

## WDC District Plan Review – Built Heritage Assessment

### Historic Overview - Tuakau & District



HERITAGE  
CONSULTANCY  
SERVICES

## Tuakau

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>1</sup>

This account 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 1: 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>2</sup> The Ngaati Tipa marae of Nga Tai E Rua was established in Tuakau in 1914 and is 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

<sup>1</sup> Nona Morris *Early Days in Franklin* p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Ngati Tamaoho Cultural Value Assessment Report for Tuakau Business Plan Change, p. 5.

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, 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>3</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>4</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>5</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 the products of Maori agriculture and horticulture was therefore all but destroyed.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Morris, p. 165.

<sup>4</sup> The book *Potatau*, written by Pei Te Hurinui Jones, gives a detailed account of the search for the first Maori king. *Tawhaio King or Prophet* by Carmen Kirkwood also gives an account of the turmoil of the time under discussion.

<sup>5</sup> 'Build up to war - Maori King movement 1860-94' <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/politics/maori-king-movement-1860-94/build-up-to-war>

<sup>6</sup> Te Winika, the historic waka now housed in Hamilton's Waikato Museum, was another victim of the war. What remained of

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>7</sup>



Figure 2: William Fox Tuakau, *Lower Waikato 1864*. Note flag flying atop Alexandra Redoubt. WC-018, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

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 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.

---

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* <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

<sup>7</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.

## 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>8</sup>

The missionary Richard Taylor also visited Tuakau in 1847, describing it as 'a little place with only one man in it.'<sup>9</sup>

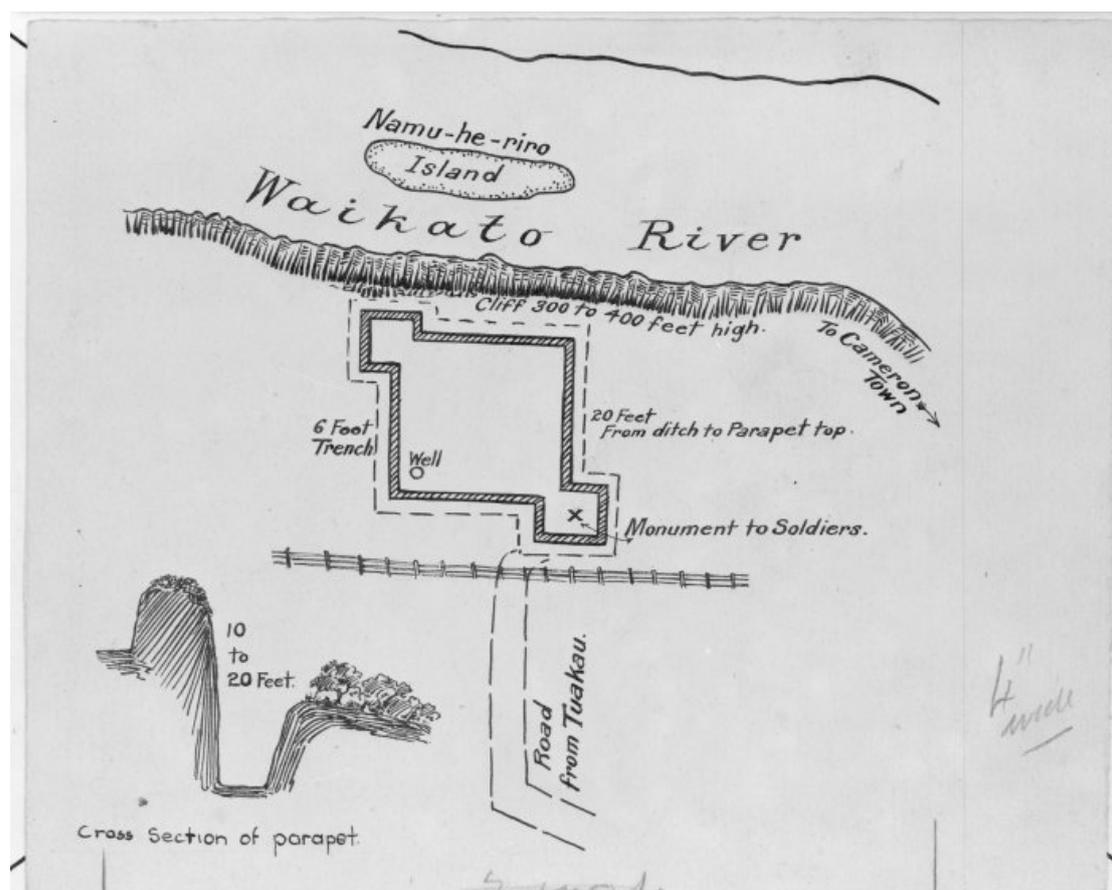


Figure 3: Map of Alexandra Redoubt, Tuakau (probably sketched by James Cowan in the 1920s). ½-025237-F, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. North is at the bottom of this view.

## 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>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> A. D. Mead, *Richard Taylor: Missionary Tramp* p. 124.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Turbott 'Tuakau as I Knew it, up to 1900' *Auckland-Waikato: Historical Journal* Sep 1989, Vol 55, p. 35.

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>11</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>12</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>13</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 4: Colour Sergeant McKenna. <http://www.militarybadges.info/nz-army/page/21-vc-winners.htm>

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.

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>14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Nona Morris [ed.] *The Journal of William Morgan: Pioneer Settler and Maori War Correspondent* p. 47.

<sup>12</sup> Turbott, p. 35.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 36.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Edward Brewer, *The History of the Tuakau Police: 1907 to 2005* (Manuscript Copyright, 2005), p. 2.



IN MEMORY OF BRAVE MEN WHO FELL DURING THE MAORI WAR:  
THE OBELISK ON THE ALEXANDRA REDOUBT, NEAR TUAKAU, WHICH  
WAS RECENTLY UNVEILED BY THE HON. G. W. RUSSELL, NEW ZEA-  
LAND MINISTER FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

Figure 5: '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.

### 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>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Brewer, p. 2.

