

Historic loss in future

Turuturu-Mokai is an historic reserve just five minutes drive from Hawera. It possesses a charm of its own — a blend of striking scenery and intriguing history.

Four hundred years ago it was a Maori pa, the scene of a bitter battle between two rival tribes. Last century it was a pakeha redoubt and the site of a battle between members of the Armed Constabulary and the Nga Ruahine tribe.

At the turn of this century it was declared an historic reserve, to be preserved for the recreational use of the public.

In a few years' time its name will be synonymous with camellias.

Turuturu-Mokai is an important part of the history of South Taranaki. And, more important, it belongs to the people of the area.

Set out on 26.5 acres of land, it includes the original pa and military redoubt.

The small Tawhiti Stream runs through the reserve forming a large swamp area. Changing rooms and an empty swimming pool are sited near the old redoubt.

Unfortunately, few people in the Hawera district take advantage of the reserve. Recently the only people attracted to Turuturu-Mokai have been vandals.

Although there is an occasional picnic or barbecue there during the summer the reserve is vastly under-used.

Turuturu-Mokai presents an exciting area for

development. Even as it is, the reserve is a beautiful recreational spot — as a picnic area or a scenic walk.

Over past years attempts have been made to develop the site and the reserve is certainly in better condition than it was 20 years ago.

It is its future that is in question.

Does Turuturu-Mokai fill a recreational need for the people of Hawera? Do people want the reserve developed?

These are questions the Hawera District Council needs to know if it ever decides to develop Turuturu-Mokai to its full potential.

Taranaki Herald Hawera reporter Shirley Pearce filed this report, tracing the history of Turuturu-Mokai and looking ahead to the future of the reserve.

Just before dawn a war party from Taki Ruahine delivered a carefully planned attack on Turuturu-Mokai.

The defenders were in no condition to resist as they were still suffering from the fatigues of the previous day.

Most of the inmates of the pa were slain and many were taken as slaves.

A legacy of bitterness and rancour remained for many generations after the battle.

After the massacre the smoke-dried heads were impaled on stakes and thrust into the ground.

The uhi, after being dipped in urine, was placed in position and struck with a mallet.

The uhi cut through the flesh and blood flowed freely at the incision. Naturally such an operation was extremely painful.

Considerable inflammation followed and this took a long time to heal.

The tobunga came to Turuturu-Mokai and lashed the young men and after completing his work he returned to the Taki Ruahine pa.

For many years "Maori

trod within the old pa. Their wharua and staves fell into disrepair. Fosse and rampart lost their sharp outlines, debris from the crumbling battens littered the trenches, pits and passages were filled up, but always the main lines of the defences remained — with their memories.

After the massacre a token of goodwill towards the Taki Ruahine was carried upon it and it is treated with great respect.

An ancient design is carved upon it and it is thought to have been used by the women and children par-took of the food. I have been to eat human flesh, and my throat is constantly open for the flesh of man.

"I shall not die, I shall not die, I shall not die. That is the word for you extending to Matarangara. That is a clear word for you extending to all your boundaries. Cause. Stop. From Titokowaru."

However it was unlikely Titokowaru himself ate human flesh.

Under the orders of Colonel McDonnell, Captain Frederick Ross proceeded to re-garrison the redoubt at Turuturu-Mokai.

The new garrison started putting its defences back in order but did not finish before they were attacked.

It started in the wintry dawn of July 12, 1868. The Maoris were armed with muzzle-loading, Enfield, shotguns and tomawaks. The Armed Constabulary had Terry carbines and revolvers.

Shortly after 5 a.m. the Maoris attacked. The first man shot was Lennon, a canteen keeper.

Thiruau, the war priest, made the offering of Lennon's heart to the war gods. Lennon's head was found outside the redoubt after the fighting.

When the Maoris attempted to storm the gateway Captain Ross headed the defence. Surrounded by five volunteers Captain Ross was killed while defending the gateway.

His heart was cut out as Lennon's had been.

Again and again the Maoris tried to climb over the rampart but were turned back. Hand to hand fighting and close range firing were the order of the day.

Meanwhile the sounds of fighting had been heard at the Whiti redoubt, three miles away. A party of 50 Armed Constabulary set out on foot to relieve Turuturu-Mokai.

