her huru, or garment, and leaving it near the two isolated rocks which stand at Tauhara, they set off to swim to Oparu.

It was nearly low water, so swimming across the channel, they reached the sandbank, walked across this, swam the next channel and so on. As they were swimming, the maid, forgetting her instructions, looked back to see if her mistress was following, and at once she and the dog sank and were drowned. Te Hana still pressed on, and just before daybreak, she reached the shore below Oparu. Burying herself in the sand, she awaited the dawn.

That morning when Rangikahui arose, he called to his slaves, saying "Go; Gather shellfish." Taking their kits, they departed to the beach. Soon they found Te Hana, and rushed back, crying out in great excitement, "Oh chief! We have found a girl and on the sandbank, and she is naked."

Rangikahui knew at once that it would be Te Hana, for he expected her, being quite confident that she would be unable to resist the atahu. He therefore went down, taking with him a huru, and putting this upon her, he took her home to be his wife.

When her people discovered that she was missing intense excitement reigned at Mahipatua. At once began a great search, and messages were sent out all over Kaipara to look for her. At last they found her huru at Tauhara, and they concluded she had gone to Rangikahui. Then came the order "Man the canoes." and with anger in their hearts, and well-armed, the warriors set off.

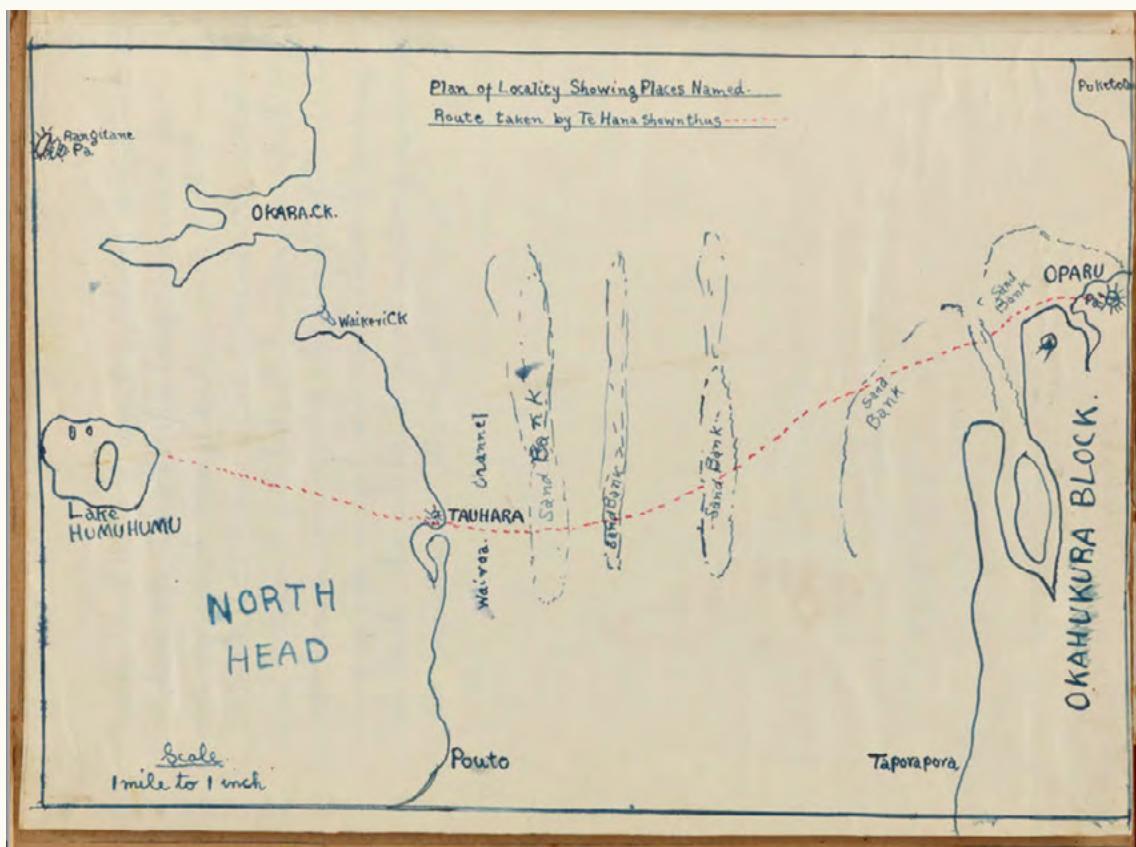
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Rangikahui, from the Citadel of his pa, was gazing over the harbour towards Tauhara, and saw them coming. Seeing the water black with a mighty fleet of canoes, he bade his people prepare for a desperate battle. Then he and Te Hana ascended to a house top to watch.

Soon the canoes were beached and the crews rushed up on the pa. They attacked the palisades and began to breakthrough. The heralds of the defenders cried “Ka hinga! Ka hinga!” [“We are falling”]. The battle continued and again the heroes called “Ka hinga. Ka hinga!” And yet again. Then at the third call Rangikahui, who was too engrossed in love-making to help in the defence, shouted, “Mahi atu! Mahi atu!!” (“Fight away! Fight away!”). At last, despite the stubborn defence the invaders broke through, killed Rangikahui and drove out his people. Then with the lust of battle upon them they pressed on, captured the Whakahurangi pa, and on again taking all the pas and land on the Oruawharo right through to Mangawai. Te Hana was taken back to Mahipatua and married to Rangiwhapapa, as was formally intended” (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, pp. 63-66).



**Figure 5:** Hand drawn map by Cyril Halfpenny showing the locality, places and route taken by Te Hana (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, p. 67)

### 3.11 Creatures in and around the river

The unpublished literature says little about creatures in the river aside from cursory mentions of eels and the appearance of a single shark. However, in perusing more recent reports, it is clear that river fishing would have been a major part of life. The river contained (and still does albeit in lower volumes) tuna, inanga and other fish<sup>39</sup>.

