

Presentation Summary – The Tuhoro Whanau Lands Report

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1. This report is not a history of the Tuhoro whanau. It is instead intended to assist the Tuhoro whanau in telling their own history, to inform that history, and to supplement the knowledge handed down to them. The most important aspects of their history – who they are, where they come from, and how they and their ancestors have lived their history – are theirs to tell. What this report does do is gather together many of the written records (those written in English, at least) relating to Tuhoro, his descendants, and their lands. Given the limited information relating to the man himself, the focus here is predominantly on the lands he bequeathed to his descendants, the fate of those lands and, where the sources allow, the reaction of those descendants to the fate of their lands, nearly all of which have been lost to them since the 1890s.
2. This is in many ways not a unique story, for a similar fate befell almost every whanau in Te Rohe Potae. This report is not asserting that the Tuhoro whanau or their history are unique, special, or more important than the history of the many other whanau (and hapu and iwi) involved in this inquiry, and it was not written in order to ascribe any such status to them. The history of every whanau is important to that whanau, but in terms of this report and this inquiry the fact that the fate of the Tuhoro whanau is not at all extraordinary is also what makes it important. The pattern of land loss, marginalisation, and outward migration that has affected them is familiar but the overview nature of the research programmes for the Tribunal inquiry process tends to obscure rather than illuminate how these broad patterns impact on specific hapu or whanau. A generic impact can be generally asserted across a district, but what that means for a particular Maori group is lost in the bigger picture. This report seeks to illustrate how Crown policies and practices affected the lands of one whanau. As for how these and other policies and practices affected the whanau itself, that history is theirs to tell.
3. To say the experience of the Tuhoro whanau is not extraordinary within the history of Te Rohe Potae is not to say that Tuhoro was an ordinary man. He was a rangatira, “a chief having large connections” as John Orsmy said in 1900, one who had an important role in introducing industry to Orahiri (Otorohanga), in the shape of flour-milling in the 1850s. He had returned there from his lands at Kawhia in the 1840s, and was instrumental in the

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allocation of valuable cropping land to various hapu around Orahiri. When commercial cropping and milling abated at Orahiri after the Waikato war, the mill was moved to his other home, Kawhia, and erected at Te Mahoe. More importantly, Tuhoro joined other leading Ngati Maniapoto rangatira in supporting the establishment of the Kingitanga at Haurua in 1856. After signing an oath of allegiance at Whaingaroa in October 1863 he took on the role of peacemaker, seeking to bring an end to the war in Waikato and, through the 1870s, working with others to encourage the Crown to engage with Kingitanga. This enduring relationship with Kingitanga was further fostered through the marriage of his daughter Poihaere to Tawhiao (although that marriage did not long endure, it did produce a child).

4. As Tuhoro's strength faded in old age, his son Meihana Tuhoro (born in 1861) emerged as his successor in the late 1880s. The scope of his activities was narrowed by circumstance, as befitted times dominated by efforts to manage the investigation, subdivision, and alienation of Te Rohe Potae lands. Tuhoro's broad influence and many connections across Te Rohe Potae are reflected in the many lands in which the rights of his whanau were recognised. These range from lands around and in Kawhia harbour across to Pokuru in the north, as far south as Taringamotu, and to the contested eastern border lands of Hurakia and Maraeroa. Finally, if not most importantly, the heart of Tuhoro's interests lay in the heart of the district; at Orahiri (Otorohanga) and Waitomo.
5. Like many among Ngati Maniapoto, Meihana Tuhoro and his whanau had to get to grips with the complex, cumbersome, and costly new processes imposed on their land and their negative outcomes. Time and money had to be devoted to appeals against basic Native Land Court errors of little more than a clerical nature, such as omitting to include the Tuhoro whanau in the ownership of lands where their rights had been acknowledged and accepted.
6. Meihana was also involved with other leading owners in allocating – or sacrificing – subdivisions of Rangitoto–Tuhua to meet the survey costs charged against a number of blocks, only to find their efforts undermined by Crown purchase agents, with the result that even more land than anticipated was lost to survey charges. This occurred with Rangitoto–Tuhua 56 (2,000 acres), which was to be given up to discharge the survey costs on the adjacent Hikurangi block (Rangitoto–Tuhua 52 of 9,031 acres) and other blocks. The owners rejected the Crown's initial offer of four shillings per acre for the 2,000 acres being given up for survey costs, but accepted a revised offer of four shillings eight pence per acre (£463 in total). Meihana and the other trustees for the 2,000 acre block were later upset to find that rather more than the anticipated £97 been deducted from the purchase price for the survey

of Hikurangi: an additional £78 was deducted for the survey of the 2,000 acres, the very land that had been cut out to pay for survey costs. These sums included a total of £12 interest charged on the survey debts. As Meihana protested to the Crown:

