

Tangata Whenua History Of Reservoir Creek



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As there is nothing written of the Tangata Whenua history of the part of the Waimeha Plain that this report covers, much of our research is based on other research done in the general area.

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TANGATA WHENUA (IWI)

Some of the earliest Iwi recorded in the area of the Waimeha Plains were Rapuwai and Waitaha.

One of the first recorded legends is that of Rakaihautu who landed in Nelson around 800AD and travelled through the Waimeha Plains on his way down the South Island digging out the lakes as he went.

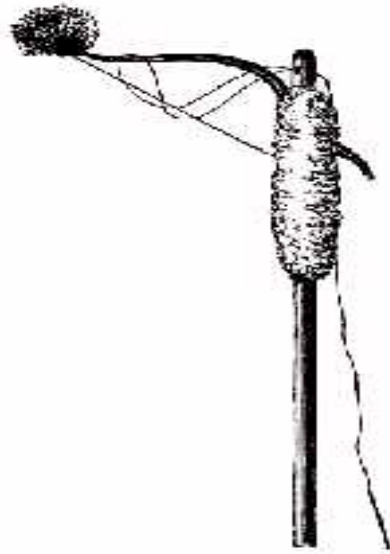
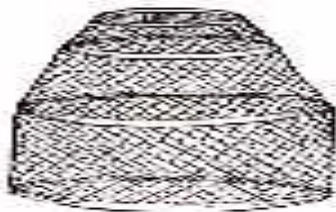
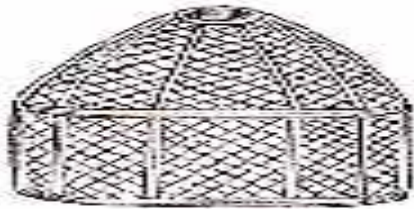
Some implements and Taonga have been found in the area that date back over 800 years to the archaic period one of these being the Adze pictured that was found by George McMurtry around the area now known as Templemore Ponds.

In the late 1500s Ngati Tumata kokiri arrived from The Wanganui district and controlled a lot of the Top of the South for about 200 hundred years until Ngati Kuia and Ngati Apa absorbed them in the early 1800s.

There was a small group of Ngai Tara based on the Waimeha Plains around this time and they are credited with building the Pa that was at the back of where Appleby School now stands possibly called Tapuwae-nuku. They were agriculturalists and had extensive gardens on the plains.

Another Small seasonal Pa was situated at the joining of the Wa-iti and Wairoa Rivers. This was called Pohare after its Chief.

Enanga (fish traps) and Manu
(bird) traps.



KAI (FOOD)

The Waimeha plain was used extensively for the production of food and the adjoining estuary was a never ending supply of Kai Moana. Seasonal Pa were established along the shores and on one of the many Islands in the estuary. The plain was also the main trading route for Iwi from Whakatu to Te Tai Poutini.

There were Ika (fish), Pipi, Tuangi (Cockles), Titiko (Mud Snails), Tio (Oysters), Kuku (Mussel), Enanga (Whitebait) and Kawari (Whelks) in the estuary. Sea birds would also have been harvested.

In the Rivers and freshwater creeks there were Koura (freshwater Crayfish) Tuna (eel) the wetland areas would supply Pukeko and Duck and in the bush there would be Kereru (pigeon), and Tui. As well as fern root, Kumera and other crops that were cultivated.



TAONGA (TREASURES)

During our oral interviews with both George McMurtry and Phyliss Field we discovered that they held Taonga (Treasures) that had been found along the Creek when they were children.

George had an archaic adze that he found under a Willow tree near Templemore Ponds when he was a child.

Phyliss' Brother found a Pakohe Argillite) adze while excavating a swimming hole at Easby Park near the top of the Creek.

The Archaic adze was of the type used in the construction of Waka (Boats) and the Pakohe one is similar to others we know were used for a wide range of jobs from opening Kaimoana (Seafood) to dressing Harakeke (Flax).



NGAHERE (BUSH)

Although most of the indigenous forest has disappeared from the area now we know that there would have been plentiful Harakeke (flax) in the swampy lowlands and Tuatara, Nihau, Beech, Matai, Kahikatea, Pocketed, and Ferns through the dry flats to the hills in the Barnicott Range. In this range runs the Pakohe (Ardulite) vein and several working sites are situated nearby.

Many of these species would have been used for kai (food) as well as Ronga (medicine) and making various items for the capture and preparation of Kai.

Totara and others were used for Waka, Harakeke had many uses from clothing to baskets for gathering and cooking Kai. The Muka (fibre) was used for Taaniko (weaving) and rope/binding for things such as bird traps and Hinau (eel/fish traps).

Much of the bush was used in various forms for Rongoa.

Kereru Korowai



Taaniko



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Whakaahua.maori.org.nz Images Library for several of the images used in this report.

