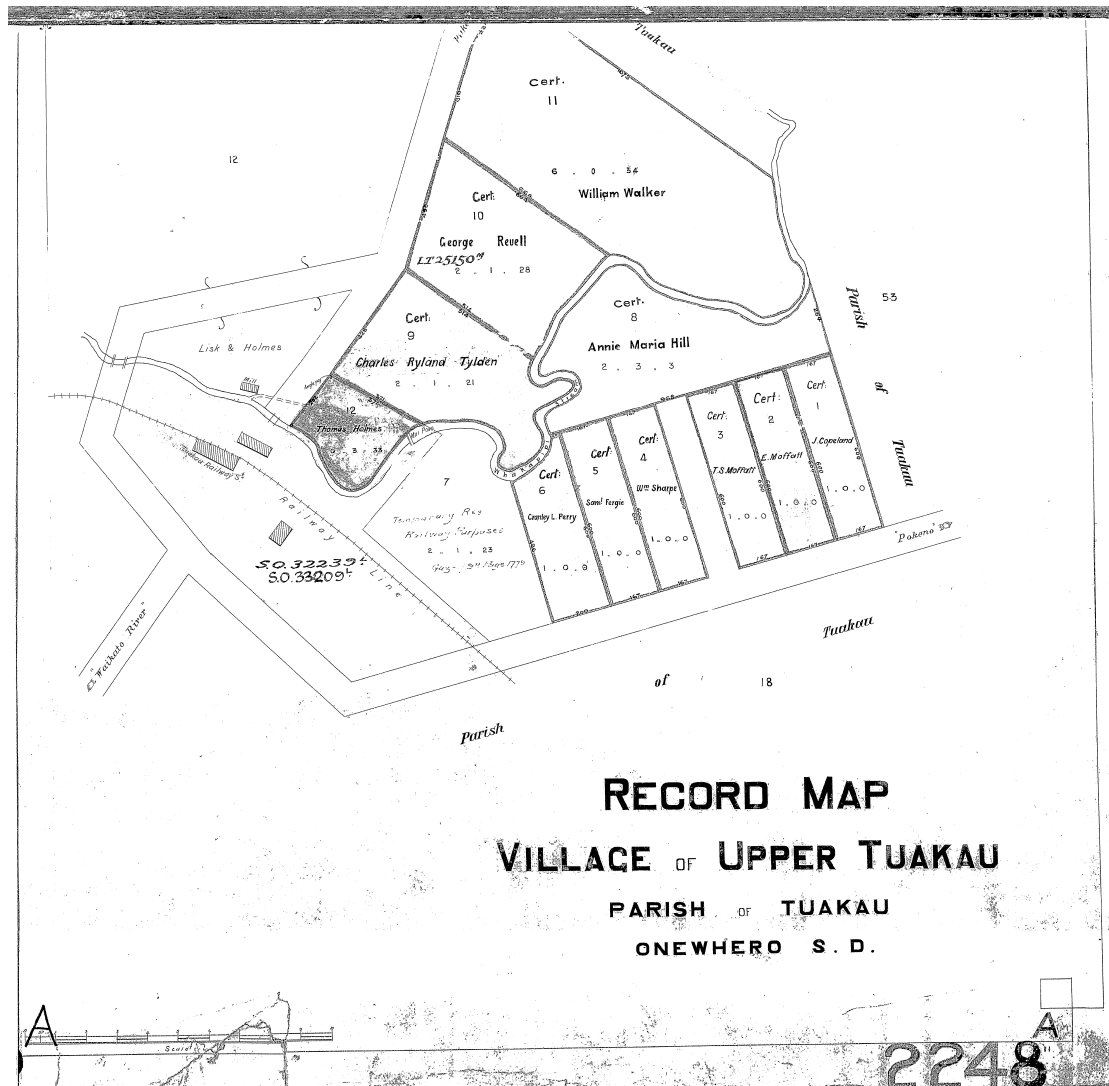


# Tuakau Structure Plan Built Heritage Assessment



HERITAGE  
CONSULTANCY  
SERVICES

for Waikato District Council  
by Heritage Consultancy Services

30 May 2014

## Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Methodology	4
Authorship & Acknowledgements	4
A History of Tuakau & District	5
Identification of Tuakau's Built Heritage Resources	25
Assessment of Effects	37
Recommended Heritage Planning Actions	38
Conclusion	38
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Tuakau Historic Timeline	40
Appendix 2: Selected Bibliography	43
Appendix 3: Image Gallery	45

Cover: 'Record Map – Village of Upper Tuakau, Parish of Tuakau, Onewhero SD'. SO 2248, undated. QuickMap.

## Executive Summary

This report identifies built heritage resources within the Tuakau Structure Plan area that embody Tuakau's history and development and may be considered for protection and promotion by Waikato District Council.

As the basis for this assessment a concise history of the study area and its wider setting has been prepared. This historical narrative establishes the backdrop against which the future development envisaged in the Structure Plan will take place. This local history also underpins the recommendations made in this report regarding the identification, protection and promotion of heritage resources within the Tuakau Structure Plan area.

In addition to a prioritised list of built heritage items, including those previously and newly identified, a heritage timeline, selected bibliography and image gallery have been appended to this report.

The principal recommendations of this report are as follows:

- Consideration should be given to scheduling additional significant built heritage resources on the Waikato District Plan, as this is the best tool available to the council for the sustainable management of historic heritage resources.
- Implementation of a future Structure Plan and/or Growth Strategy should be monitored to ensure that it maintains and enhances the heritage values of the district, especially in regards to pre-World War II built heritage items and those on rural properties that might yet be identified through a closer engagement with property owners.
- Further engagement, with property owners, local residents, community groups and other key stakeholders, may identify additional built heritage resources that merit recognition and protection by way of scheduling on the District Plan. Equally some of the buildings listed in this report may be found, upon further investigation, to lack sufficient heritage significance to merit scheduling.



George Street, Tuakau.

Figure 1: George Street, Tuakau in 1928. *Waikato* (Hamilton, 1928) p. 17. Tuakau Hotel is on the left and the view is to the south.

## **Introduction**

Tuakau and its hinterland have a rich history that encompasses pioneering settlement, the physical and cultural impacts of the Waikato War, and the construction of key social and industrial infrastructure. Sir Edmund Hillary is the most famous person associated with Tuakau but many other individuals and families have contributed to the town and the rural district it serves. The Waikato River and the North Island Main Trunk railway line have both shaped the township, while the Alexandra Redoubt is a place of national significance within the wider setting of Tuakau. Built heritage features contribute to the historic character of Tuakau, Harrisville and Whangarata and create a visual connection to a past that is typical of many provincial New Zealand places but also particular to this landscape and its people.

## **Methodology**

The Built Heritage Assessment project was commissioned by Waikato District Council to contextualise and assess the built heritage resources of the Tuakau Structure Plan area.

This report addresses the following outputs requested of the consultant:

- Preparation of an historic overview of the Structure Plan area and identification of key themes, events, people and activities that contribute to community identity and sense of place.
- Summary of the existing built heritage items/areas that have been scheduled on the District Plan and/or registered by the NZ Historic Places Trust in recognition of their heritage value to local residents and the wider community.
- Identification of potential built heritage items/areas that may have sufficient significance to warrant scheduling on the District Plan in future and/or merit identification by way of interpretative signage etc.

The Built Heritage Assessment project establishes a historic context for the Tuakau Structure Plan and a foundation document for any subsequent plan changes. It may provide information useful to the development of future design guidelines and urban design strategies for the Structure Plan area.

Project research has drawn upon published sources and archival documents, historic plans and photographs. Historical material relating to Tuakau has been located within a number of local, regional and national repositories. Input was gleaned from local informants at the Tuakau & Districts Museum and an Open Day held by Waikato District Council on 27 March 2014.

Disclaimer: The fieldwork for this project was undertaken entirely from the public domain. While every attempt was made to drive along every street in Tuakau and every road throughout the district, it was not possible to view all the buildings that might have built heritage significance on closer inspection.

## **Authorship & Acknowledgements**

This report has been prepared by Dr Ann McEwan, with research assistance from Lynette Williams. With thanks to Sandra Brasell (Tuakau & District Museum), Christine Madsen (Franklin Heritage Forum), Catherine Lapwood & Melanie Hunkin (Waikato District Council).

