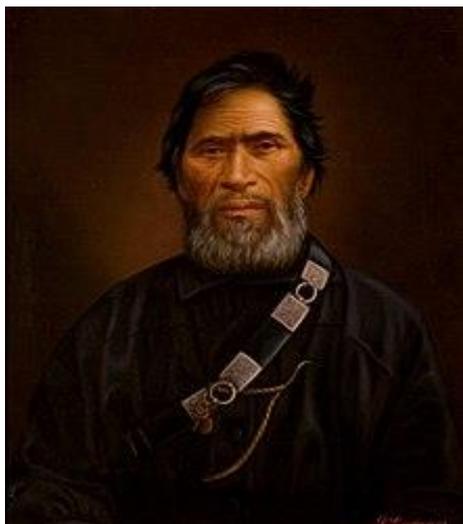


# *The Anglican Historical Society of New Zealand* *Te Rōpu Hītori o te Hāhi Mīhinare ki Aotearoa*

***The Land will Remain Forever -  
to produce food ... while blankets will wear out.***

**Author: Earle Howe**

(AHS Newsletter 45, October 2010)



Wiremu Tamihana

This article is based on a paper given at a hui at All Saints Church, Matamata on 29 September 2010. The hui was called to provide background to the forthcoming Ngati Haua claim to the Waitangi Tribunal. Presentations were also made by Ngati Haua and Archbishop David Moxon. My comments cover the period from missionary contact in the early 1830s through to the early twentieth century. I make no attempt to write Ngati Haua history but, in writing about this period in Matamata history, it is inevitable that I include substantial reference to the tangata whenua, Ngati Haua.

For me, the 1980s were years of personal bicultural learning and growth as I served as Vicar of All Saints Parish, Matamata. I was not the only one who was learning, and I certainly was not the only one taking risks. Members of All Saints Parish came with me on the journey. Their

support enabled and empowered considerable bicultural interaction which has continued to the present day.



Wiremu Tamihana Window  
All Saints Church, Matamata

When travelling through Matamata, take time to note the Wiremu Tamihana window in All Saints Church. Māori designer Fred Graham offers a prophetic statement about the significance of Wiremu Tamihana. Alongside the window is a

record of the church service and hui on the day when the window was blessed in 1983, and an explanation of the design. When driving past Raungaiti Marae at Waharoa, take note of the two totara trees planted that 1983 day. One tree was planted by Mark Davison whose family donated the window in All Saints Church in memory of John Davison. The other was planted by Wiripoai Tamihana, who was the current Kingmaker and a direct descendant of Wiremu Tamihana. On my subsequent visits to the marae there was considerable banter about which tree was growing faster – the Pakeha one or the Māori one.

### **The 1830s**

In the late 1830s, Ngati Haua land included land west of the Waikato River, an extensive area of the eastern Waikato, part of the Waikato River itself, and the upper reaches of the Waihou, Waitoa and Piako rivers. At the invitation of Te Waharoa, CMS missionaries Alfred and Charlotte Brown established a mission station at Matamata in 1835, assisted by John Morgan. The station was located just north of the present township of Waharoa.<sup>1</sup> However the mission station closed within a few months due to inter-tribal strife and a lack of respect, by some, for the mission property and the missionaries' belongings. Te Waharoa was no longer able to guarantee the missionaries' safety. The missionaries moved to Te Papa near Tauranga and were to visit Matamata frequently over the next few years.

Before the missionaries left Matamata, they established a school which was well attended, and which continued after the missionaries' departure because Brown sent two young Māori men from Tauranga to act as teachers. One of the first pupils at the school was Tarapipipi, second son of Te Waharoa. He responded positively to the missionaries' teaching and quickly emerged as a young leader not only of the emerging

Christian group at Matamata but also of Ngati Haua.

