

# Hakaraia

## Warrior Peacemaker

by Mark Derby

The Waitaha people have always lived beside the water. For hundreds of years, their rohe was the coastal land south of Tauranga. But in the early nineteenth century, Waitaha had to flee inland to escape warring tribes. They were given shelter at Lake Rotorua by their Te Arawa kin. Although this meant they were still by the water, it was not their home. The people of Waitaha never stopped thinking about their own whenua. And they never stopped hoping that one day they might return.

### THE RETURN

One miraculous day in 1836, some visitors arrived on the shores of Lake Rotorua. They were from far away to the north. Two of the people were Pākehā – the Reverend Thomas Chapman and his wife, Anne. Another of the visitors was a man who looked familiar. His whānau thought they were seeing a ghost. This was Māhika, who had been taken from his iwi twelve years earlier by the same warriors who had seized their land. None of his people ever expected to see Māhika again. But he had survived, learnt to read and write at a **mission** school in Northland, and eventually converted to Christianity. Along with his new religion, Māhika had a new name: Hakaraia.



### KO WAITAHA TE IWI

*Ko Otawa te maunga  
Ko Te Rapa-rapa-a-hoe te awa  
Ko Hei te tipuna  
Ko Takakopiri te tangata  
Ko Waitaha te iwi  
Ko Te Arawa te waka.*

The tipuna of the Waitaha iwi – the chief Hei and his son Waitaha – arrived in Aotearoa on the waka *Te Arawa*. As the waka passed the entrance of Tauranga Harbour, Hei claimed the land for his descendants. By the nineteenth century, the Waitaha people mainly occupied the land between Tauranga Harbour and the Waiari River, including the area inland up to the Kaimai Ranges. It was a beautiful region with rich soil for crops, many birds in the forests, and many eels in the rivers. Today Te Puke is the main town within the rohe of Waitaha.



## HAKARAIA: THE PREACHER AND PEACEMAKER

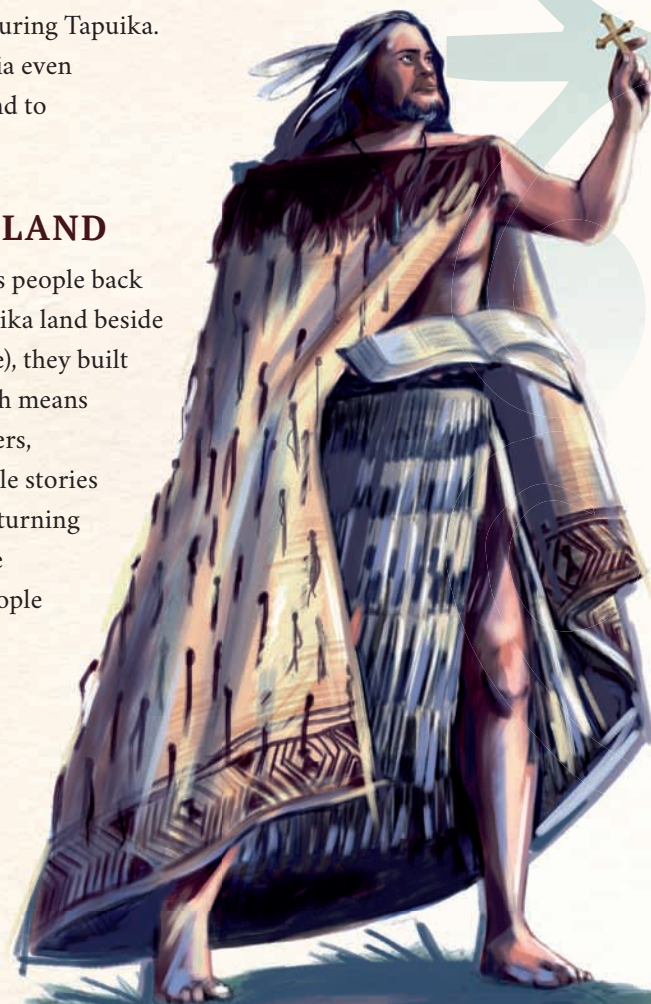
By the 1830s, Christian missionaries had begun to travel outside Northland to spread their religion and ideas. Reverend Chapman and his family came to the Rotorua area with the idea of establishing a mission. They brought Hakaraia with them as a helper and interpreter. His Waitaha people were astonished to see him again. It was close to a miracle, and being deeply affected by this, many quickly agreed to be baptised.