## A History of Tuakau & District

### The site

The north Waikato village of Tuakau, population 4182, is located eight kilometres west of the main Auckland-Hamilton highway (SH1) in the Lower Waikato River Valley.<sup>1</sup> Approximately three kilometres to the south of the rural service centre is a bridge over the Waikato River, which gives access to Port Waikato and other Lower Waikato settlements. Auckland is 60 kilometres to the north and Hamilton is 85 kilometres to the southeast of Tuakau. The North Island Main Trunk (NIMT) railway runs through the village on its way from Pukekohe to Pokeno.

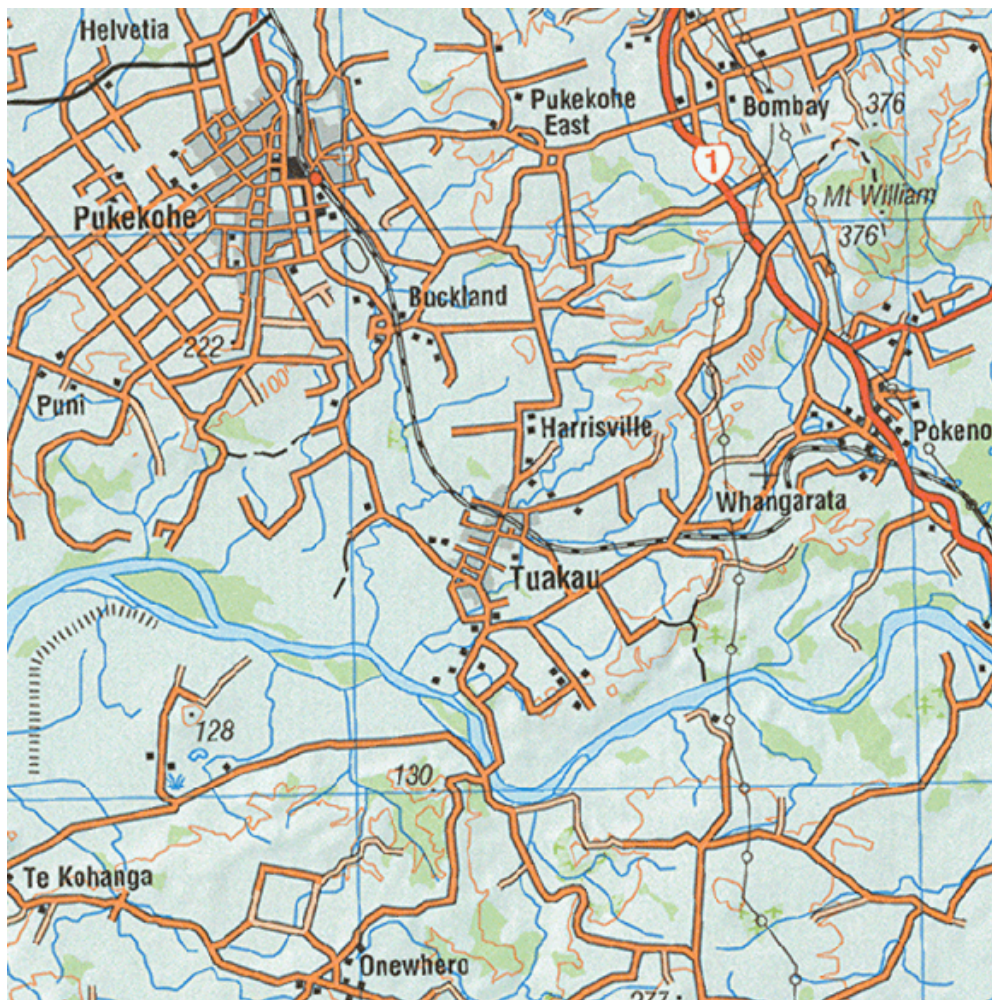


Figure 2: Topographical map of Tuakau and district. <http://www.topomap.co.nz>

Tuakau is a service and distribution centre for the surrounding district providing retailing, educational, civic and community services, as well as employment opportunities in the light industry sector. The origin of the town's name may be derived from the words 'tua' (across/beyond) and 'kau' (to swim) or 'tu' (to stand) and 'akau' (by the shore). Franklin historian Nona Morris records that the settlement was also called 'Egypt', for reasons unknown, in the late 1850s.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2013 Census, available at <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census>.

<sup>2</sup> Nona Morris, *Early Days in Franklin*, p. 104.



This brief history concerns both 'Old Tuakau', overlooking the Waikato River, and the modern day settlement, which is located in association with the NIMT. Pukekohe, the former Franklin Borough's largest town, is located to the northwest of Tuakau. The rural hamlet of Harrisville is north of Tuakau and to the east are the settlements of Whangarata and Pokeno.



Figure 3: J Johnson *Sketch of Tuakau on the Waikato River* c.1846. Auckland War Memorial Museum.

### **The tangata whenua of Tuakau**

Ngati Tamaoho, Huakina Development Trust and Ngati Naho have interests in the Tuakau area and value their association with the Waikato River.<sup>3</sup> The Ngaati Tipa marae of Nga Tai E Rua was established in Tuakau in 1914 and is located in Carr Street.

Before European colonisation, the regional landscape was one of swamps, creeks and bush, all of which supplied natural resources to tangata whenua. Scattered throughout the region were papakainga (settlements), urupa (burial grounds) and large areas of cultivation.

With a freshwater and saltwater fishing industry, agriculture, cattle grazing and orchards, the hapu of what would become Franklin supplied themselves and incoming Auckland colonists with food. Trade between iwi and settlers was brisk and relations good until disputes about land ownership and possession created a crisis that would not be resolved for over a century.

In 1846 Tuakau was a Ngati Pou fortified kainga on the northern banks of the Waikato River south of present-day Tuakau. It had strategic importance given its proximity to the river,

---

<sup>3</sup> 'Ngati Tamaoho Cultural Value Assessment Report for Tuakau Business Plan Change', p. 5.

which was both a provider of food and a major thoroughfare for iwi. Nona Morris records that by 1852, according to one Alexander Kennedy, the kainga had moved half a mile (0.8 km) inland, where the inhabitants were engaged in large-scale horticultural activities. In the 1860s, after the war that was to completely transform Maori-Pakeha relations in New Zealand, the sight of the thousands of peach trees planted by Maori at Tuakau still presented a 'very cheerful and gay lining to the sombre forest trees in the background' according to Anglican missionary Vicesimus Lush.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Establishment of a Maori King & The Waikato War**

In 1858 after many hui, Potatau Te Wherowhero was anointed the first Maori king.<sup>5</sup> One of the reasons Te Wherowhero was made king, in addition to his great mana, was that it was felt that the Waikato had an abundant supply of natural resources or kai, adequate to feed the many tribes who were expected to visit the king. These resources could be harvested from taonga such as the Waikato River, the many harbours and coastal foreshore, and the remaining bush lands within the Tainui rohe.

In spite of its unifying theme, the Maori King Movement was seen as a separatist movement. Governor George Grey feared that the continual flow of settlers from Great Britain would be impeded as Maori progressively stopped selling land. Grey's stated approach in January 1863 was therefore to 'dig around the Kingitanga until it fell.'<sup>6</sup>

By this time Te Wherowhero's son Matutaera (later known as Tawhaio) was the reigning Maori king (1860-94) and rumours were being circulated by Crown agents that he was going to attack Auckland. Governor Grey therefore ordered the imperial troops to stand by in preparation for an attack on Waikato.

Before the war, came the hostilities. Armed conflict between Maori and the Crown had begun in Taranaki in 1860. By June 1863 confiscation of Waikato land was being planned by Premier Alfred Domett's government and loyalty to the Crown was to be the test by which tangata whenua were to be 'measured'. Grey's proclamation to the Waikato hapu of the South Auckland region on 9 July 1863 stated that all those living north of Mangatawhiri Stream who pledged allegiance to the Queen of England would be allowed to stay on their land. Those who would not were to be expelled southwards and their land confiscated.

War proper broke out on 12 July 1863. Naval volunteers were ordered to smash all waka within the Manukau Harbour and this was done at two in the morning of 19 July 1863. The systematic destruction of property was also carried out along the shorelines of the harbour. Village palisades were fired and creeks and tidal waters were scoured for waka; twenty-one large canoes were towed to Onehunga and burned. Akitai/Tamaoho, Ngati Pou and Ngati Te Ata all had both domestic and long seaworthy waka. These were destroyed. Drays, ploughs and other movable Maori property were thrown into the harbour.