1. We applied to the Court to cut off that land for sale [Rangitoto–Tuhua 56], the moneys to be used to defray the cost of the survey of Rangiototo-Tuhua No. 52.
 2. The sale of that land was not open to competition so that we might obtain a proper price.
 3. The system of Government purchases of lands within the Rohe Potae was that they were to pay the survey costs of lands they acquired
7. He and the other trustees wanted the £78 refunded as they believed the Crown should pay the survey costs of the land it acquired, especially when that land was being sold to free other land from survey charges in the first place. The protest was rejected.
8. At the same time as grappling with such matters, the Tuhoro whanau also had to find a way to deal with the rapid expansion of settlement on alienated lands, and the imposition of new and ever-changing forms of outside authority over them and their lands. Meihana and his siblings strived to engage with the development of Otorohanga township, and the improvement of individualised land holdings at Waitomo which were being farmed along Pakeha lines, but found themselves undone at every turn. At Waitomo, their most economically valuable lands around the caves were wrested from them to facilitate a Crown monopoly of tourism, while their most productive farm lands were simply taken from them on the spurious and pretext of scenery preservation. The manager of the Waitomo Caves House urged the government not to take those parts of Hauturu East 3B2 that were “in the occupation of respectable natives,” including Meihana Tuhoro. The manager added that these were the only Maori “in, or near, the vicinity of the Caves, and if allowed to remain would always prove interesting to visitors.” This land is located between the Waitomo caves and Ruakuri cave and would have been visible from the tourist route between them. A local land agent thought the “pretty spot would be a nice place for tea houses.” It already had Maori houses on it, to house Maori farming their small sections, but this did not prevent the land being taken for scenic purposes.
9. Meihana complained that he was not notified of the taking at the time, and was completing a new house on his farm when finally told it had been taken. In November 1907 he told the Native Land Court assessing compensation for the taking how he and his brother were using this supposedly scenic land:

I have a kainga there. There are three houses, two nikau houses and the new wooden house. I got the timber from the mill at Otorohanga. I have expended about £16 on this house besides my own labour. I have fences also on this land. There are about 24 acres of grass on my part without counting the new clearing. It was originally all manuka. Myself and brother cleared. We cut this land up into small sections so as to have permanent kainga. I have a place in Otorohanga, but Otorohanga is not suitable for natives as [there is] no room for cultivations.

10. The Court observed the farm was the “most valuable portion of all,” and had been improved by Meihana, who “has no other land in that locality, and... would be very reluctant to part with if it he had the power to retain it.” That power had been taken from him. Shortly after, the entirely un-scenic farm land cleared by Meihana and taken from him was being leased out by the Crown for the benefit of local settlers.
11. At Otorohanga, control of the township was handed over to Crown boards and most of their small holdings were leased out in perpetuity at woefully inadequate rents for the benefit of Pakeha businessmen. Effectively shut out of the town, Meihana’s siblings eventually joined many other land owners in succumbing to Crown purchase offers intended to assist Pakeha lessors to freehold ‘their’ township sections. Meihana and then his son Meihana Tuhoro II would not leave nor give up the last of the Tuhoro lands on the street that bears their name. The marae they built there for the many manuhiri who once came to Otorohanga became the Tuhoro home, before it was destroyed by local authorities in the late 1940s. The effects of these sorts of losses on the whanau, compounded by other Crown policies and practices, are best expressed by the whanau themselves.
12. To the extent that they were grievously and repeatedly affected by Public Works takings, the fate of the Tuhoro whanau lands may not be entirely ordinary. As noted they lost Hauturu lands at Waitomo to takings ostensibly for scenic purposes, including lands they had cleared and were using productively, as well as lands only recently reserved for them by the Crown from its Hauturu purchases. In addition, part of their Kounui lands near Kawhia were taken for the Oteke Scenic Reserve and part of their hard-fought for Kaingaika land (Rangitoto–Tuhua 64) was taken for the Mangaokewa Gorge Scenic Reserve, even as adjoining land was taken for the distinctly non-scenic purpose of quarrying.
13. In addition, highly valued land at Orahiri was taken for the ‘Island’ Recreation Reserve in 1923, without regard for the pa tuna and other customary uses to which the land was put by the Tuhoro whanau owners. The land was taken without Parekaihina Tuhoro, a large owner, being informed as required, and even when the Native Land Court later sat to assess