Smith (1899) recorded an incident sourced from Te Popoto hapu of Ngā Puhi, which notes an event in Te Toko's settlement on the Wairoa River, where food was gathered. "They proceeded to the woods to catch birds, and to the rivers for fish, and collected (*ka āmi*) *kumaras*, *roi*, *pohue*, *tawa* and *hinau* berries (sweet potatoes, fern-roots, convolvulus roots, tawa berries (dried and cooked,) *hinau* berries made into cakes), and lastly quantities of dried shark" (p. 153). In this example, the dried shark was most likely collected from the coast as part of a seasonal or regular fishing expedition. It is possible that coastal fishing excursions and seasonal 'camps' were held regularly so that food could be gathered and treated for use back in the river settlements. While nothing explicitly describes this for the Wairoa and its tributaries, there are mentions elsewhere that indicate the Kaipara Harbour and heads was used in this manner. The Kaipara Harbour is the habitat for great white and hammerhead sharks, stingray and snapper. The kaimoana beds include pipi, scallops, mussels, oysters and more<sup>40</sup>.

#### 3.11.1 Eels

In describing the Tangiterōria on the Wairoa River, Buller says, "the eels abound in the muddy banks. To capture these, the Maories (sic) used large weirs" (Buller, 1878, p. 61).

While no literature has been found that explicitly describes the 'capturing' of eels in the Wairoa River or its tributaries, a description of eel-trapping elsewhere in the north may lend some insight into how eels could have been trapped in the area. For example, during the 1500s, chief and tohunga Kahu-hunuhunu (also known as Kahungunu), of what is now called Kaitaia, dug a canal from Awanui to Kaitaia. Keene (1975) described the canal as the "home of millions of swamp eels", and the people converted the canal spill that flowed into the river, into a water race. "At certain times of the year, they placed a *kupenga-tere*, drift net in the water-race and thousands of eels would be trapped with little effort. The larger canals, called *awakere* (sic, awakeri), or dug-canals, were fairly deep with one at thirty feet wide and over a mile long. When the floods rose, it was a profitable time for *kupenga-tere* to be set. The net was long and narrow and the current swift. The eels could not swim back to the mouth of the net. A hinaki was used in places that were unsuitable for the *kupenga-tere*. A hinaki was a basket made of tough vines, usually mangemange, and varied in length from two to five feet. The favourite bait was a bird toasted, feather and all, on a hot fire, and the resulting strong odour the eels found absolutely irresistible. Each tribe jealously guarded its fishing or trapping rights over its channels. Sometimes the eel rights over the inlet channel would belong to one hapu, and those for the outlet to another" (Keene, 1975, pp. 105-106. Informed by G. H. and S. C. Matthews' Papers).

<sup>39</sup> <https://millionmetres.org.nz/open-project/restoring-the-northern-wairoa-river-and-its-catchment/>

<sup>40</sup> <https://millionmetres.org.nz/open-project/restoring-the-northern-wairoa-river-and-its-catchment/>

### 3.11.2 Sharks

Fordyce (2009) wrote that Rev. William Woon recorded an incident while visiting Tangiterōria from the Hokianga that indicates sharks were present in the Wairoa River. Woon writes, “A poor man succeeded in taking a shark somewhere in the river and possessed himself of its teeth which are highly prized among the people. He made a present afterwards of the greater part to the above individual [a chief of rank], but kept one for himself as an ornament for his ear. The chief heard and with savage brutality went to the poor fellow, seized the tooth and literally cut off with it his ear!!” (Marsden & Elder, 1932, pp. 296-297 as cited in Fordyce, 2009, p. 36).

It is possible that sharks swam up the river with the incoming tide and either stayed for a time or were stranded in the pools as the tide receded, making them vulnerable and available for capture. The Kaipara Harbour is a breeding ground for several shark species such as the great white shark and bronze whaler<sup>41</sup>. It is not known how far up the Wairoa River they might swim but it can be assumed some would have been present in the river.

### 3.11.3 Kukupā

Te Parawhau chief Te Tirarau Kukupa was generally recognised as the leading protagonist in the Northern Kaipara (Fordyce, 2009, p. 18). Tirarau I was the son of Tawhiro, and was killed in the early 1790s. Tawhiro’s grandson, a nephew to Tirarau I, was Kukupa who became head of Te Parawhau after Tirarau I was killed. Kukupa’s second son, Te Tirarau Kukupa, was given jurisdiction of the upper reaches of the Wairoa River, and was chosen to take paramountcy in 1829 when his father died. Soon after, he moved to Te Aotahi Pā at Tangiterōria on the Wairoa River (Fordyce, 2009, p. 18).

However, *kukupā* was the word for wood-pigeon. Because it was also the name of Hongi’s son who became the chief of the Wairoa district, in that district they called the bird *kuku* instead, as it was sacrilege to apply the name of a chieftain to any animal (article by Rev. J. Buller copied in Halfpenny & Graham (1927) from the Christian Times (Christian Times, 1871, p. 83)).

## 3.12 Sound of the Wairoa River and its bore

In his book *Tangiteroria: Crucible of the Kaipara*, Fordyce noted the river is still tidal as far as Tangiterōria and the tension between the river flow and the rising tide creates a “wave” that travels upstream. This “tidal bore” is most apparent between Tangowāhine and Tangiterōria and peaks twice a month on a new full moon and four hours before high tide at Poutō Point. The sound of the bore as it progresses upstream provides a possible explanation for the name Tangiterōria, since some who have seen and heard it suggest it is not unlike that of a bull’s roar at its deepest pitch (Fordyce, 2009, p. 16). A literal interpretation of Tangi-te-rōria as “sound-the-conch-shell trumpet”—the warning cry of the conch (Fordyce, 2009, p. 14).