In Rotorua, Hakaraia helped the Chapmans to build their mission station, along with a school and hospital. He also began to travel on foot to the territories of other iwi, encouraging them to follow a Christian way of life and to give up warfare. Many people now accepted Hakaraia as their spiritual leader. Most were Waitaha, but some came from other iwi, especially the neighbouring Tapuika. Because of his skills as a negotiator, Hakaraia even convinced the iwi that occupied Waitaha land to allow his people's return.

## KENANA: THE PROMISED LAND

In 1845, after years of exile, Hakaraia led his people back from Rotorua to the Bay of Plenty. On Tapuika land beside the Kaituna River (near present-day Te Puke), they built a Christian community called Kenana, which means Canaan or the promised land. To his followers, Hakaraia seemed to prove that all of the Bible stories were true. He had risen from the dead by returning from captivity – and like the story about the Christian **prophet** Moses, he had led his people back to their homeland.

For the next decade, Hakaraia raised his family while his reputation as a devout spiritual leader grew. He continued to preach and to broker peace between warring tribes. The colonial government even paid Hakaraia to encourage this difficult yet valuable work.



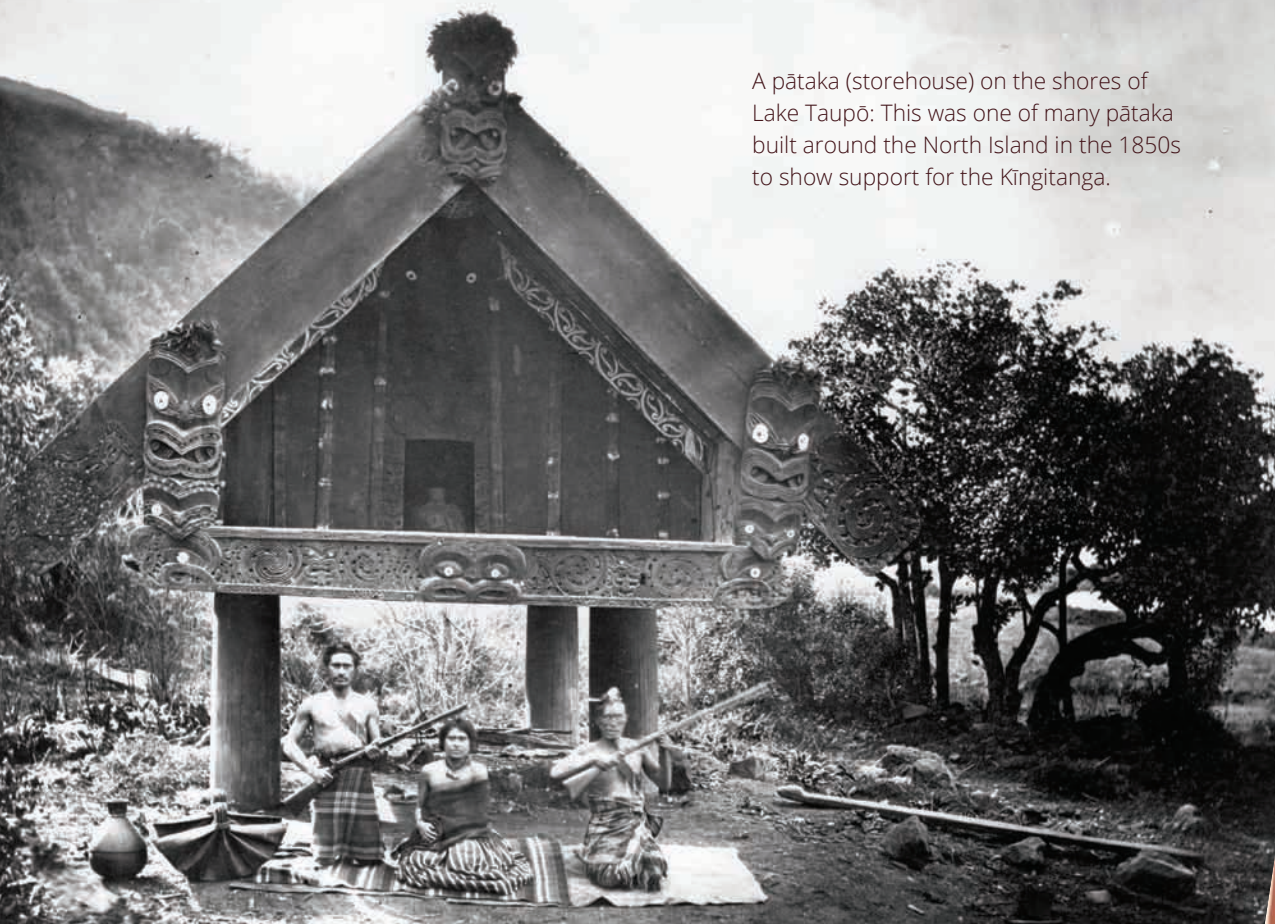
## A NEW KING

The violent years of the **musket wars** were long over, but by the 1850s, Māori were worried about a new danger. Large areas of Māori land were being sold to European settlers, often without the consent of all the owners. As well, many Māori were dying of Pākehā diseases, like smallpox and measles. Some chiefs thought that these problems could be better dealt with if Māori had their own king to rule alongside the British monarch.

The movement to establish a Māori king was called the Kīngitanga. At first, the Kīngitanga had entirely peaceful aims: to retain Māori land and restore Māori mana. Hakaraia supported these aims. Then, in 1860, the controversial land sale of the Waitara block in Taranaki sparked a series of battles between Māori and the government. A truce was eventually declared, but in the following months, the government began to raise a large army. It wanted settlers to be able to farm the fertile Waikato, home of the Māori king and centre of Kīngitanga power. By 1863, the country was at war again.