compensation no owners were present. Parekaihina did protest the taking after the event, petitioning Parliament in 1924 to seek the return of the land that had been:

the home of myself and my ancestors for centuries past where we have continuously cultivated our food crops. The area taken also comprises our pleasure grounds on the banks of the Waipa stream where we indulge in fishing, eeling, and bathing.

That the land was the old home of our ancestors containing the peach and cherry groves planted by our fathers and the two famous eel pahs [sic] known to them as Te Mutu Mutu and Te Ararimu

14. Other evidence indicates that Te Mutu Mutu and Te Araraimu were taniwha located on this important bend of the Waipa River beside Orahiri. The petition was favourably received by the Native Affairs Committee and was referred to the government, which did nothing. Across the Waipa River from the artificial 'island' reserve, not even the Tuhoro whanau's urupa, Rangituatahi, was safe from compulsory alienation, with part of it being taken for the same river control purposes that had already severed the 'Island Reserve' from the rest of the whanau's Orahiri Y block.

15. Over at Piopio, the elderly but by no means frail Putuputu Tuhoro fiercely opposed the taking of her Kinohaku East land for the Piopio School, especially as the land taken was occupied and utilised by her and those living with her, who had little other land remaining to them. As she told the government in 1913 several years before it took her land:

I have been living on the said land for upwards of sixty years and my ancestors have lived on it from time immemorial.

... I wish to obtain the said land as a papakainga and would not part with any portion of my interest in the said land for any consideration whatever, which is evidenced by the fact that I have already refused a sum of £20 per acre for a portion of the said land.

I have no children but my nephews are living with me and one of them is my adopted son and it is their desire that the said land should be reserved as a papakainga for the family with which desire I am entirely in accord.

The whole of the said land has been fenced and grassed and is being cultivated by myself and my nephews as a papakainga

16. The land also contained an urupa. In 1921 and again in 1958 parts of the land were taken for the Piopio school site. As at Hauturu, the owners were not consulted about, or even informed of, this taking and only became aware of it when the Auckland Education Board's employees arrived to take possession nearly six months later. Nui Ratamera (one of Putuputu

Tuhoro's nephews) obstructed the workers so the Board called on the police to remove him, after which he was publicly referred to as "a seasoned of Maori war veteran who had never quite got over his dislike for the pakeha and his 'taking' ways." Six decades after the first confiscation, those 'taking' ways had yet to end.

17. Putuputu and Nui opposed the taking not only because they were living on part of the land but because another part of it contained the urupa. As he told the Minister of Education in person: "He did not want his children's graves desecrated, and he did not want his land taken." After it was established that the school site did not include the urupa, they still objected to the taking, partly because the school was too close to the urupa and partly because the site was their kainga. These two elderly people were then required to appear in Auckland to have their objections heard by the Board in 1922, but Nui died before the hearing and Putuputu was too frail to travel that far, so their objections were rejected without being heard but those objections endured. When workers arrived to build the school in April 1922 the "venerable old wahine" blocked their path and "made it very plain that any timber carted on to the ground for a school building will have to pass over her dead body." Her frailty left her unable to mount more than passive resistance, but her younger whanaunga, Ngawharau Te Mura – "a fighter to the backbone" – did what she could while carrying her newborn baby. She and other local Maori removed building materials at night, blocked the site entrance, and otherwise peacefully resisted and briefly saw off the builders and their police escort. But, inevitably, the school was put up and their kainga was gone: all that remained was the compensation assessed for the land.
18. Thirty years later, the Crown came back and took more land when the Piopio school was expanded to a district high school. This time, the urupa was included, as officials believed the koiwi there could easily be "removed to an official burial ground, provided all the necessary formalities are observed." Officials later visited the site and could not find any graves, and did not give the matter any further consideration. Putuputu had died in about 1925, but her successors still lived on the land – their house was on the new school site – and they sought to protect the graves, to no avail.
19. Finally, the Tuhoro whanau were also among the owners who – in vain – strongly opposed the taking of a large part of their Pokuru land for the Tokanui Mental Hospital. These compulsory alienations hit the whanau hard. The areas taken were not always large but at Waitomo, Orahiru, and Piopio the land taken was amongst the most valuable they had been able to retain and was being actively and productively used by them.