### **Tapiri**

In July 1838, the Christian group at Matamata began building a new pa at Tapiri, not far from the Matamata pa, so that they would be free of interference from those who did not appreciate their Christian conversion and discipleship. A significant event in the early life of this Christian community was the baptism, by Archdeacon Brown, of Tarapipipi and five others on 23 June 1839. These were the first Ngati Haua baptisms. Tarapipipi was given the name Wiremu Tamihana (William Thompson) at his baptism. The community at Tapiri had a law code written by Tarapipipi, and administration of the law was a high priority.

The pa included a whare karakia, or church. The first chapel was destroyed by fire in 1839 and in 1841 it was replaced with a significant building. According to Brown it was eighty-five feet long, forty-five feet wide and thirty foot high, and could accommodate 1000 people. It was supported by two large totara posts (about three foot wide), and the altar, communion rails and pulpit were also of totara. Inside it was lined with fern stalks bound closely together with strips of split wood, and it had glass windows. When Bishop Selwyn visited the chapel in October 1843, he was so impressed that he arranged for a large eastern window to be provided at his expense. Fortunately, sketches of the chapel are held in the Alexander Turnbull Library.

In his recently published book, *Whare Karakia*, an American art historian, Richard Sundt, notes that the chapel was, like other Māori churches of this period, a whare-style structure rather than a copy of an English church. He describes the chapel as 'an audacious architectural venture, one that required a great deal of structural ingenuity in order to provide the roof with adequate support, and to secure stability and

stiffness for the edifice as a whole ... there is no compelling reason to think that indigenous builders, now with several years of cultural and technological interchange with Europeans behind them, could not have devised its bracing system on their own.<sup>2</sup> Brown described the church as a 'free will offering to the service of God, for their heavy labour in its erection has been gratuitous, as no slight proof of the sincerity of their profession.'

### **Peria**

In the late 1840s, a new village was established at Peria and Tamihana moved there.<sup>3</sup> From all accounts it was a large village with school, church, fields for crops, and home for several hundred people. By the mid-1850s it was the principal Ngati Haua settlement, with the old pa at Matamata being abandoned because of its low-lying position in a swampy area. Europeans were welcome visitors at Peria, and were given hospitality for meals and overnight accommodation, sometimes in Tamihana's home. The visitors wrote enthusiastically about their visit and the nature of the village itself. There is a sense in which these accounts reflect something of the attitudes of the writers towards Māori. Peria was a success in their eyes because it reflected much of European culture and values. Tamihana was honoured because of his Christian commitment. Josiah Firth wrote of his 1856 visit to Peria in this way: 'Every morning and evening a bell called this simple, religious people to prayers. I never saw a more charming instance of simple idyllic life than this remarkable Māori village presented.' For some Pakeha, Tamihana filled the romantic expectation of a 'noble savage.' When he espoused the cause of the Māori King their views changed.

In May 1984, the Waikato Diocesan Ministry School met at the Totara Springs camp. I arranged for the Bishop and clergy to visit the Peria site. It was a privilege to be led on to the

site by two kuia, Kiri Wharawhara and Rau Tuhakaraina. They had never visited the site and it was a moving experience for both them and us. Evidence of the settlement was there in the remains of shells scattered around in a paddock which now hosted the owner's deer. It was good to note that the urupa had been respected. As I stood there, I reflected on whom and what had been there in the 1850s and 1860s and on what might have developed there had New Zealand history taken a different turn in the 1860s.

During the 1840s, when so much energy was being used in the development of the villages at Tapiri and then Peria, Tamihana still found time to take up a significant peacemaking role amongst the rangatira of Hauraki, Tauranga Moana, Te Arawa and Ngati Haua. This work culminated in a huge hui at Matamata in June 1846, when Ngati Haua hosted thousands of visitors from Te Arawa. The achievement of peace no doubt encouraged Pakeha to visit, trade, and eventually to settle in the region. The Roman Catholic Bishop Pompallier visited Matamata and one of his priests was resident there for a short time.

