Historic Places Wellington

Four 'Waikanaes'

Sunday 26 March 2017; Guide and notes: Anthony Dreaver

Detail from J.G.Climie's 1884 map of Waikanae district.
TOUR ROUTE

1.00 pm  | Rendezvous at Intercity bus stop near Kapiti Lights. Drive via Kapiti Road to McLean Park – toilet stop and view of Kapiti Island.
1.20 pm  | Drive by Manly Street, turn right on Ngapotiki Street and left on Kupe Road into Mazengarb Road. Stop near Hadfield Place to view Kenakena church and pa site.
1.40 pm  | To end of Manly Street to view the estuary, Ferry Inn and Arapawaiti cemetery reserve.
2.10 pm  | Drive via Expressway to Te Moana Road, Waikanae. Talk by Mary O’Keeffe.
2.25 pm  | To Takamore urupa, Flaxmere Road, to view Tuku Rakau.
3.15 pm  | Whakarongotai marae gateway.
3.35 pm  | Cross to Elizabeth Street and turn right on Winara Avenue, past Hemi Matenga’s house, then to St Luke’s church, Elizabeth Street and Kapiti Coast Museum.
4.45 pm  | Return to Paraparaumu Railway Station for 5.07 train to Wellington

INTRODUCTION

The territory we are covering today has gone through several stages:

- Originally it was inhabited by Muaupoko, their territory stretching south from Lake Horowhenua.
- After Ngati Toa moved south from Kawiha, Muaupoko were forced out, their place taken by the allies of Te Rauparaha. First of these were Te Ati Awa of Taranaki, arriving in successive heke (journeys) in 1825 and later in 1832, settling from north of Waikanae to Pukerua Bay and later in Wellington.
- Their first main settlement was at Kenakena, but they moved twice: to Tuku Rakau in 1848 and to Waikanae in 1886.
- There was no organised Pakeha settlement until the railway opened in 1886, when Paraparaumu village and farms were surveyed and sold by the railway company.
- Seaside resorts developed from 1900. Paraparaumu and Waikanae were only villages until the late 1950s, since when they have become commuter and retirement towns.
- Influences on the future of Waikanae are the recent opening of the Expressway and plans to redevelop the town centre.
Kapiti Island from the north (W A McLeverty)

Kapiti (Entry) Island was seized from Rangitane by Ngati Toa in 1823. From a fortress it soon became a trading post and, in the 1830s, a base for shore whaling. From here, Te Rauparaha launched raids against South Island rivals. Many Maori travelled to Sydney and some to England.

In April 1840, Rev. Henry Williams brought a copy of the Treaty of Waitangi. On Kapiti (14 May) and at Kenakena (16 May) 24 chiefs, including two women, signed the treaty.

Whaling declined rapidly after 1847. Some of the whalers, including Bill Jenkins, turned to farming on the island and mainland. Grazing by livestock and introduced animals severely damaged the island’s vegetation.

Robert and Malcolm Maclean farmed much of the island from 1896. In 1902 they purchased Paraparaumu Beach and Kapiti Road area, and in the 1920s subdivided the coastal parts of their land as a seaside resort.

In 1897 the government bought all of Kapiti Island, except for the northern end, to be a bird sanctuary. Little progress was made until James Bennett became the resident caretaker in 1911.

Since then, animal pests have been progressively wiped out: goats (1928), possums (1987) and rats (1996). Today it abounds in kaka, pigeons, takahe, stitchbirds, kokako, kiwi and many other species.
From 1824 until the 1840s, the main Te Ati Awa village was beside the lower estuary of the Waikanae River. Kenakena/Waikanae pa was home to over a thousand people, with extensive gardens and a canoe haven.

Two freed Ngati Raukawa slaves had introduced the people to Christianity from the mid 1830s. The people then asked the Church Missionary Society at the Bay of Islands for a resident missionary.

In October 1839, the New Zealand Company survey ship Tory landed a party at Paraparaumu Beach to do land deals. In Kenakena pa they found many wounded warriors from the last inter-tribal battle in the region, Kuititanga.

A few weeks later Octavius Hadfield, who accepted the challenge, arrived. He made friends with chief Wiremu Kingi te Rangitake and set up mission headquarters for the region. In 1843 a fine church was built within the stockade.