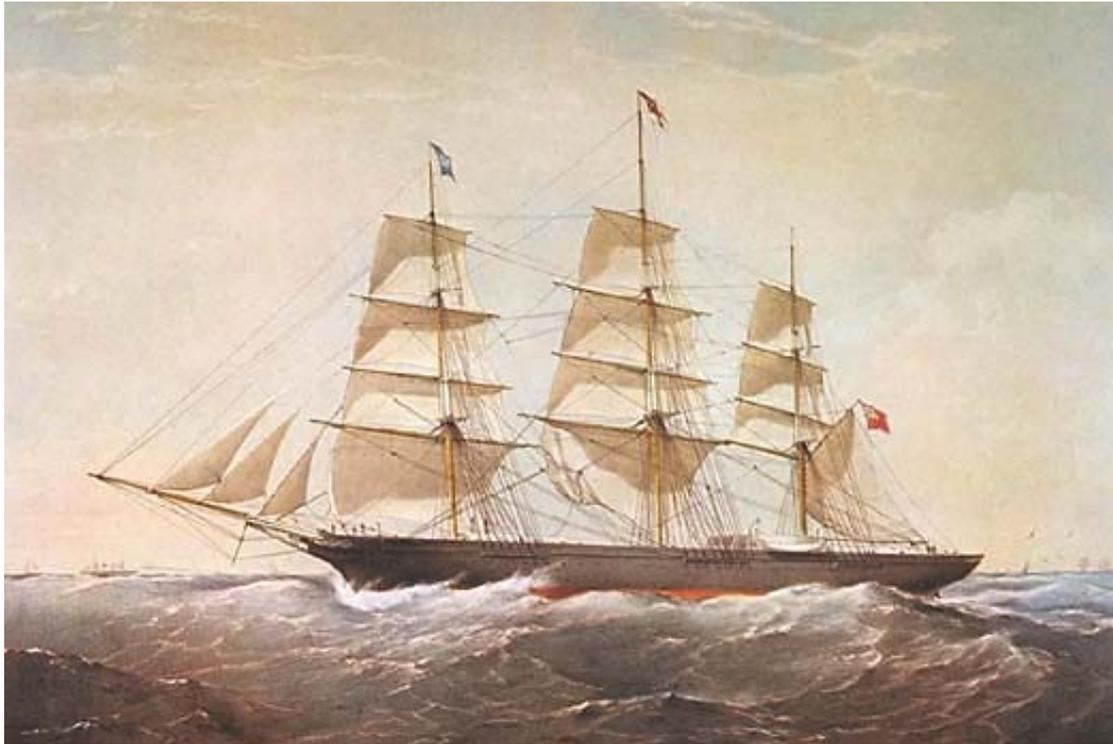


Figure 6: Thomas Dutton *The Clipper Ship Lancashire Witch* Undated.

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>16</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, 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>17</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>18</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

---

<sup>16</sup> *The Browns of Tuakau* (Otahuhu, 1974). Not paginated.

<sup>17</sup> *The Journal of William Morgan* p. 141.

<sup>18</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

thence by way of Whangarata through a bush track on foot to Tuakau where the Government had provided military tents'.<sup>19</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>20</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>21</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>22</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 foundation for the prosperity of Tuakau'.<sup>23</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>24</sup> Production and export peaked in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, by which time Tuakau was well established.

---

<sup>19</sup> Turbott, p. 37.

<sup>20</sup> *Daily Southern Cross* 12 November 1866, p. 6.

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

<sup>22</sup> Morris *Early Days in Franklin* p. 167.

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

<sup>24</sup> See <http://www.teara.govt.nz/TheBush/NativePlantsAndFungi/FlaxAndFlaxWorking/4/en>



Figure 7: An early photograph of the Tuakau township, with flax drying in the foreground. Between 1910-30. Price Collection, ½-001514-G, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

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. Collins also opened the first Tuakau Hotel in 1875. 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>25</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Percy Lapwood in *Tuakau & Districts: Golden Memories 1942-1992* p. 8.



Figure 8: Flax fibre bales ready for sale at Frost's mill, with John Lapwood 2<sup>nd</sup> from left. Reproduced in Sangster p. 41.



Figure 9: 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, Wellington.

## A Thriving Township

As the flax mills prospered, so did the township. On New Year's Day 1870 the Tuakau Post Office opened. Five years later, when the railway came to town, the post office relocated to the station. The railway 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>26</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.

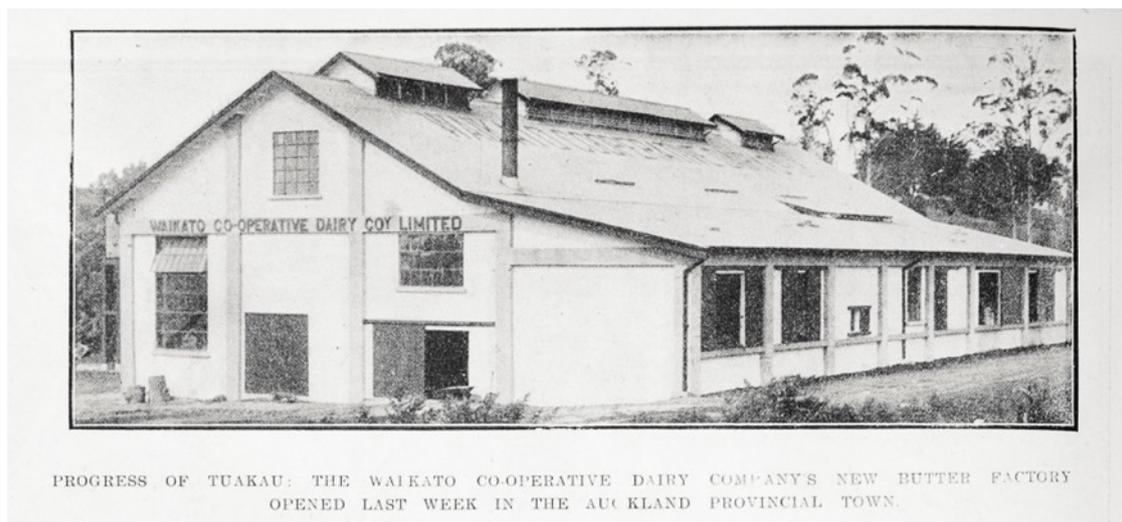


Figure 10: 'Progress of Tuakau: the Waikato Co-operative Dairy Company's new butter factory opened last week in the Auckland provincial town' *Auckland Weekly News* 29 November 1917, AWNS-19171129-36-2, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

In addition to the value of the rail link to the township, the construction of the Tuakau Bridge in 1902-3 also cemented the town's role as a hub within the district. The bridge replaced a punt service across the river (1883) 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>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Lapwood, p. 8.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 4-6.



Figure 11: The Tuakau Bridge under construction in 1902. ½-077507-F, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.



Figure 12: 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)

