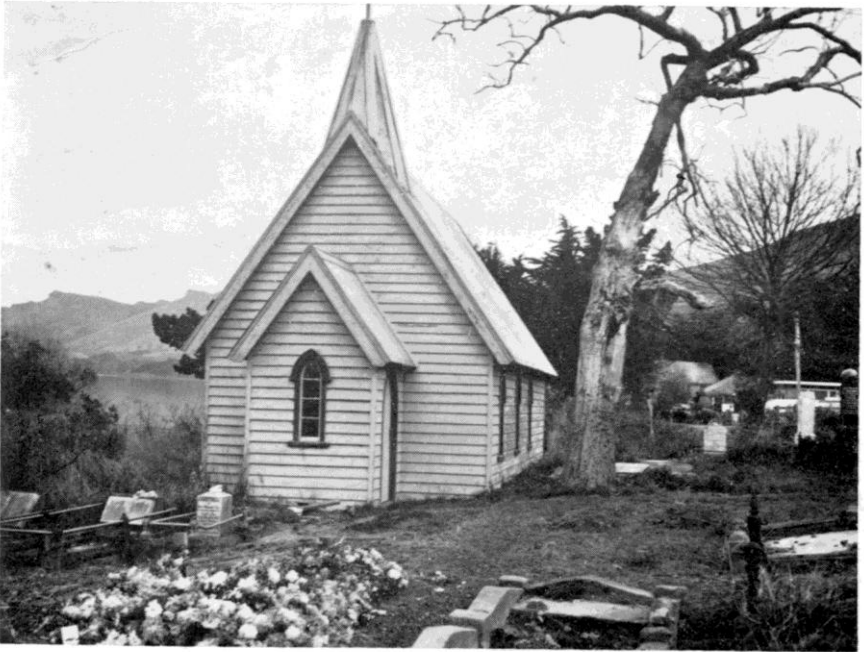


Centenary of the Rapaki Church

CENTENARY OF THE RAPAKI CHURCH

1869-1969



*A Brief History of the Church,
Settlement and People*

Centenary of the Rapaki Church

*The Lord is in His Holy Temple,
Let all the earth keep silence
He is not far from any one of us.
Let us come and bow down
And worship Him.
Kei roto i tona Whare Tapu te Atua,
Kia Marie tonu te ao katoa
Kei to tatou taha tonu the Atua
Haereinai kia whakapiko kia whaka pono
Tatou kite Atua.*

Introduction

At the request of the people of Rapaki I have set down in this Brochure, the founding of our settlement of Rapaki and the Rapaki Reserve, the circumstances leading up to the appointment of a Maori Wesleyan Minister to reside at Rapaki; the building of the Church, the Centennial of which, we are celebrating; a short biography of the Rev. Te Kooti Rato, and other Maori Ministers who followed him in the South Island; also reference to other Ministers and Laymen both Maori and Pakeha who conducted services in the church down through the years. The names of some of the Maori people who lived at Rapaki at the time the church was opened and up to the last decade. The narrator regrets if some names have been overlooked. I have also set down some of the Maori place names and legends commemorating our ancestors.

I have to thank Mr Jim Lewin, District Officer, Maori Affairs Department and many others who gave me information contained in this Brochure.

WERA COUCH

Rapaki Church Centennial



Rapaki Settlement

RAPAKI

Rapaki was founded by a Ngaitahu Explorer and Warrior named Te Rangihakaputa. About the year 1720 this great explorer and warrior landed from his canoe on the foreshore and as a gesture of making his claim to the area, he took off his “Rapaki”, his waist mat, and placed it on the ground thus making claim and possession of the land surrounding the bay. Being a high chief, this garment would be sacred “Tapu” and no one dared pick it up and remove it. Thus was the settlement of Rapaki founded and received its name. The full name of the settlement is “Te Rapaki o Te Rangihakaputa”, but down through the years the name has been abbreviated to “Rapaki”.