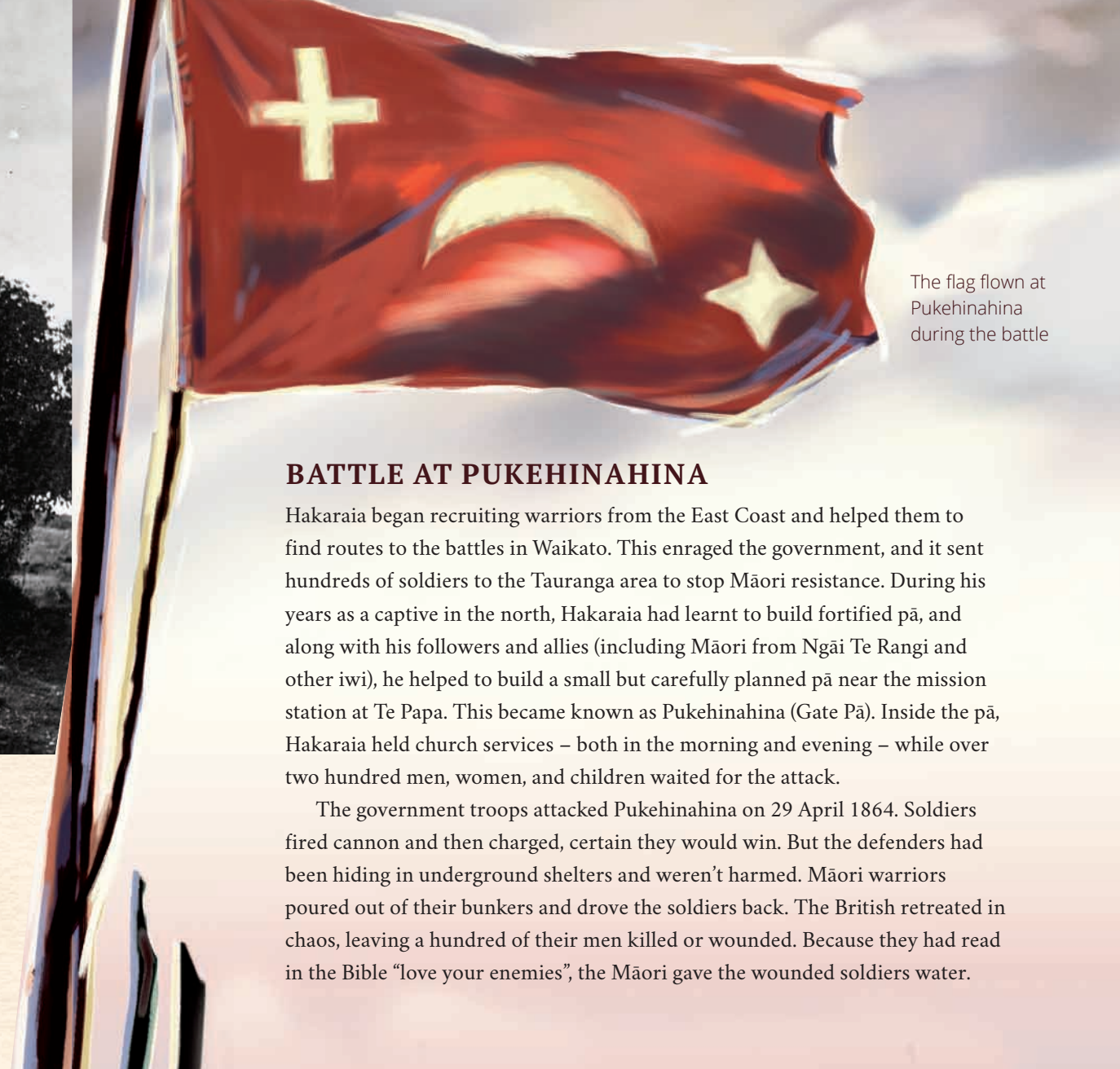
The pā of the first Māori king, Pōtatau Te Wherowhero, at Ngāruawāhia in the Waikato (painted in 1847) ▼





A pātaka (storehouse) on the shores of Lake Taupō: This was one of many pātaka built around the North Island in the 1850s to show support for the Kīngitanga.

Hakaraia was greatly troubled. He fervently believed in the Christian principles he'd been taught, but he also believed that the government and its men weren't acting as the Bible instructed. Then, in February 1864, government soldiers attacked Rangiaowhia, a Māori village in Waikato that grew food for the Kīngitanga. Twelve Māori were killed, some of whom were women and children. Hakaraia decided that he could no longer remain neutral.



The flag flown at Pukehinahina during the battle

## BATTLE AT PUKEHINAHINA

Hakaraia began recruiting warriors from the East Coast and helped them to find routes to the battles in Waikato. This enraged the government, and it sent hundreds of soldiers to the Tauranga area to stop Māori resistance. During his years as a captive in the north, Hakaraia had learnt to build fortified pā, and along with his followers and allies (including Māori from Ngāi Te Rangi and other iwi), he helped to build a small but carefully planned pā near the mission station at Te Papa. This became known as Pukehinahina (Gate Pā). Inside the pā, Hakaraia held church services – both in the morning and evening – while over two hundred men, women, and children waited for the attack.

The government troops attacked Pukehinahina on 29 April 1864. Soldiers fired cannon and then charged, certain they would win. But the defenders had been hiding in underground shelters and weren't harmed. Māori warriors poured out of their bunkers and drove the soldiers back. The British retreated in chaos, leaving a hundred of their men killed or wounded. Because they had read in the Bible "love your enemies", the Māori gave the wounded soldiers water.



Pukehinahina around 1864

## ON THE RUN

Hakaraia knew that the government wouldn't give up after their defeat at Pukehinahina. He called on his Te Arawa whānau for support, and they built another pā called Te Ranga. Before the pā was finished, the British attacked – this time killing over a hundred of the five hundred defenders, many of whom were related to Hakaraia. Along with his son and a few other survivors, Hakaraia escaped into the Kaimai Ranges overlooking Tauranga.

