

Maungapohatu Revisited

OR, HOW THE GOVERNMENT UNDERDEVELOPED A MAORI COMMUNITY



EARLY THIS CENTURY, segments of the Tuhoe and Whakatohea tribes, under the leadership of the Tuhoe prophet Rua Kenana Hepetipa, built themselves a new community. It lay at the foot of the sacred mountain of the Tuhoe, Maungapohatu, and was a conscious recreation by them of the biblical city of Jerusalem. Constructed during 1907–1908, it was an impressive settlement with its own courthouse, bank, and council room [Figures 1 and 2]. The streets were lit with oil lamps and it had its own water system, with separated pools for washing and cooking. The families set up their own rules of conduct, which were enforced through a council of elders and their prophet leader. In these first years, about 500 or 600 people lived at Maungapohatu.¹

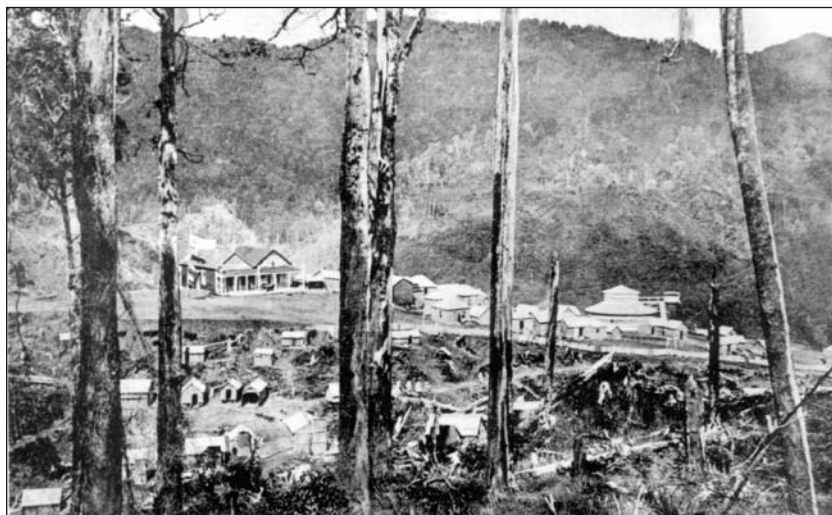


Figure 1: Maungapohatu, Christmas 1908. The large double-gabled house, built of sawn timber, which stood in the upper part of the pa, was Rua's. It was called Hiruharama Hou, New Jerusalem. The circular building near the bottom of the slope was the courthouse and meeting house. It was built of sawn totara, and was called Hiona, Zion. The wooden houses inside the enclosed wahi tapu have replaced the earlier tent homes, and the fence has been rebuilt since the foundation of the settlement. Two formal entrance gates are visible. This photograph taken by George Bourne, appeared in the *Auckland Weekly News*, 14 January 1909. *Evening Post* collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, F-75710-1/2.



Figure 2: A view of Maungapohatu in 1908 looking from the northern entrance into the wahi tapu enclosure. The circular courthouse and meeting house on the right was built in 1908 and demolished in 1916. Photograph by George Bourne, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, F-27115-1/2.

The people called themselves the Iharaira, the Israelites, and within the bounds of the community they re-enacted the saga of the lost Children of Israel, or the *morehu*, the few, the survivors. Rua himself took the name Moses, thereby claiming to be the prophet to whom the tablets of the law had been given on the mountain. It was he who devised the codes of conduct. By being baptized as Heketipa, or Hephzibah, in 1906, he asserted that he was the one to fulfil the prophecy, made in 1885 by the founder of the Ringatu faith, Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki, that his successor would be the man by whom the land would be made fruitful.² By calling himself the New Messiah, Te Mihaia Hou, Rua was claiming that he was the Word of Prophecy made flesh and thus the promise of the ultimate redemption of the people, and the fulfilment of the last Covenant. The construction of the community at Maungapohatu marked the beginning of the trials of the Iharaira and the test of their ability to remain faithful. This was God's condition for Israel in his bond with the 'remnant' (*nga morehu*). But the Covenant also presupposed God's forgiveness, and if 'Israel' proved unfaithful, the Covenant would still be renewed with Christ. Maungapohatu was, then, their City of Redemption. Here, one day, the promises would all be completed and the confiscated lands and the autonomy of the people restored.

However, by the end of 1913, Maungapohatu had declined. It was now a small, although energetic, community of about 30 families, including Rua.³ The Whakatohea had left him, but many Tuhoe still remained as followers. They had, however, tended to move back to their kin living in the coastal valleys of the eastern Bay of Plenty, seeking casual work to earn money. In 1914 the Maungapohatu community broke up on its own accord. The 20,000 acres which the Tuhoe had set aside in 1907, to be 'a habitation for God and man', were in an agreement of 23 August 1914, partitioned (*wahia*) and half was set apart.⁴ It may also have been at this time that the fences around the inner sanctum area, the wahi tapu, were all pulled down and that Rua left.⁵ It was certainly at this time, that is late in 1914, when the new, and more traditional meeting house was built, Tane Nui A Rangi 'Great Tane of the Heavens'. Rua's original circular community house, with its brightly painted emblems, the club and the diamond, stating his lineage as the Holy Ghost, King and coming Messiah, and its cryptic monograms, CA and AV, one each

side of one of the lower entrances,⁶ was abandoned. Hiona (or Zion), as it was called, had been consciously modelled on the Temple of Solomon, and its design taken from a coloured lithograph of the great mosque built over Solomon's threshing floor, the Dome of the Rock, but it was now used simply as a hay store. These dramatic changes suggest that one era or phase of the teachings had been completed, or 'kua mutu nga tauira i whakaritea mai' as Te Puhi Tatu put it.

Nevertheless, only a year later the settlement was revitalized under Rua's direction. He had spent three months in prison for the illicit sale of whisky and returned in August 1915. In the following month, between September 16 and 18, the community was reconstructed. One hundred men of Ngatikuri from Ruatahuna and Te Waiiti laboured for three hours each day for three days on the pa,⁷ a ritual resurrection of a new and more perfect community. 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days'.⁸ On the 18th, upon completion, 100 pennies — one for each man — were given as propitiation for 'the sin (hara) of the parents',⁹ and for the City of Redemption. These coins would have been burnt in the fire of sacrifice, which was then a traditional Ringatu practice and one which the Ihairaira maintained. At the same time, the men and women cut off their long hair, which they had worn since 1907 as the sign of their separation and dedication to God. The rituals were a pure mahunga, performed as a tapu-lifting rite, but derived, at least in part, from the laws which were said to have been given to Moses for the Nazarites. Moses had ended the days of the Nazarites' separation, their long-haired days, with offerings for peace.¹⁰ Rua, who returned from prison with his own hair cut, possibly by choice, lifted the tapu of separation as a sacrifice for peace. As Te Puhi commented, it was as in the times of Moses, 'all those laws were finished, with his long-haired people . . . "He was the Sacred One, he was the Remover of Restrictions" . . . The things of Moses' time have been fulfilled . . . we must return to our original custom; we must all shorten our hair.' Thus, the next stage, or era, of the community was entered into: the years of the 'new Covenant'.¹¹

But in April 1916 an armed police expedition was sent to Maungapohatu and the prophet was again arrested and imprisoned, this time for two years. During this period, the community largely collapsed. It was burdened with the heavy debts of the costs of the police expedition and the subsequent tortuous legal trials. Moreover, when Rua returned, in 1918, he found that a rival faith had established itself at Maungapohatu: the new Presbyterian mission. The Reverend John Laughton, who remained until the end of 1926, soon learned that he would have to work through Rua and live with his authority. The first uneasy relationship between the two men developed into an equilibrium of power, in which Rua dictated his terms — that no church would be built — and Laughton set his — that he would teach the children. It was immediately after Laughton's departure, leaving his assistant, that Rua reconstructed Maungapohatu for the third time. This revived settlement was a restatement of the original millenarian vision. This time, Rua prophesied the return of Christ to the sacred mountain of the Tuhoe. The event was to take place in August 1927, when the two sons of God, Christ and Rua, were to be reunited on earth, and the morehu, 'the remnant whom the Lord shall call', would be saved. The new city was built to



Figure 3: Maungapohatu Mission School c.1920. Reverend John Laughton, centre, and his assistant, John Currie, with their pupils outside the whare kanikani or dance hall. One of the conditions placed by Rua on Laughton's mission was that no school building be erected. Photographer unknown, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, F-30857-1/2.



Figure 4: The whare kanikani, described as 30ft in diameter with walls 11½ feet high, in use as a school house c.1921. In front is a mud slide made by the students. Photographer unknown, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, F-30908-1/2.

protect the faithful from a fall of stars which, Rua said, would usher in the new world. In this manner, he regathered those Tuhoe families who followed him and brought them back to the heart of their ancestral lands.