This great warrior did not remain at Rapaki but moved on to claim other areas for the Ngaitahu people. He left his son “Wheke” and a party to establish the settlement. This Chief’s name is commemorated by the name given to our Hall and Marae “Te Wheke”.

The people living at Rapaki are known as the Ngati Wheke Hapu of the Ngaitahu Tribe.

In the dialect of the Ngaitahu people, the letter “K” is used instead of “Ng” as used in the North Island. Thus the original name of the Ngaitahu people is Kaitahu. This applies also to the maori name of Lyttelton Harbour. “Whanga Raupo” was “Whaka Raupo”.

RAPAKI RESERVE

In 1848, following the purchase of the land from the Maoris in Canterbury, the Maori Reserve of “Rapaki” containing 850 acres (No. 875) was set aside and ownership granted to about 70 people. This includes the land surrounding the next bay, Taukahara (Little Rapaki). The Reserve extends from the point on the east side of Rapaki, up the ridge to the summit of the hills, then along to a ridge at the top of a small gully on the west side of Taukahara. The boundary is easily recognised here above the main road by the stone fence which runs up the gully to the ridge above it. In 1886 the Reserve was subdivided. The greater part, above the main road was divided into two blocks, one at Rapaki containing more than 400 acres and Taukahara over 200 acres. The land below the main road at Rapaki was subdivided into areas from a quarter of an acre up to about seven acres, and individual ownership was allocated among the 70 people who were the original owners in the whole block of 850 acres or their descendants. The presiding Judge of the Maori Land Court at that time must have had a terrific headache in establishing who were entitled to land, especially at Rapaki, Kaiapoi and Port Levy, for most claimed they were entitled to be allocated land in the three areas, for they stated they resided some time from time to time in the three settlements. This fact is borne out by the roll of pupils attending the Rapaki School which was opened in 1876. The parents of some of these pupils were considered as residents at either Tuahiwi or Port Levy. This also shows the reason for the close alliance and relationship among the people living in the three settlements as well as those living in Little River (Wairewa), Akaroa and Taumutu.

THE COMING OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

The Christian Message was first preached to the Maori people of the South Island at Port Levy by a Maori named Taawao, in the year about 1839-1840. Taawao came from the west coast of the North Island where he had been taught the Christian Belief and Practice by a Ngapuhi (Northland) Maori Wesleyan Teacher, a people among whom the Missionaries had worked since 1822. In 1844 a recommendation was made by the Mission Staff in New Zealand to the Annual Meeting of the Missionary Society in London to establish a Maori Mission at Rapaki. The work in the South Island was carried out by Taawao and another man named Hohepa, both of whom had been baptised into the Wesleyan Church. Periodical visits to the different settlements were also made by the Rev. James Watkins, who established the Mission at Waikouaiti. He also supervised the work of Taawao and Hohepa.

At the Sydney Conference of the Wesleyan Church in 1865 the Rev. Te Kooti Rato, an ordained Maori Minister, was appointed to reside at Rapaki and take over the work of the Maori Department of the Wesleyan Church in Canterbury and Otago. In actual fact his ministry covered the whole of the South Island.