<sup>41</sup> <https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/articles/news/2019/09/harbour-marine-surveys/>

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Rev. Buller also described the sound. “On the Wairoa River … the tide flows with great force, sending back the stream to the source of the river. In the narrow reaches it rose and fell from fourteen to twenty feet. Eels abound in the muddy banks. To capture these, the Maories (sic) used large weirs. Rushing by the long poles, the tide produced an audible vibration. This was notably the case in a certain place. The natives compared it to the sound of the large conch shell, which was their war trumpet. Hence the name of Tangiterōria (sound of the trumpet)” (Buller, 1878, p. 61). In another of Buller’s versions he described more fully the action of the water on the poles. “Many poles – used in fishing – are fixed in the muddy bottom. The action of the water on one of these causing a strong vibration, it emitted a sound, which the Maoris (sic) compared to that of the well-known horn, their ancient war trumpet” (Rev. Buller in Christian Times, 1871, p. 84 in Halfpenny & Graham, 1927, pp. 80-91).

Bradley explained, “the phenomena of the Wairoa River is the bore, a set of waves which occurs on every flood tide. It starts as a ripple and line of bubbles, and gradually increases intensity as it reaches the narrower portion of the river. Waves of up to five feet charged rapidly at an estimated speed of about 15 miles per hour. With the upper reaches flowing strongly on the ebb, pressure would build up on meeting the flood tide which would gradually overcome the ebb with the resultant waves and *roar* which was very frightening to stock” (Bradley, 1982, p. 11).

Fordyce added that ‘rōria’ referred to another instrument “created by a small piece of wood held between the teeth and truck in regular time with a finger, to a kind of nasal or humming accompaniment”. Over time, the name for this instrument was “jew’s-harp”. “A long pole in the eel weir vibrated and hummed with the rushing of the current and Māori likened that to the sound of the plaintive music of the older interpretation of the word ‘roria’” (Fordyce, 2009, p. 16).

Bradley also wrote that “Maoris (sic) used to drag long poles through the water *producing the sound of a trumpet*” (Bradley, 1982, p. 116).

### 3.13 Tangi (waiata aroha), lament, ngeri, war chant

#### 3.13.1 He Tangi mō te matenga i te Ika-a-Ranganui (Kaiwaka River)

This lament was contributed by Puriri of Uri-o-hau to Smith (Ngata, Jones, Jones, Pei Te Hurinui, & Polynesian Society, 1988, pp. 340-3). It refers to the severe defeat suffered by Ngāti Whātua at the hands of Hongi Hika at the battle of Te Ika-a-Ranganui. Smith writes that a generation was involved in the wars of Ngati-Whatua and its sub-tribes against the Ngapuhi. The greatest defeat of Ngapuhi at the hands of Ngati-Whatua was at Moremunui in the year 1807. Hongi Hika escaped but some of his relatives were killed. It is said that this was the main reason why Hongi went to England in 1820, in search of fire-arms, to avenge the defeat and to decimate Ngāti Whātua. There were several battles but it was not until 1825 that Hongi made a determined onslaught against Ngati-Whatua in the battle of Te Ika-a-Ranganui.

Verse two reads, “*Paenga rangatira ki runga o Kaiwaka, ka whakarauikatia rātou ki reira*” — “heaped-up chieftains above Kaiwaka river where they were portioned out like a fish harvest” (Ngata, Jones, Jones, Pei Te Hurinui, & Polynesian Society, 1988, p. 342-3).

Verse three reads, “*He riri whatiwhati i roto o Waimako, te moenga o te iwi*”—“the conflict which ebbed and flowed within Waimako stream, the sleeping place of the tribe, alas” (Ngata, Jones, Jones, Pei Te Hurinui, & Polynesian Society, 1988, p. 342-3).

The Kaiwaka River and its adjoining stream Waimako were where most of the Ngāti Whātua were killed. “Blood ran in the waters of Waimako on that day, and its flow was impeded by the bodies of the slain” (Ngata, Jones, Jones, Pei Te Hurinui, & Polynesian Society, 1988, p. 341).

**In full:**

Tera te marama ka mahuta i te pae!  
E Pewa moe roa! Kati ra te moe!  
Maranga ki runga, ka tu taua  
Ki runga te parepare, kia rokohanga atu  
5 Te Kauwhakatau, te nui ‘Ati-Waka.  
Tenei to pu, ko Wehi-ki-te-rangi;  
Tenei to pu, Te Ata-o-Kaihihi.  
Kei apo to hoa,  
Ka tau korua ki whare kinatu,  
10 To matua nui ki a Tama-na-tina;  
Mana e whakarewa te kakau o te hoe,  
Ka manu ki te Tapuae-nuku.  
Ka whara kei muri, tui ana te toto  
Te whana o te rangi  
15 Paenga rangatira ki runga o Kaiwaka,  
Ka whakarauikatia ratou ki reira.

Tautika te haere ki runga ki te Kaipuke  
Mo Koriwhai, mo Moremunui,  
Ka u ra, ka koa ia kia riri poka hou,  
20 He hau tangi kino na Tama-na-rangi.  
Ka mate mai te utu te puke o Ihe.  
E kai na ahau te roro o Hongi.

I haere koutou i te Tane o roto,  
I te riri whatiwhati i roto o Waimako,  
25 Te moenga o te iwi, e.

(Explanations by S. Percy Smith)

Behold the moon has risen o'er the horizon!  
O Pēwa thou heavy sleeper! Cease your slumbers!  
Arise and stand forth, that we two many stand  
Upon the breastwork, there to await  
5 Te Kauwhakatau, and the many of Ati-Waka  
Take this your firearm, 'tis Wehi-ki-te-rangi;  
Take this your other firearm, 'tis Te Ata-o-Kaihihi:  
Lest your comrade become covetous,  
And you both be cast into the house of the glutton.  
10 Your renowned sire was Tama-na-tina;  
He it was who raised the paddle aloft  
On the voyage to Tapuae-nuku,  
Leaving behind a trail of blood  
Crying to high heaven for revenge  
15 For the heaped-up chieftains above Kaiwaka,  
Where they were portioned out like a fish harvest.

Proceeded (he) then aboard the ship  
Because of Koriwhai, and of Moremunui.  
On landing, how he did rejoice to renew the combat,  
20 And raise the fierce winds of Tama-na-rangi.  
Killed in revenge were those on the hill at Ihe.  
Verily, I could consume the brains of Hongi.

You all did proceed by the pathway of Tane in the midst  
Of the conflict which ebbed and flowed within Waimako,  
25 The sleeping-place of the tribe, alas.