Once again a whole village was constructed. The houses were built of slab and shingle, each with a galvanized iron roof. The origins of their design, and probably the entire concept of the community, lay with conversations which

Rua had had with Charles Hercus, Professor of Public Health and Bacteriology from Otago University, after the typhoid epidemic which broke out at Maungapohatu early in 1925.¹² Hercus encouraged the formation of a local committee under the chairmanship of Pita Te Wharenuī (Pita Te Taite), one of the leading teachers of Rua's faith. He suggested to them that they should clear out the wells and build new homes, each consisting of at least two rooms, and with outside lavatories. The wharepuni (sleeping houses) were also to be pulled down. Irene Paulger, the first teacher at the state school which succeeded Laughton's mission school, believed that Rua had no intention of complying openly with these recommendations. The committee itself was unanimous that the wharepuni must not be demolished,¹³ but Rua, from his own authority, forced the creation of a new village. As Irene Paulger described:

At a meeting of his people, Rua prophesied that the end of the world would come at the end of the month. First would come a bombardment of stars, and after everything else had fallen from the heavens, then God Himself would appear.

His people were told that the only way in which they could save themselves was to build houses (after the method described to Rua by the Health Department) with tin roofs, and on the night of the end of the world, they were to remain indoors.

There was a frantic rush to build the new dwellings, the outdoor conveniences etc. before the time prophesied. This was done.

Then came the day itself. The people kept indoors and waited. Next morning the Maoris of Maungapohatu were glad to see that their homes were still standing. The world had not come to an end! However, the coming of God did not occur either, and the people were disappointed.

They went to Rua. He told them that as they had built their houses to save themselves, they did not prepare their hearts for the coming of God. Therefore, it was their own fault and not his, Rua's. Still, despite all this, a new, clean, more sanitary village had been built.¹⁴

This new settlement was carefully laid out, with two main streets and the houses grouped geometrically along them. Rules of hygiene were again established, and fines set for their violation. Two tennis courts were laid, one at the upper pa, and one at the separate community of Maai, where Rua and most of his wives now lived. An open-air dance floor was constructed and a string band organized. For two years, 1927–1929, Maungapohatu was a flourishing settlement of about 150 people, and in the memories of those who lived there, it was a time of many pleasures and many visitors.

It is now possible to create a profile, or a statistically based description, of this, the third community. Several new sources enable a careful survey of the families who lived there; they also reveal 'the other side of hope', or the grimmer story behind the failure of the settlement. In their baldness, the statistical sources contradict the memories of the first years of the new settlement and emphasize the human sufferings that all the families experienced. For the morehu, the survivors, the community remains the place of happiness. It is the well-spring of their identity. But one by one they were forced to leave.

Five main statistical sources exist. The first is a list drawn up by the community itself on 3 February 1929 (Table 1). It is a compilation of all the



Figure 5: Rua Kenana Hepetipa with some of his household and visitors at Maai in May 1927. In back: Te Urikore, Te Aue, Te Akakura, Hikihihi, Pehirangi with her baby Te Ariki, Piimia with her daughter Ti. In front: Harata (from Ruatoki) and Rua Kenana Hepetipa. Photographer unknown, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, PAColl-6001-41, F-30857-1/2.

‘kitchens of the Pa’. There were 30 families living in the upper pa, while Rua lived about half a mile away. With this list are two others drawn up on the same day, for various payments Rua made for work, or according to need, to members of the community.¹⁵

The second source is a government report compiled in 1936 about the Tuhoe. It commented sharply upon the harsh economic conditions of the people of the Urewera country. At that time 21 families were listed as living at Maungapohatu, including Rua and his first wife, Pinepine Te Rika (Table 2). Rua was also listed at the same time among the families living at Matahi, a settlement which he had founded in 1910 in the Waimana valley. Here he was described as living with his youngest wife, Te Atawhai Tara (or Piimia), who came from this valley.¹⁶ Rua had constantly moved between the two communities ever since the formation of Matahi; indeed, its growth from 1912 had probably been one cause of the initial decline of Maungapohatu. From 1933, after a series of bitter winters and the successive failure of the potato crop at Maungapohatu, Rua began to live more or less permanently in the Waimana valley (mostly at Otane or Matahi). He returned seldom to the City of God on earth. It was at Matahi, on 20 February 1937, that he died.

The third source for establishing a profile of the families of the Maungapohatu community are the annual school rolls, which were kept by the teachers ‘in the most isolated spot where any school is maintained in New Zealand’¹⁷ (Table 3). Some of the problems the community faced can be glimpsed through the teachers’ reports and scattered letters: the serious illnesses among the children, due partly to malnutrition and the lack of adequate medical facilities or knowledge on the part of the schoolteachers or mission workers. In the winter,

blizzards and heavy rain rendered the tracks from the settlement frequently impassable. The reports also indicate the problems of families who simply could not afford to lose the labour of their children. A difficulty in many small rural communities, it was increased here, as in other Maori settlements, by the fact that many children were brought up by their grandparents, who in their old age needed their help. The whangai tradition could cut across the demands of the Education Department. Rua, who had given much assistance to the mission school at Maungapohatu (1918–1924) and had sent many of his own children there, became one of the worst ‘offenders’, in the eyes of the teachers, at the state school. In 1933 he came into sharp conflict with Irene Paulger over the constant absence of a boy whom he had taken into his care and whom he used to milk his herd of cows.¹⁸ Ultimately, most of the Maungapohatu families were forced away to seek work, either as roadmakers or shearers, and some took their children out of school with them. Others struggled to keep their children at the school that they themselves had laboured so hard, in the years 1913 to 1918, to obtain. But by 1934 the school roll had fallen significantly. As Paulger reported, the shortage of food at Maungapohatu had simply forced the parents to seek other places to live.¹⁹

The final sources for establishing the families who made up the community and what happened to them are the registers of the births and deaths at Maungapohatu (Tables 4 and 9). The records were begun on 1 November 1924, and were maintained until 1948 by the Presbyterian missionaries and the schoolteachers.²⁰ The death registers reveal the harshness of life at Maungapohatu: the tragically high number of child deaths due to influenza, gastro-enteritis, typhoid and whooping cough. In the years 1924–1936, 57 people died, in a community of about 30 families. Of these, 16 were infants of less than a year, and over half (29) were children of 15 years or younger. Of the adult deaths, a quarter (7) were young people between the ages of 16 and 25 years. Of the total deaths, 75% were people 25 years of age or younger.

These sources expose the community’s struggles. Hunting simply did not provide sufficient meat. What they had they rationed. In the early years, when the community was maintained under strict controls imposed by Rua, the carcase of a beast was apportioned every Saturday after the religious services. Whoever was in charge on the particular occasion would call out ‘Who will have it?’ and someone would reply, ‘I will’, without having seen what portion he had claimed for his family. In this way, the good and the poor cuts were distributed equitably. The meat was mostly wild cattle or deer. Pigs (kunikuni), had always been a rarity at Maungapohatu, and were used primarily for their fat, as a preservative. As Rua’s daughter Puti who in her 60s still raised kunikuni in the Nukuhou valley, recalled with regret, ‘We didn’t eat kunikuni normally.’ Pigeons were still trapped, and preserved in fat in calabashes of 40, a ‘hokorua’. But there was not enough, and nor were the families able to grow adequate vegetables for themselves. Potatoes, carrots, corn, puha, watercress, and pikopiko (young fern), were the staples of their diet and all were in short supply during the winter. Sugar, flour and cabin bread had to be bought. All were rationed, on Rua’s directions. Each ‘kitchen’ had one tin of sugar a month, regardless of the size of the family.²¹ It is probable

that the list of the 'kitchens', drawn up in February 1929 (Table 1), was for the purposes of rationing. The community also had to make its own soap and candles. Even though the memories of the first two years are of times of plenty, from 1930 the successive failure of the potato crop brought famine. The causes of the underlying poverty are not hard to probe. The government report of 1936 commented that the 'economic conditions of the Maoris in the Urewera generally demand attention. At present they obtain a livelihood from casual work on the roads, from shearing in season, unemployment work and the sale of posts to Europeans who very often fail to pay them.'²² The inability of the families to develop Maungapohatu had derived from two fundamental factors: their failure to obtain adequate means of communication with the outside world, and failure to get the capital necessary to redevelop their land.