A later expedition searched the shoreline for waka overlooked by the first and brought back among its trophies the waka Te Toki-a-Tapiri, which was capable of carrying one hundred. The collector of customs at Onehunga used his influence to have it spared and it can be seen still at the Auckland Museum. The fleet that had sustained the settler city of Auckland with

---

<sup>4</sup> Morris, *Early Days in Franklin*, p. 165.

<sup>5</sup> The book *Potatau*, written by Pei Te Hurinui Jones, is a classic and gives a detailed account of the search for the first Maori king. *Tawhiao King or Prophet* by Carmen Kirkwood also gives an account of the turmoil of the time under discussion.

<sup>6</sup> 'Build up to war - Maori King movement 1860-94', URL: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/politics/maori-king-movement-1860-94/build-up-to-war> (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 12-Jul-2007

the products of Maori agriculture and horticulture was therefore all but destroyed.<sup>7</sup>

What is today Franklin District was a dangerous place in the latter part of 1863, as Imperial troops were on the move in South Auckland. Some Maori stayed on their lands in the area fearing the loss of cattle and pigs and the destruction of orchards. Contingents from Ngati Maniapoto, who did not listen to King Tawhaio, carried out attacks on small colonial settlements in the district, among them Pukekohe East and Camerontown.

Although the hapu of Waikato and other iwi put up a strong defence they could not outnumber the troops Grey had at his disposal, hundreds of whom came fresh from Taranaki to fight in the Waikato War. Within nine months Maori had conceded defeat after battles at Rangiriri (21 November 1863) and Orakau (2 April 1864). The Kingitanga was driven back into the King Country, clearing the way for the appropriation and colonial settlement of the Waikato. Following the defeat of Waikato, and a period for some in exile with their king, the Manukau people went home in the 1870s to find the bulk of their remaining lands had been confiscated.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 4: William Fox *Tuakau, Lower Waikato 1864*. Note flag flying atop Alexandra Redoubt. WC-018, Alexander Turnbull Library.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century a long process of protest and redress was endured by Waikato Maori. Royal Commissions convened in the 1920s and 1940s determined that the raupatu (confiscations of Waikato and Taranaki) were excessive and unjust and also laid the foundation for future government-iwi reconciliation. Finally in 1995 the Waikato-Tainui

<sup>7</sup> Te Winika, the historic waka now housed in Hamilton's Waikato Museum, was another victim of the war. What remained of its hull was transported from Tuakau to Turangawaewae at Te Puea Herangi's request in 1936. Here it was restored by Ngati Koroki carver Piri Poutapu. 'Poutapu, with Kereama Waka and Inia Te Wiata, researched Waikato carving styles and carved Te Winika's bow-piece and figurehead, stern-post and sides'. Angela Ballara, 'Poutapu, Wiremu Te Ranga 1905 - 1975'. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* updated 22 June 2007 URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

<sup>8</sup> Evidence submitted to the Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal Hearing on the Manukau Claim of 1985 (Wai08) by Nganeko Minhinnick on behalf of the people of Te Puaha ki Manuka.



Raupatu Settlements Act was passed and a settlement made for the Waikato lands below the Mangatawhiri Stream. This was accompanied by an apology for the unjust confiscations given by Queen Elizabeth II to the late Maori Queen Te Arikini Te Atairangikaahu in a private ceremony at Parliament Buildings.

### Colonial Tuakau

European contact with the Tuakau area had begun in the 1840s as a small number of missionaries and pioneers peacefully interacted with the iwi of the area, Ngati Pou. John Johnson travelled to Tuakau in 1847 and chronicled his impressions of the kainga thus:

The settlement of Tuakau consists of a few houses, within a stockade, situated in the centre of a semicircular hollow, whose two extremities abut on the river, and enclose an area of a few acres, gently sloping down on the water's edge, allowing canoes to be drawn up on the beach, which the precipitous and thickly wooded banks for a considerable distance on either hand, do not permit.<sup>9</sup>

The missionary Richard Taylor also visited Tuakau in 1847, describing it as 'a little place with only one man in it.'<sup>10</sup>

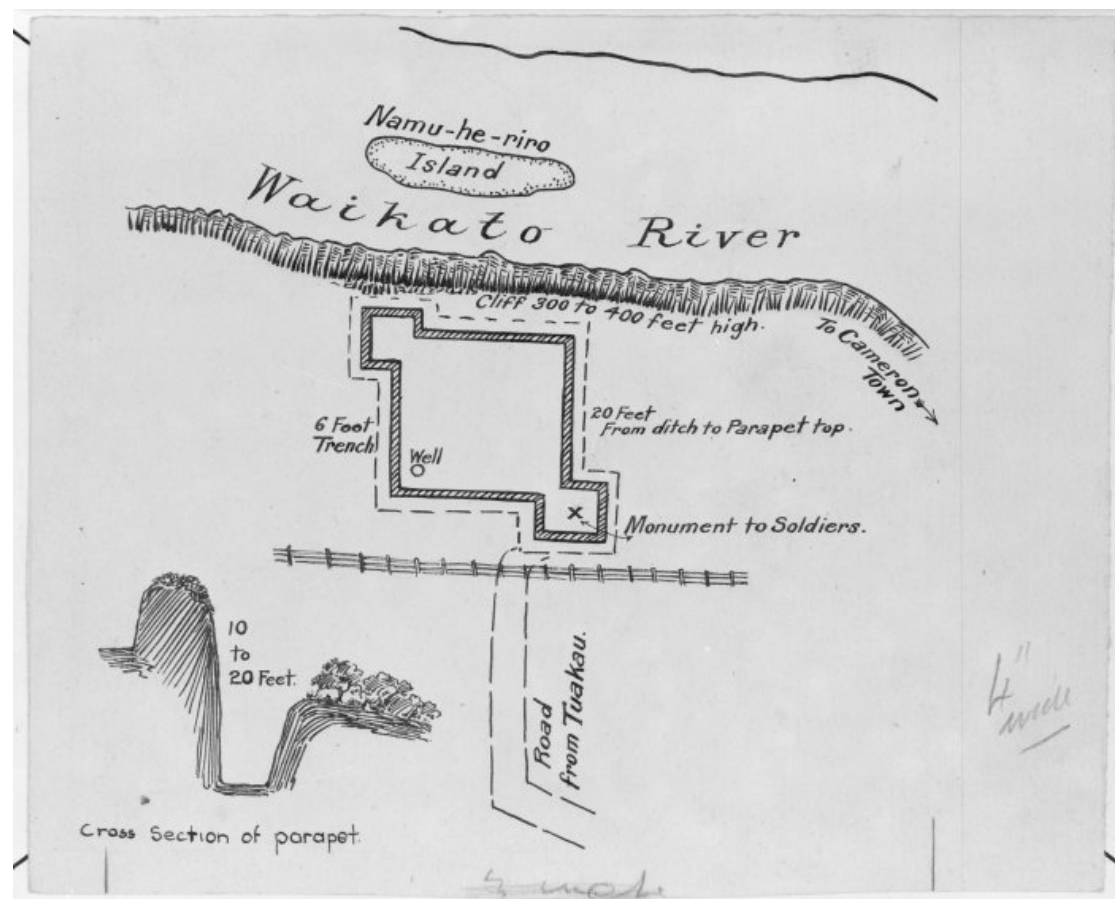


Figure 5: Map of Alexandra Redoubt, Tuakau (probably sketched by James Cowan in the 1920s). ½-025237-F, Alexander Turnbull Library. North is at the bottom of this view.

<sup>9</sup> A. D. Mead, *Richard Taylor: Missionary Tramp* (Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1966), p. 124.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 116.

