

*Te Awaitaia "Wiremu
Neera"*

150th Memorial Celebrations

27th April 1866 - 2016



*Toia mai raa ngaa waka o ngaa taiaauru ki Whaingaroa.
Ka tuu motuhake te maunga o tuawhakarere aa Karioi.
Taataahia raa ngaa hoe ki te awa e rere ana ki Opotoru.
Tuia te here taangaengae ki te whenua ki Rokikore,
Ka maawhiti te tirohanga atu ki te whenua ki Putoetoe.
Hoea te waka kia anga ki mua ki ngaa tai e pari ana ki Nihinihi.
Toia mai raa Tainui ki uta ki te one takaroa, toia mai raa ngaa
mana ki runga o ngaa pari kaarangaranga o te ia kaarohirohi.
Poua raa ngaa pou whenua ki runga o Papahua, ki te
urupaa ki te tuahu te takotoranga o te tuupuna i aa Te Awaitaia.*

*Draw the canoes from the western tides, haul them ashore to
Whaingaroa, where stands Karioi, the mountain of our forebears.*

*Dig your paddle in the current of Opotoru,
Sweeping past Rokikore where memories slumber
cast your gaze to Putoetoe , follow the current to the landing place at
Nihinihi where the tide is in full flood*

Haul Tainui! Haul her ashore!

*Stake your post on Papahua,
It is at Tuuahu, the resting place of the tupuna, Te Awaitaia*

Te Awaitaia was born at Waipa in 1796, son of Te Kata and Purehina, leaders of rank of Ngaati Hourua and Ngaati Mahanga. His leadership qualities emerged when he led military engagements from Kawhia south to Taranaki. Te Awaitaia was of equal rank to Pootatau. As well, he was Pootatau's fighting general, and companion-in-arms to Te Waharoa. While on an expedition to Taranaki to seek satisfaction for the wrongful killing of a close kin, Te Awaitaia met with a missionary who convinced him that the pathway to the resolution of disputes was through peaceful means, not through arms and warfare. In 1835, he was baptised by Reverend James Wallis at Whaingaroa into the Wesleyan church. To reflect his changed political and spiritual status he presented his taiaha to Wallis and adopted the name William Naylor or Wii Neera.



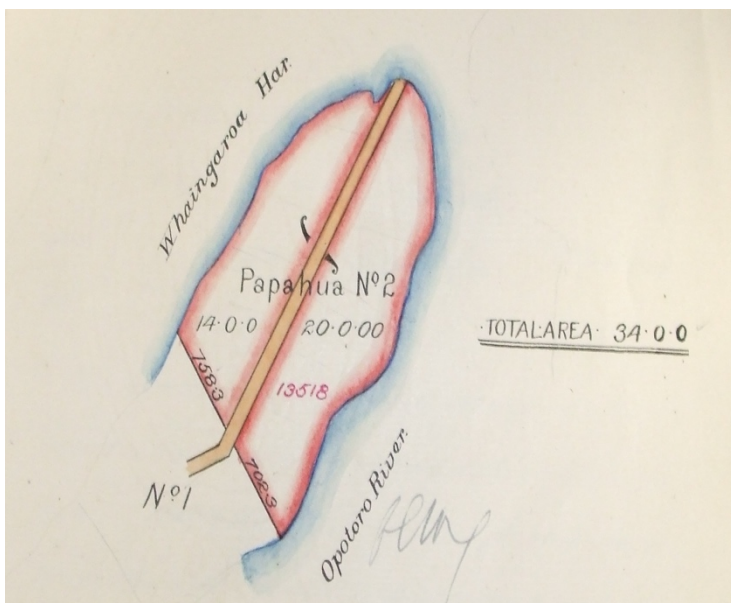
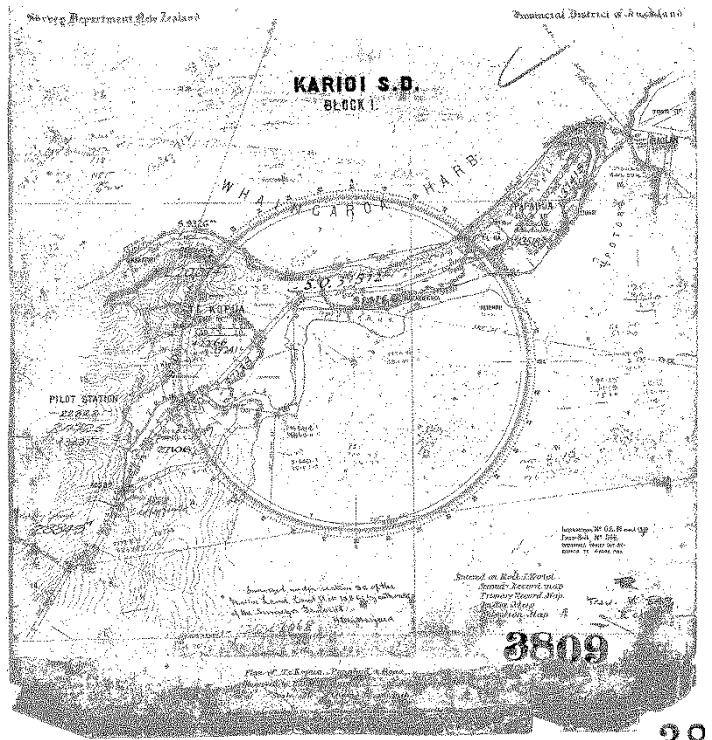
Te Awaitaia built the first church in Whaingaroa, and escorted back to Taranaki those who had been taken captive during the siege of Pukerangiora. As tribal leader of Ngaati Hourua and Ngaati Maahanga, he was a signatory to the Treaty of Waitangi 1840 and attended both the Remuera Conference in 1844 and the Kohimarama Conference in 1860. In 1857, Te Awaitaia built his Courthouse in Whaingaroa where, as Native Magistrate, he adjudicated disputes between Maaori and Paakehaa. He opposed the establishment of a Maaori King, but eventually sent his people to Rangiriri to join the King Movement. He was steadfast in his desire for a distinct Maaori nation. In 1863, when Waikato was invaded by the colonial troops, Te Awaitaia refused to bear arms but his chiefly status and authority were enough to ensure that warfare were not visited upon his tribal domain or the Whaingaroa area.