All their efforts to obtain road and railway links were unsuccessful. In 1922, the Tuhoe had given 40,000 acres of land, worth, on government estimate, £20,000, for the construction of an arterial road from the Waimana valley to Maungapohatu and Ruatahuna (together with a road up the Ruatoki valley to Ruatahuna).²³ Rua had been a major figure in persuading the Tuhoe to accept the consolidation of their land at this time and to make the land gift for the two roads. Their failure to obtain them was one of the bitterest Tuhoe grievances against the government. As Pera Meihana, of Te Whaiti, complained to M.J. Galvin, one of the authors of the 1936 report, 'Our elders gave land to the value of £21,000 for roading purposes. Where are these roads today? It is 13 years ago since this land was given by our elders to the Crown for roading purposes. When I say roading, I do not mean the main road going through from here No what I mean, when we gave this land, this land valued at £21,000, for arterial roads we gave the land, so that we could have roads to our houses and to our native blocks.'²⁴ It was the highway from the Waimana valley to Maungapohatu upon which Rua had placed all his hopes. It had been expected to start in 1927; postponed, it was finally gazetted in 1930.²⁵ It was never built. Instead, the Public Works Department refused to maintain the nine-mile bridle track from Maungapohatu to the new Waikaremoana road²⁶ while the two local county councils were equally adamant in their refusal to maintain the public dray road, constructed in 1922 up the Waimana valley as far as Tawhana. A 'six foot' track was cut from Tawhana to Maungapohatu in 1925, enabling a string of packhorses to be taken in. (The old path had become so worn in parts that it formed a deep rutted trench in which the horses got wedged.) The 'six foot' was intended to link up with a drover's route from Gisborne, but that section was never completed. From Matahi to Maungapohatu it was still a two-day journey. The horses fell in the treacherous areas and, in winter, this track, like the steep bridle path from Ruatahuna, was frequently blocked.²⁷

Rua had built Maungapohatu, first in 1907 and again in 1927, on the assumption that the settlement would soon be opened to the outside world. Maungapohatu was never intended by him to be a retreat into economic isolation. He had based his millenarian 'vision', in 1907, on the expectation of the railway, which was then surveyed to pass through the community,²⁸ and also upon the stock track from Gisborne through Maungapohatu to Rotorua and the Waikato markets. It had been started in 1896 by Elsdon Best, with the

agreement of the Tuhoe. The Gisborne sheepfarmers were also resting their hopes upon it. By 1907, only about 17 miles of the track at Maungapohatu waited to be completed.²⁹ In the following year, Rua offered the labour of his community to the Cook County Council to complete it, but he was told that he would have to supply part of the money himself. When Wi Pere, MHR, then suggested that the council deduct two shillings a day from the wages of every Maori it employed on the track until Rua's share was accumulated (£150), this proposition, to his great disgust, was rejected out of hand.³⁰ The track remained uncompleted, from Anini to Maungapohatu, and, despite its name, was never used as a drover's route. However, in 1923 the idea was again mooted. As part of the government's promises made at the consolidation of the Urewera land the previous year, the track was resurveyed, with the intention of linking Maungapohatu to Gisborne and the east coast. Further, in November 1923, Gordon Coates, as Minister of Public Works, rode into Maungapohatu from Gisborne to inspect the country. The purpose of his visit was to assess the land around Hangaroa and Ngatapa 'through which it was until recently assumed the railway would be laid', and to discuss the proposed road links from the Bay of Plenty to Maungapohatu, and on to Poverty Bay and Wairoa.³¹ Rua rode up to Maungapohatu from Matahi to meet Coates. The old track was then described by the *Poverty Bay Herald* reporter as sometimes 'one in nothing' and he observed that even Rua was 'very tired from the overland journey'. But Coates held out high hopes for the opening of the Urewera by roads. He knew that the Tuhoe 'could have refused to make any contribution whatsoever'³² to the roads, yet was still patronizing in his surprise that Rua should have shown such 'a very keen appreciation of the value of roading'.³³ It should not have astonished him. Rua had worked, from 1906, to try and open part of the Tuhoe lands for farming by making them accessible. Only recently he and other Tuhoe had given a tract of 60 acres in the Waimana valley to the new Presbyterian mission to establish an agricultural school there for Maori.³⁴ The training school, like the roads, was never built. Neither was the railway, nor the Gisborne stock track.³⁵ Despite the substantial gifts of land, Maungapohatu remained isolated and the people were fed on broken promises.

While the natural terrain was fiercely daunting for farming, the second reason for the failure of the community was their inability to find any sources of capital to redevelop the land which they themselves had cleared in 1907. Instead, all their animals — their sheep and cattle — had been sold in 1916 to raise money for their legal costs. These were debts which they did not manage to eradicate until 1931.³⁶ Ragwort set in on their pastoral land. Such cattle as they reintroduced now died. In 1927, Rua had used the same device which he had adopted at the foundation of the settlement: that of persuading the families to sell their possessions in anticipation of the millennium. But the little cash which could be raised in this manner did not go very far. Even though more land had been gifted to the Crown in order to conserve the forest around Waikaremoana, the Government still stubbornly refused to put money into the community. The only land schemes operating in the early 1930s for the Tuhoe were at Ruatoki and at Ruatahuna. Yet the 1936 report recognized that a land development scheme at Maungapohatu 'would be a social success if

undertaken'. It commented that such a scheme was not likely to be a financial success if it were to be based on loan funds that required the repayment of both the capital and the interest but that there was 'no doubt the undertaking would prove self-supporting otherwise, and might even make a profit'. The only alternatives were that the people would have to be removed 'to ensure them the ordinary amenities of life', or be left to be 'starved out'. These choices, it commented sharply, 'can hardly be contemplated'.³⁷ But no funds were forthcoming. The Minister of Lands remained preoccupied with the idea that yet another survey of the Maungapohatu area (the third for which the Tuhoe would have paid) was necessary before any farming development could be undertaken.³⁸ Rua's death, in 1937, brought the decision finally that it would now be 'uneconomic' to invest in the roads or the settlement, for it would inevitably be abandoned. But the Maungapohatu settlement had collapsed long before. The families were 'starved out'. By 1933, most were already leaving for long periods, although Maungapohatu would always remain a home. The school itself struggled on with a few pupils until 1950. But the viable and permanent community which Rua had hoped to found had not eventuated. It had failed primarily, not because of leadership or lack of effort, but because although the people had land, and were prepared to give of that land, there was no source of investment capital available for them in return. No roads ever came to Jerusalem. The poor had subsidized the state, but the state had remained substantially indifferent to them.

Tables 1–2: The Maungapohatu Residents, 1929–1936

In 1929, the community listed the families who possessed separate kitchens, indicating the separate households, or the whanau. On the same day, two lists of payments made by Rua were drawn up. The first was for those ‘in authority’ (18), who were paid in the ‘presence of the Lord’: ‘ko tu utu o te tangata tika ki te aroaro o te atu[a]’. In addition to those already included in Table 1, two further names appeared on this list: Huhana Tutakangahau, an old spinster of nearly 80 years, and Wharepapa Hawiki, one of the teachers of Rua’s faith. On the second list of 33 payments made for work, two more names appear: Whitu Kanuehi, whose brothers Hemi and Katiana had already established their separate kitchens, and Tahu Hirawano, the father of Rua’s wife Kiha. Here Huhana was named again, receiving a payment ‘for want of a cooking shed’: ‘kore kauta’. Thus, it would appear that these lists do indicate the adult community resident at Maungapohatu in the late summer of 1929.

Table 1: ‘Total List of Kitchens of the Pa’, Maungapohatu, 3 February 1929³⁹

Names	Whether still present in 1936 ⁴⁰	Children in their charge, 1936 ⁴⁶	Children attending Maungapohatu School, 1936 ⁴¹
Aperira			
Hemi [Tawa]			
[Hemi Kanuehi]	†	6	1
Heripo			
[Whaioranga]			
Iti [Toko]			
Ka			
[Kahukura Pari]	†	6	1
Katiana [Tawa]			
[Katiana Kanuehi]			
Mahia Hakeke	†	8	3
Mahia Tawari			
Mangere [Tekā]	†	3	
Paetawa [Miki]	†	5	
Paora [?Kingi]	died 1934 at Matahi		
Paro [Miki]			
Peipi [Te Pou]			
Pita [Te Wharenuī]	†	5	
[Te Taite]			
[Te Rika]			
Ripia [Tango]	†	4	
Te Amoroa [Te Hira]	†	5	2
Te Ana Raiona			
Te Ao Te Rangī			
Te Heuheu [Miki]	†	8	3
Te Kere [Pukepuke]	†	2	1
Te Koka [Pari]			2
Te Mata [Kiripa]	†	1	
Tamati [Rautao]	died 1931		
Tane [Rua]	died 1936	2	1
[Whatu Rua]	near Gisborne; widow at Maungapohatu, 1936		

Names	Whether still present in 1936 ⁴⁰	Children in their charge, 1936 ⁴⁶	Children attending Maungapohatu School, 1936 ⁴¹
Teehi [Te Au Paora Kingi] [Timoti Kingi] [Timoti Paora]	living at Matahi, 1936		
Teka [Hekerangi]	†	2	
Tori [Biddle]	living at Matahi, 1936		
Tukumaru			
Turei [Pari] [Tuhua Pari] [Turei Tuhua]	†	5	
Tuwairua [Te Hira]	died 1933		
Total: 30 kitchens		62	14
Total on the school roll listed by name:		18	

From the beginning, Rua had encouraged the idea of the whanau ownership of portions of the community's land. Possibly the formal division of the land in 1914 had recognized that. The rebuilding in 1927 emphasized family dwellings; many houses were for two families and were divided by an internal partition. Each family had an outside cooking shelter, maintaining the traditional custom of separating cooked food from the living areas. These kitchens were then counted on the list of 1929, probably as the basis for rationing. The family was also the central unit in spiritual matters. Each had their own particular prayer and worshipped separately in their own house during the week. They came together, however, for the Saturday services. It would appear that, in every way, Rua was trying to strengthen the independence of the whanau within the protecting community.