### **The King Movement**

The 1850s were a time of consolidation at Peria. Tamihana had a continuing concern for an adequate justice system and for Māori forms of law and government. Fenton, Resident Magistrate for the Waikato, attempted to establish a measure of Māori self-government in 1857 but was recalled by Governor Gore Browne. In this context, the idea of a Māori King took root and grew. In 1855, Tamihana was a member of a party that journeyed to the East Coast to test feelings about the proposal for a Māori King and to canvas for candidates. A number of hui were held in Waikato in 1857 leading to the selection of Potatau Te Wherowhero as the first King. His installation was completed on 2 May 1859 at Ngaruawahia. Tamihana's actions in developing

and supporting the concept of a Māori King was recognized in his key role in the coronation ceremony. He placed his Bible over the head of Potatau. Ever since then, a direct descendant of Wiremu Tamihana has carried out this function at the coronation of the Māori King or Queen, using Tamihana's Bible.

Most contemporary Pakeha commentators, such as Gorst, mistakenly viewed the King movement and the desire for Māori forms of law and order as simply an imitation of European culture. They did not understand the Māori fear that European government would deprive them of their land. Keith Sorrenson, a leading scholar of the 1960s and 1970s, argued that the King movement was conservative 'in the sense that it sought to reassert and extend traditional ideals, values and practices in an attempt to resist the disintegration of Māori society resulting from contact with the Europeans.'<sup>4</sup> Māori leaders were thinking of an independent Māori nation co-operating with Europeans, but not submitting to them. In many ways the Peria community was already an example of this.

Tamihana's illustration of the idea of a Māori King has often been referred to. He pushed two sticks into the ground. 'One is the Māori King; the other is the Governor' he said. He laid a third stick on top of the other two. 'This is the law of God and the Queen.' He then traced in the ground a circle around the sticks. 'That circle is the Queen, the fence to protect all.'<sup>5</sup> He was very much involved in the affairs of the Kingitanga after the coronation of Potatau Te Wherowhero.

### **The New Zealand Wars**

After the invasion of Waitara by British troops in 1860, Ngati Haua sent a contingent to support the Māori defence. Many who went south were killed. Tamihana then went south in an unsuccessful attempt to broker peace. From this time onwards there was continuing debate within the Kingitanga about their response to the

increasing Pakeha pressure on them to open up the Waikato for land sales. When Governor George Grey began building a road into the Waikato from Auckland, Tamihana called leaders to a hui at Peria. It began on 23 October 1862.

Bishop Selwyn was present at the hui and an interesting theological byplay developed on the Sunday between Selwyn and Wiremu Tamihana. Gorst records that on the Sunday morning Tamihana preached on a text from Psalm 133: 'Behold, how good it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.' Tamihana showed what a benefit it had been to the Māori people to become united in brotherhood under the Māori king. Selwyn had not been present when Tamihana preached but heard of the impression he had made. On the Sunday afternoon Selwyn preached on the same text and used it to argue for unity between Māori and Pakeha, not just in a theological sense but together in the Church of God, and, by implication, in the one nation.<sup>6</sup>

After the Peria hui, Tamihana continued to urge peace and conciliation amongst other Māori leaders, and he also met with Governor Grey. All this was to no avail. On 12 July 1863, General Cameron led the British troops into the Waikato and war commenced. As the Waikato war progressed the confiscation of land began and Ngati Haua lost a large amount of land to the west of the Maungakawa hills. In an 1865 discussion with Tamihana about the confiscated Ngati Haua land, Grey stated that the Government's reason for the confiscation was not so much punishment as the desire to provide land for European settlers.<sup>7</sup> Such an interpretation does not seem to be in line with other statements from Grey and other politicians about the reason for the confiscations.

### **Peace**

Tamihana made peace with General Carey on 27 May 1865 at Tamahere - an action which was wrongly interpreted by some of his

contemporaries, both Māori and Pakeha, as an act of surrender.

