

# Heretaunga heartache

*In the first few decades after the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, many Maori learned the cost of war.*

*And a number of Maori leaders came to the conclusion that, if they were to hold on to their land, they should use the courts, the media and parliament. One such leader was Henare Tomoana of Ngati Kahungunu, whose people faced severe pressure to sell their lands.*

*But for Henare the best defence was to use the Pakeha system.*

When the Hawke's Bay began opening up to settlers, Maori were, generally speaking, happy about this. They thought it would bring good times.

And Henare Tomoana, who was the grandson of Hawea, the ariki of Heretaunga, was one of these hopeful ones. Cautious, but hopeful.

But some of the other local chiefs weren't so alert, or principled – and unscrupulous Crown purchasers were happy to ferret them out, and strike deals with them.

One of those chiefs was Te Hapuku of Ngati Te Whatuiapiti, who confessed to Donald McLean – the Hawke's Bay superintendent at the time – that the land he was willing to sell “is not entirely mine...”

These deals led, as you'd expect, to tension – and then to some chiefs hocking off land which their rivals claimed.

The Crown purchaser for the Hawke's Bay, was able to prompt a number of transactions by enticing Maori into debt.

Local Maori, he proudly told McLean in 1856, “have no alternative but to continue selling their lands as a means of obtaining supplies which have now become necessary to their existence”.

Four months later, he asked McLean for permission “to suspend purchases and starve the Natives into compliance”.

Despite his caution, Henare got sucked into debts to European storekeepers.

So, in 1864, to create a cashflow, he had a



S. Carnell Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.



hand in leasing the Heretaunga block, of over 17,000 acres, to Thomas Tanner, for 21 years.

But in those days, the Crown was the only legal buyer or lessee of Maori land. And one of the aims of the Native Land Court, which was now getting into its stride, was to put a stop to these secret land deals.

So, in 1867, that lease was replaced with one that bundled up both Heretaunga, and the neighbouring Tarakaihe block. Both had been surveyed, and been through the Land Court mill.

The mischievous Te Hapuku, meanwhile, petitioned the Native Land Court to split Heretaunga between Ngati Kahungunu and Ngati Te Rehunga.

Henare objected. This was the tribe's estate - and he and his brother, Karaitiana, saw themselves as trustees for 16 hapu.

But they were trapped. The Land Court ruled that they were just two of 10 grantees - the rest being various chiefs with dubious connection to that land.

Worse still, those grantees were not so much trustees but were in the eyes of the law absolute owners - thanks to a Native Land Act that transferred the land that belonged to thousands into the hands of a few. Henare and Karaitiana had become, in the eyes of the law, mere minority shareholders in their tribal land.

Tanner and his mates sensed their opportunity. They began to pressure the other grantees - who were also burdened by debt - to sell their shares.

Meanwhile, in 1868, public enemy number one - Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turiki - was on the run. He'd escaped from the Chatham Islands with 300 followers.

Henare, who was a loyal Government supporter, must have thought he'd help his cause by volunteering to pursue Te Kooti. Several times, Henare's men almost had him too - there were shootouts, and Te Kooti was wounded, although he kept on the move.

The next year, Henare's men tried again, this time chasing Te Kooti around Taupo. But while they were risking their

necks chasing Te Kooti (with Henare more than likely paying and provisioning his men out of his own wallet) he was served a writ for debts of £900.

Even that didn't make him lose heart. In the end, however, Henare's men were forced to return to Napier, because of lack of supplies.

The Government showed its gratitude by giving Henare a sword of honour. But practical help? Forget it.

By the end of that year - December 1869 - Henare owed over £3000, and the following year, Heretaunga had to be sold. And the sale proceeds? They all went to settle debts.

With Heretaunga lost, Henare took a new tack. In mid-1870, he told the new Hawke's Bay superintendent, JD Ormond,

that Maori were deeply unhappy about the land rorts.

That discontent was building, and led to the setting up of "the Hawke's Bay Repudiation Movement".

In part, this erupted from a feud between two powerful white land-grabbing factions.

In one corner, representing Government, there was JD Ormond, and his ally, Donald McLean - and in the other, there was Henry Russell, the squire of Waipukurau.

These two parties were scrambling to curry favour with the chiefs named on the certificates of title awarded by the Native Land Court. Get in sweet with them, they reasoned - and you'd end up with their land.



S. Carnell Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library

Henare's wife, Akenihi Tomoana



But Henry Russell's conscience got the better of him. He didn't like the arrogant way settlers were treating Maori. He wanted them to keep at least some of their land and rangatiratanga. So, he jacked up the price of Maori land where he could - particularly any that JD Ormond wanted for public works.

In 1870 Henry Russell began talking with Henare Matua, a chief. He was all for taking the land back, no ifs or buts.

JD Ormond, meanwhile, was fearful that a "collision" was about to happen. But it didn't - largely because Henare and Karaitiana held back.

Henare favoured Henry Russell's more moderate plan - which involved taking dodgy land deals to the Supreme Court, and pressuring the Government to investigate them.

Russell went on the road, drumming up support for the repudiation ideals, and raising money. He even opened a repudiation office in Napier.

