



Stories

1400s: According to B. McFadgen (Archaeologist), this time was a "watershed - a cultural boundary - between early and late prehistoric periods. Before the fifteenth century, people in New Zealand lived a different life than afterwards. In the earlier period, there were no signs of warfare - the people had no pa, and it seems that they had no need for them, in marked contrast to later times. It was around this time of crisis that geological activity escalated - the Big Crunch - culminating in widespread tsunamis. The waves would have wiped out women, children, craftspeople, knowledgeable people, as well as waka, fishing lines and nets, gardens, houses, shellfish beds and fish, seals and vegetation" (McFadgen Pg 229).

The Hao-whenua earthquake is recorded by the Ngāti Ira iwi. The earthquake caused the land around the Rongotai Isthmus to be uplifted, drying up the narrow stream channel called Te-Awa-a-Taia which ran from the middle of Lyall Bay to Evans Bay and joining Miramar Peninsula to the mainland. According to Best (1919), this took place in about the mid-15th century AD (around 18 generations before he was writing).

Artefacts found after the 15th century are less sophisticated than those found before this time. It maybe due to the fact that many craftspeople were wiped out by tsunami. As well, middens from the period before the 15th century were rich in forest birds (including moa), seals, and fish bones. But late middens, including those on ohuan soil, are mainly shellfish, with few if any forest birds (McFadgen Pg 229).

It was not long after these fifteenth century catastrophes perhaps, that Watonga and his Ngai Tara people moved into the Wellington region from Hawkes Bay. They constructed four main pa, three along the Te Ranga a Hiwi ridge line, which had a clear line of sight to the main pa which was on the site of Worser Bay School. One of the three ridge pa was built at the southern end overlooking Island Bay beach. This pa was called Uruhau and the main house, Te Mahio.

The battle Of Uruhau pa as told to Elsdon Best and recorded in, ' The Land of Tara' (1919): Mua-upoko iwi of the Otaki district including Nga-Rauru and Ngati-Ruanui attacked the Ngati Hinewai iwi at Te Uruhau. During the night before the attack Kauhika, who was an aunt of Te Rangi-kai-kore, and a dreamer of dreams, had a vision. In a dream she saw Te Wharau ridge occupied by men:- "The fire kindled there cast its glow here to Urahau and I was alarmed and awoke."

Te Rangi-kai-kore said:- "Let a person go to Te Wharau, and there stay on the eastern side of the main ridge, where the crest of the spur of Te Wharau breaks down suddenly, there to lurk aside from the path, to see if we cannot light upon a solution of the dream of the old woman."

So Mohuia and Kaipara were sent, and on arriving at the place advised by Te Rangi-kai-kore, remained there. When the sun became suspended over the bounds

of night, the invaders were seen advancing along the Wharau ridge. The scouts returned, and reported :- "There is a hostile force at Te Wharau examining the appearance of the burning of the fires." Te Rangi at once commanded:- "Go to Te Aka-tarewa and Uruhau in order that the women and children may be sent to Te Whetu-kairangi. Send a person to Para-ngarehu (fortified village at Pencarrow Head) to advise them of the hostile force at Te Wharau that is examining the country."

Even so Mohuia went to Te Whetu-kairangi, and Kaipara went to Te Aka-tarewa and as far as Uruhau. The canoes of the local people were taken across to Motu-kairangi (Miramar Island), while certain persons went to watch the main ridge extending from Te Wharau by way of the spur extending towards the south. A man was dispatched to Puke-ahu (Mt. Cook), above Hauwai (Basin Reserve), for it is said to have been a moonlight night. The enemy was now seen advancing along the beach at Kumu-toto (Woodward Street). The scouts of Puke-ahu returned and reported the rear of the force as passing Waititi (foot of Charlotte Street) while the head was at Kumu-toto. 'The men are ranked as close together as trees in a forest grove. The scouts then remained at Kaipapa (site of Vice-regal residence), on the eastern side of Hauwai, there to await developments, and to note which fort the enemy made for. It was then seen that the force was moving directly on Uruhau to deliver an attack.