Table 2: 'Inhabitants of Maungapohatu', list presented on 1 June 1936⁴²

Names	Children Listed in 1929 ⁴³	Children attending Maungapohatu School, 1936 ⁴⁴
Haukore Tawa m [Pita Kanuehi]	3	
Ripeka Rua f		
Hemi Tawa m [Hemi Kanuehi]	6	*
Ani Miki f		1
Huirangi Te Hiro (widow)	1 grandchild	
Kahukura Pari m Materoa Tatu f [Te Puhi Tatu]	6	*

Names		Children	Listed in 1929 ⁴³	Children attending Maungapohatu School, 1936 ⁴⁴
Mahia Hakeke	m	5	*	3
Te Umere Hikihiki	f	looking after 3 others		
Mangere Tekā	m	2	*	
Pare Mahia	f	1 adopted		
Paetawa Miki	m	5	*	
Puhata Tekā	f			
Pita Te Wharenuī	m	4	*	
[Pita Te Taite]		1 grandchild		
Tangiwaka Anania	f			
Ramari Korotau (widow)		2		
[of Kanuehi Te Wara]		2 grandchildren		
[and of Te Houpapa Te Maipi]				
Ripia Tango	m	4	*	
[Ripia Hami]				
[Hauraki Ripia]				
Tina Pita	f			
[Roherohe Pita]				
[Lucy Pita]				
Rua Kenana	m	1 grandchild	Living at Maai (Maungapohatu) 1929	
Pinepine Te Rika	f			
Te Amoroa Te Hira	m	1	*	2
Te Waimarini Pari	f	1 grandchild; looking after 3 others		
Te Heuhei Miki	m	4	*	3
Rina Ruka	f	4 grandchildren		
[Lena Ruka]				
Te Kanapu Te Kauru	m	1 grandchild		
[Tautau Te Wakaunua]				
Pia Pei	f			
Te Kere Pukepuke	m	2	*	1
[Te Kere Orupe]				
Te Araka Whitu	f			
Te Mata Kiripa	m	1 grandchild	*	
Kahu Te Awahou	f			

Names	Children	Listed in 1929 ⁴³	attending Maungapohatu School, 1936 ⁴⁴
Te Wairemana Taiwera (widow)	1 grandchild	[*Tane Rua's widow]	1
Tahu Hirawano (widower)		living at Maungapohatu, 1929 ⁴⁵	
Tame Wirihana m [Tame Tawa]			
Tio Rua f [Pera Rua]			
Teka Hekerangi m Kumeroa Te Rika f	2 grandchildren	*	
Turei Pari m [Tuhua Pari]	5	*	
Kaki Pukepuke f			
21 families			
38 adults	72 children		12
Total on the school roll, listed by name:			18

Table 3: School Rolls, Maungapohatu, 1925–1936⁴⁶

The state school was opened in May 1925, at the end of the typhoid epidemic. The high point of the roll numbers was 1927, the year of the reconstruction for the millennium. When the numbers began to drop, from 1929, the teachers apparently adopted a device of inflating the overall figures in order to maintain the school's grading and their rank. From 1930, they invented unnamed children in the lower primer classes. Hereafter, the stated number of children and those listed by name no longer correlated.⁴⁷

Table 3: School Rolls, Maungapohatu, 1925–1936

1925	45	
1926	53	
1927	55	
1928	53	
1929	44	
1930	(44)	35
1931	(46)	
1932	(40)	36
1933	(31)	27
1934	(32)	26
1935	(34)	25
1936	(30)	18

Table 4: Deaths, 1924–1936, showing Maungapohatu families affected⁴⁸

Name	Hapu	Year of death	Child (15 years or under)	Spouse	Hapu
Hemi Tawa*†49 [Hemi Kanuehi] Hira Kingi (died)	Tamakaimoana Ngaitau	1936 1925	1	Ani Miki† Te Mauniko (separated)	Tamakaimoana –
Horo Tatu [Horopapera Tatu] (living at Tawhana) Kahukura Pari*†	Ngatimarū	1930	1	Rangipaea Rua	Tamakaimoana
Kanuehi Te Wara (died) Miki Te Wakaunua ⁵⁰ [Wati Te Wakaunua] (died) Naiti Rua (died) (single) m Paetawa Miki*† [Paetawa Wātī]	Tamakaimoana Tamakaimoana Tamakaimoana Tamakaimoana	1927 1929 1936 1929 1928	2 1 1	Materoa Tatui† [Te Puhī Tatu] – Ramari Korotau† Iranui (deceased)	Ngatikuri/Tamakaimoana – Hamua –
Pari Te Rika [Pari Te Wharenuī] (died) Pukepuke Hoani [Pukepuke Kanara] (died) Ripia Tango*† [Ripia Hami] [Hauraki Ripia]	Tamakaimoana Tamakaimoana Ngatikuri (½ caste)/ Ngatikahungunu Ngapuhi	1934 1926 1931 1936 1933 1928 1927 1928 1933	1 1 1	Puhata Teka† – Heru Te Maipi (died 1926) Herehere Te Maipi (died 1928) Lucy Pita† [Roherohe Pita] [Tina Pita]	Tamakaimoana – Tamakaimoana Tamakaimoana Ngatikuri/Ngaitau/ Tamakaimoana

Child

Name	Hapu	Year of death	(15 years or under)	Spouse	Hapu
Ripine Tutakangahau [Huhana Tutakangahau] (died) (single) (living at Maungapohatu, 1929) ⁵¹ Rua Kenana†	Tamakaimoana	1930		–	
Soni Kameta	–	1928		Te Akura Ru (died)	Tamakaimoana
Te Au Paora Kingi (living at Matahi, 1936) ⁵² Te Heuheu Miki**†† [Te Heuheu Wati]	Tamakaimoana	1925 1926	1 1	Maggie Tautau [Maggie Te Kanapu] [Korekora Tautau] (died) Heriwaka Hii (died)	Tamakaimoana
Te Houppapa Te Maipi ⁵⁰ (died)	Tamakaimoana	1928		Rina Ruka† [Lena Ruka]	Tamakaimoana
Te Hirata Whitu (died) (single)	Tamakaimoana	1928		(1) Hera (deceased) (2) Ramari Tamiana† [Ramari Korotau]	– Hamua
Te Iwikino Hairuha (died)	Tamakaimoana	1925		–	Tamakaimoana
Te Kanapu Te Kauri† [Tautau Te Wakaunua]	Tamakaimoana	1925 1927	1 1	Ngahuia Paraone (died 1925)	Tamakaimoana/Hamua
Te Kere Pukupuke**† [Te Kere Orupe]	Ngatikuri	1927	1	Pia Pei† [Pini Te Puihi] Kahawai Kanuehi [Kahawai Tawa] (died 1930)	Hamua
Te Koka Pari*	Ngatikuri	1928	1	Paremaina Reha	Hamua

Child

Name	Hapu	Year of death	(15 years or under)	Spouse	Hapu
Te Mata Kiripa*† [Papu Kiripa]	–	1925		Haromi Hohaea (died)	f Takmakaimoana
Te Raumiria Te Haunui (died) (widow)	Ngaiteriu	1933		Ru Hoani (deceased)	m –
Te Rewa Te Amoroa (died)	Tamakaimoana	1928		Matatu Mahia	f –
Te Whetu Tamati	Tamakaimoana	1927	1	Tuhiwai Teka	f Tamakaimoana
Tamati Rautao* (died)	Tamakaimoana	1931		Kahu Te Awaheru	f –
Tame Tuwairua	–	1927		Tangiaurere Rua (died)	f Tamakaimoana
Tauake Te Pou (died)	Ngapotiki/Ngatiraka	1925		–	
Tauru Tuhua (died)	Tamakaimoana	1924		Hiriwha Ponihahio (died 1927)	f Tamakaimoana
Tawhara Pita	Ngaiteau	1927	1	Te Paea Pitau	f Ngaiteriu
Teka Hekerangi*†	Tamakaimoana	1926	1	Kumeroa Te Rika†	f Tamakaimoana
Turei Tuhua*†	Tamakaimoana	1926	1	Kaki Pukepuke†	f Tamakaimoana
[Tuhua Pari]		1927	1		
		1929	1		
		1931	1		
Tute Taumata (died) (widow)	Tamakaimoana	1929		Te Wharau Tawhio	m –
Tuwairua Te Hira* (died)	Tamakaimoana	1933		Mate Te Whiu	f –
Wakaina Teka	Tamakaimoana	1930	1	Hine Mike (died 1930)	f Tamakaimoana
[Jack Tekai]					
Wiki Houpapa (living near Tawhana, 1936) ⁵³	Ngaitekahu	1926	1	Moni Hake	f Te Whakataane
Whitu Tawa [Whitu Kanuehi] (living at Maungapohatu, 1929) ⁵⁴	Tamakaimoana	1926	1	Kirikino Hikihiki (living near Tawhana, 1936) ⁵³	f Tamakaimoana
(living near Tawhana, 1936) ⁵³					
Total families: 38	Total child deaths: 29	Total adult deaths: 28	Total deaths: 57		

Tables 5–8: Causes of Death, Maungapohatu, 1924–1936

Early in 1925 an outbreak of typhoid fever struck Maungapohatu, most certainly caused by pollution of the water supplies. Two children died from it. Rua's reconstruction of the community in 1926–7 was a determined effort to generate better conditions and it is noticeable that the child mortality fell in 1928. However, malnutrition would defeat him. A main cause of the high infant mortality which the community experienced was undoubtedly their inadequate diet.