## Alexandra Redoubt

West of the Ngati Pou kainga and three kilometres to the south of present-day Tuakau, lie the remains of the Alexandra Redoubt. This defensive fortification was, like the kainga, located thus because it provided commanding views of the Waikato River and the surrounding countryside. Fort Alexandra was named for Princess Alexandra, wife of Edward, Prince of Wales, who was later crowned King Edward VII.<sup>11</sup>

On 12 July 1863, as General Cameron led the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Regiments across the Mangatawhiri Stream and the Waikato War began, Colonel Alfred Wyatt marched the 300 men of the 65<sup>th</sup> Regiment past the Pukekohe East Church on the way to Tuakau to build Alexandra Redoubt.<sup>12</sup> A plaque that stands at the gate of the redoubt cemetery states: 'This Redoubt, constructed in July 1863 and garrisoned by the 65<sup>th</sup> Regiment was intended to protect General Cameron's right flank on the Waikato River and ensure safe passage for the steamer *Avon*. A detachment from this redoubt was in action at Camerontown.'<sup>13</sup>

Fighting near the redoubt began on the morning of 7 September 1863 as army supplies were being loaded at Camerontown, down river from Tuakau. A large contingent of some 200 Maniapoto warriors attacked the supply party, resulting in the death of several men as they tried to escape by canoe.

Gunshots from the fighting at Camerontown were heard by the troops of the 65<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Captain Richard Swift, the officer in charge, ordered a march on Camerontown by a party of 50 men and officers.<sup>14</sup> Swift and his men marched seven miles through dense bush to be met by an ambush. The captain was wounded in the confrontation and died that same evening. Command of the party was then taken over by Colour Sergeant Edward McKenna. Fighting continued into the evening and then the men of the 65<sup>th</sup> set off for the safety of the redoubt. They were met by a large relief party, which had been sent to Tuakau from Queen's Redoubt at Pokeno by Cameron. In all, approximately 50 Maori are believed to have been killed, while the 65<sup>th</sup> lost four men and a further four were wounded.



Figure 6: Colour Sergeant McKenna. <http://www.militarybadges.info/nz-army/page/21-vc-winners.htm>

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Turbott 'Tuakau as I Knew it, up to 1900' *Auckland-Waikato: Historical Journal* Sep 1989, Vol 55, p. 35.

<sup>12</sup> Nona Morris [ed.] *The Journal of William Morgan: Pioneer Settler and Maori War Correspondent* p. 47.

<sup>13</sup> Turbott, p. 35.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

The conflict, while small in the context of the Waikato War, was notable given the high number of awards given. McKenna received a commission and Victoria Cross. Corporal Ryan was also awarded a Victoria Cross, although he drowned before he could receive his decoration. Privates Bulford, Talbot, Cole and Thomas each received the Distinguished Conduct Medal.<sup>15</sup>

The events that occurred in the vicinity of the Alexandra Redoubt took place during a dark time in the history of Tuakau as hostilities between the government and Kingite forces reached boiling point. Local police historian Kenneth Brewer has written that the fortifications and the gravesites there today are a 'significant feature of the district's history and a mute memorial to those of both sides who died in the ensuing conflict.'<sup>16</sup>

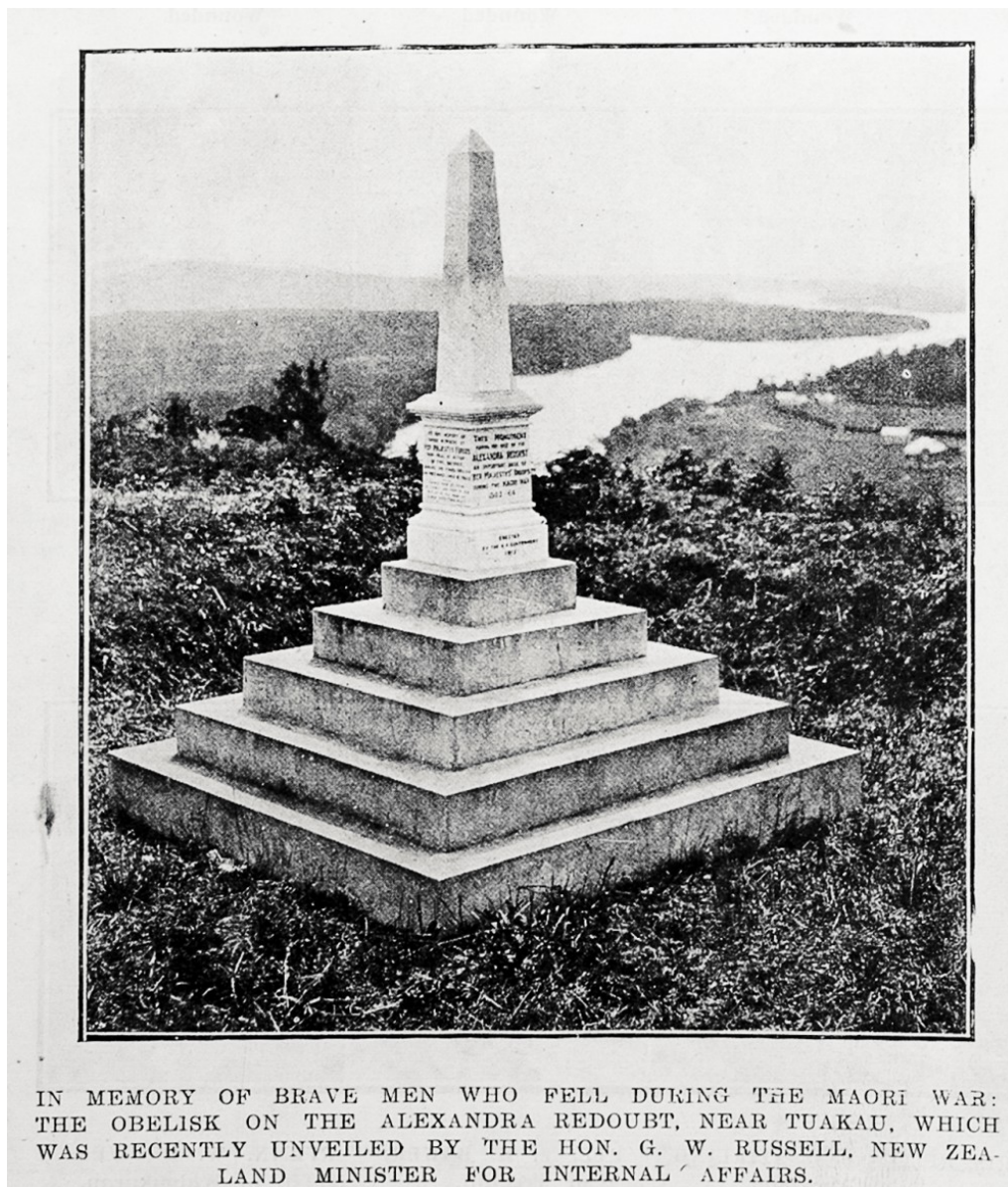


Figure 7: 'Obelisk on the Alexandra Redoubt, near Tuakau, which was recently unveiled by the Hon. GW Russell, New Zealand Minister for Internal Affairs' *Auckland Weekly News* 21 December 1916. AWNS-19161221-40-5, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

<sup>15</sup> Turbott, p. 36.

<sup>16</sup> Kenneth Edward Brewer, *The History of the Tuakau Police: 1907 to 2005* (Manuscript Copyright, 2005), p. 2.

## Waikato Immigration Scheme

The advent of war in 1863 brought with it an influx of troops and local militia, all of whom needed to be fed and supported. Early settlers sold their produce to the troops and as war ended they were joined by immigrants brought out by the government to settle the confiscated lands of the Waikato, including the Tuakau block. Access to Tuakau for these settlers was either via the river or by way of 'muddy tracks gouged out of the densely wooded landscape'.<sup>17</sup>



Figure 8: Thomas Dutton *The Clipper Ship Lancashire Witch* Undated.

