

This important valley is intersected by three rivers and numerous tributary streams. The communication from the port with the interior is to cross the lagoon which may be done at high water with a large boat or small steamer of light draft of water. There is considerable depth of water in the river and the tide is exceedingly rapid. After going about fifteen miles up the navigation becomes impeded with timber. I imagine these rivers to take their rise in the distant mountain range to the Westward and probably from the same source. I had no opportunity of examining the country except part of the valley alluded to, but consider the greater part of the 880,000 to be available land.

From conversations with Natives I concluded there was little difficulty in travelling to Port Nicholson and I am sanguine that the valley of Aoriri will be found to communicate with the valley of the Hutt, the Natives also travel to Cook's Straits, keeping near the banks of the river which they follow in for some time after leaving Aoriri and I have every reason to think this river is the Manawatu therefore there is little doubt easy communication may be had to most parts of the interior and West Coast.

Cattle bred there might after the bridle road is cut be driven to Port Nicholson, the different settlements in the straits and to the Plymouth Company's settlement at Taranaki. The natives have also a path through a pass in the interior range of mountains by which they can communicate with Caffia and Wycatto. The rivers in the valley of Aoriri abound with eels which are caught and cured in immense quantities by the Natives and keep good for several months. About this part of New Zealand it is very thinly populated and the natives have had but little intercourse with the white people and missionaries, they are, consequently, more ignorant and barbarous than the generality of natives but they wish to have some Europeans settle amongst them.

I am, Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

W. B. RHODES.

Te Aro, April, 22nd, 1841.

101. At page 37 there appears an extract from an account by Messrs. Thomas and Harrison. The full text of this contribution is as follows:—

*New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Straits Guardian*, Wellington, Saturday morning, 10th May, 1845

EXTRACT FROM JOURNAL OF A WALK ALONG THE EAST COAST TO TABLE CAPE BY MESSRS. THOMAS AND HARRISON

On the 27th after three hours walk along a sandy beach we came within three or four miles of Kidnappers when the road turns off on some sand hills, thence up a very steep and high hill, the path now lay across the summit of the range forming the southern boundary of the Houriri plain, towards the south west we saw the river Tukituki winding through a valley till it discharges itself with the Awapuni into the sea. Descending the hills we again came on the beach along which we walked four hours passing Kurupa's Pa and some lagoons, crossing the Tukituki and Awapuni at its junction. Here is a large Pa at which we stopped for the night. We were well taken care of, the natives providing for us well, according to the chief's instructions. The next day with a man and a boy we went off in a canoe for the Bluff of Houriri the wind blowing very strong and coming ahead delayed us much. It was 2 p.m. before we got through the channel and lagoons and had landed at the opposite side of the Houriri River; the harbour formed here by the river opening the lagoon was what is termed McDonald's Cove, is good for vessels of about 100 tons. There is a strong tide at all times, the land immediately around the lagoon is swampy and would require an embankment to render it available for the formation of a township. At the mouth of the river there are two small low sandy islands which might answer for a few stores but there is no wood and water must be brought from a distance; the plain of Houriri lying between two ranges of hills running north and south and stretching away towards the Manawatu with which it is connected by other valleys and plains is about 60,000 to 70,000 acres in extent, consisting for the most part of grass intermixed with bullrush and swamp.

102. As further contribution to the description of Ahuriri and surrounding places we can take firstly a portion of a letter from Captain Drury of H.M.S. "Pandora," published at the command of the Governor in the *New Zealand Gazette* of 1855, page 73. The letter is dated 25th June, 1855, and goes on to say:—

*Hawke's Bay - Ahuriri.*—We arrived in Hawke's Bay on the 26th February anchoring N. 77° W. 1½ miles from the Bluff. We remained in the roadstead off Ahuriri ten days and at one time I was in great hopes of getting into the harbour, having found it deeper than usually reported. There was 12' 6" at high water, at the shoalest point, which was only just below our draft of water. The tides are rapid but by leaving the roadstead at or near high water there was little difficulty in entering. I have supplied the Commissioner of Crown Lands with a tracing of our survey of the entrance, and I think the local authorities could easily place two beacons in line to guide vessels in, removing their positions should the freshets affect the channel. The following remarks are appended to the plan.