As punishment for their involvement at Pukehinahina and Te Ranga, in May 1865, the government confiscated large areas of Waitaha land. But Hakaraia would never surrender, and the government sent another large force of troops to capture him. Again he escaped and moved even farther inland, to the King Country, where the second Māori king – Tāwhiao – had been living in exile since the Waikato wars. Māori from many different iwi came to live with Hakaraia, whom they called Te Hēpara (the shepherd). Some people claim that over the next few years, Hakaraia was even more influential than Tāwhiao.

Around this time, other fugitives were also living in the King Country. The most well-known was the East Coast leader Te Kooti. The government regarded both Hakaraia and Te Kooti as dangerous criminals and was determined to catch them. In 1870, it sent two separate forces of soldiers to do the job. These soldiers finally tracked Te Kooti and Hakaraia and some of their followers to the Waioeka Gorge, near Ōpōtiki. The final attack was said to be like “a mob of horses racing”. Te Kooti escaped, but Hakaraia was killed.

## FORGOTTEN AND REMEMBERED

The government and the newspapers celebrated the death of a “notorious rebel”. The early years of good work done by Hakaraia – his peacemaking and his Christian community – were forgotten.

Hakaraia was once the most prominent Māori leader in the Bay of Plenty. But in the years after his death, his name was barely mentioned. Now, Hakaraia is being remembered as a principled man who turned to war only because he thought peace was no longer possible. One hundred and fifty years after Pukehinahina, a carved image of Hakaraia was placed on the site of the battle to mark the anniversary.



### GLOSSARY

**mission:** a place that teaches Christian beliefs

**musket wars:** the inter-tribal conflicts that began in 1818 and caused the deaths of many thousands of Māori

**prophet:** an inspiring spiritual leader

# Hakaraia: Warrior Peacemaker

by Mark Derby

Thanks to Te Kapu Ō Waitaha Trust for allowing us to take photographs on their marae. Thanks also to Alison McCulloch for taking these photographs, which have been used as inspiration for the design elements in the article “Hakaraia: Warrior Peacemaker”.

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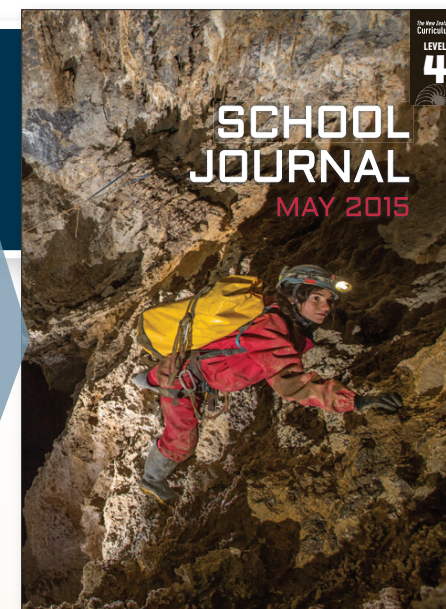
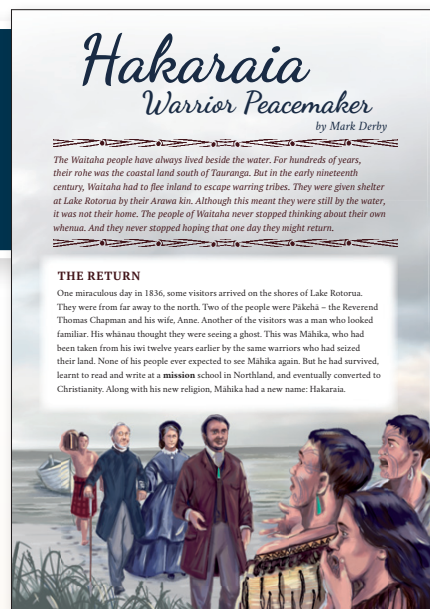
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