When the stars of the morning were high up, the people of Te-Wai-hirere (at Point Jerningham) marched out and joined the people of Te Aka-tarewa. Then the people of Uruhau began to move out. One division of the invading force made for the sea beach below the Uruhau fortress, while the other division occupied the ridge ; thus they invested the fort. Pakau, the chief of Uruhau, was now convinced that the enemy would be defeated by him, and he also knew that the men of Te Wai-hirere and Te Aka-tarewa were outside the fort waiting for him to sally forth. There also were Tara and Tautoki, who had ascended the ridge at Orongo (ridge extending from signal station to eastern head of Lyall Bay), a name given by Tamatea-ariki on his arrival at Te Whetu-kairangi. He ascended that ridge to obtain a view of the Great Harbour of Tara, also of the other island. 'Takitumu' (his vessel) was below, at Te Awa-a-Taia, being relashed as to her top-strakes, and having gum of the houhou (*Nothopanax arboreum*) worked into the lashing holes, and, when this was done, 'Takitumu' went Te-Arapawa, that is to Te Wai-pounanu (the South Island). It was Kupe who gave this name to that island; and by him also was the first greenstone found at Ara-hura, on the west side of that island.

However, Tara and Tautoki ascended that ridge at Orongo, there to await the attack of the enemy on Uruhau. As the light of morn came the enemy force was seen on the beach below the fort of Uruhau, and tho men of the land had moved out of Uruhau, as was denoted by the voice of Pakau being heard shouting out, "Charge ! Charge !" Some of the local braves had diverged by the track to the beach, where fighting had commenced, while those of Te Wai-hirere and Te Aka-tarewa joined the Uruhau men. Te Rangi-kai-kore cried out:—" O Pakau ! Attack ! Join in !" On hearing this the enemy fled to the forest to the west of Uruhau. Then fighting was carried on at the seaward side, and Te Toko, one of the chiefs of the enemy force, was slain in a fight at Waitaha, on the beach at the promontory on the western side of Te Awa-a-Taia.

When night fell, the people of this part, the clan Ngati-Hinewai, bethought

them that the enemy might turn to and dig up their seed kumara, which had been planted and were sprouting, so they pulled them up during the night. This act was the cause of the name Ngati-hutihuti-po (The Night pullers) being assigned to the clan Ngati-Hinewai.

This task completed, all crossed over the channel and entered Te Whetu-kairangi. When Te Rangi-kai-kore, Pakau and Te Piki-kotuku, the chiefs of the forts of the mainland arrived, the women, children and old men had crossed over to Para-ngarehu, where they were then staying. Dwelling within Te Whetu-kairangi nought remained save weapon-wielding braves; the fort was well manned, for Ngai-Tara numbered six (? hundred) twice told at that time, while the enemy force of Ngati-Ruanui and Mua-upoko was four hundred once told.

That night the bodies of Te Toko and Whakatau (two slain chiefs of the invaders) were burned with fire in Haewai (Houghton Bay), west of Te Rae-kaihau (western headland of Lyall Bay) on the coast.

Next morning the invaders burned the forts of Uruhau, Te Aka-tarewa and Te Wai-hirere, the huts in all the cultivation grounds at Pae-kawakawa and all other cultivations of the mainland. The raiders then betook themselves to the making of rafts, whereby to cross over to Motu-kairangi. Having all assembled on Motu-kairangi, they then invested the Whetu-kairangi fort. One hundred were stationed at Takapuna, one hundred at Kirikiri-tatangi (Seatoun), one hundred at Te Mirimiri, and one hundred at the side toward Kaiwaka, the lagoon on the western side of Te Whetu-kairangi, thus was Te Whetu-kairangi invested. Fern was obtained from the mainland wherewith to set fire to the stockade defenses of the fortress, to be kindled when wind sprang up. A contention ensued in the rolling of bundles of fern against the defenses, which did not reach them, so energetic were the men in the fort in casting whip-spears from the fighting stages of the fort. Seven men were slain by the garrison by means of these spears slung with a whip from the elevated platforms. This weapon was of this form : one end was brought to a point and deeply notched behind the point; when this notched end pierced a person, it broke off in his body. (It is said that some of these rough spears had two such notches, and, when a man was pierced with one, and a person endeavored to pull it out, then it broke at the second notch, the one nearest the point, which end piece was left in the wound, and would assuredly cause death.)

