

land.

They reached the South Island surprisingly none the worse for wear, and after a days rest they continued their journey down the west coast of the South Island.

The farther south they went the colder and rougher the weather became. They took shelter in caves when the sea was too wild and warmed themselves in front of fires.

They finally came to the mouth of the river which led to the greenstone up river. In fact Chief Tauraroa wasn't certain that this was the right river, for he could only guess where the greenstone was by second-hand legends. Some Canterbury tribesmen get it by crossing the Southern Alps from the plains on foot and carry back the greenstone.

The canoe was paddled up the river and to the joy of the crew and the relief of Chief Tauraroa the greenstone was found shining in shallow water near a bank of rock. The crew boisterously splashed around in the chilly water heaving the heavy greenstone slabs onto the bank, and from there into the canoe.

The canoe was soon as low in the water as Chief Tauraroa dared make it and he ordered his men to leave the valuable greenstone and come aboard. They reluctantly left their fortune and paddled the now not too seaworthy canoe towards the sea. They stayed close to shore in the fairly calm water, and they slowly made their way to Cook Strait.

The Cook Strait was as wild as ever and the canoe had no chance of crossing it in its over-loaded state, so Chief Tauraroa decided to hide the heaviest stones at a cave near Picton.

With a more seaworthy canoe and better weather the canoe set off bravely across Cook Strait. Soon the canoe started bucking up and down over the mountainous waves. Men were knocked from their seats, and it took three strong men to hold the canoe on course. Chief Tauraroa was tempted to throw some greenstone overboard but he held on to it all determinedly.

Everyone was greatly relieved when they came within the shelter of Kapiti Island and thanked the gods for saving them from the terrifying sea.

After repairing and restocking the canoe they set off north again. The journey to Auckland was slow but rather uneventful. Many of the men were bored and looked forward to getting home.

At Mangere they were once more greeted by Chief Tauraroa's father and invited to stay a few days. Chief Tauhari congratulated his son on his great adventure, and he ordered some of his weapon-makers to go with him as he had promised. Chief Tauraroa gave some greenstone in return and they separated contentedly the next day.

The final trip home was made quickly for it had been rumoured that his en-

emies had already been readying for war.

They returned home to a hero's welcome and the hangi and celebration were enjoyed by all.

The village soon settled down to the serious business of preparing for war. The chipping of the weapon-makers and the cries of practising warrior could be heard echoing throughout the valley.

As it turned out a battle was not fought, for when faced with the dreaded greenstone axes the enemies faded away back to their own homes.

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## Ngapera Black Q.S.M.

Tihei mauri ora  
Ko Maungapohatu te maunga  
Ko Whakatane te awa  
Ko Tuhoe te iwi  
Ko Taiturakina te tangata  
Greetings  
Maungapohatu is the mountain  
Whakatane is the river  
Tuhoe is the tribe  
Taiturakina is the man

I have used the opening quotation to my story because it refers to the place where a prominent old lady comes from. Tuatoki — Taneatua (where I come from). Ngapera was born and raised as a child at Maungapohatu, the sacred mountain of my Tuhoe people. She was born in 1886 and she grew up in the wild, rugged mountainous Urewera country of my Tuhoe people known as "Nga Tamariki a Hine-pu-kohu-rangi" (the children of the mist).

Living at Maunga-pohatu at these early times, soon after the fighting of Te Kootis followers and the Government's soldiers was very difficult, but Ngapera and her people survived.

She was a young person about my age when her family moved from Maungapohatu to live in Ruatoki the fertile lands on the northern edge of the mountainous Urewera country.

Ngapera attended the Ruatoki Native School as a teenager and it was there that she gained her first experience of formal education. Although she did not receive education beyond that which she got from the Ruatoki Native School she was totally involved with the life and work of the people in her community.

She helped the elders of her sub tribes to raise money for the building of meeting houses and dining halls on her Rewarewa and Ohutu maraes. Ngapera married Mr Jack Black who was a serviceman of the First World War. They farmed their land in Ruatoki which they developed from scrub and manuka to a

top dairy farm during the Land Development Scheme of Sir Apirana Ngata in the early 1930s. They became so successful at their farming that they were awarded the Bledisloe Ahuwhenua Trophy in recognition of their farming effort. Her husband was the first farmer in Ruatoki to gain this award which is competed for by Maori farmers throughout the country.

Ngapera's concern for the progress and welfare, not only of the people within her community, but also for others, took her deeper into other fields of community work.

Ngapera was a foundation member of the Ruatoki Branch of the Maori Women's Welfare League. She continued to take an active part in the work of the League until she was in her early 90s.

During the second world war, Ngapera organised people in her community to raise money through the Patriotic Fund Organisation to assist servicemen in the Maori Battalion serving overseas. This was to be the beginning of her long association with the Returned Servicemen's Association.

In recognition of many years of community work and service to her people, Ngapera was awarded the Q.S.M. (Queen's Service Medal) in the New Year's Honours of this year. A fitting and worthy reward for many years of working and serving other people.

The presentation of Ngapera's award took place on her Rewarewa Marae, in Ruatoki on the 26th June. It was at the request of her people to the Government that they wanted to be with Ngapera during the presentation award ceremony and also because of her great age 96 years, that they agreed to the request. The Deputy Prime Minister the Honourable Duncan McIntyre was appointed to make the presentation to Ngapera Black. Over 500 people attended the ceremony from throughout the Bay of Plenty and as far as Auckland and Wellington.

As I write this story about my Kuia Ngapera, a tangi is being held for her on Ohutu marae in Ruatoki. She died on Sunday night in Hastings only two weeks after being presented with her Q.S.M. Her body was brought back from Hastings to Ruatoki today. Ngapera was the last kuia of Tuhoe with the moko (chin tattoo).

I feel very sad when I think that with the passing of such a great old lady, our link with an old way of Maori life is gone. Her funeral will be held on Thursday, the day after I arrive back at school.

Haere e kui  
Haere te morehu o te ao tawhito  
Haere, Haere, Haere.

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