Although the Peria village was now in a state of neglect Tamihana, whose health was failing, worked hard to salvage his reputation and the mana of Ngati Haua. In July 1865 he petitioned the House of Representatives in Wellington, asking for an investigation into his actions during the war period. When Mainwaring, the Resident Magistrate in the Waikato, visited Tamihana on behalf of the Government to discuss his petition, he spoke of the loss of the land in this way: 'We have stood on Maungakawa, we have looked down on Horotiu and shed tears, and now the pain is simply gnawing at our hearts.'<sup>8</sup>

On 1 May 1866, Tamihana met with Governor Grey and agreed to visit Wellington for a meeting of the General Assembly in August. He was treated with respect as a guest of honour. He was not without a sense of humour despite his poor health. One evening, playing draughts with Frederick Whittaker, the provincial Superintendent for Auckland, Tamihana offered to play with the Waikato as the stake. Whitaker declined the stake but played the game and was defeated! Perhaps Whitaker had the last laugh. Tamihana's petition was referred to him, as Superintendent of Auckland, for consideration and there is no further mention of it in official records.

### **Native Land Court**

In her significant work on Wiremu Tamihana, Evelyn Stokes described the experiences of Ngati Haua at the Native Land Court in Cambridge from March 1866 onwards. The Court gave consideration to the land to the east of the confiscation line. I imagine that the outcomes for Ngati Haua from the Land Court sittings will be receiving attention in their forthcoming claim to the Waitangi Tribunal. Evelyn Stokes wrote: 'By going to the Native Land Court, Tamihana had set in train a process that would ensure the alienation of all but a few small pockets of Ngati

Haua land ... Tamihana had opposed land sales and road building but was powerless to stop the process. His people had agreed to a lease for Firth, and he hoped that a Pakeha farmer might be the means to maintain the peace he sought. Tamihana died before he could have comprehended the full impact of the Native Land Court and land loss on his people.'<sup>9</sup>

A key factor in the outcomes of the Native Land Court was the lease arrangement that Josiah Clifton Firth negotiated with Ngati Haua with the assistance of Tamihana. Firth had been visiting Matamata from 1859 in his quest for land in the area, and finally secured a lease in 1866. After the death of Tamihana in December 1866, Firth acquired further land under lease. It seems that initially Ngati Haua were happy to deal with Firth because of Tamihana's trust in Firth. Firth went on to use the provisions of the Native Lands Act of 1865 to ensure that any subsequent sale of freehold title was in his favour as the title was encumbered with the lease to him. Ngati Haua leaders complained bitterly that Firth had manipulated the law to extinguish their customary title.<sup>10</sup> Eventually his lands covered 60,000 acres between Waharoa in the north, the Waikato River in the south, the Waihou river in the east and the Maungakawa foothills in the west.<sup>11</sup>

Historians have viewed Firth's motives with considerable suspicion, not the least of all Duncan Waterson, a former resident of Matamata, who wrote in 1969: 'Firth, although he professed friendship with Tamihana and the amenable sections of the Māori people was just as concerned, as were his more cynical Auckland colleagues, to acquire huge Waikato properties. His membership of the Direct Purchase Association of 1859 and his chicanery at the Cambridge hearings of the Native Land Court testify to Firth's overriding determination to destroy Māori land ownership and to reduce the

tribes to acquiescent beggars on the fringes of the estate.’

Waterson concluded that this was ‘a most unsavory era in racial relations.’<sup>12</sup>

### The Matamata Estate

Firth put considerable funds and effort into development of his large estate, especially with drainage and construction of roads. He also improved the navigation of the Waihou river. These enabled steamers of shallow draught to sail up-river to Stanley Landing, the northern boundary of the estate. This achievement was celebrated with a high-profile event on 11 March 1880, which was attended by the Premier, John Hall, and other government dignitaries. By 1880 there were 10,000 acres in cultivation, particularly with wheat, and there were 7000 more acres in grass.