It is said that the investing force camped out in the open, and on a certain night came on a southerly storm accompanied by rain, whereupon the invaders were greatly distressed by the rain and cold, even to the next day. Also they suffered for want of food, for they had consumed all the kumara sets they had dug up in the cultivation grounds. The food supplies of the ocean, and paua (Haliotis), Kuku (Mytilus), and pipi (Chione) of Te Awa-a-Taia were unprocurable on account of the storm.

Then Tara said to his warriors ; - "To-morrow, in broad daylight, let us issue forth, and let three men challenge the company, while those behind press on and cover them. Grant them no rest; ere the fight has raged long, they will be wearied on account of their hunger and exposure to the storm."

All the people within Te Whetu-kairangi agreed to this action. In the dead of night they prepared food; as they were eating it day came. Then Te Whetu-kairangi poured forth its braves. On account of the heavy fall of snow of the previous night continuing until the sortie was made by the warriors, when the

enemy realised their action the whole six hundred once told had issued forth from the fort.

The invaders fled to the western side of Te Awa-a-Taia; some reached it in safety, others, owing to the flood tide, perished in the waters, while yet others were slain by the local folk. Tamatea-kopiri and Marohia were the only chiefs killed; one of the chiefs perished in the waters and his body was cast on shore. The story is that many escaped, that is they crossed the channel of Te Awa-a-Taia, floated across it, and when the pursuers arrived at the shore of Te Awa-a-Taia, the majority had already crossed. This was known by the number of dead, which amounted to one hundred odd. It is said that most of the dead were of Mua-upoko. Here ended this fight.

1850s: the variegated thistle can still be seen growing thickly over most of the Lyall Bay hills [apparently it came from sheep imported from Australia] (Sutherland A. 1947 Pg 37).

1850s: "apart from the Maoris at Te Aro, Pipitea , Petone and Hutt, we knew of very few Maoris near Wellington. A few families lived at Houghton Bay; and at the head of the valley of Houghton Bay, near the foot of Mt Albert, was another camp situated in a clearing surrounded by beautiful native forest. That one was almost directly behind the old homestead where my father afterwards had his sheep yards" (Sutherland A. 1947 Pg 120).

1855 Earthquake: the clay walls of the Sutherland homestead collapsed, some of daughters were in the kitchen and barely escaped. Riding round to Houghton Bay, William and Elizabeth Sutherland found an enormous quantity of fish caught high and dry (Sutherland A. (1947) Pg 49). Reference was made to caves that formerly existed near the top of the hill near the outward point of the bay [Te Raekaihau Headland]. They were subjects of interest to the girls, who never ascertained how far they penetrated into the hill. They were closed up by the earthquake of 1855 (Sutherland A. 1947 Pg 124).

1863: "Country sections 1-4, 216 acres [most of Houghton Valley]– were bought by Alexander Sutherland in 1863, and until then he had been grazing these sections paying a small rent perhaps, or more likely squatting on them" (Sutherland A. 1947 Pg 124).

1864: Sutherland employed William Wilson Bird (aged 14) as a cowboy and general handyman who stayed 74 years (He would have known the Houghton valley area intimately and it is possible that the remains of a hut still seen on the track opposite the corner of Hungerford and Houghton Bay Rds was built for him as an overnight shelter) (Sutherland A. 1947 Pg 50).

1870s: the sheep carried on the Lyall's Bay station in 1870 amounted to between 1200 and 1500 half-breds. This apparently was the peak period, and from then on the flock there reduced until in 1878 there were approximately 800. To clean the wool, sheep were washed in the sea, in a small bay about half a mile on the Island bay side of Lyall's Bay. This small inlet or bay has now been filled in and built over by the city Corporation (could refer to Dorrie Leslie Park) (Sutherland A. 1947 Pg

64.).

1890s: At this time there were only 2 families in Houghton Bay, Williamson and Love, and very few people lived at the bay, and only 6 families in Melrose (Keneally, 1984). At that time Mr. H.M. Haywood owned most of the Houghton Valley area including the Hermits cave. He tried unsuccessfully to save the cave when the road was built (Hutchinson P. 2011).

1911: In the early 1900s Mr Lopez farmed the top of the valley. The area now known as Sinclair park was called 'Bull paddock' because a bull killed Mr Lopez in 1911.

1924: Jean Huxford's father, A. Harper "bought this house [56 HB Rd] for his sister Mrs. J. Sinclair (Jim Sinclair's mother). She was living in Waipawa. The land went down to the creek and up to Buckley Rd and along it to Houghton Bay Rd and down to the fence by what was called McClintocks Cnr. He paid 2000 pounds for the whole lot"(Jean Huxford Memoirs).

