

COPY OF FREDA KAWHARU'S BACKGROUND REPORT

The land situated at Oromahoe, presently being run by the Department of Maori Affairs as a land development scheme, has a long history of occupation by hapu of the Ngapuhi tribe. There were small settlements with houses, land and features of the landscape all named, with boundaries clearly defined. During the mid 19th century, the kaumatuas who had the mana rangatira of the land were Mahikai and his teina Marupo, Tuhirangi and his teina Peia, Parangi, brother of Marupo's wife Waihue, Whiorau teina of Te Pua and Timi their first cousin, as well as Kemara and Moko. Present owners trace their descent from these tupuna.

By the turn of the century, individual title had still not been established, and it was for this purpose that the Oromahoe Papatupu Committee was established in 1904, to hear claims to the land.

Rights were claimed by accepted Maori practice of Ahika or occupation through tupuna, pa, wahitapu, mahinga and mana rangatira. Hereditary rights remained intact and were not affected by ringa kaha, or rights of conquest followed by permanent occupation. In the case of Oromahoe however there have been instances of rights to occupy, with ultimate legal title being bestowed on individuals who would otherwise not have had the kinship connection to claim.

The dominant hapu in Oromahoe presently are Ngati Rahiri, and Ngati Kawa, te Ngarehauata, Matarahurahu, Whanaurara and Ngati Rahiri. Of these, it was subsequently said that Matarahurahu had died out.

Ngati Tautahi, Ngati Whakaeke and Ngati Kaihoro have also been recognised as being hapu who have had rights in Oromahoe.

Prior to World War II, a number of small holdings had been established comprised mainly of a few dairy cows, with cream being sent to the Bay of Islands dairy factory. Pigs and some sheep were also kept mainly to provide supplementary meat for domestic use, and for the former, to make use of the skim milk available. Large gardens were the mainstay of the requirements for fruit and vegetables. What was grown or killed was shared, as was labour for such seasonal activities as haymaking.

This situation continued into the 1950's with up to 11 farms sending cream to the dairy factory, one farm only having more than thirty cows. Thirty was the magical number, being held as the ideal by some to aim for. Such a herd it was thought would be capable of providing a sufficient income for families which were often large.

It was becoming increasingly evident however that what had been considered a minimum income requirement in the early post war years was now no longer sufficient. The economics of the times made it increasingly difficult to keep up with such things as mortgage repayments. Advice from Maori Affairs Department field officers, whilst being pertinent to good farming practice, was not geared to accounting for management of income to relative debt. Small holdings were increasingly being left, particularly by the young. Better employment opportunities and incomes beckoned, both at the local freezing works and further a field in Auckland. In two instances, families cut their connections altogether in Oromahoe, by selling their holdings to Pakeha farmers. Areas of land which had been in pasture rapidly began to show the signs of neglect.

Such was the situation when on February 8, 1962, a court sitting was held at the Oromahoe Marae with Judge Gillanders Scott presiding. Owners of the numerous blocks situated in Oromahoe attended and gave approval for their land to be incorporated as one unit, to be administered by the Department of Lands and Survey. It was envisaged that at such future time when the land was developed, it could again be subdivided and made available by ballot to selected owners or their appointees within their own families who were suitably qualified in farm management. Not all owners especially those with individual title, were agreeable to their land being included in the scheme and chose to continue farming operations independently.

Accordingly at a court sitting at Whangarei May 15, 1962, Judge Gillanders Scott provided for "The several blocks of Maori freehold or European land owned by Maoris, containing an area of 1932 acres 2 roods 10 perches held under separate titles ... an order cancelling the several titles, substituting title of whole land ... more conveniently / economically held in common ownership under one title." An amendment was made by an order of the Appellate court under Section 45 of the *Maori Affairs Act 1953* on January 31, 1963, by reducing the area by 70 acres 1 rood 13 perches, being the area

of Porotu B2 Block excluded. This amendment was the forerunner of many to the amalgamated block in common ownership now titled Oromahoe R.

On January 24, 1969, an application was made for Te Aute B2 to be amalgamated with a number of other titles as follows, 18R, Haoowhenua, Oromahoe E1, Te Pae B6Bi, Te Pae B6B2, Patukauae C (Part), Porotu B1B and Porotu B. The application first came before the court on February 20, 1969, was adjourned and didn't surface again until January 27, 1972.

Change of title came about by:

1. Voluntary sale to the Crown through Section 151/53 of the *Maori Affairs Act 1953*, (live buying)
2. Sale of uneconomic shares on succession, to the Maori Trustees through Section 137/53.
3. Acquisition of consolidated uneconomic interests by the Maori Trustee under Section 445/53.