### **3.13.2 Ko te Puru (Wairoa River)**

In *Maori Wars of the Nineteenth Century. The struggle of the Northern against the Southern Maori tribes prior to the colonisation of New Zealand in 1840 ...* (Second and enlarged edition), Smith provided the earliest version found for this literature review of this *ngeri* from Ngāti Whātua, Te Roroa (1910, p. 41). Halfpenny & Graham (1927, p. 161) call it a “Whaka-ara-ara (waking up) song” and say was used by Taoho to alarm his people. They add it is likely much older than the incident noted by Smith.

“Taoho was sitting at the door of his house in the *pa* of Tokatoka, from which there is a very extensive view in all directions. He saw a column of smoke go up from Maunganui Bluff, the well known signal used by these tribes for generations past to denote the presence of an enemy. Arising he sang the *ngeri*, or war song of Ngati-Whatua” (Smith, 1910, p. 41-2).

Smith's version is as follows:

Ko te puru!  
Ko te puru!  
Koa a Tokatoka.  
Kia ueue,  
Kia tangatanga i te riri e!  
E kore te riri e tae mai ki Kaipara.  
Ka puta waitia  
Kia toa!  
A! a! a! te riri!

'Tis the *puru*! (projection on Tokatoka mountain meaning,  
"be firm as the rock on Tokatoka")

'Tis the *puru*!  
Indeed, of Tokatoka.  
Exert (yourselves)!  
Be quick to anger!  
And no war shall Kaipara reach,  
But pass away.  
Be brave!  
A! a! a! 'tis war!

(Smith, 1910, p. 41-2).

In the Te Roroa website<sup>42</sup> historian Gary Hooker wrote:

"Pokaia's taua, said to be one thousand strong (but by Ngapuhi only five hundred strong), departed from Hokianga by foot along the west coast until it reached Maunganui Bluff. Crossing the Bluff, it camped at Te Patapata feeding off the famed mussel rock there. Ngapuhi's fires were seen by Taoho from his pa at Tokatoka and he immediately recited *Takahia-i-te-rangi* and sent off messengers to his allies Ngāti Whātua, Te Uri O Hau, Te Taou and co. After reciting the Te Roroa ngeri, or war song".

Ko te puru !  
Ko te puru!  
ko Tokatoka.  
Kia ueue,  
Kia tutangatanga te riri e !  
E kore te riri e tae mai ki Kaipara  
Ka puta waitia  
Kia toa !  
A ! a! a! te riri

<sup>42</sup> <http://teroroa.iwi.nz/taoho.html>

T’is the plug !  
T’is the plug !  
Indeed of Tokatoka.  
Exert yourselves  
Be quick to anger  
And no war shall Kaipara reach,  
But pass away.  
Be brave !  
A! a! a! tis war !

Cowan (1987) provided yet another version, which he calls *The Song of Tokatoka* from his informant, the old man Te Rore Taoho of Ahikiwi—the son of Taoho warrior-chief and head of the Ngati-Whatua tribe—who places the timing of this ngeri during the earlier battle of Te Moremonui where Ngāti Whātua defeated Ngāpuhi. Te Rore says, “this battle song, the slogan of the Wairoa men, was chanted on the eve of an engagement, in particular before the fight of Te Moremonui, where Taoho and his braves defeated an army of Ngapuhi under Pokaia, Hongi Hika and other great warriors”<sup>43</sup> (Cowan, 1987).

According to Cowan, Te Rore stated that “high up there on Tokatoka’s precipitous crag there dwelt a hundred years ago the warrior-chief Taoho, head of the Ngati-Whatua tribe. Taoho’s house was close to the Puru (the “Plug”), that rocky projection which juts out from the western face of the peak, the Tokatoka citadel which no foe had ever scaled. This is the tribal warsong of the Ngati-Whatua and Te Roroa, the thundering ngeri of the river-dwellers, enjoining the warriors to be as firm as the great rock Tokatoka, which they regarded as a type of their clan and country”<sup>44</sup> (Cowan, 1987):

A-a! Ko te Puru-e!  
A-a! Ko te Puru,  
Ko te Puru ki Tokatoka!  
Kia ueue;  
E kore te riri  
E tae mai  
Ki roto o Kaipara.  
Kia toa!  
A-a-ae! Te riri!

**[Translation.]**

’Tis the firm-set rock,  
The steadfast rock,  
The rock of Tokatoka’s height!  
Put forth your strength!  
The tide of war  
Ne’er shall the heart of Kaipara touch.  
O tribe, be brave!  
Ah, yes, indeed, ’tis war.

<sup>43</sup> <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Pom01Lege-t1-body3-d2-d11.html>

<sup>44</sup> <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Pom01Lege-t1-body3-d2-d11.html>

## 4 Question 2: **Tangata whenua view of change in the river since the 19th century**

### 4.1 Summary

In the timeframe between the previous section relating to question one regarding the tangata whenua view of the river, and the land wars of the 1860s onwards, loss of land, and the subsequent court processes, the dominant themes in the literature were the adoption by tangata whenua of European religion, authority and trade.

While the arrival of religion had a far-reaching impact, it was not apparent how it changed the tangata whenua view of the rivers. We know from other works that ideas about *tapu* saw significant changes in its application over the subsequent decades, but there is no literature that refers to this in relation to the rivers in this study.

There was notably no literature which directly referred to the views of tangata whenua to change in the rivers. It was likely that literary efforts focused almost singularly on capturing what writers believed to be rapidly diminishing knowledge using Māori informants who would soon be gone. It appears there was no effort to capture the views of tangata whenua as their rivers changed around them.

There were no Māori informants or writers found who wrote about the changes of the rivers in this study. Even Waitangi claims reports tended to focus on land, battles and settlements rather than the rivers. It is only in recent decades that attention has been given to changes in the rivers relating to a contemporary environmental and spiritual perspective that is quite different to the previous section. From the 1980s to today, several Councils and Government agencies have produced hundreds of reports on environmental aspects focusing on pollution from a scientific viewpoint that may include aggregated summaries following consultation with Māori but attribution isn't clear.