Mildred Pfeiffer's story: I came to live on View Rd in the year 1926. The children in the valley either went to Lyall Bay School or South Wellington in Newtown. Myself I went to Lyall bay school, quite a long walk for a 5 year old and in all kinds of weather.

In the district a piece of land was given to the Progressive Assn. of H.V. in 1929 and a local hall was built for 98 pound. The hall was used for just so many functions. As a church where all the children in the area went to Sunday School or bible classes and every year we had an anniversary where all the children were put on a layered stand and sang hymns and choruses. And parents came along as audience. Often the church put on plays & concerts. The hall had Scouts, Girl Guides, Cubs, Mothers League, Townswomen's Guild, Country Dances, Table tennis, Bowls, lodge for a group of children who were called Good Templars. These children took an oath to say they would never drink alcohol and would never swear or gamble. Tennis Club was started up on the patch below the hall in the 30's. In the year 1930 the children in the valley were all asked to attend school in the hall while the school was being built. In 1931 February the school opened with 2 teachers, Miss Henderson took up to Standard One and Miss Park took Std. 2,3,4,5 & 6.

I was in Miss Park's Room. A very stern teacher who had a cane and she used it. Everyone walked to school and everyone went home to lunch. We had 1 hour's lunch break. On very wet wild days we would stay at school until 1pm and then have the afternoon off. During the early 30's was depression years, most families were hard up. Often children came to school with bare feet. Their parents couldn't afford to buy them shoes.

1928: "Houghton Bay, Past and present. A suburb apart. Developing fast. The material for my residence [James Laurensen at No22 View Rd] was sledged across another man's paddock, and View road north, to my home, was made by my old neighbour, Sinclair, his boys, and myself, and later widened by the City Council. When the land was cut up thirty years ago into blocks ranging from an acre

upwards, it was purchased by a band of working people. Out of all the men who originally signed these agreements, I am the only one left in the district. We were, then under 'the old Melrose Borough Council and the road was a cart track from Houghton Bay. Credit for the public betterment of the district must be given to Messrs. Sinclair, Williamson, Isbister, Coutts, and Hayward" (EP 16 Feb 1928, Papers Past. ATL).

1930 - 1940: According to Frank Crane (lived at 171 Houghton Bay Rd) the MacIntosh family started a shop on the corner of Houghton Bay Rd and Esplanade. The Cranes took over the shop when Frank was in College (probably late 30's). He said he delivered groceries by hand car (Frank Crane Interview 2010). According Allen Cobb (lived at 24 View Rd), The Cranes started a very small shop (may have been a converted garage) and sold penny ice creams and soft drinks. Frank Crane used to help Sid Restieaux milk the cows as a boy and take the milk to Island Bay. All the roads were gravel.

Allen Cobb also said that a hermit lived in a tiny cottage on Buckley Rd hillside [on west side of school] (Alan Cobb, written correspondence, 2005). Jean Huxford said a Mr Jessop lived in it and it was built in anticipation of Clonmel Rd being built (Jean Huxford, Memoirs), [Connected somehow to the Williamson family of 104 Houghton Bay Rd] "The land for the school was bought from a Mrs. Merrie or Merry who came out regularly to collect rent from a Mr. Jessop who had what we call a bach halfway up the hill to Buckley Rd. Having built there because Clonmel Rd was shown on the map as a proposed road, which was never put in" (Jean Huxford Memoirs).

"I remember an single man was given 10 shillings for one day's work etc. was when the ground for the Houghton Bay School was cut out of the rock by pick and shovel work. At the age of 12 years old I bought a section for fifty pounds! I drew the money from my own account and a lawyer who later became Mayor of Wellington had to come to the N.Z. Post Office and sign that my dad was really my dad he signed that he was. However, this was short lived as he died and the previous owner gave me my money back. I cried, I wanted that section. It was below 104-106 Hb Rd, entrance was by the present day school fence" (Jean Huxford Memoirs).

"During the depression, the Sinclair's [lived at 56 Houghton Bay Rd] kept cows on their land which ran from the school up as far as Buckley Rd. They could be found carrying milk around the valley and selling it. After the depression it was back to the building trade and he and his brothers built eight houses in the valley area" (EP: 29 Jan 1992).