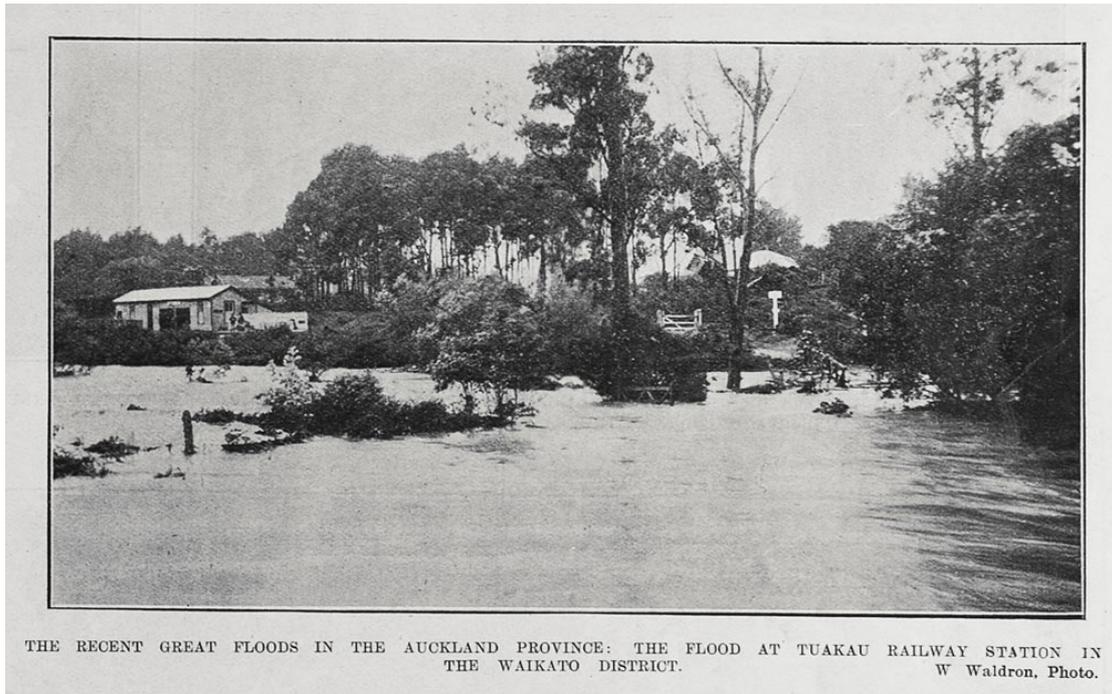


Figure 13: 'The recent great floods in the Auckland Province: The flood at Tuakau railway station in the Waikato district' *Auckland Weekly News* 7 February 1907. AWNS-19070207-13-3, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

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>28</sup> The bridge across the Waikato River survived the flood but a span collapsed in August 1929. The current bow-string arch structure was opened on 22 June 1933, although there was no official ceremony to mark the event.

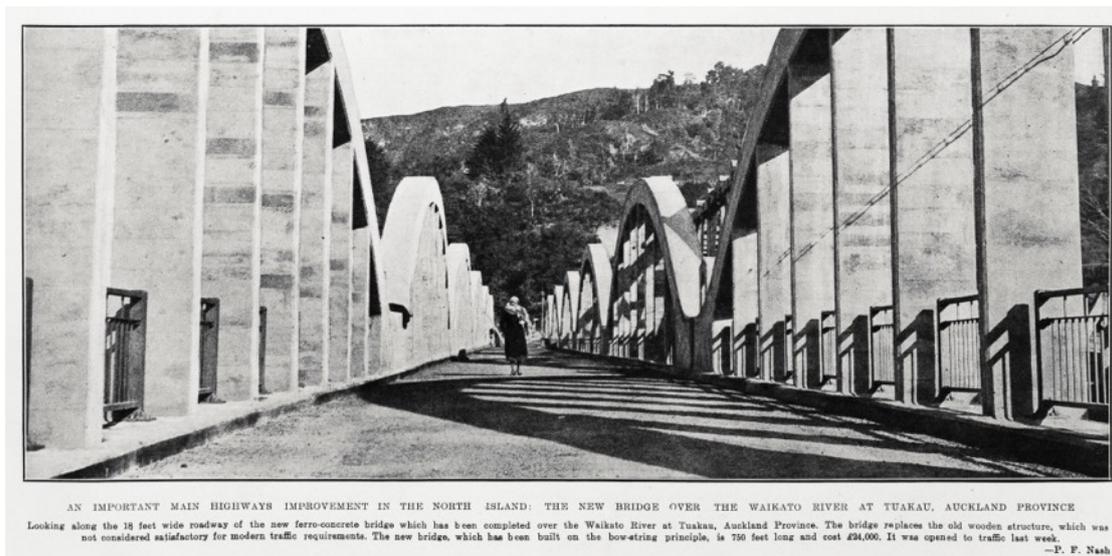


Figure 14: 'An important main highways improvement in the North Island: the new bridge over the Waikato River at Tuakau, Auckland Province' *Auckland Weekly News* 28 June 1933. AWNS-19330628-41-3, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

<sup>28</sup> Lapwood, p. 7.

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>29</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>30</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>31</sup> In 1910 a new railway station was erected and three years later a new post office was built in Liverpool Street. 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>32</sup>

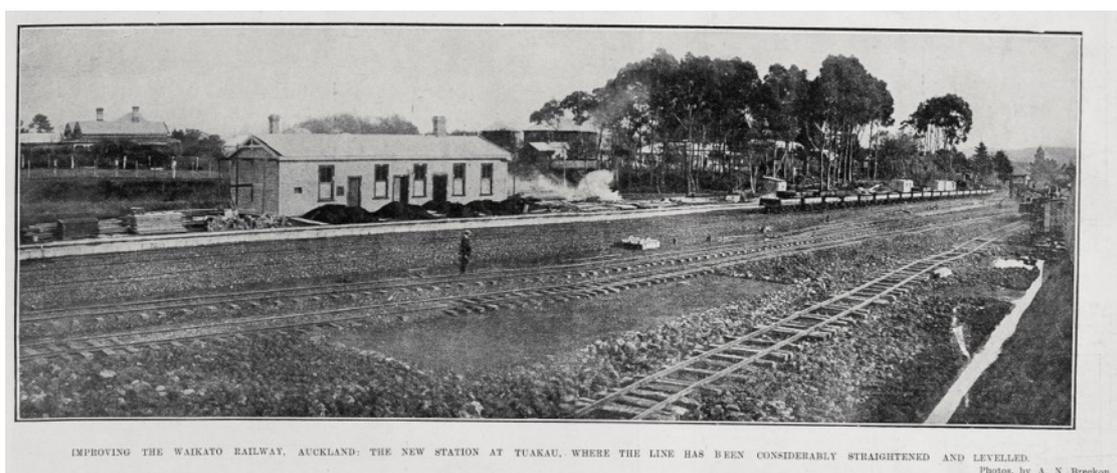


Figure 15: 'Improving the Waikato Railway, Auckland: The new station at Tuakau, where the line has been considerably straightened and levelled' *Auckland Weekly News* 10 August 1911. AWNS-19110810-15-2, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

In terms of civic infrastructure, Tuakau's Memorial Town Hall was built in 1924, after which time the hall George Revell built up Harrisville Road in 1892. The town's Methodist church (demolished) was also built on Revell's land. St Andrew's Catholic Church was erected on land gifted by local farmer Charles Dromgool in 1912-13. An earlier Catholic church had stood at Alexandra Redoubt (1869). In 1879-80 the town's Presbyterians built St Stephen's Church in Church Street, from where it was removed to Madill Road in c.1914. After the merger of the local Presbyterian and Methodist congregations in 1973, St Stephen's became a Union Parish church.

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>33</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).

<sup>29</sup> Lapwood, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Franklin County Council Administrative History, Archives New Zealand, 2008, available at [www.archway.archives.govt.nz](http://www.archway.archives.govt.nz)

<sup>33</sup> See 'On top of the world: Ed Hillary' and subsequent pages <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/culture/edmund-hillary>



PRODUCING THE FINEST-GRADE HONEY: AUCKLAND BEEKEEPERS HOLD THEIR ANNUAL FIELD DAY AT TUAKAU LAST WEEK.  
 Left: Mr. G. V. Westbrooke showing a frame of bees from one of the hives at Mr. P. A. Hillary's up-to-date apiary. Right: A general view of the gathering last Saturday afternoon. One of the features of the day was the wide interest taken by lady apiarists. —Staff Photographer.