Karaitiana, meanwhile, who'd become the Eastern Maori MP, told the Government

that if it didn't appoint a commission to inquire into the land grievances - he'd join the repudiationists.

A commission was, in fact, appointed - but it was a damp squib. So from April 1873, Henare and Karaitiana became repudiationists.

The Repudiation movement was the first time Maori joined together, in a Pakeha way, to try and beat the system from the inside.

Henare's biggest contribution here was to set up a Maori weekly newspaper, financed by Henry Russell, called *Te Wananga* - which ran from August 1874 until December 1878.

In the first few numbers, Henare outlined the paper's purpose - to alert readers to Pakeha business practices, and their land dealings, and to help get readers' heads around Pakeha ideas.

The paper also argued that Karaitiana was the only genuine Maori representative in Parliament - the other Maori MPs were lackeys.

In June 1876, Henare called and hosted

a meeting of chiefs at Pakowhai. The chiefs called for the reform of Maori land law. Henare, however, argued that the Native Land Court could stay - but more should be made of its provisions to protect land.

Henare succeeded Karaitiana as the Eastern Maori MP in 1879 - but soon became disillusioned. In his first year as an MP, he voted against his leader, George Grey in a vote of no confidence.

Despite that stir - and his efforts to rein in the Native Land Court - he didn't make much impact and, in 1884, he lost his seat to Wi Pere.

The end of Henare's mainstream political life wasn't the end of his efforts, though. In 1886, with Renata Kawepo, he set up a meeting in Hastings with the new Native Minister, John Ballance, to discuss the draft Native Land Administration Bill.

At that meeting, Henare suveyed the land laws - and told Ballance they were all bad news. He wanted Maori to have more say over their own affairs.

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For more information enquiries should be directed to:

Tina Suter  
Events Co-ordinator

ERMA New Zealand

Ph: 04 916 2426

DDI: 04 918 4825

Fax: 04 914 0433

roadshow@ermanz.govt.nz



By 1888, Renata Kawepo had died, and Henare was the senior Heretaunga chief.

In May 1891, he told the Native Land Laws Commission that the laws foisted on Maori by the Parliament were damaging. The solution, he said, was for Maori to make their own.

That line of thinking reflected his growing interest in Te Kotahitanga - the independent Maori parliament. Henare was one of the men who set that up and, in June 1892, when Te Kotahitanga met at Waipatu marae, Henare became its Speaker. And there, the skills he'd picked up in Parliament shone.

He was re-elected as Speaker in 1893, but by this time he'd come to see himself as "leader of the opposition" - someone who, in the absence of opposition parties, provided a contrary view.

One such view was seen in the bill he drafted for the Native Minister, asking for power over Maori to be delegated to Te Kotahitanga - who'd be subject only to the Governor. Not surprisingly, that got no traction.

In June 1898, Henare was made a member of the Legislative Council - and still had that position when he died in February 1904. @

- Danny Keenan

S. Carnell Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.



## Archives Opens Ākona Te Reo - Māori Language Exhibition

Ever wondered how we went from being fluent in Te Reo Māori, to almost losing it, to building it up again to become a taonga we can all have access to?

Archives New Zealand, which keeps all the records of Government safe, recently opened an exhibition which runs through the history of the Māori language and looks at the impact of Government policies on the health of Te Reo.

The exhibition opened in the Wellington office to mark the anniversary of the day the 1972 Maori Language petition was handed over to Parliament.

They've put a bit of effort into the exhibition, too - all the text panels are in Te Reo Māori and in English and the petition itself is on display. And quite an impressive display it makes, too - over 30,000 people signed it! Worth a visit to see if you can spot anyone you know!

The petition led to the establishment of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori and the folks at the commission have been helping out with the exhibition.

There's all sorts of useful info up for grabs, too. For example did you know that in the

1860s 75% of the Māori population could read and 66% could write in Māori. It's thought that there were more Māori who were literate in Māori than there were immigrants who were literate in their own languages.

Things went a bit downhill after that - the Native Schools Act of 1867 set up a state-controlled system of primary schools for Māori and they used English to teach the kids. At that time Māori thought this would help in working with Pākehā.

During the 1900s there was more pressure to forget Te Reo and focus on English, until by the 1930s Māori leaders such as Sir Apirana Ngata and Sir Peter Buck were worried enough to call for Māori to be spoken in Māori homes.

By the 1950s it was clear the education system was failing Māori children and the language was in grave danger. During the 1960s the Māori



Women's Welfare League, the New Zealand Māori Council and the Māori Education Foundation were all calling for instruction in Te Reo Māori.

By the 1970s other Māori groups like Ngā Tamatoa and Te Reo Māori Society joined in. By this time only 18-20% of Māori were fluent, and most of them were over 65.

In 1978 Ruātoki School became the first bilingual school. It was followed in April 1982 by the first Kōhanga Reo - Pukeatua at Wainuiomata.

From these beginnings came the Kōhanga Reo movement and the Kura Kaupapa Māori.

In 1987, following recommendations from the Waitangi Tribunal, the Māori Language Act declared Māori an official language and set up Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori.

The petition of Mrs H M Jackson and 30,000 others, 14 September 1972. (Archives Ref: ABGX, W4731/72, 1972/42 Second Sequence)