Instead, the literature on river changes turns to the experiences of the settlers, with Māori as cameo roles in their stories (Barlow, 2001, Borrows, 1969, Bradley, 1982, Hook, 1929, Ryburn, 1999, Stallworthy, 2006, and many more).

However, we can surmise that given what we know about wider research, there were likely strategic elements that motivated changing views by tangata whenua including supporting European settlers into river areas for religion, trade and protection from marauding tribes. It may have been a cost they were willing to bear for the perceived advantages. There is also the suggestion that some were tired of the constant fighting and welcomed the missionaries and their beliefs for a change of direction towards a more peaceful existence. Others may have sought relief from the application and consequences of tapu on the rivers especially when considering the occasional discretion exercised in some of the accounts in this literature review.

**In summary, the literature supports the following views of tangata whenua on the change in the river:**

1. as a food source but now with introduced methods, tools (e.g. farming, orchards, horticulture, fishing)
  2. as a means of transport but now for trade, community activities (e.g. events, stores, church, etc.), replaced canoes and walking, with horses, early stage “tourism”
  3. as an asset to be monetised (e.g. farming, forestry, land sales, trade, etc.)
- 

## 4.2 Changes in the river & use from settlement in the 1800s

### 4.2.1 Settler view of its potential

The arrival of the settlers, their desire to acquire land, and make use of the resources available in the Kaipara drove significant change that was rapid and far-reaching. Rev. William Woon while visiting Tangiterōria from the Hokianga in 1837 observed “the Kaipara was likely to be a place of considerable trade in timber as thousands of the finest trees range along the forests each side of the splendid river and the natives are employed preparing cargoes for the colonies” (Fordyce, 2009, p. 36). Both Polack (1838) and Dieffenbach (1843) travelled around the country with a remit to look for commercial opportunities.

Later Rev. Buller (1878) commented, “At that time there was no commerce in the whole district; now there are many farms, settlements, and large trading depots. It is destined to great importance” (Buller, 1878, p. 62) and “The New Zealand Company was now sending out an agent in the *Tory*, to buy up all the land, if he could, for settlement” (Buller, 1878, p. 67).

However, this example shows the concern of Parore Te Āwha, of the hapū Te Kuihi, that the Europeans might usurp the opportunities. Parore lived at Kaihū and the Kaipara and took advantage of trading opportunities:

“Previously to taking leave, Parore shewed me a puka-puka, written in English by a European residing on the Hokianga, announcing his intention, together with a company of commercial men in Sydney, to take the trade of flax and spars into their own hands.

I bade the chief dismiss any fears as to the object of my journey, as it was intended to benefit natives and Europeans generally; that, if the river (probably Kaihū river) was found to be navigable for shipping, his lands would be rendered as valuable as the soil in the vicinity of those rivers inhabited by Europeans.

The chief was much pleased with my answer, which carried conviction. He gave me his nephew, Tamaroa, a smart active young chief, and a young friend, as companions in my journey, desiring them to use their influence in procuring me canoes, to accelerate my mission in descending the rivers Kaihu, Wairoa, and Kaipara.

The chief then presented me with additional provisions for the journey, also a pig which had originally belonged to Tamaroa, and now followed him with the fidelity of a dog. An increase to our stock of vegetables was added, with some bundles of fern-root and dried fish" (Polack, 1838, p. 95).

#### **4.2.2 Introduction of European trade**

The following account highlights the ease at which new trade could be introduced, of which the tangata whenua took part. Thomas Forsaith was an English trader, politician and pastor. Mold (2016) explained:

"In 1838, Thomas Forsaith chartered the *Coromandel* loaded it with trade goods and lumber making machinery, and immigrated to New Zealand. In 1839, he purchased two blocks of land in the Kaipara district and established a trading station at Mangawhare on the Northern Wairoa River. He also erected a mill to cut kauri spars (then selling at £17 each) for the British Government, and imported cattle and farm implements to break in his land. By May 1841, he had cleared and fenced 12 acres, of which 10 acres were sown in wheat" (p. 36).

#### **4.2.3 Acceptance of European authority**

The following account highlights the acceptance of colonial authority by tangata whenua. In 1839, Thomas Forsaith, an English trader, politician and pastor, had established a trading station at Mangawhare on the Northern Wairoa River. Mold (2016) stated:

"In February 1842, while Forsaith and his wife were visiting Sydney, a Maori skull was discovered on his property. Local chiefs claimed that a tapu had been broken and exacted utu, or payment, by plundering the station. Forsaith petitioned Governor Hobson for compensation. The claim was investigated by George Clarke the Protector of Aborigines. His report cleared Forsaith of complicity, and the chiefs responsible agreed to cede him a small block of land (10 square miles) by way of settlement" (p. 36).

#### **4.2.4 Shipping**

"It was far up, on the last-named of those rivers, that our station was being formed. Vessels of heavy burden can go up fifty miles or more. After that the river gradually narrows, is tortuous in its course, and suited only for steamers" (Buller, 1878, p. 62).

"Ships would sail right up to Tangiterōia and navigating the narrow stretches called for skill of the highest degree. Later, when the Wairoa Bridge was opened, steamers of 1300 tonnes went through the lifting span ... Today a large ship could not pass under the bridge as there is very little water at low tide owing to silting" (Bradley, 1982, p. 15).

#### 4.2.5 Flora changes

“For miles, the banks of the river are now lined with the graceful willow trees which have sprung from the shoots I imported. Fruitful orchards are the outcome of grafts I introduced. Luxuriant meadows are the result of the grass-seed which I sowed” (Buller, 1878, p. 63).

“Further on at Kiri and Tangiteroria, the willows have taken charge and only a small boat could go to McLeod’s pool as many of the creeks are now choked with African rice grass brought in ballast, and are now a mere trickle. The weed is steadily encroaching on to valuable farm lands and at Hoanga it was planted by the Council to stop erosions” (Bradley, 1982, p. 15).

