

retired to the strongly defended sanctuary of Nukutaurua pa on the Mahia Peninsula. There is evidence both from Maori Land Court records and from the accounts of early European coastal visitors that this evacuation of the whole area was not as widespread or as lengthy as has been sometimes inferred. Nevertheless occupation was fugitive and precarious until the spread of Christianity⁴ and European settlement. Kaikokiikiri was reoccupied about 1842 and in the lower valley Tauanui was the first place to be settled.

Relations between the Hawke's Bay and Wairarapa Maoris seem to have been somewhat strained after the *heke* and it was in fact the rumoured threat of an invasion by Te Hapuku and his supporters from Ahuriri which led Ngatuere to build the pa. Colenso, passing up the valley in March 1846 from Te Kopi and McMaster's, recorded his observation of the pa: '... proceeded 2 miles to Otaraiā, where we were welcomed by Ngatuere, the Ch. and his party who were busy in buildg. a pa. This Chf. is still heathen, but always very kind, gave plenty of food, pork and eels, to lads ...'⁵

More detail was given by H. Tacy Kemp, Native Secretary, in a general report on Maori villages in the Wellington Wairarapa area. Otaraiā was '... situated about 12 miles from Huangarua, and is the Pa built about four years ago when the celebrated chief "Te Hapuku" threatened a hostile descent upon the natives of the valley in consequence of some insult offered by them to his son: he came down from Hawke's Bay but returned without doing any mischief. The Wairarapa natives were, however, obliged to make an atonement for the insult, and Ngairo was deputed to be the bearer of a considerable sum of money, together with some other articles of value, and to arrange a reconciliation which he accomplished. Ngatuere, Manihera and William King, are the Principal men of this Pa, and were the strongest opposers to the selling of the land. The Pa is now nearly a wreck, and since the peace with Te Hapuku, they feel more security in living in the plantation grounds, which are within a short distance of the Pa.'⁶

The report confirms the virtual abandonment of the pa and the dispersion into the cultivations shown on the map five years later.

Three years later, in 1853, Sir George Grey obtained from the Kahungunu their consent to sell lands in the Wairarapa and from September 1853 Donald McLean was engaged in completing the acquisition for the Crown of extensive areas in the district. Otaraiā was included in the Wharekaka Block the purchase deed for which was signed formally on 4 January 1854. Most of the deeds concluded at this time were not specific about minor reserves and Otaraiā pa and burial ground was apparently in a block of one thousand acres 'towards the south of the Waihora to be given to Manihera as a permanent possession which land shall be surveyed and laid out by Captain Smith.'⁷ This was apparently done.