As they approached the attacking Maoris retired, carrying their wounded.

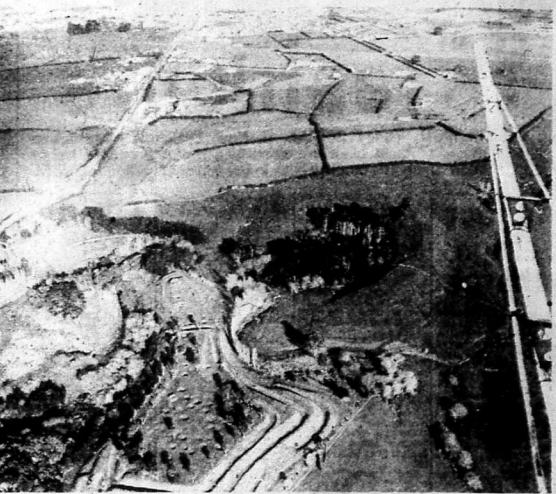
No further attacks were made on Turuturu-Mokai redoubt and when peace finally came to South Taranaki the garrison was withdrawn.

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An aerial view of Turuturu-Mokai historic reserve with Turuturu Rd on the left. The camellia museum will be sited on land beside Turuturu Rd at the top of the reserve.



A view of the changing sheds at Turuturu-Mokai, photographed from the highest point of the pa.



The carved post at the top of the pa — a token of goodwill towards the pakeha from the Maori people. It holds an ancient design which removed the tapu from the pa.

Cannibalism

Early in 1868, Titokowaru was ready. There were minor acts of aggression and then three military settlers were killed while felling bush.

The Maoris claimed both land and timber and gave settlers notice to leave. At this time Whiti redoubt, Thiruau and the garrisoned by the Armed Constabulary. Soon after a trooper named Smith was killed while retrieving his horse from the bush.

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Jan 21-Feb 19 Aquarius (Jan 23-Aug 21) **Leo**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Anticipate a spate of surprising news and rather unheralded visitors or last-minute invitations. This is a good time to make purchases.

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Feb 20-Mar 20 Pisces (Feb 22-Apr 21) **Virgo**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A secret wish of someone close to you will be revealed and you may be able to do nothing about it. Don't let frustration get you down — just let things take their course.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Mar 21-Apr 19 Aries (Mar 23-May 21) **Libra**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A friend's problem seems to have been weighing on your mind of late. Don't get too heavily involved or this might become your worry as well. Check your way of living will call for common sense adjustments.

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Apr 20-May 19 Taurus (Apr 22-Jun 21) **Scorpio**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

You may have to take on a new responsibility, if you do face matters that concern you take a share. You're capable but apt to do things on your own.

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May 20-June 20 Gemini (May 22-Jul 22) **Sagittarius**

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You need something pleasant to look forward to. Try to organise some social entertainment. Don't let commonplace things of life get you down.

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June 21-July 23 Cancer (Jun 23-Aug 23) **Capricorn**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

You may hear of an acquaintance's dishonesty, but don't discuss the matter with anyone as there is more in it than you know. Expect a surprise parcel or letter which will thrill you.

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BIRTHDAY: The year should start off with many invitations to a busy social life. You'll come up against a major financial holiday as indicated. Something will change your outlook on life.

FOR ANYTHING TO DO WITH STEEL

Closure

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Unfortunately the lake became filled with silt and instead of being 1.5m deep became only 90cm deep with a metre of mud and silt.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Health Department then ordered the closure of the swimming pool because the water, which came from the Tawhiti Stream, was not up to health regulations.

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Eventually the lake was drained and the stream redirected. In the early 1860s various parts of Turuturu-Mokai were fenced off to allow sheep grazing, this cutting down on the cost of maintenance.

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At one stage Turuturu-Mokai was considered as a site for the municipal swimming pool. However this suggestion did not find much favour as the site was too far out of town.

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One development going on through the years at the reserve has been the planting of native trees and the man behind a lot of this planting was Mr Rod Syme, Hawera.

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Part of the original pa which remains are the food pits. These are about 1.2m and can be found on the top of the pa.

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At the entrance to the reserve are the remains of a small pa. It is called Te Unga-uanga. A series of stone structures run along the base of the pa — not an ancient fortification but a deterrent to people driving their cars up the hill.



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