#### 4.2.6 Economic opportunities

The changes in the river were driven by Europeans and Māori who were willing to work with them for economic opportunities. Bradley aptly described the multiple opportunities in *The Great Northern Wairoa* (1982).

“The Northern Wairoa was at one time simply looked upon as a great timber district with surrounding gum-fields both of which would in time be worked out. Many predicted that when the last log went down the river the last man would go with it. How wrong they were! The Wairoa was then a ‘Maiden District’ and its development was only just beginning. This is a strange comment to make on a district that had just finished producing more wealth than the rest of the Colony put together” (Bradley, 1982, p. 31).

“There were 100,000 acres of very rich alluvial flats which, when drained, would and could carry one cow to the acre. Experts stated that once developed, the Wairoa would smother Taranaki. Added to all this was the wonderful transport system, ‘the river’. The flats fringed the river for over 40 miles on each bank and extended back into the hills” (Bradley, 1982, p. 31).

“Steamers of 4000 tonnes could use the river with no tolls or maintenance” (Bradley, 1982, p. 31).

“The swamplands could carry two sheep per acre and the gum country’s value had not yet been ascertained but later carried as much stock as other parts of the Wairoa” (Bradley, 1982, p. 31).

“The extent of development of the Northern Wairoa was built on its easy water transport. Boats of all descriptions plied its waters carting away the wealth. Timber, gum and flax and later cream boats” (Bradley, 1982, p. 32).

Dieffenbach recalled the following, “The first natives I fell in with were a cheerful and industrious set, near the head of the Wairoa, who were cutting and squaring kauri-trees in a very workmanlike manner” (1843, p. 260).

## Literature Review

### Te Kawa Waiora

9 April 2021 | Robyn Kāmira, Paua Interface Ltd

Fordyce said that in 1834, Superintendent of the Missionary press and a missionary in his own right William Wade, met with Parore Te Āwha at Kaihū (2009, p. 25), where he observed a “wheat field in cultivation”, before travelling with Parore to Te Wharau where they “procured a canoe” to travel upriver (Wairoa) to Tangiterōria (Fordyce, 2009, pp. 37-38).

“Irishman Frederick Edward Maning<sup>45</sup>, a long-time Pākehā-Māori settler of the Hokianga and vehemently anti-treaty had been influencing the young Te Uri-o-hau chief Wiremu Tipene’s anti-government stance. However, Tipene had recently returned from Hobart and was alarmed at what he’d found out about the British impact on Tasmanian aborigines” (Fordyce (2009, p. 96). Rumours were that there was “disaffection among the Kaipara tribes” ascribed to Maning. A year on from the signing of the Treaty, the colonial government sent Assistant protector of Aborigines Henry Kemp to call upon Tirarau and Waiata’s people on a fact finding mission. When he arrived at the head of the Wairoa River, he found they were not debating the worth of the colonial government but “busily engaged in felling and squaring spars”. While Tirarau found time to express his unhappiness with the British “exercise of magisterial power” his attention was on matters of the forest. Kemp noted the Māori population was 800 and 70 for Europeans. “He was confounded by the abundance of timber, particularly kauri and kahikatea, and impressed by the fertile land adjoining the Wairoa and Otamatea rivers ‘affording ample scope for European location’” (Fordyce, 2009, p. 99).

“At the head of the river is the Wairoa Falls, 60 feet high and 100 feet across. They are a miniature Niagara and were a great tourist attraction in the early days when special excursion boats would run from Dargaville. There is a lovely swimming pool just below the Falls and it was a tourist attraction to have Māori divers leaping down the 60 feet. In flood time it is a spectacular sight and in the logging days the great logs would bustle over into the pond which would cushion their fall” (Bradley, 1982, p. 11).

### 4.2.7 Wairoa River changes

On the Wairoa River, Fordyce (2009) wrote, “native bush clearing and modern agriculture have contributed to the river’s extreme turbidity” (p. 19) indicating that the years of increasing economic activity have possibly increased the volumes.

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<sup>45</sup> <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1m9/maning-frederick-edward>

## 5 Recommendations for further exploration

### 5.1 Layered geographic and other information

There are several old accounts of place names, wāhi tapu, battles and other land uses along the rivers and adjacent areas that were collected in the 1800s and early 1900s from Māori informants. Many came with historical accounts, mysterious ‘stories’ and more. While some of this information did not specifically address the two research questions of this study, there is rich content that could shape a future project focusing on mapping the physical landscape and rivers as a potential GIS (Geographic Information System) with various tools to help describe and fill out the information as it was, and show how it changed over the centuries.

For example, the information content for one location could include place names, maps, photos, audio, wāhi tapu, burial sites, caves and more. This rich array of information could inform future use of a site including re-visiting tapu or noa places, marking a site as remembrance, including it in educational programmes, and more.

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### 5.2 Non-text materials

There were several references in the Halfpenny and Graham letters about artefacts found by Halfpenny. Graham encouraged him to deposit them into the Auckland Museum but it is not confirmed whether this occurred. If so, a visit and search in the museum may uncover some valuable taonga (Halfpenny & Graham, 1927).

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### 5.3 Tāporapora

Section 3.6 discusses the location of Tāporapora. This intriguing account poses the possibility that the Wairoa River confluence was once where the Kaipara Harbour entrance is. The implications are interesting as that would locate much of the current northern harbour coastline and the old Tāporapora whare kura as part of the banks of the Wairoa River. A scientific study may shed light on these accounts and presents the possibility of discovering artefacts under the Kaipara Harbour.

