

This map of the Hawkes Bay and Taupo district is of importance. It not only records the journeys' of missionary Colenso, but it marks the tracks which penetrated the Ruahines and gave access between Taupo and Hawkes Bay. To the south, but out of the picture is the Wairarapa. This valley provided an alternative route to Palliser Bay and Whanganui-a-Tara-Wellington Harbour, other than by journeying down the eastern coastline of the Te Ika-a-Maui.

Although by the 1840's the track to Taupo and the West Coast by way of Te Atua Mahuru, — a high peak of the Ruahine Range — and the highland plateau of Mokai Patea had fallen into disuse, other pathways were still serving their role in the ancient roading system.

In the southern sector of the range a route which led from coast to coast was still very much in use. This route led up the Orua River until the path traversed a range of foothills which led to the Pohangina. This being a tributary of the Manawatu. From this point the track led into the Ruahines proper where an elevation of 3000 feet was reached before the route descended to what has become known as the Seventy Mile Bush. On reaching the valley floor there was a choice of routes. One via Porangahau and the coast or through the bush and the Heretaunga Plains.

An alternative route to Taupo which avoided Mokai Patea and the Onetapu desert was by way of the Wai-o-Hinganga or present day Esk.

After leaving the Esk the track crossed the Ahimanawa Range. From here the track circuited the upper reaches of the Waipunga which is a tributary of the Mohaka and onto the head waters of Rangitaiki and thence to Taupo.

Today modern highways follow the general line of these ancient trails.

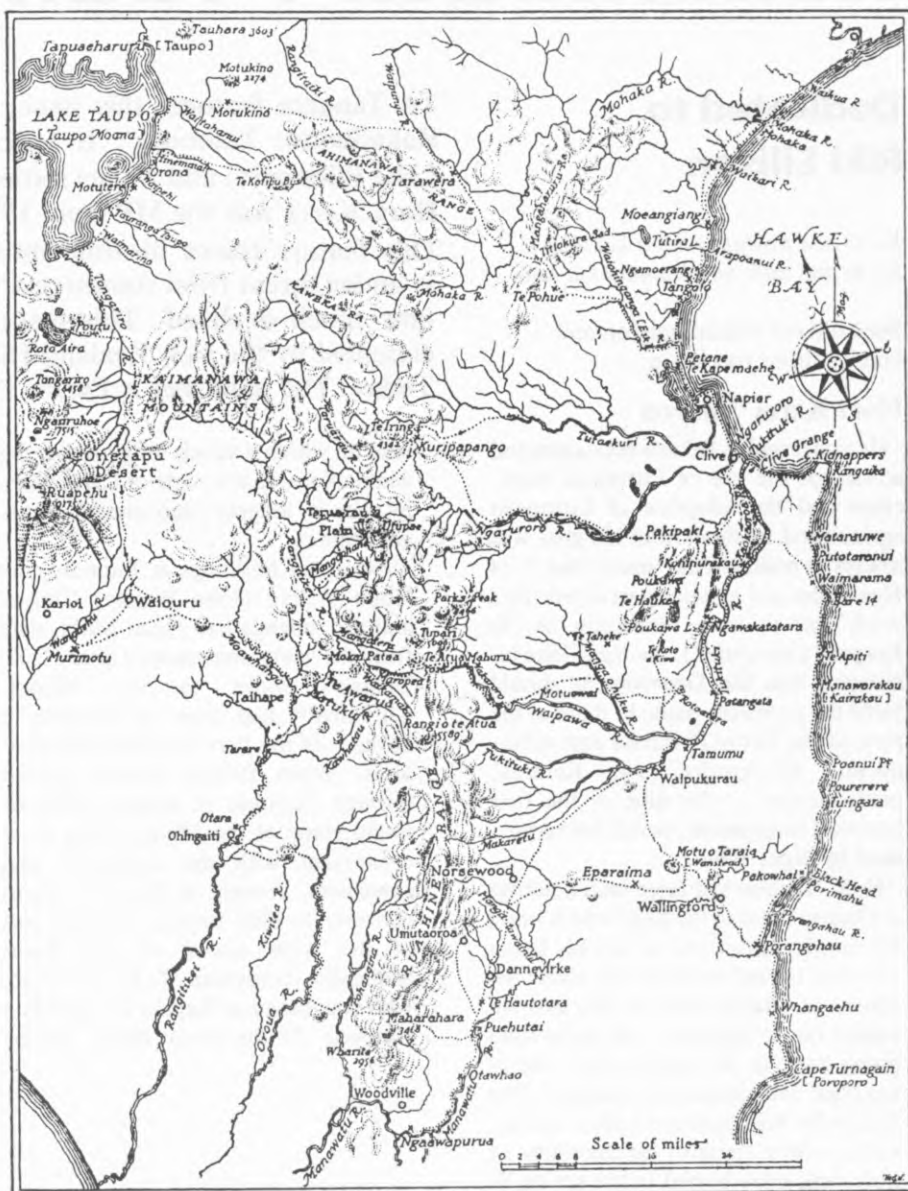


Illustration and Ruahine Map
Map of the Hawkes Bay and Taupo District 1845-1855.