"A Mrs. Miller lived on Hungerford Rd.[No 75] worked hard raising money for the hall. One year she, with two of my aunts went from shop to shop in Wellington getting toys donated. These were very hard times but a Christmas party was put on in the hall for all children in the district. Jim Todd drove he and his brothers truck decorated with balloons etc. from her place up to the hall blowing the horn all the way with Father Christmas and hid two fairies on it. I was one of the fairies and the other fairy was Thelma Huxford. That day he gave every child a toy from his sack and each child queued up and was given a cake and a soft drink.

As Mrs. Miller said it would probably be all those children would get that year, as times were so bad. The kind people who do these things should not be

forgotten in History, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Williamson, and Mrs. Mouat. Mrs. Millar had whalebones over her gateway. On a Sunday after Bible class we would go down to the beach and she would be there. She wore white cotton stockings, she told us it kept the sand flies away. We loved to watch her put her forefinger in the sand and make a circle and she kept going round it getting smaller and smaller until her finger was right in the centre then lifting her finger up and down a couple of times a centipede would be drawn right up out of the sand. I think she had aboriginal blood in her". (Jean Huxford, Memoirs).

1931: "PRINCESS BAY AND CHILDREN. The question of the taking of sand from Princess Bay from the "Bun Around" -was brought up at the City Council meeting last night. "So much sand has been taken out of this bay that it has been changed from a beautiful picnic resort to a positive deathtrap for kiddies and, picnickers," said Councillor Semple in referring to Princess Bay. Great big holes had been dug and the landscape destroyed, ruining the place as a resort and making it decidedly unsafe. He considered that the thing should be stopped immediately. Councillor McKeen mentioned that inquiries had shown him that sand had been taken from the vicinity of the "Bun Around" for a number of years without the council getting any royalty. It was decided that the whole matter should be gone into by the Reserves Committee" (EP, Vol. CXII, Issue 14, 16 July 1931, Page 14. Papers Past, ATL)

1933: "HOUGHTON BAY'S NAME. A correspondent recently asked which was the correct method of spelling Houghton Bay – Houghton or "Haughton." The information was then vouchsafed that "Houghton" was correct, as it was named after Mr. J. Houghton, who arrived in Wellington in 1843. Mrs. Jessie Houghton Probyn, a granddaughter of Captain Robert Houghton, master mariner, who arrived on the Aurora on January 22, 1840, now writes to say that the bay was named after her grandfather. Captain Robert Houghton she adds, had charge of the signal station on Mount Albert when he died. Ward's "Early Wellington" is the authority for the statement that Mr. J. Houghton gave his name to the bay, which was called by the Maoris Haewai" (EP, Vol. CXVI, Issue 69, 19 September 1933, Page 3. Papers Past, ATL)

1940s: Allan Cobb writes, 'in between the time of leaving Haughton valley School until 1945 life was full of interest for the lads of the valley. Allen Cobb – Stewart Bruce – John Blair – Reg Jacobs – Bas Jacobs – Ned Sellan – Norm Sellen – Murray Sellen – Lester Lye – Tom Walls – Ray Crespín – David Mildreth - Andy King – all the Huxfords – Jim Blair – Malcolm McKinnon – John Gunn – the Doreen boys – The Mather lads - the Nicols boys – Frank Crane and many others" (Alan Cobb, written correspondence, 2005)

1940 – 1950: The Esplanade tar sealed in the 40's. This was done by stripping sand from Houghton and Princess bay beaches, for use by the Maranui Asphalt plant at the bottom of Hungerford rd. In the 1940's after the war there were concrete bunkers on the beach and tank traps in the roadway. (S. Graham, written correspondence). According to Frank Reading, there was a Home Post on the corner of Houghton Bay Rd & The Esplanade. Locals had to show a passport to get

from Houghton Bay to Island Bay (Reading F. interview 2012). According to Barry Calnan, there was a Home Guard HQ in his grandfather's garden shed, which was on the corner of Hungerford & Houghton Bay Rds (Calnan B. interview 2012).

(Research to gather historical information focused on pre- 1950s, before being lost. Historical information post - 1950s will hopefully be done sometime in the future. Grant Corbishley 2013).

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Abbreviations

ATL - Alexander Turnbull Library

EP – Evening Post

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