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Wai 674: The Kaipara Interim Report (Wai 674)

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Kaipara Minute Book - 346.0432 Tai Tokerau 1 Kaipara 11 no. 11 plus 5 more

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**END**

<sup>47</sup> <https://kaihuvalleyhistory.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/whare-tohunga-family.pdf>

## 7 Appendix 1: Examples of Materials



**Figure 6:** Kaipara Harbour showing the Wairoa River. 1852.  
No source given. – Sir George Grey Special Collection.

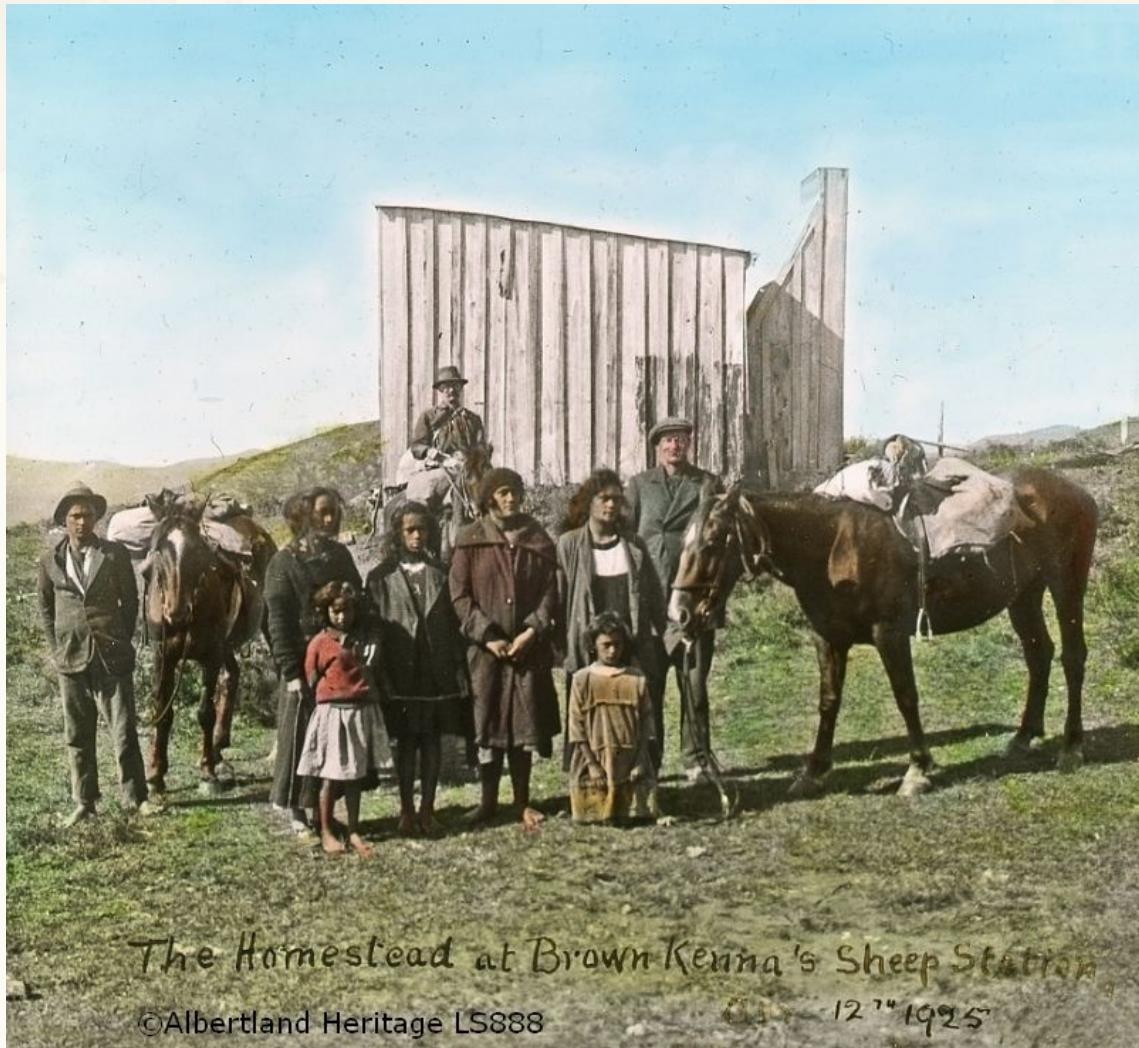
**7 Appendix 1:** (continued)