The bush was the major feature of Tuakau's colonial landscape. Arthur Brown and his family arrived in Tuakau from Australia in 1873 and much of his farm *Woodlands* was 'covered with a thick bush of excellent rimu, matai, puriri, a little totara and less valuable (then), tawa, taraire, hinau, etc., with a wonderful variety of beautiful ferns'.<sup>18</sup>

On paper in 1865 Tuakau probably appeared to be rather more developed than the Browns found it in the following decade. Almost exactly two years after the war began, preparations were being made in Tuakau for the arrival of settlers brought out from England and Ireland as part of the Waikato immigration Scheme. William Morgan described the scene thus:

In company with various others, last Saturday I visited Tuakau, now I suppose Provincial property. We found various surveyors engaged in laying off allotments. When I was last there the natives were living there in large numbers. Now only vestiges of whares are seen, the military having consigned them to flames. Peach trees there are in great numbers but little else. From the redoubt there is an admirable view of the river as it winds along, the bush clothing each side. There seems to be only one landing place, extensive swamps existing all along the banks of the Waikato. Tents were erected for the accommodation of the immigrants,

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> *The Browns of Tuakau* (Otahuhu, 1974). Not paginated.



who had not yet arrived. Tuakau is a desirable place of residence, has some very good land – large flats of alluvial soil, and will eventually become a town of some size, there is no doubt.<sup>19</sup>

Immigrants from the *Ganges* (arrived in Auckland on 14 February 1865 from Queenstown, Ireland), the *Dauntless* (arrived 15 May 1865 from Kingston, Dublin) and the *Lancashire Witch* (arrived 2 June 1865 from London) were granted a ten-acre block along with a quarter-acre town section in Tuakau.<sup>20</sup> From their ships most of the settlers went first to barracks in Onehunga, then on to Drury. Women and children were housed there while the men travelled on the Great South Road to Pokeno 'and thence by way of Whangarata through a bush track on foot to Tuakau where the Government had provided military tents'.<sup>21</sup> The women and children followed later and generally began life in Tuakau in nikau whares with earthen floors.

Conditions for the early immigrant settlers improved only slowly and a letter writer to the *Daily Southern Cross* in November 1866 suggests that things got worse before they got better:

A few days ago I visited the settlement of Tuakau, and was not only disappointed, but pained at the appearance of the place. Of the fine body of immigrants planted there but few remain, and with one or two exceptions there is a sad poverty-stricken appearance about it.<sup>22</sup>

In the early years many male settlers were employed by the government to construct roads. These public works were not only an important source of income for settler families but also helped to develop the infrastructure of the district. One local historian records that another source of income for settlers in the district involved the collection of fungus, which was then sundried and sold to the Chinese community in Auckland for use in cooking.<sup>23</sup>

Charles Heaphy and his fellow surveyors originally plotted the township of Tuakau much closer to the river, redoubt and former site of the Ngati Pou kainga. The coming of the railway in 1875 had a magnetic effect, however, drawing the settlement northwards and hence much closer to the blocks of land that are the subject of the proposed Structure Plan.

## Flax Industry

Before the railway, the chief impetus for the improving fortunes of the settler community was the flax industry. Flax mills sprang up all over the Franklin district in the 1860s and 1870s as the Waikato Immigration Scheme brought settlers to the area. Nowhere in the district were flax mills more numerous than at Tuakau.<sup>24</sup>

Whereas before the war the flax had been hand-stripped in the traditional fashion by Maori, after the war mechanical methods were tried and perfected. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century flax rope was in high demand and, in the Tuakau area, 'it was not long until every creek in the district was harnessed to a water wheel and working a small flax mill. ... Practically all the settlers one way or another, worked at the flax dressing, and it is safe to state that flax laid the

---

<sup>19</sup> *The Journal of William Morgan* (Auckland, 1963), p. 141.

<sup>20</sup> Morris, *Early Days in Franklin*, p. 154 See also <http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~grimason/Shipping/Passenger.html> for shipping lists for the Waikato Immigration Scheme

<sup>21</sup> Turbott, p. 37.

<sup>22</sup> *Daily Southern Cross* 12 November 1866, p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> Turbott, p. 37.

<sup>24</sup> Morris *Early Days in Franklin* p. 167.



foundation for the prosperity of Tuakau'.<sup>25</sup> By 1870 there were 161 flax mills in New Zealand, including those in the Waikato, and these employed 1766 workers. Maori were still involved in this major New Zealand export industry, but largely as labouring flax cutters.<sup>26</sup> Production and export peaked in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, by which time Tuakau was well established.



Figure 9: An early photograph of the Tuakau township, with flax drying in the foreground. Between 1910-30. Price Collection, ½-001514-G, Alexander Turnbull Library.

The Waikato River was used to transport the flax to the Great South Road where it was carted the rest of the way to Auckland. Among the early settlers of Tuakau associated with the flax industry was John Collins, who came out from Ireland on the *Ganges* and also ran an orchard in River Road west of the Domain. In 1992 long-time resident Percy Lapwood recalled that there were ten or more flax mills in operation in and around Tuakau in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century:

The first I remember were at Tuakau Beach, John Poland's and EC Frost's. Later Poland's was taken over by Chas. Dromgool and also E and G Lapwood. Somervilles had a waterpower mill on the creek below Mrs M Dromgool's and this was later worked by Mr M Geraghty and then Mr JJ Dromgool. A little further up the creek Mr Chas. Dromgool had a waterpower mill. Messrs Poland and Black had a water mill at Black's Bridge on Buckland Road, Mr BG Geraghty at the foot of Harrisville Hill, while Mr F Geraghty had one on Mill Road. Later, Mr M Geraghty had a steam-powered plant just a few yards up the creek from the bridge a little north of St. Andrew's Church.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Lorna Kerse Collins *Family Reunion*, 21-23rd January 1994 p. 17.

<sup>26</sup> See <http://www.teara.govt.nz/TheBush/NativePlantsAndFungi/FlaxAndFlaxWorking/4/en>

<sup>27</sup> Percy Lapwood in *Tuakau & Districts: Golden Memories 1942-1992* (Waiuku: W. J. Deed Printing Ltd, 1992), p. 8.



Figure 10: Main Street, Tuakau, early 1900s. Shows wooden commercial buildings lining the street including Green & Colebrook Ltd, Tapper Bros, a fruiterer, Tuakau Hotel, Clifton House and the premises of Mrs Moor. ½-001521-G, Price Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.

### A Thriving Township

As the flax mills prospered, so did the township. On New Year's Day 1870 the Tuakau Post Office opened, and in 1875 the railway came to town. This did much to reduce Tuakau's previous isolation in comparison with those South Auckland towns and villages located on what would later become State Highway One. Not only did the railway reshape the map of Tuakau, it also added further impetus to the development of the local flax and dairy industries.

The rise of the latter was acknowledged by the Waikato Dairy Company when it erected the district's first butter factory on Ryder's Road in 1917.<sup>28</sup> Such was the volume of milk being produced in Tuakau and district that a second factory was built down near the river in 1932. The original factory had its own railway siding from which butter was railed to Auckland for export from the port. Although a new factory was later built at Paerata, the Tuakau factory continued to produce award-winning butter until its closure in May 1984.

---

<sup>28</sup> Lapwood, *Tuakau & Districts*, p. 8.

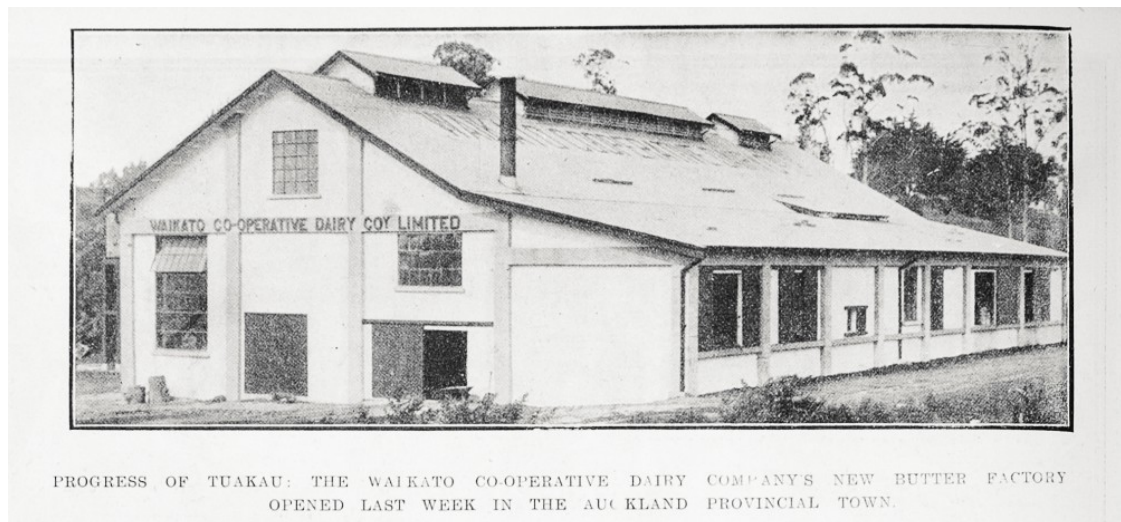


Figure 11: 'Progress of Tuakau: the Waikato Co-operative Dairy Company's new butter factory opened last week in the Auckland provincial town' *Auckland Weekly News* 29 November 1917, AWNS-19171129-36-2, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