In 1886, Firth sub-divided part of his estate, offering 20 farms of 50-100 acres with provision for a settlement around a nearby station on the recently built railway line to Tirau. He named the settlement Waharoa. Initially the farms were to be leased with a right to freehold at a later date. He also built a dairy factory. There were a considerable number of applications for the farms. But the deepening financial depression of the 1880s and difficulties in the fledgling refrigerated meat and dairy industries prevented

further subdivision of the estate. Firth’s dreams ended in ruin, leaving Waterson to comment: ‘It is significant that Firth, the only authentic folk-hero of the region, neither lived at Matamata nor succeeded in realizing his big-man’s dreams.’<sup>13</sup>

In 1895, John McCaw became manager of the Matamata Estate on behalf of the Assets Realization Board. Taking up residence at ‘The Tower’ at Matamata he continued the development of the estate. By 1901, 25,000 acres were under cultivation. The Lands Board acquired over 42,000 acres for the Matamata settlement and considerable subdivision began, including suburban allotments in Waharoa, and in Matamata township. These allotments, including 80 farms, were put up for ballot in 1904, attracting 160 applications. There does not appear to have been any successful applications from Māori.<sup>14</sup>

For Ngati Haua the nineteenth century was a time of great upheaval after contact with Europeans. This upheaval resulted in loss of Ngati Haua lives in the New Zealand Wars and also in significant loss of land. There is now an opportunity to build on the learnings of the past one hundred years of Pakeha settlement, and discover what Te Waharoa foresaw when he said, **‘The land will remain forever to produce food ... while blankets will wear out.’**<sup>15</sup>

### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The sites of the Matamata Pa, the earlier Kutia Pa, the CMS Mission House and Tapiri Pa are all on Dunlop Road, Waharoa, and are clearly signposted. For details of these and other relevant heritage sites near Matamata visit [www.mpdc.govt.nz](http://www.mpdc.govt.nz) and follow the links to ‘Heritage’

<sup>2</sup> Richard Sundt, *Whare Karakia*, Auckland, 2010, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> The sites of the Peria village and its flourmill and school are on Peria Road, Matamata, and are signposted.

<sup>4</sup> M P K Sorrenson, ‘The Maori King Movement, 1858-1885, in *Studies of a Small Democracy*, Robert Chapman and Keith Sinclair (eds), Auckland, 1963, pp. 35-36.

<sup>5</sup> Great Britain Parliamentary Papers, 1862, p. 51.

<sup>6</sup> J E Gorst, *The Maori King*, London, 1864, pp.319-320

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<sup>7</sup> L S Rickard, *Tamihana the Kingmaker*, Auckland, 1963, p. 174

<sup>8</sup> Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives, 1865, E-14, pp 1-2.

<sup>9</sup> Evelyn Stokes, *Wiremu Tamihana, Rangatira*, Wellington, 2002, p. 505.

<sup>10</sup> R C J Stone, *Makers of Fortune*, Auckland, 1973, p. 143.

<sup>11</sup> D B Waterson, 'The Matamata Estate, 1904-1959' in *The New Zealand Journal of History*, Volume 3:1, April 1969, p. 32.

<sup>12</sup> Waterson, p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> Waterson, p. 50.

<sup>14</sup> C W Vennell et al, *The History of the Matamata Plains*, Matamata, 1952, pp.135-147.

<sup>15</sup> These words were uttered when the CMS missionaries were finalizing the purchase of land at Matamata for the Mission Station. Payment included blankets, iron pots, and other similar items. See Evelyn Stokes, pp. 26-27.

Every year, in the Church's liturgical calendar,  
**Wiremu Tamihana** is commemorated as **Prophet and Kingmaker** on June 23<sup>rd</sup>  
See '*For All the Saints*' pages 235-238.