**Figure 7:** Photo of Halfpenny & Graham, 1927 papers.

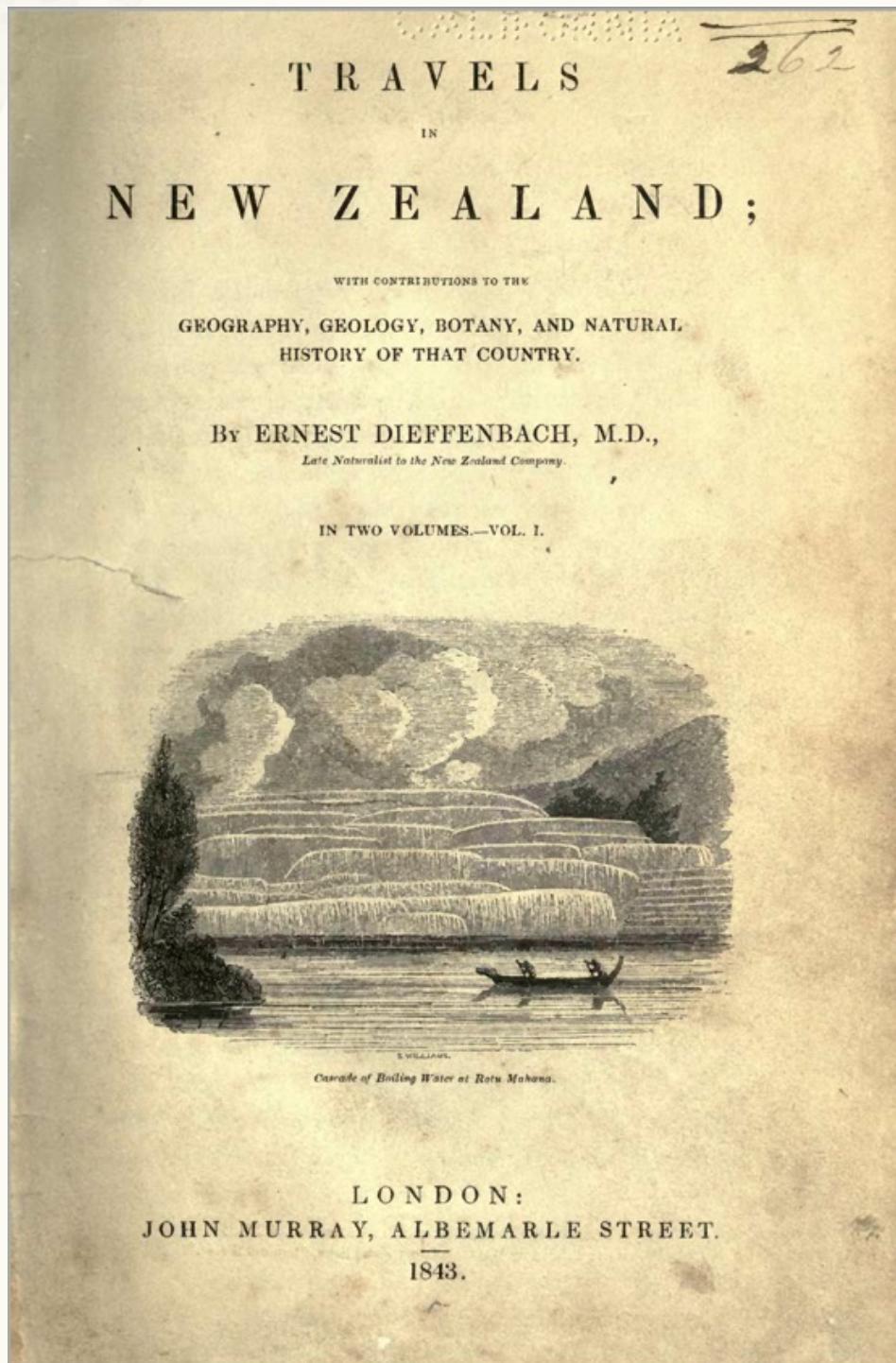
7

**Appendix 1:** (continued)



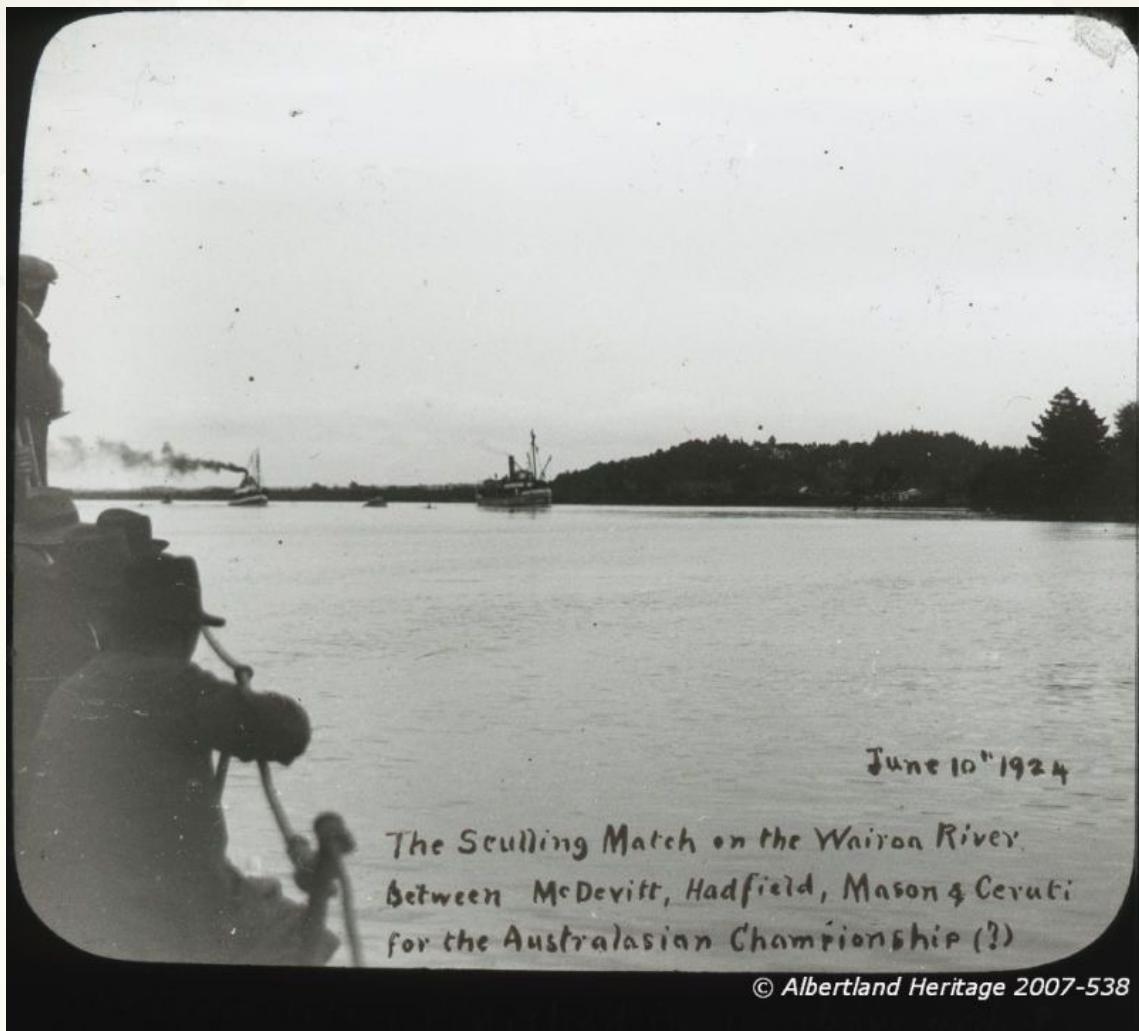
**Figure 8: The Homestead at Brown Kenna's Sheep Station, April 12th 1925, taken during Cyril Halfpenny's expedition, held in Albertland Heritage collection.**

7      **Appendix 1:** (continued)



*Figure 9: Cover of 'Travels of New Zealand' by Ernest Dieffenbach (1843).*

**7 Appendix 1:** (continued)



**Figure 10:** Sculling match on Wairoa River, June 10th, 1924  
held in the Albertland Heritage collection.



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