Figure 16: '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 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 classroom and accommodation building, 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 was a private Marist Brothers' Cemetery, in which student James Cotter, aged 15, was the first interment on 15 May 1931.<sup>34</sup> The remains in the cemetery were disinterred in 1998 and reburied in the Marist plot at Waikaraka Cemetery in Auckland. Since 2011 the property has been developed as a privately-owned educational and events centre.

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>35</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>36</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>37</sup>

<sup>34</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>35</sup> K & N Morris *Franklin Remembers The War Years 1939-1945*, pp. viii & 63.

<sup>36</sup> *Spotlight on Life and Business: Franklin District 2002*, p. 76.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*



MARIST BROTHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE, OPENED AT TUAKAU, AUCKLAND.

View of the new building on March 14, when the opening ceremony was performed by Bishop Cleary in the presence of five hundred people.

—Staff Photographer.

Figure 17: '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.



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

Figure 18: '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>38</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>39</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 an important place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century history of New Zealand.



Figure 19: 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>40</sup> The Harris family was settled in the area 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>41</sup> At one point he defeated William Massey, the future Premier, as the Liberal candidate for the Franklin electorate (1893).<sup>42</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>43</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. At that time the headmaster was Alfred Hill, who was appointed to the role in 1895, after arriving in New Zealand from England in 1878. While the 1883-4 teacher's residence is still extant, the original school building was demolished in 1964.

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

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

<sup>40</sup> *Daily Southern Cross* 25 February 1873, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Nona Morris *Early Days in Franklin* Pukekohe, 1965, p. 73.

<sup>42</sup> Barry Gustafson. 'Massey, William Ferguson' <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/2m39/massey-william-ferguson>

<sup>43</sup> *Cyclopedia of New Zealand: Auckland Provincial District* Auckland, 1902; available at [www.nzetc.victoria.ac.nz](http://www.nzetc.victoria.ac.nz)



Figure 20: 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.]

## 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>44</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>45</sup> According to the *Cyclopedia* the local school (est. 1887) was the site of the Whangarata Post Office. In c.1902 the latter was run by Miss Jane Reston. The school burnt down in 1925, destroying the Whangarata Public Library, which was housed at the school. Classes were held in the nearby teacher's residence until a new school building opened in the following year. The school closed in 1968, after which it was used as a camp and community hall.



Figure 21: 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 brothers George and William Ewing, whose farm was known as 'Glencairn', John Hartley, Helier Bree and James Pirrit. The Pirrit family is also associated

<sup>44</sup> E Bradbury [ed] *The Settlement and Development of the Waikato, New Zealand* Auckland, 1917, p. 60.

<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)

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.

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>46</sup>



Figure 22: Whangarata World War I Memorial. <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz>

## West of Tuakau

The land to the west of Tuakau was confiscated after the war, but certain parts of it were returned to Ngati Te Ata in 1865.<sup>47</sup> The area has several sites of significance to the 1860s land wars, including military sites. Imperial and militia troops were stationed at Cameron (aka Camerontown), Bluff Stockade, Alexandra Redoubt, Koheroa Redoubt, Pokeno Redoubt, and on the eastern side of the district, at Esk, Surrey, and Miranda Redoubts.

'Waiuku West', described as the land between Dalziel's Claim and Waikato Heads, was surveyed in December 1864.<sup>48</sup> Also in 1864, parts of Maioro, Karioitahi and Taurangaruru were subdivided, largely into 10-acre lots for new immigrants as part of the Waikato Immigration Scheme.<sup>49</sup> Some parcels were 20 acres with a few much larger. Some 4000 settlers arrived under this scheme.<sup>50</sup>

Camerontown [Cameron Town] was formerly known as Tira Aroa pa. It was set aside as a township reserve by c. 1859<sup>51</sup> and the Mauku tramway was surveyed to the town, the intention being that it would serve as a port and freight could be taken by tramway to the Manukau Harbour.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/whangarata-first-world-war-memorial>

<sup>47</sup> <http://myold.lawsociety.org.nz/in-practice/the-changing-law/case-commentary/new-zealand-steel-mining-limited-v-the-honourable-dj-butcher/New-Zealand-Steel-Mining-Ltd-v-Butcher-2014-NZHC-1552.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> SO 466.

<sup>49</sup> SO 618, 621, 623, 627.

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/history-of-immigration/page-6>

<sup>51</sup> SO 638 sheet 1.

<sup>52</sup> Morris *Early Days in Franklin* p. 96.

Camerontown was surveyed by early 1863 into ½-acre and ¼-acre parcels with the intention of close settlement. The government put up 34 lots for sale on 1 June 1863 but only ten sold.<sup>53</sup>

The tramway tracks had not been laid prior to a raid on the government stores by a party of Ngati Maniapoto on 7 September 1863.<sup>54</sup> At that time it was occupied by Ngati Whauroa, who until then had been allied to the government. Four Europeans were killed in the engagement, one being James Armitage, the Resident Magistrate. A memorial obelisk erected at Alexandra Redoubt in 1915 commemorates members of the armed forces who died during the war in the Tuakau district.<sup>55</sup> The town never eventuated, but the redoubt is now an historic reserve.

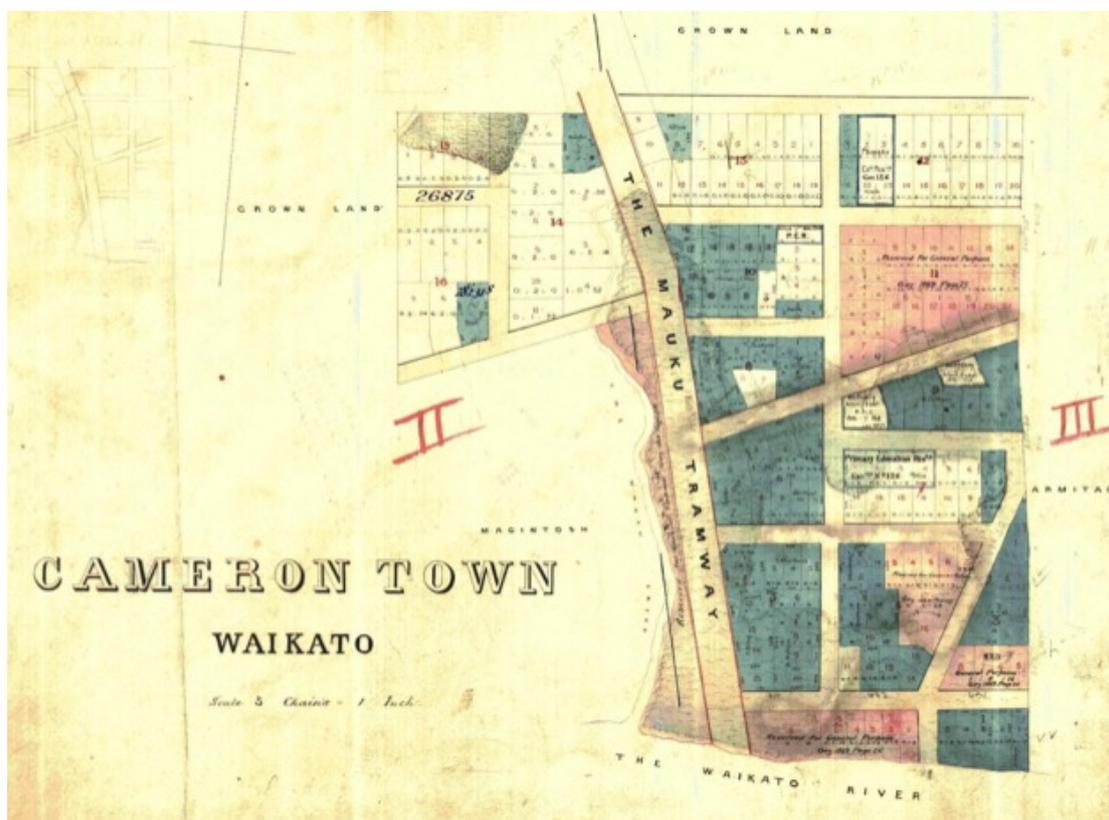


Figure 23: 'Cameron Town', SO 1305 C2 n.d.