20. Even so, the area taken under the Public Works Act was relatively modest compared to the vast areas lost to the more typical alienation processes of Crown and private purchasing. The several dozen 'parent' blocks in which Tuhoro whanau interests have been identified and which are discussed in the report had a total area of over 370,000 acres (see Figure 1 in the report for the general location of the key blocks). Not all of these lands could be closely studied within the parameters of this report, but Tuhoro whanau interests have been identified in 45 subdivisions of these parent blocks, subdivisions which total over 90,000 acres and which were located throughout Te Rohe Potae.
21. Their interests in these land titles was sometimes fractional, being shared with dozens or even hundreds of other owners, but in other cases they held interests ranging from exclusive to significant. Nearly all of those lands suffered the same fate, which was a mix of Crown purchasing bolstered by survey charges, followed by extensive private purchasing, and public works takings. There were usually several rounds of Crown purchasing of individual interests under pre-emption, each round of purchasing being followed by the subdivision of the title to cut out Crown interests. This was the fate of the Hauturu East, East B, and West blocks in which the Tuhoro whanau had interests. Those Crown interests included survey charges, and each round of subdivision led to further survey charges. These practices tended to result in ever-diminishing returns for the Crown and ongoing inconvenience and uncertainty for the remaining Maori owners.
22. For instance, after the first round of purchasing in Hauturu West 1 (11,610 acres) the Crown was awarded 2,000 acres in 1892, and the remaining Tuhoro interests were located in Hauturu West 1A (1,160 acres); in 1899 after further Crown purchasing its new interests of 601 acres were cut out, leaving the 57 remaining owners with 1A2 (559 acres); and finally in 1908, after further Crown purchasing its new interests were cut out as 1A2A (72 acres), leaving the Tuhoro whanau amongst the 56 remaining owners of 1A2B (487 acres). A similar fate befell Hauturu West G, where Crown purchasing was far more extensive, as well as in Karu-o-te-whenua, Kinohaku West, Otorohanga, and numerous Rangitoto and Rangitoto–Tuhua blocks. After about 20 years of purchase activity Meihana Tuhoro and the many other owners of these lands were left alone to try and deal with their remnants of land.
23. Once the Crown had largely (but not entirely) concluded its purchases the way was largely cleared for private purchasing through the stream-lined processes of the local Land Board from 1909. The result was that most of the lands in which the Tuhoro whanau had interests were soon permanently alienated.

24. Of the more than 90,000 acres of subdivisions in which their interests have been located, just 10,293 acres remain as Maori land today. The vast bulk of this remnant is in four large, rugged, bush-covered blocks that are economically unproductive and which must necessarily be preserved by their innumerable owners for conservation purposes. Like most of the owners of these lands, the Tuhoro whanau have but fractional interests shared with hundreds of others. Other lands in which they have interests are tiny papakainga or marae reserves in which their interests are either shared with hundreds of other beneficial owners, or in which those interests are only nominally held by individual owners or on behalf of a wider tribal group (such as urupa or Te Motu).

25. The only lands truly remaining to the Tuhoro whanau in their name – or largely in their name – and for their own use are small subdivisions of Hauturu East and tiny sections in Otorohanga township (one as small as 771 square metres). All but one of the township sections are only nominally owned by the whanau, being held by Pakeha tenants under perpetual leases that – due to title complexities imposed on the owners by the Crown – are almost impossible to break. This leaves the Hauturu lands – Uekaha A6 of 31 acres and Uekaha A7 of 141 acres – as the only productive lands available to the whanau. Like their other widely scattered interests, however much these lands are valued as the legacy of their tupuna Tuhoro and as a place to stand, they cannot sustain a whanau that has had to travel far from their home to find a place to live.

26. In terms of the outcome being effective landlessness, the history of the Tuhoro whanau is not at all unusual. What is perhaps unusual is that in seeking to tell their story they have also sought to quantify the land loss they have suffered since the time of Tuhoro and identify how that land loss occurred. This is, in part, the history of one whanau but in many respects it is the story of many.