RAPAKI CHURCH

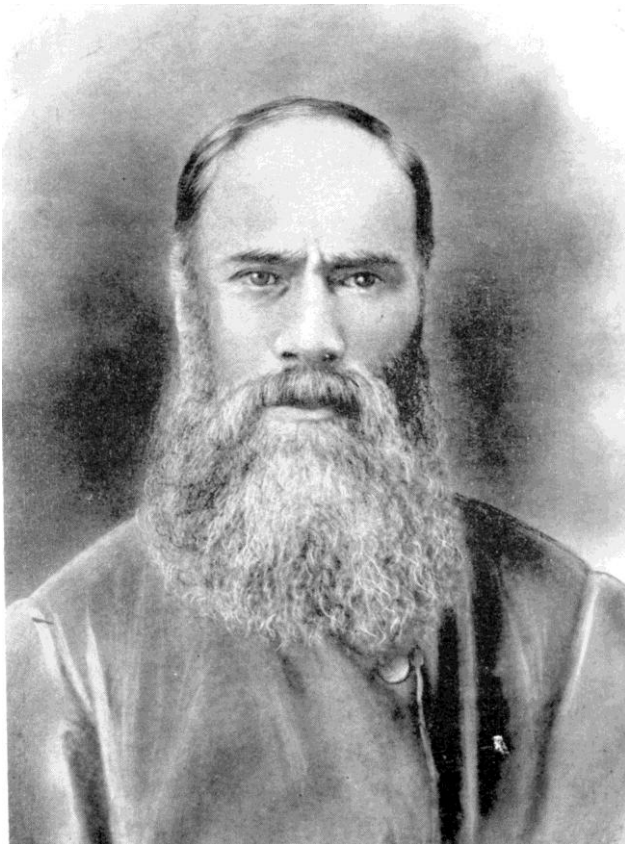
Following the appointment of the Rev. Te Kooti Rato to live at Rapaki. the people of Rapaki decided to build a church in which they could worship under the Ministry of Te Kooti. This was completed and opened on Tuesday, 4th May 1869. Unfortunately the narrator has not been able to trace any record of the names of those taking part in the opening ceremony. A report of the occasion in the 'Lyttelton Times' Newspaper dated Thursday, 6th May 1869 reads that "The courteous invitation of the Rapaki Māoris, together with the beautiful weather of Tuesday, tempted us to be present at the opening of the new church which now graces the very pleasantly situated settlement of Rapaki. The church was thronged with a congregation of about a hundred persons nearly half of whom were European Visitors, while as large a company were to be satisfied with a place outside. It would have been difficult to determine, judging from the group of Ministers standing within the Communion Rail, to what denomination the sacred structure belongs, for all three resident clergymen of Lyttelton were there, as was also Te Kooti, the native Minister of the settlement. The liturgy of the Church of England was used. The opening prayers were read by the Wesleyan Minister, the chants were led by the Maori brother of the same persuasion, the Anglican clergyman led in reading the psalm for the day, while the Presbyterian Minister offered prayers in English, and the English speaking portion of the audience sang part of the hymn beginning 'come let us join our cheerful song' and their Maori brethren chanted and read the psalms with an accuracy of time and fervour of manner very gratifying to listen to. Most earnest attention was given to the sermon preached from the Text 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name'. The offertory was taken at the door as the congregation retired, and seem to be liberal. The whole service was of a deeply interesting and edifying character, and at its close, many were the encomiums passed by the Europeans on the neatness of design and perfect finish of the: church, and the orderly and devout deportment of the Maori Worshippers. These latter were delighted at the interest displayed by their Pakeha friends, and expressed themselves as especially pleased with the Hymn singing of the ladies. At the close of the devotional part of the proceedings the Maoris invited their European visitors to a tent filled up for the occasion where they were regaled with an abundant supply of refreshments."

Information obtained from another source states that the sermon was preached by a Rev. McIntosh, and yet another source that the church cost £159 to build and that a man named John Wesley (Teone Taehea) was treasurer for this money. The land on which the church was built was decided on and set aside by the people living at Rapaki, at the time. This procedure was the common way the Maori Elders dealt with their land and was considered binding by them. In such circumstances was an area of land comprising about seventeen acres set aside for a garden and grazing for the Minister's horse and cattle. Services in the Church have been conducted by the Wesleyan later known as the Methodist Church since it was opened. After the formation of the Wesleyan (Methodist) Circuit in Lyttelton in 1871 the Minister there

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has supervised and conducted regular services in the Church in conjunction with the Maori Ministers appointed to the South Island.

About 1912 the Anglican Minister at Governors Bay used to conduct a service once a month with Mr Taare Tikao and his family in their home. Later the service was held in the hail and later at the request of the other people of the Pa an Anglican Service was conducted in the Church. This monthly service is still held by the Anglican Minister from Lyttelton.