In addition to the value of the rail link to the township, the construction of the Tuakau Bridge in 1901-2 also cemented the town's role as a hub within the district. The bridge replaced a punt service across the river and promoted the greater agricultural development of Onewhero and Pukekawa on the south side of the river. In the same decade livestock saleyards were built in Tuakau and Messrs Madill and Collin built a bonemill for the manufacture of fertiliser. EC Frost started a whitebait canning factory near the river at about the same time.<sup>29</sup>

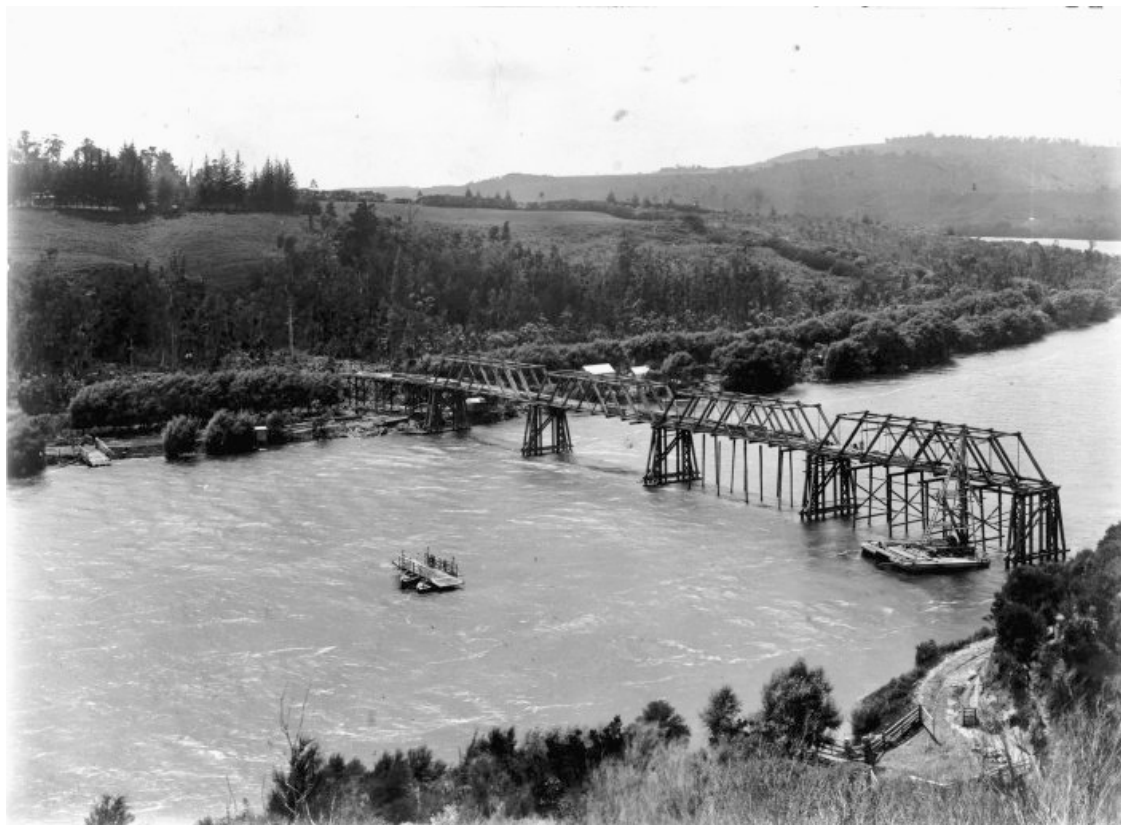


Figure 12: The Tuakau Bridge under construction in 1902. ½-077507-F, Alexander Turnbull Library.

<sup>29</sup> Lapwood, *Tuakau & Districts*, pp. 4-6.





Figure 13: Whitebait Fisherwomen, Waikato River, photograph taken near Tuakau in August 1929. Reproduced in Cowan, *The Maori: Yesterday and To-day*, 1930. Available at [www.nzetc.victoria.ac.nz](http://www.nzetc.victoria.ac.nz)

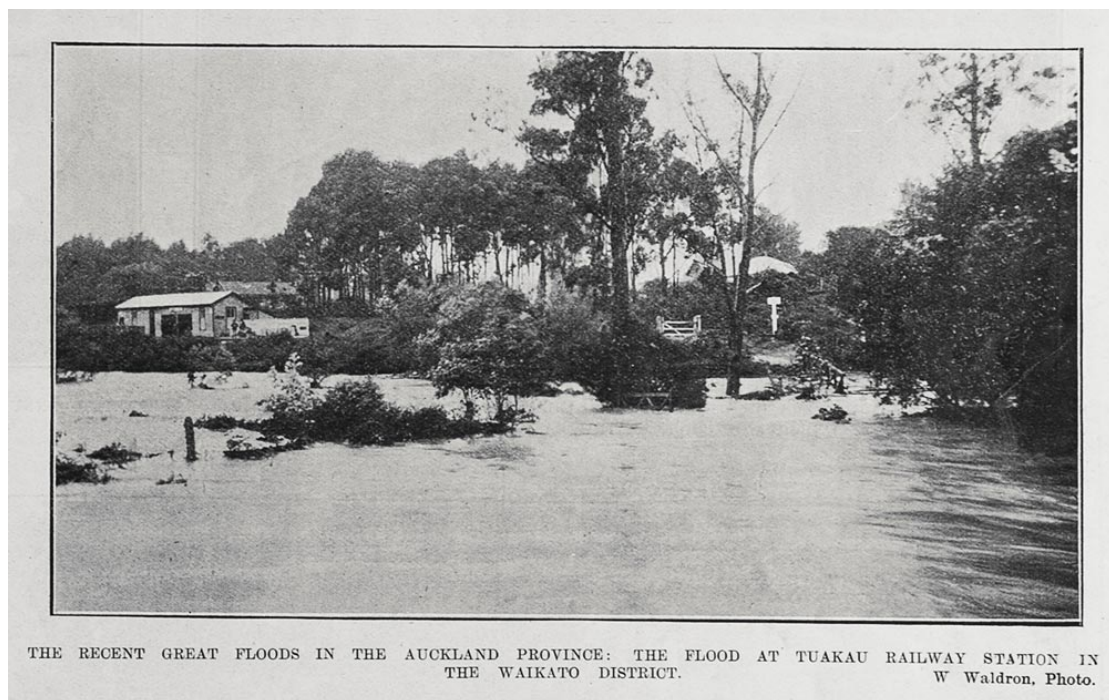


Figure 14: 'The recent great floods in the Auckland Province: The flood at Tuakau railway station in the Waikato district' *Auckland Weekly News* 7 February 1907. AWNS-19070207-13-3, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

In 1907 the Tuakau Police Station was opened but the major event of the year was a flood that covered the Waikato basin. It is reported by Percy Lapwood that 'downpours of rain turned little creeks and drains to raging torrents and every bridge giving access to Tuakau was washed away'.<sup>30</sup> The bridge across the Waikato River survived the flood but it collapsed in August 1929. The current bow-string arch structure was officially opened on 22 June 1933.

