

“Our Marae”

The question as to where is “our marae” is not easily answered. Dad never mentioned or talked about going back to any particular marae but he did talk about coming from Whangaehu, Turakina and Wanganui.

Lindsay also notes that when Dad was growing up, in the early 20th century, for Maori it was a time when the old way of life was disintegrating and many villages and marae were abandoned (the rise of the Ratana religion—see separate article—was both a spiritual and political response to these changes). It is only in recent years that the marae mentioned below have been developed at the same time as the resurgence of the language and renaissance in Maori culture.

The following information, therefore, is more about marae with which our Taiaroa whanau has some association.

To begin with, we need to go back to Dad’s grandfather (Hoani I or Hoani Tokorangi Te Onewa Taiaroa) who we know was born in 1837 at the **Otukou Marae** which is situated beside Lake Rotoaira. The hapu is Ngati Hikairo, the iwi is Tuwharetoa, the wharenuī is Okahukura. It should be pointed out that while it is unlikely that Dad ever visited here, in this area there are a number of pieces of land (and Lake Rotoaira itself) in which Dad was deemed to be a beneficial owner

Contact: This marae does not have a website but you will find it pictured at “Te Whare Aronui o Tuwharetoa” which is a private training organization which uses the marae. If you wished to visit this marae it would probably be best to talk to Rakeipoho Taiaroa (Archie’s son) who works at the Tuwharetoa Trust Board in Turangi—07 386 8832)

It may be interesting to know that: “In 1838 Bidwill estimated the population around Lake Taupo and Rotoaira to be not less than 5,000 while five years later Dieffenbach commented that around Lake Taupo were numerous small villages and that he considered the total number of inhabitants to be not more than 3,200...by 1850’s many villages had been abandoned and “the largest settlements were those grouped around the southern end of Lake Taupo... Pukawa, Te Rapa and Tokaanu had populations of several hundred...as the people moved closer to the centres of European contact.” (see Ward, p43)

It is believed at around about this time, the 1850's, Hoani came to Papatupu near **Pipiriki** with Taurerewa-Tuwharetoa where they established a subsistence farm. During the Land Wars he was in the Volunteer Native Contingent attached to the British Army Regiment stationed in the Whanganui area. He was involved in the strike on Otapawa Pa in South Taranaki which was occupied by over 200 Hauhaus in January, 1866. He received service medals and 100 acres of land from the government for his services. He then returned to Papatupu to continue farming for a while before he sold his farm "**Waimarino**" and moved to Whangaehu where he established another farm. The main crops on the farm were oats, wheat and onions.(see Blue Book)

It was here that Hoani married Te Kiri Tinimare Nga Winika of Ngati Apa and it is through her that we have links to Wanganui. Her father was a Rennie who had migrated from Scotland to Otago and later moved north to **Turakina**.

However, Lindsay points out that he has found references to a Taiaroa in this area from 1824 so it would seem we have links to this area through both our paternal and maternal lines.

When they married Hoani and Te Kiri built their homestead on Beach Road, Whangaehu.

Whangaehu Marae is 15 kms south of Wanganui, the river is Whangaehu, the waka is Kurahaupo, the iwi is Ngati Apa and the wharepuni is Rangitahuahua.

Contact: see website: Ngatiapa.iwi.nz; Lillian Te Manawaroa Te Awe Awe (06 342 6739) or mail: 25 Hadfield Crescent, Whanganui

(see detail Morvin Simon, p82)

Hoani built a small whanau Roman Catholic church near his homestead which was called "Rakautaua". According to the Blue Book Hoani baptized all his ten children (including, presumably, Te Waati Taiaroa, Dad's father) in this church. Sadly this church burnt down in the same year Hoani died(1913). He was buried in the Taiaroa Urupa, a private

burial place close to the church on Beach Road. Te Kiri, his wife who died five years later is also buried there as are his daughters Ruuma and Whakairi (Nora) and a number of other close relatives.

So it is correct to say that the Whangaehu Marae is one of "our marae" and the one that Dad was probably closest to in the early years of his life.

Paremamao, Hoani's sister, spent her life at Waihi, on the shores of Lake Taupo and although she had no children of her own she raised Hoani's daughter, Meri from her very early teens and it is through Meri that we have many connections and links to the **Turangi** area.