Te Kooti Rato

MAORI METHODIST MINISTERS

Te Kooti Rato, who came from Wairarapa (Ngatikahungunu) was trained for the Wesleyan Ministry at Three Kings College, Auckland. On leaving the college in 1857 he was appointed to the Chatham Islands, in that year. In 1863 he was ordained into the Ministry at Christchurch and the Bible which was presented to him at his Ordination is signed by the Revs. James Buller, John Aldred, William Kirk, and John

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Crump. In 1865 he was appointed to reside at Rapaki and Minister to the Maori people in Canterbury and Otago. This he did for nearly thirty years, being loved by the people throughout these provinces. Then following the death of his loved wife and through old age and illness, he had to give up his ministry. He returned to his home land in the Wairarapa (Pirinoa) in 1892. He died in 1895 and is buried there.

A letter he wrote in reply to one he received from the Conference just before he died reveals his character and spirit of unflinching faith, is reprinted here:

“To our fathers and brothers who are gathered together in one house, in the house in which the Gospel of our Redeemer Jesus Christ, is preached. Dear friends, dear fathers and dear brothers, greetings to you all. May the grace of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ be with us all. I have received your letter of greetings to me, dated the 8th day of this month.

Dear friend, and all my beloved friends, greetings to you all who are assembled in the preaching of the word of our Redeemer Jesus Christ. I am very, very glad to have the pleasure of receiving such a nice letter from you all. Yes, Jesus, is my Shepherd and My Master, by day and by night, as all my heart and soul is for my redeemer, Jesus Christ. That is why I was so pleased to get such a loving letter from you one’s. When I received you one’s letter, I felt that my Master and guide was by my side day and night. My saying unto you one’s is Turn your hearts towards our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

“As he will always stay by us to show us and guide us by the right path.
“These are my loving words to you all—From your aged,

Te Kooti Rato.”

No appointment of a Maori Minister was made to the South Island until 1904. In the meantime at Rapaki an aged and loved local preacher named Teone Taeahe also known as Hoani Wetere (John Wesley) carried on the services in Maori. In 1904 Neho Herni Papapakura was appointed to the South Island and resided at Oraki, Colac Bay, Southland. He made many visits to Rapaki in his Ministry and conducted services in Maori and Pakeha. He was gifted with a beautiful tenor voice and eventually left the Ministry to tour America with a group which combined entertainment with lecturing. For many years he was in charge of a Maori Hostel in New Plymouth, where he died.

In 1916 Rakena Piripi Rakena was appointed to the Maori Ministry in the South Island. He lived for a time at Temuka but made Rapaki his headquarters most of the time he was in the South Island, and conducted services in the Church whenever he was here on the Sunday. In his work he visited the Maori people in the whole of the South Island, from Nelson and Marlborough to the Bluff in Southland and the West Coast. While in the South Island he married Miss May Couch of Rapaki in 1921. Following their marriage he was transferred back to the North Island carrying out his Ministry in the King Country, Taranaki and Northland. He died in Hawera but is

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buried in the cemetery surrounding the Church at Rapaki. He was greatly loved by the people where- ever he Ministered to them and was held in esteem by his Pakeha brethren. A son Rua Rakena is in the Methodist Ministry and at present is Assistant Superintendent of the Church's Home and Maori Missions Department in Auckland.

The Conference in 1921 appointed Matarae Tauroa as Maori Minister in the South Island. He lived at Temuka and Rapaki during his ministry which covered the whole island. He married Miss Elizabeth Couch of Rapaki and soon after was transferred back to the North Island, serving in Northland, Waikato, and Taranaki. He resigned from the Ministry to farm family lands at Pupuke near Kaeo in Northland, where he died. A son, Lane Tauroa is in the Methodist Ministry and is at present stationed at New Plymouth supervising the Maori work in that area. Another son is Principal of Wesley Methodist College at Paerata, South Auckland.