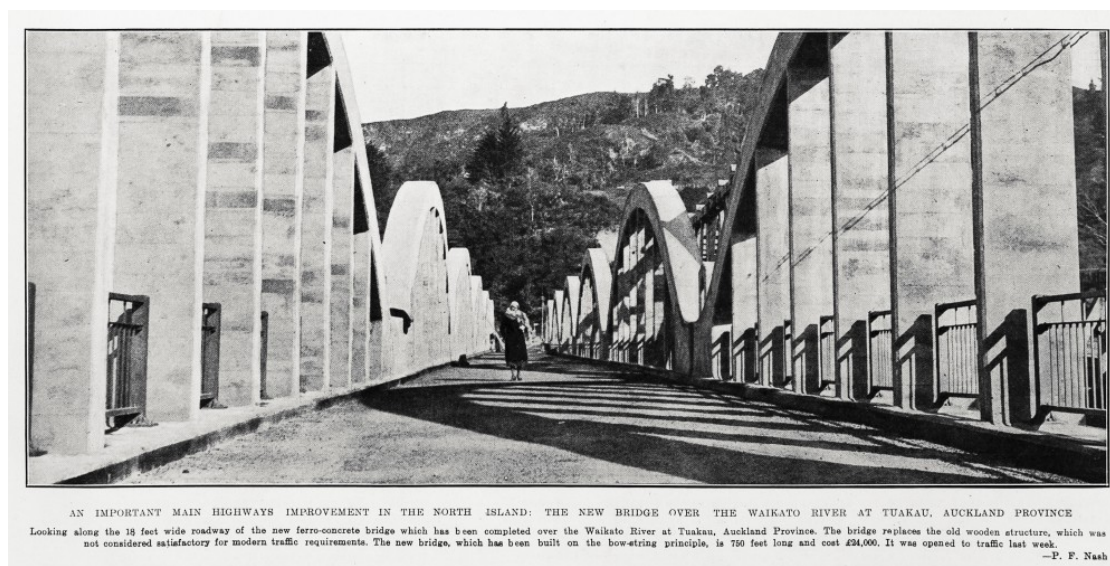


Figure 15: 'An important main highways improvement in the North Island: the new bridge over the Waikato River at Tuakau, Auckland Province' *Auckland Weekly News* 28 June 1933. AWNS-19330628-41-3, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

Despite the advent of the railway, the river still played a vital role in the lives of Tuakau residents. The Lapwood brothers had several launches that they had used on the river for many years and in 1915, when the Waikato River Board was formed, they had a 'contract for the supply and delivery of all piles used in the river groynes'.<sup>31</sup> Fruit growing also continued to be a significant part of the town and was carried on by John Collins, who had an orchard and glasshouses 'where he grew large quantities of grapes'.<sup>32</sup>

Public works also continued to play an important role in the growth of Tuakau and in c.1909 the Railway Department began a grade easement project on the Auckland-Mercer line that employed about 80 men.<sup>33</sup> In 1910 a new railway station was built in Tuakau and two years later a new post office was built in the town. Franklin County Council was formed from the southern part of Manukau County in the same year. Tuakau became an Independent Town District in 1914, reaching borough status in 1955.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Lapwood, *Tuakau & Districts*, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> Franklin County Council Administrative History, Archives New Zealand, 2008, available at [www.archway.archives.govt.nz](http://www.archway.archives.govt.nz)



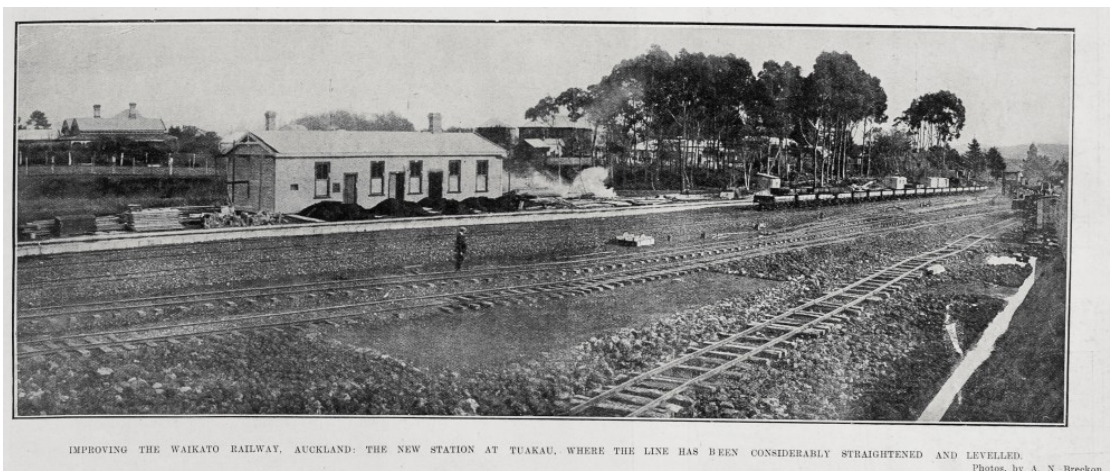


Figure 16: 'Improving the Waikato Railway, Auckland: The new station at Tuakau, where the line has been considerably straightened and levelled' *Auckland Weekly News* 10 August 1911. AWNS-19110810-15-2, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

The most famous New Zealander associated with Tuakau is without question Sir Edmund Hillary (1919-2008). His parents Percival and Gertrude moved to Tuakau in 1920, bringing with them two children, June and Edmund. Their third child, Rex, was born in Tuakau. Gertrude, nee Clark, was a school teacher and Percival had been the publisher of Dargaville newspaper the *North Auckland Times*.<sup>35</sup>

The family made the move to Tuakau when Percival was allocated land there for his service during World War I. In Tuakau Percival trained as a bee-keeper and later established a weekly newspaper, the *Tuakau and District Times* (published 1932-39).



Figure 17: 'Producing the finest-grade honey: Auckland beekeepers hold their annual field day at Tuakau last week'. The left-hand photograph shows Mr GV Westbrooke holding a frame of bees 'from one of the hives at Mr PA Hillary's up-to-date apiary'. *Auckland Weekly News* 4 February 1931. AWNS-19310204-50-1, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

Edmund attended Tuakau Primary School (1924-31) and then commuted by train to Auckland Grammar for two years. The family moved back to Auckland when he was 16. The connection with bee-keeping remained in the family; Percy founded a magazine for bee-keepers, *New Zealand Honeybee* (1937-9), and Edmund was initially exempt from

<sup>35</sup> See 'On top of the world: Ed Hillary' and subsequent pages, URL: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/culture/edmund-hillary> (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 31-Oct-2008

conscription when World War II broke out as bee-keeping was a reserved occupation. It is for mountain climbing, not bee-keeping, that Edmund Hillary is best known of course. He was knighted following his ascent of Mount Everest with Tenzing Norgay in 1953 and his association with Tuakau Primary School is commemorated by a monument at the school.

The Hillary family's time in Tuakau coincided with the establishment of Lavalla College in 1926. The college was a Marist juniorate or high school for aspiring priests and the school, with its imposing brick buildings, was supported by a farm run by the brothers. The school was known as Felix Donnelly College after 1999 and later owned by the Youthlink Family Trust. On the property is a private Marist Brothers Cemetery, in which student James Cotter, aged 15, was the first interment on 15 May 1931.<sup>36</sup>

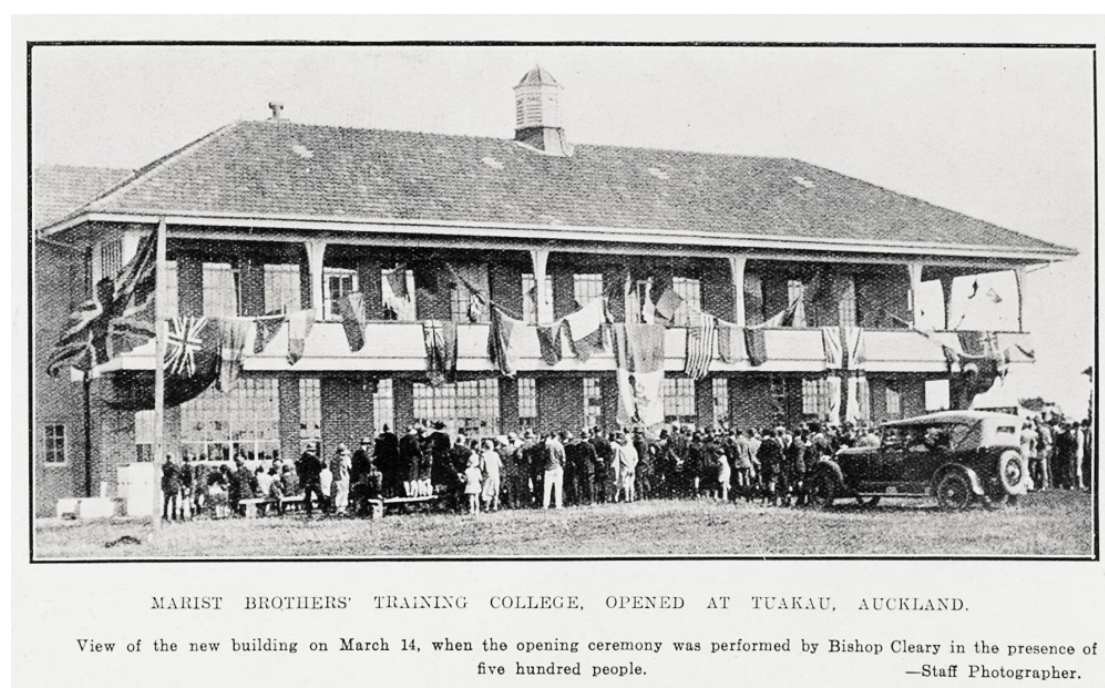


Figure 18: 'Marist Brothers' Training College, opened at Tuakau, Auckland' *Auckland Weekly News* 18 March 1926, p. 46. AWNS-19260318-46-3, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

