

was truly a food supply area, and has been so for ages. So greatly was it valued by the natives through the generations that songs were sung, poetry composed and dances created in praise of its productiveness. It was the most valuable part of the Ahuriri patrimony.

Native tradition and all the available evidence demonstrates clearly that in its original state it was a fresh water area with a fair proportion of rich dry flats—the deepest portion of the water area being around Te Pakake Pa.

The food obtained from its waters consisted of eels, flounders (mohoao), Kakahi's, &c., and birds, and from the dry areas kumaras, taros, hues, &c.

Those conditions existed until the Tutaekuri River changed its course, about 1767 and turned the whole area into one sheet of water. The weight of water from within gradually increasing it eventually forced an outlet through which at the time offered the least resistance.

Tutaekuri, prior to it changing its course, had its mouth on the sea coast and not in the Te Whanga. In time of flood the waters from the Waiohinganga, Purimu and other smaller streams found their way into the sea at Ketekeeterau, near Petane, which outlet was more or less artificially kept open by the Maoris.

It was there as recorded in Banks' Diary, when Captain Cook visited Hawke's Bay and also in the Admiralty Chart in England.

Prior to the sale in 1851 the food obtained from Te Whanga had changed more or less in quantity and kind. They lost the cultivable area, but nevertheless, they were still able to catch flounders, eels, birds, and gather Kakahi; and in addition, they were enabled to catch salt water fish and gather cockles and mussels round the Iron Pot.

From prior to 1840 right up to at least 1874 the Te Whanga was for all practical purposes a fresh water area.

W. B. Rhodes in his report dated 22/4/41 :—

- (a) The entrance to the river is generally smooth and the ebb-tide of fresh water runs out at the rate of seven miles per hour.
- (b) The communication from the Port with the interior is to cross the lagoon, which may be done at high water with a large boat . . .

George Edward Wright (2/2/61) :—

The depth of water varies much from 30 to 36 ft., mid-channel at the entrance, to 4 ft. about Captain Charlton's.

O. L. Bousefield (17/4/65) :—

It was now possible to cross at high water to the Western front of Napier, in almost any course from Battery Point in from 3 to 9 feet of water. Some ten years ago this could be done by taking Onepoto for the starting point. It will be observed that the Tutaekuri used about that time to cross the mud flats on the line marked K.

The rise and fall of the tide ranges from 3' 4" to 3' 7", ordinary spring from 4 ft. to 4' 4".

In the course of time, and with the advent of the Pakeha, the present channel was improved in various ways by heaping of rocks, building piers and dredging.

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE NAPIER H.B. (30/1/61)—2

That before any extended dredging operations are carried on at the eastern Harbour, the South side at least should be secured by piling and planking . . . and when convenient the north side should be secured in like manner.

George Edward Wright (2/2/61) :—

My opinion of Napier Harbour was that if left as it was in 1859 that part of it principally used as a Harbour and called the Iron Pot would soon be closed by the sand and shingle drifting into it.

. . . From the accumulation of sand-banks it was undoubtedly necessary to undertake by artificial means to provide accommodation for vessels if it were desired they should lie in still waters.

I first visited Napier about 7 years ago . . . At that time it was three feet deeper at the entrance to the Iron Pot than it is now.

Turnbull Library,
Wellington : a report
headed "McDonald's
cove."
Para. 100.

Para. 93.

Herald, 23/2/61.