### The Awaroa portage and canal

This area is influenced to a large degree by the settlement of Waiuku, which began as a colonial town in 1851.<sup>56</sup> Settlers from neighbouring farming districts would have relied on traders and retailers at Waiuku for supplies and for selling produce. The portage from the Waikato River along the Awaroa River through to Waiuku Creek and thence across the Manukau Harbour to Onehunga and Auckland was a main thoroughfare.

The Awaroa River was a traditional canoe portage for parties travelling north or south and in the 1840s to early 1860s for Waikato Maori taking their produce through to the Auckland markets. Before the Great South Road was suitable for heavy wheeled traffic, freight from Hamilton and Cambridge was taken down the Waikato River and either around to Manukau Harbour by sea or via the traditional route through Waiuku. The idea of a canal being cut to improve the Awaroa was mooted

<sup>53</sup> Sale Advertisement, *New Zealander* 29 May 1863, p. 2; *New Zealander* 2 June 1863, p. 3.

<sup>54</sup> Henry ERL Wily *South Auckland*, p. 171.

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/alexandra-redoubt-nz-wars-memorial>

<sup>56</sup> Norris *Early Days in Franklin* p. 55.

as early as 1853.<sup>57</sup> One route involved cutting a canal from the Waikato River, up the Awaroa Creek through to the Waiuku arm of the Manukau Harbour.

A hotel was built at Purapura, the northernmost extent of the navigable stream; called the Rising Sun, the two-storied building was later removed to Waiuku.<sup>58</sup> In 1857 a large store and three-roomed dwelling with an extensive frontage to the principal landing place was advertised for sale or lease.<sup>59</sup> Further hopes for the development of Purapura as a village were seen in the survey that laid out residential-sized parcels, with sections advertised for sale in 1859.



Figure 24: 'Village of Purapura', half way between Waiuku and Otatau, showing names of owners on some of the small sections. Misa Road south of Storey Road is called Clay Street on this undated plan. SO 991 C.

<sup>57</sup> *Daily Southern Cross* 17 June 1853, p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> Wily p. 139.

<sup>59</sup> *Daily Southern Cross* 5 June 1857, p. 1.



Figure 25: Excursionists on the Waikato River, ca 1910. Lapwood's launch is seen moored at Hood's Landing, near Otatau. Footprints 04673, South Auckland Research Centre, Auckland Libraries.

## Whiriwhiri

Whiriwhiri was laid out in 5-acre parcels as a settlement close to the Middle Landing Place on the Awaroa River.<sup>60</sup> On 2 February 1865 63 families were in possession of their land at Whiriwhiri; by 1873 the settlement had a school with 39 pupils.<sup>61</sup> Whatever the hopes for the settlement, the *Herald* reported that the school would be closed at the end of 1875.<sup>62</sup>

On 15 March 1952 the first of many annual horse races was held by the Waiuku Picnic Racing Club at a racecourse formed on Jack Muir's property. The course circled around Lake Otamatearua, towards the southern end of Whiriwhiri Road. A 1975 photograph of the course shows the stock yards on the roadside being used to pen horses. After a few years buildings replaced the racecourse tents but by the late 1970s the race meetings were intermittent and they had ceased by 1991.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> SO 466 sheet 6, SO 463 sheets 1 and 2.

<sup>61</sup> Norris *Early Days in Franklin* pp. 151, 185.

<sup>62</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 24 December 1875, p. 1.

<sup>63</sup> See Footprints, Auckland Libraries available at <http://manukau.infospecs.co.nz/footprints/home.htm>



Figure 26: Race day, Whiriwhiri, 15 March 1952. Footprints 04601, South Auckland Research Centre, Auckland Libraries.

## Otaua

In 1873 Gibbs & Co. established a sawmill at Otaua, utilising the 'inexhaustible supply' of kahikatea, rimu, rata and pukatea.<sup>64</sup> The mill stood on the bank of the Otaua Creek about two kilometres up from the Waikato River and was accessible for steamers. A tramway was built to move the logs to the mill.

A hall in the settlement was built in 1898 and an inter-denominational church followed in December 1910. It was shared by the local Presbyterian, Anglican and Methodist congregations.<sup>65</sup> By 1911 Otaua also had a creamery and post office store.

---

<sup>64</sup> *Waikato Times* 27 November 1873, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> E Whittaker *History of the Otaua Combined Church 1910-2010* Waiuku, 2010.



Figure 27: Unfurling the flag at Otaua School. 13 September 1900. Footprints 06448, South Auckland Research Centre, Auckland Libraries.



Figure 28: Creamery, Otaua, c. 1908. Footprints 04730, South Auckland Research Centre, Auckland Libraries.



Figure 29: Undenominational Church, Otatau, 1910. Footprints 04625, South Auckland Research Centre, Auckland Libraries.

A roll of honour for Otatau residents who had fought in the Second World War was unveiled in September 1946, but a more substantial war memorial was opened on 20 November 1954 – the Otatau District War Memorial Bowling Green, situated across the road from the hall.



Figure 30: Otatau War Memorial Bowling Green. <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/otatau-war-memorial-bowling-green>

## Maioro

Maioro was once a wasteland of drifting sand dunes; it was also the site of many Ngati Te Ata burial grounds (urupa). In 1932 the government acquired the Te Papawhero block of 509 acres and began reclamation and stabilisation of the dunes, setting up a Public Works camp and planting marram grass and then pine trees.



Figure 31: Road-making equipment at the Waikato Heads sand-dune reclamation area, Maioro, ca 1948. The workmen's camp and cottages can be seen in the background. Footprints 04822, South Auckland Research Centre, Auckland Libraries.

In 1952 the former reclamation area became the Waiuku State Forest. In 1959 four blocks were taken under the Public Works Act 1928 for forestry purposes. A plant nursery established at the reclamation area produced about 250,000 seedlings each year. The Waiuku State Forest (also known as Maioro Forest) of 3725 acres originally formed part of the Waiuku Block. In 2003 Crown Forestry applied to harvest Waiuku Forest, but in 2005, after opposition by Ngati Te Ata, the Environment Court refused the application.