War touched Tuakau once again in the 1940s, when a temporary camp and exercise area was set aside for the US Army southwest of Tuakau. During the war years a large log was put in place at the Tuakau bridge, which was to be lowered in the event of a Japanese invasion.<sup>37</sup>

Of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Tuakau there is perhaps less to tell, in terms of major developments at least. The population of the village stood at 1,630 in 1964, and ten years later Tuakau College opened. Previously local children travelled to Pukekohe or Auckland for their secondary education. A shift in the transport industry from rail to larger trucks and more door-to-door deliveries spelled the end of rail in Tuakau and the railway facilities were closed and demolished in 1986.<sup>38</sup> Since then a change in land usage has also occurred, 'most of the borough stock farms hav[ing] changed to market gardening, orchards, and the glass-house growing of flowers and tomatoes'.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Cemeteries Vol. 4, Franklin District Library, 11 March 2007. See also New Zealand Marist Brothers' Province – New Zealand, available at <http://www.maristbrothers.org.nz/New%20Zealand.htm>

<sup>37</sup> K & N Morris *Franklin Remembers The War Years 1939-1945*, pp. viii & 63.

<sup>38</sup> *Spotlight on Life and Business: Franklin District* 2002, p. 76.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*





FOWL FARM. VISIT TO A POULTRY RUN IN THE TUAKAU DISTRICT, AUCKLAND

Figure 19: 'Fowl Farm: Visit to a poultry run in the Tuakau district, Auckland' *Auckland Weekly News* 6 September 1939. AWNS-19390906-40-3, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

Poultry farming has continued to flourish and with the natural gas pipeline from New Plymouth passing through Tuakau, 'the drying of timber and grain, and sand and metal processing are some of the new industries, which have grown'.<sup>40</sup> Tuakau has maintained its role as a service centre for surrounding districts 'providing schools, doctors, clubs, parks, water treatment, and sewerage and storm water facilities'.<sup>41</sup> In 2001 the town centre was redeveloped and today the built environment of the settlement is of a modest scale but one that has a number of historic buildings and a very important place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century history of New Zealand.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.



Figure 20: 1940 Centennial Park, Tuakau. A McEwan, 17 March 2014.

## Harrisville

By 1873, if not earlier, the locality was named for Major Benjamin Harris (1836-1928), who was an Irish-born farmer, soldier and politician.<sup>42</sup> The Harris family was settled in Harrisville by 1862 and between 1874 and 1923 Harris served, for varying lengths of time, on the Auckland Provincial Council, as a Member of Parliament and then as a Member of the Legislative Council.<sup>43</sup> At one point he defeated William Massey, the future Premier, as the Liberal candidate for the Franklin electorate (1893).<sup>44</sup>

The *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* notes that Major Harris had sold 'considerable areas' of his land at Harrisville by 1902 and that 'most of the settlers have small holdings, and are Danes'.<sup>45</sup> The principal landmark of the district is the school, established in 1877, which had an average attendance of 33 at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>46</sup> At that time the headmaster was AE Hill, who was appointed to the role in 1895, after arriving in New Zealand from England in 1878.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Daily Southern Cross* 25 February 1873, p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> Nona Morris *Early Days in Franklin* Pukekohe, 1965, p. 73.

<sup>44</sup> Barry Gustafson. 'Massey, William Ferguson', from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 13-Nov-2013 <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/2m39/massey-william-ferguson>

<sup>45</sup> *Cyclopedia of New Zealand: Auckland Provincial District* Auckland, 1902; available at [www.nzetc.victoria.ac.nz](http://www.nzetc.victoria.ac.nz)

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*





HON. B. HARRIS.

Figure 21: The Hon. B Harris. *Cyclopedia of New Zealand: Auckland Provincial District* 1902. <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/Cyc02Cycl-fig-Cyc02Cycl0690a.html>



Figure 22: Harrisville Mission Hall, photographed by JD Richardson. 4-6336, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries. [This hall opened in September 1899. It was built to host Anglican services, being overseen by St Peter's Church in Bombay, but was also available to other denominations. *Auckland Star* 25 September 1899, p. 5.]



## Whangarata

Whangarata was described as a 'small dairying settlement' by E Bradbury in his 1917 account of the settlement and development of the Waikato.<sup>48</sup> At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Whangarata had 'a creamery, a public school, and a post office' and it was a flag station on the NIMT railway.<sup>49</sup> According to the *Cyclopedia* the local school (est. 1886) was the site of the Whangarata Post Office. In c.1902 the latter was run by Miss Jane Reston.



Figure 23: Detail from 'Plan of Land Required for Railway Purposes to be Taken Under the Public Works Act 1908' showing Whangarata station. SO 16815, dated 29 August 1912. QuickMap.

Early farmers in the area included Scottish-born George Ewing (died 1930), whose farm was known as 'Glencairn', John Hartley, Helier Bree and James Pirrit. The Pirrit family is also associated with Pokeno. '[O]ne of the oldest settlers of the Whangarata district' who is featured in the *Cyclopedia* is William Young, who was born in Ireland in 1833 and arrived in New Zealand aboard the *Ganges* in 1864.<sup>50</sup>

Other names of those associated with the early history of Whangarata can be found on the settlement's World War I memorial. This monument was unveiled at the school on 15 September 1924 and the 55 names inscribed on it record those from the district who served in the war, as well as those who were killed in action.<sup>51</sup>



Figure 24: Whangarata World War I Memorial.

<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/whangarata-first-world-war-memorial>

<sup>48</sup> E Bradbury [ed] *The Settlement and Development of the Waikato*, New Zealand Auckland, 1917, p. 60.

<sup>49</sup> *Cyclopedia of New Zealand: Auckland Provincial District* Auckland, 1902; available at [www.nzetc.victoria.ac.nz](http://www.nzetc.victoria.ac.nz)

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/whangarata-first-world-war-memorial>

## Identification of Tuakau's Built Heritage Resources

The heritage resources of any community are diverse in nature and may be valued for a wide variety of reasons. Whilst some might be offered protection under the auspices of the Resource Management Act, the Reserves Act, the NZ Historic Places Act, the Waikato Regional Policy Statement and/or the Waikato District Plan, others rely on efforts by community groups and individuals for their conservation.

The *Tuakau & Districts Community Plan* (2012) identifies a vision 'to protect the heritage we have for our future generations' and one of the plan's priorities is 'recognition of tangata whenua, pioneers and icons in the district'.<sup>52</sup> Waikato District Council will play a role in achieving this vision, both through undertaking its regulatory responsibilities and by modelling best practice through the management of its own heritage assets.

Note: Where this report identifies buildings erected before 1900 the sites on which they stand should be considered as having potential archaeological value under the terms of the Historic Places Act.

Built heritage / historic character qualities:

- multiple centres and dispersed settlement [Tuakau South, Tuakau North, Central & Upper Tuakau]
- pull of the railway superseding that of the river in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and changing the urban form of the settlement
- satellite settlements of Harrisville and Whangarata have their own settler histories and surviving built form is focused upon school buildings
- Tuakau's modern-day town centre is focused on George Street between the railway line to the north and the War Memorial Hall / Tuakau Saleyards in the south.
- residential buildings that contribute to the historic character of all three settlements include colonial cottages & villas, bungalows, government [state and NZR] housing, and post-war bungalows
- there are a small number of architecturally designed buildings, but notable buildings are predominantly examples of the vernacular forms of colonial classicism and Gothic Revival
- Tuakau War Memorial Hall & the main building at the former Lavalla College are the district's principal landmark buildings.

---

<sup>52</sup> *Tuakau & Districts Community Plan* (2012) p. 45.