In April 1866, as he was waiting to meet with Sir George Grey in Kawhia, he took ill with fever and was stretchered back to Whaingaroa by his Ngaati Te Wehi kin. Despite medical help, Te Awaitaia succumbed to fever and in accordance with his final request, was buried here on his tribal land at Papahua in the urupaa known as Te Tuuaahu.

Papahua

The Papahua land consists of 34 acres. In 1923, the Raglan Town Board went to Whatawhata to ask Ngaati Hourua – Ngaati Maahanga to sell the block. The request was refused. Under pressure to sell their land, the owners instead made a decision to transfer the land according to customary practice for use as a public reserve. The conditions attached to the transfer were:

- That the land would never be sold
- That the Raglan Town Board would derive no benefit from the land
- That a bridge would be built between Papahua and the township
- That the memorial monument to Te Awaitaia would be transferred to Papahua
- That Ngaati Hourua and Ngaati Maahanga and the Crown would have equal rights over the land



Transferring rather than selling Papahua meant the right of Ngaati Hourua – Ngaati Maahanga to maintain the relationship with Papahua was assured, and that Ngati Hourua – Ngaati Maahanga and the Crown could freely enjoy the open spaces of Papahua, in keeping with the spirit of peace-making envisaged by Te Awaitaia.

The area along the foreshore, including this burial ground, is called Papahua 3. This land is held under Maaori title to Ngaati Hourua – Ngaati Maahanga.

Putoetoe

Putoetoe was Te Awaitaia's personal residence. It was here that he built his Courthouse where he acted as a native magistrate. "Mahia te Pai" was the inscription on his flag that was hoisted above his Courthouse in 1857. It was an exhortation to act with integrity and compassion.



The memorial monument to Te Awaitaia:



The photograph is of members of Te Awaitaia's immediate family standing next to his monument outside his Courthouse in 1870. Members are from left to right: Toea Te Awaitaia (grand-daughter), Wi Nera Te Awaitaia (son, and holding taiaha), Hetaraka Otene (nephew and successor), Miriyama-Toea (daughter), and Atutahi Nikorima Te Rutu (husband of Miriyama).

The monument to Te Awaitaia was constructed by the then government. The dedication of the monument coincided with a multi-tribal gathering at Papahua to pay homage and lament the deaths of Te

Awaitaia and other coastal tribal leaders - Te Aoterangi, Kiwihuatahi and Kukutai. Ongoing warfare in previous years had prevented such eulogies being given full expression. Tuukuku was the name of this significant gathering at Papahua