With the transfer of Matarae Tauroa, no further appointment of a Maori Methodist Minister was made to the South Island, and the conducting of Methodist 'Services in the Maori Settlement was carried out by the Lyttelton Pakeha Methodist Minister. Visits by Maori Ministers to the South Island were made from time to time. Outstanding Ministers, all senior Maori Ministers who visited Rapaki and held services in the Church down through the years were the Rev. Tahupotiki Haddon, Rev. Eruera Te Tuhi and Rev. Rangi Rodgers, now stationed at Hamilton. Mention must be made here of Pakeha Ministers, who at the time of their visits to Rapaki to conduct services were Superintendents of Home and Maori Missions or outstanding Ministers in the Maori work, Rev. F. G. Hammond, Rev. E. Gittos (known lovingly as Father Gittos), Rev. A. I. Seamer and Rev. J. G. Laurenson. Maori Ministers of the Anglican Church who visited Rapaki and conducted services were Bishop Panapa, Rev. Canon Rangihu and Rev. Canon W. Huata.

As previously stated the Methodist Ministers at Lyttelton have always conducted services at Rapaki and supervised the work of the Methodist Church here. In the early days someone from Rapaki went into Lyttelton to fetch the Minister in a horse and cart, or buggy and then took him back after the service.

Mention must also be made of a loved local preacher from Lyttelton who conducted services here' in early days, Mr B. Chambers. He always walked out and back. Then there was Mr George Couch who used to come out from Lyttelton in the late 1880's to conduct services. He married Miss Kiti Piper and settled in Rapaki and continued to hold services until he died in 1907.

Those who assisted in the services by playing the organ were Miss Kiti Piper, Miss Ria Solomon, Miss Molly Tikao, Mr George Piper, Miss Emily Manihera, Mr Wera Couch (still does), Miss Elizabeth Couch and Mrs Freda Couch.

PEOPLE OF RAPAKI

The narrator has found it difficult to establish people living at Rapaki at the time of the opening of the church up to the: end of the last century. Some of those living at Rapaki at the time and in later years to the last decade were: Irihapeti Te Kooti Rato, Teone Wetere Tāehea, his wife Harata, Iharaia Tuhaka, Horopapera Momo, his wife Hana, Hon Te Maiwhakea, his wife Hanakoukou, Iharaia Ratuka, Hohaia Tekotuku, Pita Mutu. his wife Matapi, Peneta Nohoa, Papara Kahutuanui, Tahan Hapaikete (Happy Jack), Paora Tau, his wife Ramari, Paora Taki, his wife Kohiwai, Te Kina, his wife Wikitoria, Mohi Rakuraku, his wife Ramari (Puku), Matana Piki, Teoti Paipeta, his wife Hera (Teera), Teoti Pitama, his wife Harata, Teone Tene (Denny), his wife Toria, Teone Watene, his wife Hera (Turi), Reihana Tau, his wife Wikitoria. and second Heeni (Parera), Hoani Tè Poho Riwai (Levy), his wife Mere, Barney McKinlay, his wife Irihapeta, George Couch, his wife Kiti, Takana Manihera, his wife Riti, Teiti Manihera, his wife Makareta, Eruera Manihera, his wife Hana, Anitapa (Duncan) Manihera, Henare Paipeta.

Early pupils who attended the Raoaki School opened in 1876 were Richmond Momo, Walter Momo, William Levy (Rewai), Potahepa Kelly, Emma Piper (Paipeta), Kiti Piper, Margaret Piper, Miriam Solomon, Peter Piper, John Kelly, Eliza Kelly, Leah Solomon, Jenny Momo, Abraham Solomon, Mary Tau, Lydia Manihera, Charlotte Piper, Paul Tau, Patrick Hirlihey, David (Geo) Levy, Agnes Solomon, William Piper, Charles Manihera, John Tau, Harriet Hohaia, Martha Tau, Hector Piper, John Manihera, Agnes Pitama, Martin Watson (Watene), Rachel Solomon, George Piper, Emma Solomon, Annie Lee, William Lee, Charlie Lee, Duncan Manihera, Martha Watson, Rachel Tikao, Edward Manihera, Henry Piper, James Lee, Mary Tikao, William Watson, Moses Manihera, George Pitama, Elizabeth Tikao, John Martin, Makarini Pitama.