Following the concern of the resident missionary over the deaths among the children, the local policeman visited Maungapohatu in October 1927. He described in detail the tidiness of the houses, each with wooden floors, the four bath houses, the covered wells, and the controls imposed on animals. He attributed the high number of deaths not to the absence of hygiene but to the recent hard winter and the lack of food. 'No flour, potatoes . . . Some more hard up than others and some have been living on Tawa and Hinau berries prepared and cooked . . . As far as I can make out it has been the diet that has been the cause of so many deaths.'⁵⁵



Figure 6: Typhoid camp at Maungapohatu, 1924. Photographer unknown, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, Sister Annie Henry Collection, F-30884-1/2.

In the period of this study for which the death registers were maintained (1 November 1924–1936), not one of the children who died is recorded as having received medical attention from a doctor. Three of the adults were seen the day before they died. It was not simply a matter of reluctance by the families to seek European medical help, although their belief that some apparently inexplicable illnesses were caused by *makutu* (witchcraft), or by a violation of *tapu*, would render European doctors irrelevant to them. It was also the near impossibility of getting help. Maungapohatu was 'at least ten hours removed from medical assistance',⁵⁶ that is, at Rotorua. It was also at least three hours from the nearest telephone, at Ruatahuna. And, as the 1936 report stressed, the tracks had fallen into disrepair because of government and local body negligence.

It was not until 1935 that a medical certificate of death was actually required for Maori. Consequently, there was no legal basis for contact with the European medical world. Not one of the deaths at Maungapohatu in 1936 was certified. The lack of medical contact, the high infant mortality, and the level of death reveal the profile of a 'third world' community. But it existed in New Zealand, where the infant mortality and the mortality rate for the European population in general was extremely low. It can be, of course, argued that Maungapohatu's problems were the consequence of its isolation, but the point to be reiterated is that this isolation was not simply a matter of choice. The report of 1936 for the new Labour Government urged the repairing of the decayed Waimana valley road and the 'six foot' track. In December 1936, the Tuhoe also directly petitioned the Government about both. With Rua's death, it was concluded that they would now serve 'no useful purpose'.⁵⁷

In May 1936 a survey was made of the diet and dental condition of the people of Maungapohatu. The report commented that the basic diet was white flour and sugar, brought in by packhorse. The other foods were wild pork, potatoes, puha, steeped maize, oatmeal porridge, and occasional wild beef. Puha water, or weak tea with sugar, were the two common drinks. Butter, eggs, and milk were all rare, as were birds, eels or fish. Few traditional Maori foods were available. Pigeons were preserved in fat — illegally — and sometimes given as gifts to the missionaries: 'peihana a koe' — a 'pheasant' for you. But, as the report stressed, the community was forced to rely on bulk supplies of flour and sugar from the Ruatahuna store. The rationing system originated by Rua had come to an end. Now the people relied on the wages earned by the men at the road-making camps around Waikaremoana and the stores they brought when they returned for a 'week-end'. The orders placed for flour and sugar were vast. One family, consisting of two adults and a child, ordered a 50-pound bag of flour and three 70-pound bags of sugar for an ostensible three months' period. On this occasion, the total order for the community (30–40 adults and 36 children) was 30 'fifties' of flour and seven 'seventies' of sugar. As the report commented, although this supply was intended to last for three months it was often supplemented by the return of a wage-earner with more food.⁵⁸ The quantity might at times have been generous, but the diet itself was inadequate. The health, and the teeth, of the entire community were all affected. As a diet it was deficient in proteins and high in carbohydrates. It would have been considerably inferior to that of non-Maori families living on the basic wage.⁵⁹ It was a diet which would weaken the body's capacity to resist disease and it was undoubtedly a contributory factor to the high post neonatal mortality of the community.

Table 5: Infant Mortality, Maungapohatu, 1924–1936⁶⁰

	Less than one month of age	1 month–11 months	Total
1924			
1925			
1926	1	3	
1927		3	
1928		1	
1929		2	
1930	1	1	
1931		2	
1932			
1933		1	
1934			
1935			
1936		1	
	2	14	16

Total births registered at Maungapohatu, 1924 – 1936: 99 (see Table 10)

The greatest infant mortality at Maungapohatu, and in many Maori communities at this time, *unlike* European infants, occurred after the first month and in the age group 3–11 months. The causes of these deaths were some form of respiratory disease. Of the 14 children in this age group who died at Maungapohatu, 11 deaths were attributed to influenza or pneumonia. Of the remainder, two died of whooping cough and one of dysentery. In 1935, a general report on Maori health attributed this conspicuous pattern of post neonatal mortality to poor housing and inadequate clothing.⁶¹ As D. Ian Pool has observed in his study of the Maori population, 1769–1971, inadequate housing was a major cause of the very high levels of infant mortality and tuberculosis in many Maori settlements.⁶² At Maungapohatu, the adult population suffered unduly from tuberculosis, poverty's illness.

**Table 6: Causes of Adult Deaths, Maungapohatu, 1924 – 1936⁶³
(16 years and over)**

Tuberculosis	7
Accident	5
Senile Decay	4
Influenza/Pneumonia	3
Creeping/shaking/paralysis	2
Gastro-enteritis	1
Typhoid	1
Blood poisoning	1
Post-partum haemorrhage	1
Bright's disease	1
Epilepsy	1
Cancer	1
Total:	28

Table 7: Causes of Infant and Child Deaths, Maungapohatu, 1924 – 1936⁶⁴ (15 years and under)

Pneumonia/influenza	16
Whooping cough	4
Bowel inflammation/gastro-enteritis	3
Typhoid	2
Peritonitis	1
Premature birth	1
Paralysis	1
Malnutrition and measles	1
Total:	29

The community was well aware of the vulnerability of their children in the cold Urewera winters. Somewhere between 1933 and 1935, they built for themselves a new *whare mahana*, or warm house, which was used particularly for confinements and for those with pneumonia. It was dug into the hillside, its floor excavated and its outside walls packed with earth to keep in the warmth. Raupo bundles, placed under a sheathing of totara bark, were used for extra insulation on the wooden walls. A fire of maire wood, whose smoke does not irritate the eyes, was kept burning inside. Because it was warm, the other children used to play in there too, and it became a place everyone remembers for its laughter. This *wharepuni*, or sleeping house, still stands at Maungapohatu today, now a silent testimony to the community's efforts to help themselves.

Table 8: Ages of Adult Deaths, by deciles, 1924–1936⁶⁵

16–25 years	7
26–35 years	2
36–45 years	2
46–55 years	–
56–65 years	8
66–75 years	6
76–85 years	3
Total:	28

The pattern of adult deaths, even from such a small group, is also revealing. After the youthful years, with a high risk of mortality, relatively few deaths occurred until the later middle age. Of the adult deaths, more than half occurred after the age of 56.

The community possessed traditional and sometimes effective remedies for some illnesses — boils, cuts, burns, fractures and diarrhoea. John Laughton acquired a considerable respect for their knowledge of the antiseptic properties of some plants. One which was used was the red-berried *manono* (*coprosma*), from which the inner bark was scraped, plunged in boiling water, and painted, like iodine, on wounds. Mixed with pork fat, it was applied as an ointment. Cleanliness at the *pa* was also stressed. Lloyd Carter, who worked as a missionary there for 18 months in 1931–1932, considered it to be ‘the cleanest

pa we were ever at'. Everyone bathed on Friday night, ready for the Saturday Sabbath, and the hearths were cleaned and freshly clayed every Friday. No dogs or animals were allowed loose on the marae, and fines were imposed for failure to observe these rules. There were also 'specialists' for particular illnesses. Old Huhana Tutakangahau was the one to see for boils or sores on the breast; Te Heuheu Miki was the obstetrician, trained in traditional birth procedures. But basic hygiene and limited medical knowledge could not defeat the illnesses induced by malnutrition and inadequate living conditions.