Figure 32: Forest nursery at the Waikato Heads sand-dune reclamation area, Maioro, ca 1940. Brushwood shelters were used to protect the seedlings until hedges were established. Footprints 04817, South Auckland Research Centre, Auckland Libraries.

While the predominant economic activity in this area today is farming, mining to recover iron sands is also undertaken. New Zealand Steel has held a licence to take iron sands since 1966; a site for an iron sand concentration plant began operation in 1969. After human remains were disturbed by digging operations in 1990, a mediation process began between the Crown, NZ Steel and Ngati Te Ata.

### **Karioitahi [Kariaotahi]**

This farming district, situated in the north-west corner of Waikato District, is known for its surf beach and cliffs suitable for para-gliding. Some 54 settlers in the Waikato Immigration Scheme arrived at Karioitahi on 9 March 1865.<sup>66</sup> A school opened in 1879, was rebuilt on a new site in 1931, and closed in 1968. The 1931 school building is now used as a community hall.<sup>67</sup> A war memorial Roll of Honour, originally unveiled at the school in 1920, remains on display.

### **Aka Aka**

The Aka Aka Drainage Board, formed in 1895, was charged with draining the 10,000-acre Aka Aka swamp.<sup>68</sup> By 1917 Aka Aka was 'a splendid dairying and fattening country' with rich alluvial flats on what was formerly a swamp with dense kahikatea forest. Aka Aka School, established in July 1906, celebrated the opening of its purpose-built building on 3 June 1907, situated near the creamery which had opened in 1901.<sup>69</sup> By 1912 the school roll had increased from 20 to 55, an indication of the

<sup>66</sup> Norris, p. 152.

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/karioitahi-school-roll-honour>

<sup>68</sup> *Cyclopedia of NZ - Auckland Provincial District* p.677.

<sup>69</sup> *Pukekohe & Waiuku Times* 7 August 1912, p. 3; *Auckland Star* 22 January 1901, p.4.

rapidity with which the district was growing. A hall opened by August 1912 and its modern replacement now stands beside the Aka Aka School.<sup>70</sup>



Figure 33: Creamery, Aka Aka, c. 1908. Footprints 04666, South Auckland Research Centre, Auckland Libraries.



Figure 34: Useful drainage work being carried out at Aka Aka by relief workers from Wellington. *Auckland Weekly News* 6 April 1932 p. 36. AWNS-19320406-36-3, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

<sup>70</sup> *Pukekohe & Waiuku Times* 14 August 1912, p. 3.



Figure 35: Road block at Aka Aka erected by the Home Guard near Wright's Bridge, c. 1942. Brushwood screens were intended to disguise the road block from the approaching enemy. Footprints 04334, South Auckland Research Centre, Auckland Libraries.

## Port Waikato

Port Waikato (Putakaka) was one of the first localities in the Waikato to have a permanent European resident. Charles Marshall established a trading post here in 1830, followed soon after by a CMS mission station run by Robert Maunsell. During the Waikato War it was a base for imperial and militia troops on route up the Waikato River to the seat of the war. The land was part of the Te Akau Block surveyed after the war – this reached from Port Waikato to Raglan Harbour and for the most part was returned to iwi and remained in Maori ownership for many years. Parcels have been leased out, sold and subdivided as economical farm units. The population is small and dispersed, with some concentrations of housing at marae, near the Tuakau Bridge, Te Kohanga, Onewhero and Pukekawa.

Access to Port Waikato today is by sea into the river mouth, or across the river by boat to landings on the north side. Alternatively, two roads serve the area: Tuakau Bridge Road runs roughly parallel to the south bank of the river and Waikaretu Road winds through the rugged hills to the south. The bridge road to Port Waikato was not opened until the 1920s.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century Port Waikato was one of the western havens for coastal shipping, despite its treacherous bar. The Waikato River allowed easy access into the Waikato hinterland for trade. Charles Marshall established a trading post there in 1830. He brought with him a personal servant, Logan, and a young Australian aborigine named Billy Boy.<sup>71</sup> In 1832 his house was burnt down by a Ngapuhi raiding party and Logan and Billy Boy were captured. Marshall returned and built another house, on a hill overlooking the river mouth; its chimney was still standing in 1965.<sup>72</sup> Apart from a few years when he lived at Paparaumu, Marshall remained at Port Waikato until his death on 28 August 1892.<sup>73</sup>

In June 1839 Robert and Susan Maunsell of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) established a mission station at Maraetai, Port Waikato. Benjamin and Harriet Ashwell supported them there until a

---

<sup>71</sup> Vennell & Williams, p. 27.

<sup>72</sup> Morris, pp. 23-4.

<sup>73</sup> Morris, p. 23. The location of Paparaumu is uncertain, possibly Churchill.

new station was opened near Taupiri. Maunsell was instrumental in obtaining 32 signatures for the Treaty of Waitangi at Maraetai.<sup>74</sup> The Maunsells established a school at the mission in 1847, which at its height had over 100 pupils. Several assistants helped with the teaching, including Beatrice Panton. After Susan Maunsell's death in October 1851, Maunsell remarried; Beatrice Maunsell continued to run the school for 13 years. A small cemetery at the corner of Stack and Maunsell Roads contains the graves of Susan Maunsell and "others".

In 1851 Marshall laid claim through the Land Court to 4280 acres bought directly from local Maori.<sup>75</sup> He owned land in the Churchill area as well. In 1868 he was granted 1025 acres of land (now near Smeed's Quarry Rd) to compensate for the government's appropriation of his land at Port Waikato.<sup>76</sup> Port Waikato can claim to have one of the earliest post offices in the region, established in 1864 under Robert O Stewart. It closed in 1870 but re-opened in 1874, with Charles Marshall appointed postmaster.<sup>77</sup>



Figure 36: Old Land Claim plan 49, drawn 1858 for the Church Missionary Society's claim to 168 acres, shows a dwelling house and paddocks in the narrow area to the right between the river and the Oraeroa Stream.

Ngati Tipa chief Waka Kukutai donated 756 acres for a mission station and school at Kohanga, and in the early 1850s the Maunsells ran two establishments while new buildings were erected.<sup>78</sup> The Kohanga site included Kaitangata and Hihutoroa pa.<sup>79</sup> The mission land is now bordered on the east by Kohanga Store Road. A track led from Kohanga to the other mission station across the river from Taupiri. The Maunsells remained at Kohanga until October 1863; they returned in October 1864 but Beatrice died soon after.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1m28/maunsell-robert>

<sup>75</sup> *New Zealander* 22 January 1851, p. 2.

<sup>76</sup> SO 247

<sup>77</sup> Vennell & Williams, p. 242. Drummond, p. 32.

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1m28/maunsell-robert>

<sup>79</sup> DP 18003.

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1m28/maunsell-robert>



Figure 37: 'Kohanga' by John Kinder, 1858. Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki 1937/15/47.

Port Waikato was also a base for ship building and repairs during the Waikato War and afterwards. The paddle steamer *Rangiriri* was assembled there, the sections having been brought from Onehunga. On 2 March 1864 there were 'three steamers, two brigantines, two schooners and a cutter' in port, discharging their cargo which included about 100 tons of coal.<sup>81</sup> Two large commodious stores and dwelling houses were being built, while Simpson's store had been open for some time.