The first teachers at the Rapaki School were Patrick Hirlihey, Rev. W. S. Lucas, Mr and Mrs J. Moore, Mr and Mrs Bone, Mr E. A. Hastings, who after retiring from teaching remained at Rapaki and died here. Mrs Marewa McConnell (flee Manihera) was a teacher at Rapaki in later years.

The present residents of Rapaki are V. Wera Couch (Maori Methodist Missionary) and wife Pearl, Robert Gillies and wife Raukura, John O. Tauwhare and wife Doreen, Whenua Rehu and wife Hana, George M. Couch and wife Hine, Arthur Couch and wife Freda, Te Whe Ariki Hutana, John Philips and wife Tewhe, Henare Paipeta, May Rakena, Kena Rakena and wife Sally, K. Smith and wife Barbara, Dudley J. Couch and wife Eleanor, Gerett Kottier and wife Dawn, Douglas Couch and wife Elaine, Henry Couch and wife Mary, Barry Page and wife Margaret, Eddie Tikao and wife Flo, Rum Watson and wife Elizabeth.

Those who volunteered to serve overseas in the first World War were: John Tikao who attained to the rank of Captain: Duncan Manihera, Corporal; Shedrack Rum,

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William Piper, Henare Piper, Waitere Manihera killed on Gallipoli. Now living at Rapaki and served overseas, Robert Gillies.

Those who volunteered for the Second World War were Tony Tikao-Barrett who attained to the rank of Lieutenant and was decorated with the M.C., Kena Rakena who served with the Air Force in the Pacific. Now living at Rapaki and served overseas, Whenua Rehu. Moke Couch served with the occupation Forces in Japan.

Kia Riwai volunteered as a V.A.D. nurse and served overseas, being awarded the B.E.M. decoration. In later years for her services to her Maori people as a Welfare officer, she was awarded the M.B.E.

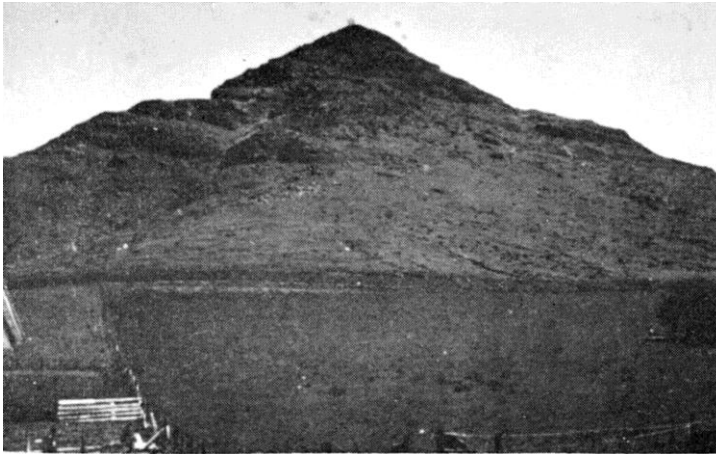
Those who achieved to high positions in the Teaching Profession were: George Piper (now aged 87), Marewa McConnell (Manihera) retired, principal, and William Gillies. Donald Couch who gained his M.A. Degree is a Lecturer at the University of Vancouver, Canada. Val Couch is a Registered Architect and is with the Wellington Education Board.

Those who gained Rugby Honours were Ben Couch (N.Z. All Black), Sam Piki and James Manihera (Maori All Blacks).

I must make mention of Napier (Mick) Hutana, who was at the time of his death in August last (1968) Chairman of the Centennial Committee. His enthusiasm to organise and make the Centennial Celebrations a successful and enjoyable reunion of our people was his greatest wish. His leadership and help is sadly missed.

