

Life and times of Hoani John Tairaoa II: 1882–1960 and how they might relate to Te Waati, his older brother.



Hoani Tokorangi Tairaoa I

Hoani II was born in 1882, in his parents' home, in Beach Road, Whangaehu the fourth son of Hoani I Taiaroa (born 1837 at Otukou Marae) and Te Kiri Tinimare Nga Winika (Rennie) of Ngati Apa..

Te Waati was the second son so would have been born at least a couple of years earlier but probably even earlier because records show that Hohepa, the third son, was born in 1877.

Hoani I was brought up on a subsistence farm at Papatupu (near Pipiriki) and later was involved in the conflict with the Hauhaus, escaped to become involved with a Volunteer Native Contingent attached to the British Army Regiment stationed in the Whanganui area and fought with the British against the Hauhaus at Otapawa Pa in South Taranaki in January, 1866. Hoani I received service medals and 100 acres of land from the government for his services. After this he returned to the Papatupu area to continue farming at a farm called "Waimarino".

It is not clear when the family moved from here but it is possible that Te Waati was born here rather than at Whangaehu.

The farm at Whangaehu was a cropping business growing oats, wheat, onions and other vegetables for sale. One year Hoani I "netted 600 pounds, an awful lot of money in those days so he bought himself a car." It is said that all ten of the children, seven brothers and three children helped with the many chores around the home.

Hoani II went to Whangaehu Primary School but it is not known whether Te Waati did as well. If he did, it was a two mile walk to the school

Hoani I had earlier embraced the Roman Catholic faith and built a small whanau church near his homestead which they named "Rakautaua". "With financial assistance from his family and using his own expertise he built the Church himself. The church was regularly used by several families in the area and Hoani I baptised all his children there." One assumes, therefore that, Te Waati was Roman Catholic.

We now know that Te Waati died in 1909. To date, we have not discovered where he is buried. It seems likely that he would have been buried at the urupa alongside the family church but others have suggested that we search the urupa at Kauangaroa which we have done without success yet.

In 1918 (25/11) Hoani I died and was interred in front of the family church. In the same year (or it may have been 1913) the church burnt down. Some family photos and Hoani's war medals were salvaged but some important family documents were destroyed. The bell of the Church is in the Catholic Church in Whangaehu.

In 1918 Te Kiri Tinimare died and was buried beside her husband?

(This date is contradicted by note in Whanganui Minute Book, No 86 page 235; 13 May 1927 which notes that Te Kiri Taiaroa aka Kiri Reni died in 1924—this lists all the sons/daughters still living at that time (Kahukura, John (Hoani II), Meri, Tio, Nora and Pita) but not those who had pre-deceased her (Te Waati, 1907; Hapimana; Ruuma 1910; Pawhare).

All but 18 acres of the family farm was sold. Seventeen acres was kept for the family and one acre for their urupa. Two of Te Waati's sisters Ruuma (Leonie) (d. 1910) and Whakairi (Nora) and Piki (Ruuma's daughter) are buried here.

The area, where the family church was, has been designated as a family urupa for descendants of Hoani I and Te Kiri Tinimare.

Te Waati's aunt Paremono (Polly) died in 1919 and was buried in Waihi Bay, Tokaanu.



Hoani Tairora II

Hoani II, Tom's uncle, worked in shearing sheds, as a deckhand on the riverboat, "Waireka", as a builder in Taumarunui, Raetihi and Waiouru (often in conjunction with his brothers Kahukura and Hohepa (also known as Joe Paddy)). Hoani II was a self-taught musician and played the harmonica and banjo. Together with Kahukura and Hohepa he played in a dance band in many gigs around the district. Hoani II had children by three women, with the third (Tehukinga/Lucy) in the late 1920's, he had seven children one of whom was named Te Waati (not to be confused with ours). Hoani embraced the Ratana faith at this time and all the children were baptised in the Ratana Church.

(The Ratana Church was not founded until after Te Waati's death so he presumably died a Roman Catholic. His sons, Mick and Nev, Dad's brothers, married into the Ratana family and presumably into the Ratana Church although for some reason, perhaps the fact that he was living with the Jones family, Dad did not join the Ratana Church.)

Now working as a roadman Hoani II moved with the work to Tawata then to Ratana in 1950-51 where both of them were officers of the church as well as acting as caretakers of the Ratana Temple.

When he died (playing cards) in 1960 he was 78 years old and his wife died eight months later.

In contrast his brother, Te Waati who died in 1909, must have been no more than 32 years old. His oldest child Mick had been born in 1898, Bill Tete in 1901, Nev in 1902, Dad in 1907. Two sisters Reimana and Makareta were born after this but both died without issue. *(Some of the land entitlements which Dad succeeded to came through Makareta (aka Margaret)).*

We are not sure why Te Waati died so young. It may have been a flu epidemic. There was a flu epidemic which hit the country in 1920 and many died as a result including Hoani II's first wife Karanga, Archie Taiaroa's grandmother.

Extracts from notes written by Soraya Peke for Hoani John Taiaroa II reunion held at Whangaehu Marae, Labour Weekend, 1997.

Thanks to Soraya Peke for sharing the information about our common great-grandfather (Hoani I) and her grandfather (Hoani II).

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