Figure 38: SO 362 'Plan of a portion of the Town of Port Waikato', October 1864.

<sup>81</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 4 March 1864 p. 4.

A survey map drawn in 1864 shows the extent of habitation at that time, plus subdivisions for proposed occupation (SO 362). Shown are the courthouse and lock-up, hospital, officers' mess, commissariat store, additional store, barracks, and several other unnamed buildings. Some land parcels are shown with no occupant/owner's name, others are marked H Fenton, FD Fenton, William Baird, Williams, Cruickshank, Thomas Russell, WT Buckland, several C Marshall, Robinson, Alice M Taylor, AT Tunui, W Spargo, GR Breton, Young. At the right is Kerei Te Putu's 3245 acres. At mid-lower is 'land granted to Church Missionary Society'. The mission station buildings and garden are shown on the Maraetai Creek at lower left, just above high water mark. A wharf projects into the river with a large building marked Commissariat Store beside it.

When S Percy Smith visited during his survey in October 1864, he described activities at the wharf:

There were the steamer 'Koheroa' undergoing repairs, the 'Avon' being dismantled, having done her work on the Waipa nobly, and the 'White Slave,' a new steamer, being built, besides the building of barges and boats. There are several large and good stores for commissariat purposes, both Imperial and colonial, barracks, and officers' quarters on a hill overlooking the dockyard; a few men of the 14th Regiment are in garrison.

A resident magistrate was based at Port Waikato's courthouse. RO Stewart was appointed postmaster in March 1864.<sup>82</sup> Maori continued to live in the Port Waikato area after the confiscations.



Figure 39: Putakaka, Port Waikato, 1864, showing the steamers 'Koheroa', Avon and 'White Slave'. After a sketch by S Percy Smith, 10 October 1864. In James Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars*, 1955, p. 312. <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/Cow01NewZ-fig-Cow01NewZ312a.html>

---

<sup>82</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 26 March 1864, p. 4.



Figure 40: The barracks in 1983. It was hoped the building could be shifted, but it burnt down soon after this photograph was taken. Footprints 00495, South Auckland Research Centre, Auckland Libraries.



Figure 41: Plan of Waimate near Waikato Heads, property of W. Kukutai, Ngatitipa. Shown are several houses, with people's names. ML 218, 1866.

When a *NZ Herald* columnist visited in October 1888 he was greeted by two Pakeha: Marshall and Parker, the latter being the owner of a poultry farm who had lived there for 27 years. The only other Pakeha living there were Mr and Mrs Herdson who lived in the old mission house, kept a store and a poultry farm. The Herdsons reportedly shipped 80 dozen eggs per week to Auckland.<sup>83</sup>



Figure 42: Scene by the waterfront at Port Waikato. 1/2-000923-G, WA Price Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Caesar Roose (1886-1967) operated one of the main shipping services on the Waikato River, running regular services for freight and passengers between Port Waikato and Cambridge from 1915. He established the Roose Shipping Co. in 1922.<sup>84</sup> Roose utilised the wharf at Port Waikato for refurbishing and mooring his larger vessels.

<sup>83</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 13 October 1888, p. 1.

<sup>84</sup> Jeanette Thomas. 'Roose, Caesar' <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/4r27/roose-caesar>



Figure 43: The LST 283, brought from Hawai'i and renamed *Rawhiti III* in March 1948 by Caesar Roose, moored at Port Waikato. February 1948. WA-12275-G, Whites Aviation Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.



Figure 44: On the wharf, Port Waikato, 1949, with Heather and Ada Hawke at left. Photographer Mary Lowe. Footprints 03803, South Auckland Research Centre, Auckland Libraries.

In 1928 a children's health camp was established in the sheltered valley accessed by the Port Waikato-Waikaretu Road, thanks to the efforts of Hamiltonians Hilda Ross and William Paul and the donation of 51 acres by Edward Spargo of Port Waikato.<sup>85</sup> The first of the summer health camps for underprivileged children was held for ten days in late December 1928-early January 1929: 187 children from Hamilton were transported by river on the *Manuwai*. Accommodation was initially in the form of tents, but a dining hall and kitchen, storehouse and dormitories were soon built.<sup>86</sup>

After the purchase of a further 65 acres across the road in 1933, with the intention of farming the land for income, a cottage was built to provide for the farm manager.<sup>87</sup> A swimming pool was built by 1937 and by 1940 the camp covered 120 acres. In 1940 the dormitories were lined, porches and

<sup>85</sup> Vennell & Williams p. 295.

<sup>86</sup> Ross Galbreath *Happiness, Health, & Outdoor Education* 2003 pp. 5, 11.

<sup>87</sup> Galbreath, p. 12.

verandas added and septic tanks installed for the new toilet and laundry blocks.<sup>88</sup> In late 1956 the first of the school-based camps began. From 1 January 1963 the camp was leased to the Education Department.<sup>89</sup> The school camp's emphasis then became physical education and nature study as well as camping skills. The Port Waikato Camp School Trust took over responsibility in 1989; repairs were undertaken by volunteer working bees until funding was available through grants and donations that allowed bigger refurbishment projects during the 1990s and 2000s.

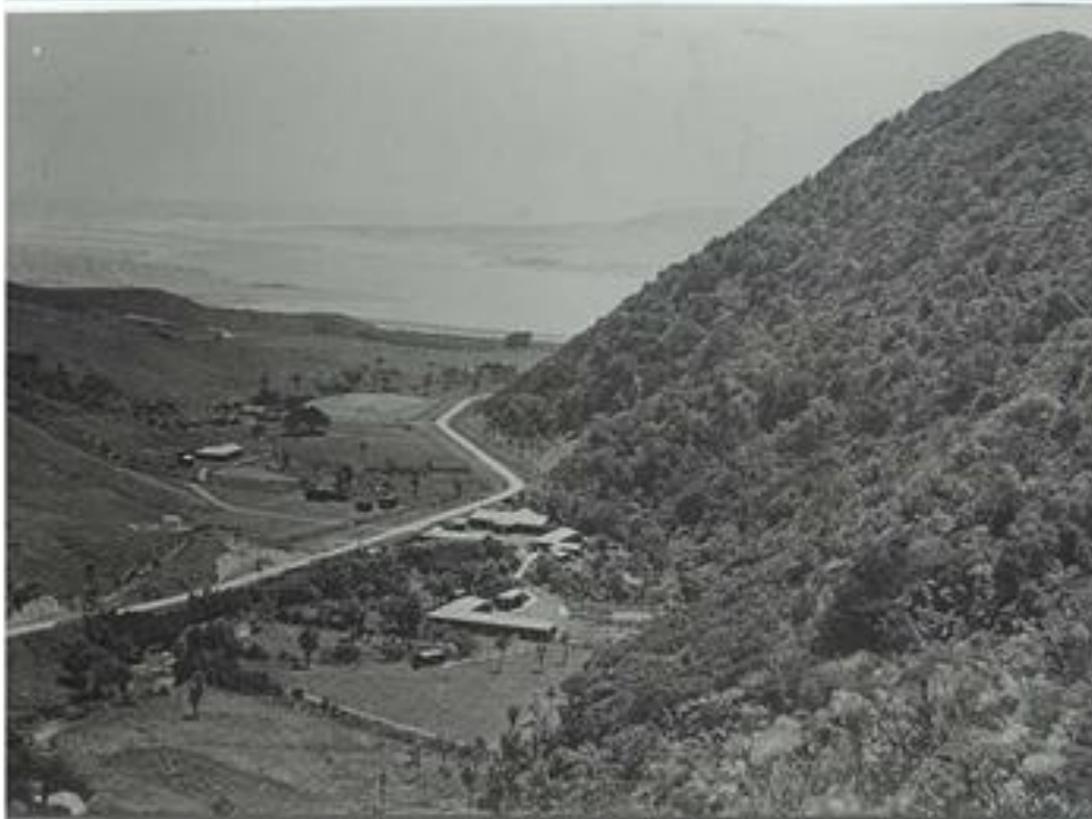


Figure 45: Waikato Children's Camp, Port Waikato c.1938. Image # 12,159, Hamilton City Libraries.