Table 9: Maungapohatu Births, 1924–1926

The registers of the births at Maungapohatu provide further evidence that only a small number of whanau lived at Maungapohatu at this time. All children who were born between 1924 and 1936 and who were registered at Maungapohatu in those years belonged to the 33 families listed in the table.⁶⁶

Table 9: Maungapohatu Births, 1924–1936, showing families whose children were born or registered at Maungapohatu⁶⁷

Father	Hapu	Mother	Hapu	Year of birth of child born at Maungapohatu	Year of birth, and of registration, of child born elsewhere and registered at Maungapohatu
Biddle, Donald [Ted] [Eructi]	Te Mahurehure (¼caste)	Rangi Rua	Tamakaimoana	1924	
Haukore Tawa† ⁶⁸ [Pita Kanuehi]	Tamakaimoana	Ripeka Rua†	Tamakaimoana	1928 1929 1933 1935	
Hemi Tawa*† [Hemi Kanuehi]	Tamakaimoana	Ani Miki† [Ani Wati]	Tamakaimoana	1925 1926 1927	
Hena Tuwairua	Ngaitama/Tamakaimoana	Te Mamae Kiripa	Ngaitawhaki/Tamakaimoana	1929 1931 1933 1935	1934
Heramana Nirai [Hillman Rua]	Ngatiwhare	Te Oriwa Te Maipi [Wharerimu]	Tamakaimoana	1931 1933	
Heta Rua	Tamakaimoana	Te Paea Hori	Ngaitama	1927 1929	
Horo Tatu	Ngatikuri/Ngatimaru/ Tamakaimoana	Rangipaea Rua	Ngaitama/Tamakaimoana	1928 1927	1928

Father	Hapu	Mother	Hapu	Year of birth of child born at Maungapohatu	Year of registration, of child born elsewhere and registered at Maungapohatu
Huges, Billy Iti Toko*	Tamakaimoana (½ caste) Hamua	Ripeka Whitu Matariki Heremaia	Tamakaimoana Te Mahurehure	1935	1929/1930 1934
Kahukura Pari**†	Ngatikuri/Tamakaimoana	Materoa Tatu† [Te Puhū]	Ngatikuri/Tamakaimoana	1928 1930 1931 1936	1926/1927 1926/1927 1934 1935/1936
Mahia Hakeke**†	Tamakaimoana	Te Paina Hikihiki† [Te Umere]	Tamakaimoana	1924 ⁶⁹ 1927 1931 1934	
Mangere Teka**†	Tamakaimoana	Pare Mahia†	Te Whakataane/ Tamakaimoana	1929 1933	
Paetawa Miki**† [Paetawa Wātī]	Tamakaimoana	Puhata Teka†	Tamakaimoana/Ngatitwhaki	1926 1927 1928 1930 1931 1936	1934
Paora Akuhata	Ngatimanunui (¾ caste)	Hine Puhata	Tamakaimoana (¾ caste)	1926 1930	

Father	Hapu	Mother	Hapu	Year of birth of child born at Maungapohatu	Year of registration, of child born elsewhere and registered at Maungapohatu
Paora Teka	Tamakaimoana	Matatu Mahia (remarried here)	Tamakaimoana	1931	
Peipi Te Pou*	Ngatiraka/Tamakaimoana/ Ngatitawhaki	Pukaha Tahuri	Ngatikakahutapiki/ Tamakaimoana	1925 1926 1927	1931
Ripia Tango*† [Ripia Hami] [Hauraki Ripia]	Ngapuhi/ Ngatikahungunu/ (¾ caste) Tamakaimoana	Lucy Pita† [Roherohe] [Tina]	Tamakaimoana/Ngaiteau	1929 1926 1927	1929 1930 1931
Te Heuheu Miki**† [Te Heuheu Wati]	Tamakaimoana	Rina Ruka† [Lena]	Tamakaimoana	1934 1925 1927	1936 1929
Te Kanapu Te Kauru† [Tautau Te Wakaunua]	Tamakaimoana	Pia Pei†	Tamakaimoana	1931	1926/1927
Te Kere Pukpuke*† [Te Kere Orupe]	Ngatikuri/Tamakaimoana	(1) Kahawai Kanuehi (died 1930) (2) Te Araka Whitu†	Hamua Tamakaimoana Hamua/Tamakaimoana	1926 1933 1928	1926/1927 1936
Te Koka Pari*	Ngatikuri/Tamakaimoana	Paremaina Reha			
Te Rewa Te Amoroa Te Whetu Tamati	Tamakaimoana Tamakaimoana	Matatu Mahia Tuhiwai Teka	Tamakaimoana Ngatitawhaki/Tamakaimoana	1928 1927	

Father	Hapu	Mother	Hapu	Year of birth of child born at Maungapohatu	Year of birth, and of registration, of child born elsewhere and registered at Maungapohatu
Tame Tawa† [Tommy Wilson] [Tame Wirihana]	Ngaitamatea/ Tamakaimoana	Tio Rua† (Pera) (Bella)	Tamakaimoana	1929 1930 1934	
Tame Tuwairua (remarried)	Tamakaimoana	Mei Rua	Tamakaimoana	1931	
Teka Hekerangi*† Timutimu Tioke (living) at Matahi, 1936) ⁷⁰	Tamakaimoana Ngaitama	Kumeroa Te Rika† Teopea Kawana [Pea Henare] (living at Matahi, 1936) ⁷⁰	Tamakaimoana Ngatikahungunu	1926	1926/1927
Tori Biddle* (living at Matahi, 1936) ⁷⁰	Tamakaimoana ($\frac{3}{4}$ caste)	Meri Rua [Whakataataata] (living at Matahi, 1936) ⁷⁰	Tamakaimoana	1926 1928 1930	
Tumeke Onekawa [Mac]	Tamakaimoana	Puti Rua	Tamakaimoana	1930	
Turei Pari*† [Tuhua]	Tamakaimoana	Kaki Pukepuke†	Tamakaimoana	1924 1927 1929 1930 1932	1925/1926
Wakaina Teku [Jack]	Tamakaimoana	Hine Miki	Tamakaimoana	1930	

Father	Hapu	Mother	Hapu	Year of birth of child born at Maungapohatu	Year of registration, of child born elsewhere and registered at Maungapohatu
Wiki Houppapa (living near Tawhana, 1936) ⁷¹ (remarried)	Tamakaimoana	Ka Reha (living near near Tawhana, 1936) ⁷¹	Hamua/Tamakaimoana	1926 1932	1930 1934 1936
Whitu Tawa [Whitu Kanuehi] (living near Tawhana, 1936) ⁷¹	Tamakaimoana	Kirikino Hikihiki (living near Tawhana, 1936) ⁷¹	Tamakaimoana	1926 1928	
Total: 33 families				75 children	24 children

Table 10: Infant and Small Child Deaths compared with Births at Maungapohatu, 1924–1936

In the years of this study for which the births and deaths at Maungapohatu were recorded, the community lost one-quarter of the children born. Although these figures cannot be considered an absolute measure, as families moved away and some deaths may not have been recorded, the overall picture is grim.

Table 10: Infant and Small Child Deaths (0–4 years), compared with Births Registered at Maungapohatu, 1924–1936⁷²

Year of actual birth		Year of actual death
1924	5	
1925	3	
1926	16	5
1927	10	7
1928	9	2
1929	11	2
1930	10	2
1931	10	3
1932	2	
1933	6	1
1934	8	
1935	4	
1936	5	3
Totals:	99	25

Table 11: Hapu cited in the Registers of Births and Deaths, 1924–1936

The families were from a relatively small number of hapu and, for the most part, from hapu closely associated with the Maungapohatu land block. With the exception of two individuals (Ripia Tango and Teopea Kawana), the people living at the Maungapohatu settlement in this period were Tuhoe, or were from hapu who had for a long time intermingled and intermarried with Tuhoe, to the extent that they were often considered to be Tuhoe. Most of the people stated simply that they were Tamakaimoana, a hapu which had traditionally lived at Maungapohatu. However, several individuals cited alternative hapu at different times, and from informants I know that some of the individuals listed in the Registers have firm descent lines from hapu other than those that were cited. For example, Rua's wife Te Akakura Ru, daughter of Ru Hoani and Te Rau Miria Te Haunui, was a major chieftainess of Ngatirongo, of Tauarau, Ruatoki. But at her death she was simply registered as Tamakaimoana. Consequently, any general conclusions drawn from the Registers of Maori Births and Deaths must be understood to reflect a simplification of the genealogical lines and of the priorities of descent being stated. Bearing this in mind, it is still conspicuous that the hapu cited at the time were a limited number of hapu, and they were all hapu who lived traditionally at or near Maungapohatu, Ruatahuna, Ruatoki and Te Waimana. There is no evidence here that the community drew on any other tribal groups. The two 'outsiders' had married into these hapu.

Not only were the tribal links close, but so were the family links. The Tuhoe were still using a patrilineal naming system, that is, the child bore its

father's name as its second name. Thus, the immediate family can be traced, through the male line, and the pre-eminent families at Maungapohatu of the later 1920s can be readily identified. They were the children of Kanuehi Te Wara, who was the father of Rua's wife Pehirangi, and who died in 1929; the children of the Maungapohatu chief, Miki Te Wakaunua, who died in 1928; of Tekā Hekerangi, one of the leading Riwaiti, or teachers of the faith, who was still living at Maungapohatu, after the school and the mission closed, in 1951; of Pari Te Rika (Te Ahuru Te Rika), another of the Riwaiti, who died in 1933; and of Rua himself. Their descendants were the 'new generation', who intermarried. There is little doubt that Maungapohatu drew its strength, in its revived millenarian phase, from a relatively limited number of families and hapu. Kin — indeed, close kin connections — was undoubtedly the basis of Rua's following at this time.