With the incorporation of new blocks into the scheme, the title changed. From 18R, it became 18R2 on December 4, 1972. Subsequent changes became 18R2B, then to 18R2B2 on November 14, 1977, thence to 18R2B2B, then to 18R2B2B2 which is the current title.

By December 17, 1970, a policy of "No more live buying" was instituted by the Maori Trustee on behalf of the Crown, nor were any more "Uneconomic shares" taken by the Maori Trustee. The policies of live buying and conversion of shares meant however, that the character of tribally owned "Tupuna" land had irrevocably changed. The Crown had become the major shareholder. 65,400.233 shares out of 104,652.219 were now in Crown title, leaving only 37% in Maori ownership. Apart from the Crown the present owners schedule lists three hundred and thirty three owners, albeit of these, a number are deceased and have not been succeeded to.

THE BRIEF

1. To help the present ownership update all share successions
2. To help owners families trace their whakapapa
3. To identify all shares acquired under compulsory acquisition by the Crown.

1. Update of Share Successions.

Preliminary research identified 72 names of deceased people in the owners schedule. Further investigation eliminated six of these as being family names repeated from one generation to another, creating difficulty in establishing who the name belonged to. This was particularly so when "nicknames" had been given to individuals and baptismal names were not commonly used if at all. All but fourteen have had succession forms and/or letters sent to next of kin. Of the remaining number, preliminary enquiries for some have been made, while others as yet remain unknown.

There are approximately seventy addresses still unknown or incomplete, some of which are in the process of updating. Others require more research to identify family links and whereabouts of individuals.

2. Whakapapa

Sources of whakapapa have come from:

- a) Maori Land Court records
- b) Oromahoe Papatupu Committee minutes
- c) Personal records as kept by Hori Tane, (Deceased 1977) son of Te Tane Haratua, and Hone Ngapua (deceased 1932, aged ninety two) son of Tuhirangi
- d) Verbal information from a variety of sources, having a common link in Oromahoe
- e) Records extracted from the Rangihamama research project, where owners have had interests in common in both blocks.

Much of this research has been a matter of collating information, often sketchy, from different sources, then fitting it together. The aim has been to identify the tupuna from whom the present owners gain their rights. To this effect, although the whakapapa goes considerably further back in time, a case point of the mid 19th century has been established, with rangatira from that period identified. From them, the kinship links which have given substance to rights in the land have been determined. People from that period who did not remain in any degree of permanent occupancy had their rights lapse. The embers of their fire died and remained cold. Work has yet to be completed in linking all the present generation with their forebears.

3. Identification of owners of shares compulsorily acquired by the Crown

Owners have been listed under three categories of:

- a) Section 137/53. Sale of uneconomic shares on succession to the Maori Trustee.
- b) Section 151/53. Live buying of shares by the Maori Trustee.
- c) Section 445/53. Consolidated uneconomic interests acquired by the Maori Trustee. (compulsorily)

Although the lists have not been entirely completed, errors in referencing in the land court records, have made it difficult to find the original documentation. Such is the case concerning shares held by Ade Kiwikiwi and others which were acquired or sold by/to the Maori Trustee under Section 435, and Section 151. 3213.553 shares were involved, for which a price of three thousand two hundred and thirteen pounds eleven shillings and one penny was paid. Further systematic searching may well find the relevant files required.

CONCLUSION

The research brief has been an interesting and rewarding exercise. It has required numerous trips north to the Maori Land Court at Whangarei, followed by periods, usually of two nights at Oromahoe to follow up matters pertinent to the brief. Parameters have been determined usually outside the confines of a standard nine to five routine. Information has been sought from records, and through people contacts, usually with one or two, occasionally more, and sometimes into the early hours of the morning. Opportunities have also arisen in the attendance of hui in meeting people and pursuing relevant material. Where it has not been possible to make personal contact in seeking information, letters have been written. Unfortunately the numbers of replies does not tally with the letters posted. Those that have replied however, have been grateful for the information received and have in their turn been obliging in their response. Verbal requests have also been made by a number of people for information concerning the scheme, and for copies of whakapapa tracking kinship links to Oromahoe. The network of interest has grown, particularly with owners listed in the schedule who have had no contact with Oromahoe, and don't know this section of their people.

Regrettably the time constraint for this exercise has made it impossible to complete the task and to present the material contained within it in an appropriate manner. Hopefully this situation may be redressed in the future, in order to have a completed and permanent record documented for the benefit of the present and future beneficiaries of the scheme. By consensus of those attending the recent 1988 "Annual General Meeting" when a decision was made to move in the direction of forming a 438 Trust, it was further decided that henceforth the land development scheme should be known simply as, "Oromahoe".

Signed

FREDA RANKIN KAWHARU