In Port Waikato a narrow strip either side of the road to the ocean beach was subdivided in 1951 into 85 sections of varying size, suitable for residential purposes (DPS1186). The area behind the ocean beach was incrementally surveyed, in 1955 by Venning (DPS 3625); in 1961 and 1972 by Muir Bros (DPS 8872, DPS 17714), and in 1978 by Phillips (DPS 26669). By 1958 there was a cluster of buildings around the wharf and another closer to the ocean beach as more baches and permanent homes were built. Port Waikato is now a small settlement of under 300 people and a holiday park provides temporary accommodation. The area is known for its fishing, whitebaiting and the ocean beach for swimming and surfing. The islands in the river near Port Waikato have been occupied for decades, primarily by whitebaiters in the season. A whitebait factory operated at Kaitangata pa on the bank of the Waikato River in the mid-1920s.<sup>90</sup>

South of Port Waikato, Limestone Downs was one of the largest sheep and beef properties in the Waikato at 3200 ha; it was bought in 1926 from its Maori owners by Charles Alma Baker. The station runs research programmes with Massey University and underwent a dairy conversion in 2014.<sup>91</sup>

Limestone outcrops in the hills about eight kilometres to the south of Port Waikato were the setting for Weatherstop Hollow in the *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy.<sup>92</sup> Nikau Cave at Waikaretu, south of Port Waikato, with its kilometre-long limestone cave, has become a tourist attraction.<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p. 23.

<sup>90</sup> Pa site and whitebait factory buildings shown on DP 18003 drawn 1924.

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.ruraldelivery.net.nz/2014/06/a-legacy-of-sheep-beef-production-and-training-at-limestone-downs/>



Figure 46: Cottages on Numueiairo Island opposite Tuakau Landing. NZ Herald, reproduced from Sangster p. 40.

## Te Kohanga

Te Kohanga School opened in 1913.<sup>94</sup> During WWII the Home Guard established an observation post on top of the neighbouring hill Te Korangi; this consisted of a large hollow with camouflage netting and tea tree and was connected by a field telephone line to the headmaster's house.<sup>95</sup> Also at Te Kohanga was a general store, hall and a post office. Movies were shown at the hall, which stands across the road from the school on Tuakau Bridge Road.

## Onewhero and Pukekawa

Trader George Weller established himself at Onewhero in c. 1831, but in 1832 he was captured by a Ngapuhi taua and taken north.<sup>96</sup> The land was later confiscated, although large tracts were subsequently returned to Maori, including 4000 acres granted to Kingitanga followers in 1880.<sup>97</sup> Land around the Maori settlements at Onewhero and Pukekawa became available through lease or purchase and European-style farms were established. There was a steam sawmill cutting timber for housing.<sup>98</sup> By 1883 a punt operated between Onewhero and the Tuakau landing, its inauguration coinciding with the first ballot of twenty-six 100-acre farms at Onewhero.<sup>99</sup> A special settlement was established at Onewhero and settlers there were soon growing grass seed and running cattle.

A flax mill was established near Onewhero in 1890, providing work for local people.<sup>100</sup> Two years later a site for a school at Onewhero had been chosen and a road formed.<sup>101</sup> The first stage of the Onewhero School building was ready for use in March 1893. A schoolroom was opened at Pukekawa in June 1895 and the community's first hall opened in 1907.<sup>102</sup> Onewhero replaced its two halls, one situated at Te Hirua close to a store and dairy factory, with a new building in 1932.<sup>103</sup> Today the Onewhero School & Community Hall, which opened in 1989, is located beside Onewhero School, not far from the Onewhero Society of Performing Arts (est. 1949), which opened a new theatre in Hall Road in 2008.

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/waikato-places/page-2>

<sup>93</sup> <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/27271/nikau-cave>

<sup>94</sup> SO 22596.

<sup>95</sup> Sangster p. 102-3.

<sup>96</sup> Vennell & Williams, pp. 27-28.

<sup>97</sup> *Otago Daily Times* 28 February 1880, p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 19 August 1891, p. 6.

<sup>99</sup> Vennell & Williams, p. 130.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*, p. 225.

<sup>101</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 21 December 1892, p. 6.

<sup>102</sup> *Observer* 29 June 1895, p. 21.

<sup>103</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 1 November 1932, p. 11.

The opening of the first Tuakau Bridge (1903) enabled much easier access for residents on the south and west sides of the Waikato River. The Lapwood Bros. and EC Frost were farming there by 1903. Dairy farms predominated and creameries were opened at Onewhero and Pukekawa by local co-operatives in the early 1900s.<sup>104</sup> A post office opened at Onewhero in 1900 [replaced 1923] and a postal depot was being operated in 1905 out of the Slater homestead at Pukekawa.<sup>105</sup> In the same decade St Stephen's Anglican Church was built in Onewhero (1903-4) on land gifted by early settler and local farmer James Miller. Pukekawa's Undenominational Church benefitted from the generosity of the Orr family, who built the church in 1917 and then gifted the property to the Auckland Presbytery in 1925.

A notable local farmhouse built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is popularly known as Cameron's Castle. 'Clunes' was built in 1915-16 for Scottish-born sheep farmer Duncan Cameron at Onewhero, to the design of Pukekohe architect FW Mountjoy. The house was built with 8-inch concrete walls throughout and was wired for electricity with its own plant.<sup>106</sup>

In the same decade (1918), William Smeed opened a basalt quarry on the side of river, at the end of what became Smeed's Quarry Road. The Pukekawa Quarry (Basalt) & Sand Plant operated for many years. Winstone Aggregates purchased the site in 1971.<sup>107</sup> In 2013 the quarry also began producing sand from the Waikato River on whose banks the site lies. Pukekawa is also known as the scene of the murders of farmers Harvey and Jeanette Crewe in 1970. Arthur Thomas was convicted of the crime but pardoned after nine years in jail.<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> Vennell & Williams, p. 200.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, p. 242.

<sup>106</sup> *Auckland Star* 1 March 1916, p. 12.

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.winstoneaggregates.co.nz/sites-locations/pukekawa/>

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/waikato-places/page-2>