Table 11: A List of Hapu Cited by Adults on the Registers of Births and Deaths, 1924–1936⁷³

		Total
1. Tamakaimoana	A Tuhoe hapu, from Maungapohatu	
40 males		
40 females		80
2. Ngatikuri	A Tuhoe hapu, from Te Waiiti	
5 males		
2 females		7
3. Hamua	A Tuhoe hapu, from Waikirikiri, Ruatoki	
1 male		
5 females		6
4. Ngaitama	A Tuhoe hapu, from Te Waimana	
2 males		
2 females		4
5. Ngaitawhaki	A Tuhoe hapu, from Ruatahuna	
1 male		
3 females		4
6. Ngaiteau	A Tuhoe hapu, from Maungapohatu	
2 males		
1 female		3
7. Te Whakataane	Old tribe, long married into Tuhoe, from Tauwharemanuka and Tawhana	
2 females		2
8. Te Mahurehure	A Tuhoe hapu, from Rewarewa, Ruatoki	
1 male		
1 female		2
9. Ngatimaru	A Tuhoe hapu, from Maungapohatu	
1 male		1
10. Ngaiteriu	A Tuhoe hapu, from Ruatahuna	
2 females		2
11. Ngatiraka	A Ngatiawa hapu, intermarried with Tuhoe, Opouriao and Te Waimana	
2 males		2
12. Ngatiwhare	A Tuhoe hapu, from Te Whaiti	
1 male		1
13. Ngaitekahu	A Tuhoe hapu, upper Tauranga river valley	
1 male		1
14. Ngapotiki	Older name for Tuhoe	
1 male		

		Total
15. Ngatitamatea	A Ngatikahungunu hapu, intermarried with	
1 male	Tuhoe, from Waiotahe	1
16. Ngatimanunui	A Tuhoe hapu, from Umuroa, Ruatahuna	
1 male		1
17. Ngatikakahutapiki	A Tuhoe hapu, from Parahaki, near Ruatahuna	
1 female		1
18. Ngatikahungunu	The large Hawke's Bay tribe	
1 male		
1 female		2
19. Ngapuhi	The large Hokianga and Bay of Islands tribe	
1 male		1
<hr/>		122
Total number of individuals registered with hapu stated		
48 males		
49 females		97

Maungapohatu was a very small community, yet, despite its tiny numbers, some statistical patterns do emerge. They are the patterns of extreme poverty. The high post neo-natal mortality rate was due to poor housing and diet; so was, at least in part, the 25% of adult deaths attributed to tuberculosis. The profile of the community reveals many of the characteristics of the 'under developed' world. But the Maori were a minority population living in a nation which had a developed medical reputation, and particularly one for child care. The Maungapohatu people were 'surveyed', not least in 1936 by the Labour Government, and their problems 'recorded', but no action resulted. Yet this community had tried very hard to help itself. The poverty of these families was not due to self-neglect or 'laziness', any more than these were the causes of the poverty of the Maori in general. It was an objective situation, and one which the Maungapohatu people had tried to surmount. It was created by the fact that the land they owned could not be redeveloped without capital or assistance, but could no longer sustain them in a traditional way. They had already lost their best land by confiscation in 1866. To earn money, the men worked as they could: mostly as shearers and agricultural labourers on the neighbouring Pakeha farms at Waimana or Gisborne. In 1919 an Auckland reporter, who met Rua and was much impressed by the Maungapohatu settlement, came close to some of the root issues. In Rua, and others, the Tuhoe possessed leaders who were prepared to act as mediators and to bring in influences that they considered beneficial for the people. But they were given no consistent external support or advice in their considerable efforts to make the Tuhoe self-sufficient again. 'It is really a disgrace to us as a people, and particularly to those responsible for native affairs that so many Maoris should be forced for lack of proper opportunities to lead idle and useless lives, while so much of their land lies uncultivated . . . I am quite sure that if men like Tu Rakuraku [of Waimana] and Rua, and other leading chiefs whom I have met recently were given official recognition and some practical control over . . . Maori lands, they would soon add very considerably to our output of agricultural

wealth'.⁷⁴ In 1921, Apirana Ngata made similar observations of the Tuhoe: that they were efficient in all that related to work in the bush country, but what they required was financial assistance and sustained advice.⁷⁵ Instead, they were driven into becoming a rural proletariat. They gave of their wealth — the land — to open up the region. They struggled hard to get a school at Maungapohatu, seeking a European education for their children. But they were left without roads, without capital, and without much assistance. Stripped of their own accumulated funds by the costs of the arbitrary legal trials of 1916—1917, the Tuhoe of Maungapohatu could not recover. They were condemned to remain 'ragged trousered philanthropists' in the land of ostensible equality. From their perspective, their captivity in Babylon seemed unending.

NOTES

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1 For a fuller account of the foundation of Maungapohatu see Judith Binney, Gillian Chaplin and Craig Wallace, *Mihaia. The Prophet Rua Kenana and his Community at Maungapohatu*, Wellington, 1979, pp.45–80. At its height, in the winter of 1907, there were about 600 people resident in the settlement. *Poverty Bay Herald* (PBH), 23 September, 30 December 1907.

2 The prophet Te Kooti was always known among the Tuhoe by his ancestral name, Te Turuki. The name under which he was foreordained was Arikirangi, commonly shortened to Rikirangi. His Anglican baptismal name was Te Kooti, 'Coates'. He used all these names variously. This prophecy is from Otewa, 25 January 1885. Te Kooti was drawing upon Isaiah 62:4: 'Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.' Rua was baptised Hepetipa by Eria Raukura, the chief tohunga of the Ringatu, who had himself been ordained by Te Kooti in a tohi, or baptismal rite in 1881. Te Kooti's prophecy for his successor was 'e ki nei ka karangatia koe ko Hepetipa, to whenua ko Peura, no te mea ka hua reka a Ihoa i a koe, a ka whai tahu to whenua.' ('It says you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah, for the Lord is well pleased with you, and your land shall have a spouse.') This text and prophecy Rua announced to be his when he set apart Maungapohatu in 1907. (Maungapohatu Notebook 1881–1916, pp.90–91. Translation by Jane McRae and Merimeri Penfold.)

3 Pinohi Tutakangahau's list of Maungapohatu families and their children, 7 December 1913, Education (E) 44/4, I. Pinohi said there were then 70 children of an age for schooling. Almost all the families on this list were at Maungapohatu in its later reconstruction, from 1927, with which this article primarily deals.

4 The setting apart of the 20,000 acres was recorded in a letter written by Rua to PBH and published by them on 23 April 1907; the breaking up of the 20,000 acres was recorded in the Maungapohatu Notebook 1881–1916, p.98.

5 Te Puhī Tatu, daughter of Tatu Horopapera, one of the teachers of Rua's faith, speaking with the author, 22 January 1978. Her comments are quoted in full in Binney et al., p.77.

6 *The Outlook*, August 6, 1918. The Rev. J.A. Asher, who wrote the article, stated specifically that the C crossed the A, and the A crossed the V. Photographs taken of the building in 1908 show the CA monogram clearly. The monograms are in Roman lettering and there is a possibility that they were copied from an inscription for Ca[esar] Au[gustus]. This suggestion is not quite as absurd as it may appear. In Luke 2:1 it is stated, 'there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed'. Rua taught that the final sign of the end of the world would be when everything was taxed, 'even cups and saucers'. (Mac Onekawa, a staunch follower of Rua, talking with the author, 16 May, and 10 December 1978.) Beside the monogram CA there was also painted an image of Halley's comet, which Rua used as the promise of the new Messiah, and the fulfilment of the Covenant. The monograms had been carefully copied and probably derived from an illustrated Family Bible of the later 19th century — as was the building itself.

7 Maungapohatu Ledger Book 1907–1929: 'Ka taati te mahia o te pa i te 16 o tenei marama, kia oti i nga ra e toru . . . Ma te hapu kotahi ma Ngati Kuri, e n:ahi kia oti i te 18 o nga ra o Hepetema nei, tau 1915.' 'Work was begun on the pa on the 16th of this month, to be completed in three days . . . One hapu, Ngati Kuri, is to work and complete it on the 18th day of September, year 1915.' (Transcription and translation by Rangi Motu.) In the Maungapohatu Notebook a comment is made that four of the houses which had sprung up were plundered: 'Ko te 4 o nga whare ka tupu ra, ka murua.' (Maungapohatu Notebook 1881–1916, p.39.)