PLACE NAMES AND LEGENDS

The Tribal Ancestor of the Ngaitahu Tribe is Tamatea, the captain or Ariki of the canoe Tākitimu. Tamatea was known as Tāmatea Ariki and Tamatea Fokaiwhenua. The latter name aptly describes this ancient Ancestor, Tamatea the explorer. The captains of the other Canoes who brought the first Maoris to New Zealand, Aotearoa, from Hawaiiki landed at different points along the coast of the North Island, and remained in those areas. Tamatea sailed his canoe from the Bay of Plenty along the east coast of the North Island and South Island to Southland, Murihiku. There his canoe was drawn ashore and now forms that range of mountains, Takitimu Mountains. Truly the name Tamatea Pokaiwhenua is worthy of this great Ancestor.



Poho-o-Tamatea, Tamatea's Breast

His name is worthily commemorated in two hill features overlooking Rapaki. The steep face of the peak which looks down on the settlement is called Te-Poho-o-Tamatea, Tamatea's Breast. There is a ridge of Rock starting at the top of the hill at the back of Rapaki and descending down into the gully known as The Giant's Causeway. To the Maori people the ridge is known as Nga Pungarehu o te Ahi a Tamatea, the Ashes from Tamatea's Fire. Legend has it that one night Tamatea camped on the top of the hill, a severe storm of rain and snow came up and he was almost frozen to death. He requested his Gods to bring him fire from the volcanoes of Taupo. So, he was made warm. In the morning he gathered up his fire and started on his journey south. As he walked along the ashes from the fire fell on the ground and formed the rock ridge. The Maori name is aptly given The Ashes of Tamatea's Fire. Truly the people of Rapaki live in the presence of their ancient Ancestor. The United Service Hotel in Christchurch is built from the stone obtained from the ridge, for it is first class building stone. The high Rock outcrop to the right of the ridge known as Witches Hill is known to the Maori people as Te Upoko o Kuri, the head of Kuri. Kuri is one of the early ancestors and chiefs of the Ngaitahu people. Another high outcrop

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of rock on the top of the hills overlooking Cass Bay known as the Tors is known to the Maoris as Te Moenga o Te Wheke. Te Wheke's sleeping place. Te Wheke, as I said at the beginning of this Brochure, was the chief left by Te Rangiwhakaputa to establish our settlement and his name is commemorated in the name of our hall and Marae. The highest peak in the hills surrounding Lyttelton Harbour and situated on the South side known as Mount Herbert is known to the Maori people as Ahupatiki. The narrator well remembers when he was a boy hearing his grandmother reminiscing with other women of her own age on how they hid from Te Rauparaha in the bush on the slopes of Ahuapatiki.

The Maori name of Lyttelton Harbour is WhangaRaupo or Whaka-Raupo, the bay of Raupo Reeds.

The Bay between Rapaki and Governors Bay is called Taukahara. The bays to the east of Rapaki are known as Motukauati—Rahi, Cass Bay, and the next Motukauati—iti, Corsair Bay. Groves of trees whose soft wood was used to start fire grew in these bays. Quail Island is known as Otamahua. Here the eggs of sea birds; were gathered for food also the paua. The Reef in mid harbour was known as Kaimatarua. Here were abundant supplies of mussels, kuku.

The wharf at Rapaki is called Gallipoli. It is a memorial to our boys from Rapaki who went to the first World War. In those days there was a launch service to Lyttelton run by Mr Andrew Anderson of Charteris Bay, the name of the launch was Matariki. With the coming of the motor car the launch service was discontinued. With the passing of the years the wharf has fallen into disrepair and declared dangerous and its use prohibited by the Lyttelton Harbour Board. Our children, however, use it as a bathing place where they can dive straight into deep water.

Hei konei te mutunga o enei tuhituhitanga o to matou kainga.

Hei whakamaharatanga ki nga pouwa, Tauwa, kia mohio ai te Iwi.