In 1848 Wiremu Kingi led 580 of his people back to Taranaki to safeguard their ancestral lands. Most of the remaining Te Ati Awa then moved to Tuku Rakau, a site chosen with the help of military surveyors. The 1848 earthquake raised the coastline, shifted the riverbed and damaged houses and stockade. Abandoned, the church was soon overwhelmed by sand drift until its foundations were dramatically rediscovered by road-workers in 1961.
Arapawaiti (small canoe channel) was a Te Ati Awa village standing amidst potato gardens near the Waikanae River. Close by was the house and barracks of Major David Durie, police inspector and customs officer from 1847 to 1851, the first colonial authority in the region. His constables carried mail from Wellington to Wanganui. When the troops moved to Otaki, John Knocks ran a store and post office in the barracks building until 1865.

Tom Wilson, a Kapiti whaler, and his wife Hanaka built the Ferry Inn in 1848. In the living room can be seen the old serving hatch for the bar. Upstairs are four small guest rooms with their original wooden doors. Wilson was an interpreter at Otaki from the 1850s and Waikanae postmaster from 1865 until his death in 1878. In 1879 Tom’s daughter Hannah married Henry A. Field and the couple moved into the inn, but converted it to a farmhouse. In 1896 Field became MP for Otaki, but died only three years later. He was succeeded by his brother William Hughes Field. His widow remained at the house until her death, when it was let to a couple named Donovan. However, Field’s adopted daughter Hana, who had married Len Udy, missed the district and they moved back to the house in 1924. On their death it passed to their daughter, Mrs Jean Webber and from her, in 1991, to her niece, the present owner.

Across the river on the high dune was Waimeha pa, scene of several clashes between Ngati Raukawa and Te Ati Awa, the last being Kuititanga, 1839.
Governor George Grey (seated) meets Te Rangihaeata at Tuku Rakau, 20 February 1851 assert Ngati Toa’s interest in local land sales. With the governor is Major Durie. Alexander Turnbull Library

By 1848, earthquake and sand drift made the pa at Kenakena untenable, and many of its people had returned to Taranaki. With the assistance of Governor Grey, most of the remaining Te Ati Awa people, led by Wi Tako Ngatata-i-te-Rangi, consolidated their settlement here at Tuku Rakau, a sheltered and fertile area.

A leading figure was Hadfield’s assistant, Rev Riwai te Ahu. In 1858 he led resistance to sale to the Crown of the Waikanae/Ngarara Block, a policy maintained by Wi Parata te Kakakura until 1897.

Timbers from the Kenakena site were re-used in the new village, which comprised homes, gardens and the meeting house Puku Mahi Tamariki. Later a church and public house were built. The urupa, Takamore, overlooks the site of the kainga from the western sand ridge.
Te Mahia Wi Parata (centre, with feathers in her hair) with relatives including Mrs Eve Parata (with scarf) sitting on the porch of Whakarongotai, c. 1908.

When the Wellington and Manawatu railway line was built, Wiremu Parata and his brother Hemi Matenga saw an opportunity to benefit Te Ati Awa ki Waikanae. In negotiations with the railway company they donated land for the line where it passed through the Ngarara Block, and the company undertook to build a station where all trains would stop. The meeting house, Puku Mahi Tamariki, renamed Whakarongotai, was moved by bullock team to its present site as a new centre for the village. Parata built a popular boarding house called Mahara House. His own house site is being redeveloped as a car park for railway commuters.

Whakarongotai is the cultural heart and key gathering place of Te Ati Awa. It is notable for its Victorian elegance with layers of old wallpapers, rafters painted with symbols of the Pleiades, and female profiles cut in the outer ends of the maihi.
Parata leased land to Europeans to the east of the railway line. In 1895 he gave land for a school and in 1895 a bullock team dragged the church at Takamore across the railway line to Elizabeth Street. Although much changed, the original building is at its core. After Parata’s death in 1906, the Township of Parata was subdivided. Early shops can still be seen, and the post office (1907–1982) is now a museum. Hemi Matenga built a mansion still visible at 48 Winara Avenue.