8 Matthew 26:61.

9 'No te tekau 18 o nga ra, ko te kapa kotahi rau pene, ko te whakahere hara tenei, e ki nei te kupu te hara o nga matua.' 'On the eighteenth there were one hundred pennies in coppers. This was the propitiation for sins, as the word says, the sin of the parents.' (Maungapohatu Notebook 1881–1916, p.39. Translation by Jane McRae.)

10 Numbers 6:5, 18.

11 'Kau muta era whakarite ki ana tangata makawe-roroa . . . 'Ko ia tonu te Tapu, ko ia tonu Noa.' . . . Kua rite tera whakarite ite wa ia Mohi ma . . . a me hoki ano ki te tikanga tuatahi, a me whakapotopoto nga nrakawe o ratau katoa ko ana tangata. (Talking with the author, 22 January 1978. Transcription and translation by Rangi Motu.)

12 The date for the typhoid epidemic, January 1925, is able to be established by an article

written by the missionary teacher Euphemia (Phem) Doull, in *The Outlook*: 9 March 1925, and an article in the *Auckland Weekly News*, 5 February 1925, p.48. The year 1924, cited in Binney et al., pp.152, 154, is incorrect.

13 Letter from Taite Whareniui (Pita Te Whareniui) to Mataatua Maori Health Council, 31 August 1925, H 121/14, 03246. (I am indebted to Mr Jeff Sissons, who is completing a PhD at the University of Auckland on the Maori communities in the Waimana valley, for this reference.) [Jeffery Sissons, 'Te Mana o Te Waimana. Tuhoe History of the Tauranga Valley', PhD thesis, University of Auckland, 1984].

14 'Maungapohatu Maori School History', 9.

15 Maungapohatu Ledger Book 1907–1929, pp.12–13, 15–16.

16 Maori Affairs (MA) 13/92.

17 Laughton to Director of Education, 3 June 1936, E 44/4, I.

18 Paulger to Director of Education, 30 October 1933, E 44/4, II.

19 Paulger to Director of Education, 1 July 1934, E 44/4, II.

20 One original birth register, for the period 1935–1948, exists in the Registrar-General's Office in Lower Hutt. The duplicate of this, and of the earlier register, 1924–1934, is filed into the national records of Maori Births, also held in the Registrar-General's Office.

Two original death registers exist. The first, 1924–1935, was acquired by the Rotorua Museum in 1981. The second, 1936–1948, is held in the Registrar-General's Office. The duplicates of both registers are filed into the national records of Maori Deaths in the Registrar-General's Office.

I have also searched the Te Whaiti, Ruatahuna, Matahi, and Waimana (Tanatana) Maori death registers for the period 1924–1936, for deaths of people recorded as living at Maungapohatu.

21 Puti Onekawa, daughter of Rua, talking with the author, 16 May 1978.

22 Shepherd–Galvin Report 1936, p.10, MA 13/92.

23 As part of the Urewera consolidation scheme. 40,000 acres was the amount given, not 60,000 as stated in Binney et al 1979, p.171. The Crown had purchased 345,000 acres by 1921 but it took 482,000 acres in the general consolidation. The difference — 137,000 acres — included land to cover the survey costs, the portion for the roading costs, and a gift from the Tuhoe to preserve the Waikaremoana forest area. Urewera Consolidation Roading: Tuhoe Trust, Part I, MA 29/4/7/1.

24 Conference held at Te Whaiti, 5 July 1936, p.5, MA 13/92.

25 *New Zealand Gazette*, 17 July 1930, p.2194.

26 F.W. Ferkert, Engineer-in-Chief of Public Works, to Department of Education, 4 August 1931, E 44/4, I.

27 James Hay to Director of Education, 8 July 1931, E 44/4, I; Paulger to Director of Education, 11 June 1933, E 44/4, II; Minister of Lands to Minister of Native Affairs, 6 June 1936, MA 13/92.

28 *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives* (AJHR), D-1, 1906 (Map).

29 PBH, 17 December 1907.

30 J.A. Mackay, *Historic Poverty Bay and the East Coast, N.I., NZ.*, Gisborne, 1949, p.399.

31 PBH, 3 December 1923, an article entitled revealingly "'Never Again!' Ministerial Visit to the Urewera'.

32 Coates to Acting Minister of Lands, 17 August 1923, Urewera Consolidation, MA 29/4/7, I.

33 PBH, 3 December 1923.

34 PBH, 13 October 1923; J.R. Elder, *The History of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand 1840–1940*, Christchurch, 1940, p.371.

35 Creswell n.d. The Tuhoe were monetarily compensated, in 1958, for the land they had given for the arterial roads. At Te Whaiti, in 1937, a boys' manual training school was opened by the Presbyterian mission, using some of the money raised originally for the Waimana agricultural school. John Laughton stated that the church ran into problems of securing title to the land they had been given at Waimana. (J.G. Laughton, *From Forest Trail to City Street. The Story of the Presbyterian Church among the Maori People*, Christchurch, 1961, p.42.)

36 Binney et al., p.189.

37 Shepherd–Galvin Report 1936:6-7, MA 13/92.

38 Minister of Lands to Minister of Native Affairs, 6 June 1936. (MA 13/92.) The two previous surveys — the original 'useless' magnetic survey, and the land transfer surveys of 1922 — had both been paid for by Tuhoe.

39 Maungapohatu Ledger Book 1907–1929, p.15.

40 'Inhabitants of Maungapohatu', MA 13/92. Cited as Table 2.

- 41 School Inspectors' Report, 15 December 1936, E 44/4, II.
 42 MA 13/92.
 43 Table 1.
 44 School Inspectors' Report, December 15, 1936, E 44/4, II.
 45 Maungapohatu Ledger Book 1907–1929, p.16. Payments made by Rua for labour, 3 February 1929.
 46 School Inspectors' Reports, E 44/4 I, II.
 47 The lesser figure is the total number of children listed by name; the higher figure the stated number. The inflated figure is almost certainly a device of the teachers to maintain the grading of the school. There is no Annual Inspection Report on file for the school in 1931. The total, therefore, is taken from a mid-year list, which did not include names.
 48 Maungapohatu Maori Death Registers 1924–1948, unless otherwise indicated.
 49 * indicates whether on 1929 list from Maungapohatu Ledger Book, cited as Table 1. † indicates whether on 1936 Maungapohatu list, MA 13/92, cited as Table 2.
 50 Te Whaiti Maori Death Register 1914–1935. Died in a truck accident at Te Whaiti, 27 January 1928. See Binney et al., p.180.
 51 Maungapohatu Ledger Book 1907–1929, p.16. Payments made by Rua, 3 February 1929, 'for want of a kitchen'.
 52 'Inhabitants of Matahii Pa', 1936, MA 13/92.
 53 'Inhabitants from Tauwharemanuka to Tawhana', 1936, MA 13/92.
 54 Maungapohatu Ledger Book 1907–1929, p.16. Payments made by Rua for work, 3 February 1929.
 55 Hugh Macpherson, Te Whaiti, 4 November 1927, to Medical Officer of Health, Auckland, H 194/1/6, 13924. (I am indebted to Jeff Sissons for this reference.)
 56 Minister of Lands to Minister of Native Affairs, 6 June 1936, MA 13/92.
 57 Report of the Department of Lands and Survey to Maori Affairs, 20 August, 23 September 1937, MA 29/4/7/1, Part I.
 58 AJHR, 1937, H-31, Appendix C, p.66.
 59 Ian Pool, *The Maori Population of New Zealand, 1796–1971*, Auckland, 1977, p.171.
 60 Maungapohatu Maori Death Registers 1924–1948.
 61 AJHR, 1935, H-31, p.8.
 62 Pool, p.171.
 63 Maungapohatu Maori Death Registers 1924–1948; Te Whaiti Maori Death Registers 1914–1936.
 64 Maungapohatu Maori Death Registers 1924–1948.
 65 Maungapohatu Maori Death Registers 1924–1948; Te Whaiti Maori Death Registers 1914–1936. It should be noted that many of the older individuals' ages can only have been estimated, as their births would not have been registered. (It was not until 1913 that Maori births were required to be registered.) Age counted by years was a European concern.
 66 Children born before 1924 and subsequently registered at Maungapohatu have not been included in this table. There were, in fact, 10 children born between 1917 and 1923 and all were born into families already included in this list.
 67 Maungapohatu Maori Birth Registers 1924–1948.
 68 * indicates whether on the 1929 list, cited as Table 1. † indicates whether on the 1936 list, cited as Table 2.
 69 Two females are entered as born to this couple on different dates in November 1924. One was registered in 1924, the other in 1931 with a different name. They may be the same child.
 70 'Inhabitants of Matahii Pa', 1936, MA 13/92.
 71 'Inhabitants from Tauwharemanuka to Tawhana', 1936, MA 13/92.
 72 Maungapohatu Maori Births and Deaths Registers 1924–1948. I have here followed Pool, p.161 for the 'small child' category of 0–4 years.
 73 Tables 4, 9.
 74 *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 March 1919, p.21.
 75 Undated memo attached to the manuscript of the Urewera land consolidation report, 1921–1922. MA 28/7/5/1.