Whangaehu is very close to **Ratana** and while Dad had no apparent connection with the followers of this religion his brothers Mick (Mitai) and Nev (Onewa) did. Mick marrying Rawinia, the daughter of the T.W. Ratana and both of them ending up running the only two stores in the Ratana village.

As described by Morven Simon (p79) "Ratana is not so much a marae as a township having its own shops, post agency, temple, museum, fire station and school" as well as brass band!

Mick's son, Harerangi Meihana, is head, or Tumuaki, of the Ratana Church and Nakata, Nev's son still owns the only store in the village.

We have always been made welcome at Ratana as if it was "our marae"

Contact: see website: "The Ratana Church of NZ and Ratana Pa";

Nakata Taiaroa, Ratana Store: Nakata is Uncle Nev's son (b. 1927 so is probably our oldest first cousin on the Taiaroa side) knows who we are and is always delighted when we visit.

Soraya Peke & Andre Meihana: swpeke@extra.co.nz; 06 3426 838; Soraya organized the last reunion and knows who we are.

Over the last thirty years a number of our Taiaroa family have been invited to attend Taiaroa reunions at various marae—the first of these was **Raetihi Marae** in 1979 which Rosemary & I and kids, Lindsay & Janet and kids and David Taiaroa attended

Apart from the number in attendance (varied from 300 to 700) and the representatives of so many branches of the Taiaroa Whanau the highlight was the attendance of Kahukura (Te Waati's younger brother) who was born in 1887. (see Yellow Booklet).

This marae could not be described so much as "our marae" but it would be a place to visit if you were doing the Wanganui River road trip—the carpet, which was our koha, may still be in the meeting house.

Contact: Raetihi Marae, Ohakune Road; 06 385 4299

At the beginning of 2002 we had a Taiaroa Wananga at **Te Hirangi Marae** in Turangi. which Rosemary & I, Keri & Richard and kids and Tamati attended. Again all branches of the wider Taiaroa Whanau were in attendance. This marae is closely associated with the Heremaia family who are descendants of Meri (Te Waati's sister) and they have always been very welcoming and inclusive of the Te Waati Taiaroa line.

We enjoyed a similar welcome when we returned to participate in the Tuwharetoa Art Exhibition in 2007 with Karen's Ngatoroirangi Exhibition receiving an enthusiastic reception by the locals. Again this is not "our marae" but it is one where we would always be welcome.

Contact: Check with Rakeipoho Taiaroa (07 386 8832) Turangi

Or with Stuart Heremaia, who was one of the organizers of the 2002 reunion (07 386 6625)

Or with Te Whare Aronui or The Maori Shop, in the Turangi Mall; Manager: Hinemoa Wanikau, who helped organize the Art Exhibition (07 386 7097)

More recently we have made contact with the administrators of the Whanganui Lands incorporations in which Dad had an interest and to which the Whanau Trust has now succeeded.

Shareholders are invited to participate in visits to farms from time to time.

Contact: websites: www.whanganuitrust.com/morikaunui or www.atihauwhanganui.co.nz

I believe the answer to the question as to what is "our marae" may be different depending on your own particular viewpoint—Lindsay would not feel comfortable with claiming to belong to a marae unless he was working for/with them on a regular basis; others wish to live close to their marae and use them for important family occasions for hui and tangi. In our own immediate family's case, and in the eyes of the younger generation—Copperfield Farm has been the place where in recent years we have come back to for our family hui—and perhaps after 2009 it will be at Pages Road!

1. "Maori Settlement in the Taupo Country 1830–1880", R. Gerard Ward, Journal of the Polynesian Society.
2. Taku Whare E...My home my heart, by Morvin T. Simon an anthology of marae throughout the Whanganui and Rangitikei districts.
3. Article "The Ratana influence on the Taiaroa family" by RMTaiaroa (2002)
4. Summary of lands for Tamatea Te Waati Taiaroa Whanau Trust by RMTaiaroa (2008)
5. Yellow Book—1979 Taiaroa family reunion, Raetihi
6. Blue Book—2002 Taiaroa family reunion, Turangi

Compiled by Mervyn Taiaroa—2008.