

Parihaka

The Art of Passive Resistance

and its links with the Northern Cemetery



Parihaka Memorial Stone



Northern Cemetery, Dunedin, late 19th century

The Parihaka men known as the "ploughmen" were transported south from Taranaki to Dunedin, and held as political prisoners at the Dunedin Gaol without trial during the years 1879-1881. They were followers of Te Whiti-o-Rongomai and his uncle Tohu Kakahi of Parihaka, who preached passive resistance as a counter to the efforts of the colonial troops to dislodge them from their Taranaki lands.

During their imprisonment in Dunedin the Parihaka "ploughmen" made a huge contribution to the city building roads particularly notable being the rock walls at various locations on the edge of the Otago Harbour, they also created a cemetery at Port Chalmers, records are incomplete as to other works undertaken by the "ploughmen" from Parihaka, but clearly complementing the significant works undertaken by the Taranaki Prisoners held in Dunedin during the years 1869-1872 following the "Colonial Land Wars".

Poor sanitation, the harsh southern climate, prison food and separation from their lands and families all contributed to a number of deaths among the political prisoners while in the south. Three are buried in the Northern Cemetery in paupers' graves. Their burial plots are in the area of Block 56, but are difficult to locate because the cemetery was redesigned after the burials took place.

In March of the year 2000 a large contingent of Taranaki Maori led by kaumatua Tom Ngatai unveiled a memorial in honour of their ancestors who are buried in the Northern Cemetery.

Contributed by Edward Ellison of Otakou Ngai Tahu

The three Parihaka men buried in the Northern Cemetery are:-

Pererangi, died 24th September 1880,
buried in Block 56, Plot 27;

Watene Tupuhi, died 22nd July 1880,
buried in Block 56, Plot 53;

Peteroi, died 28th January 1881,
buried in Block 55, Plot 67.

Eighteen of their fellow Parihaka men who died as prisoners in Dunedin are buried in the Southern Cemetery, Dunedin.

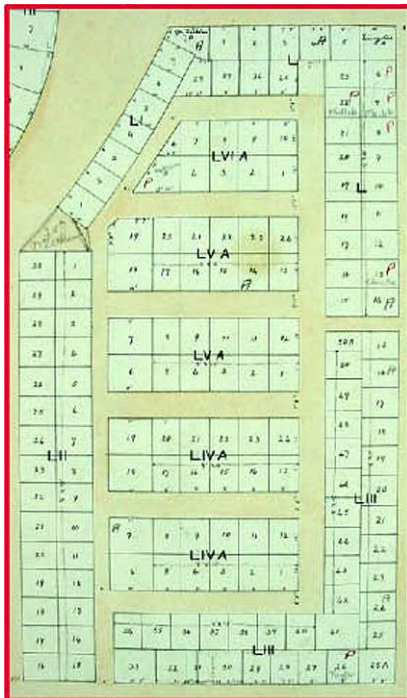
Watene Tupuhi died of consumption (TB) on 22nd July 1880 at 4.25am at Dunedin Gaol. He died there because he had refused to go to the hospital, preferring to die with members of his hapu and fellow prisoners. Wiremu Kingi Matakatea and another prisoner, Rangi Puahoaho, asked Isaac Newton Watt, Resident Magistrate, to be allowed to go to this burial. Tupuhi and Rangi Puahoaho belonged to the same hapu. Watt at first thought this "preposterous", but he nevertheless sought permission for those most closely related to the deceased to attend - "I would suggest that twenty five should be allowed to attend under my command escorted by say twelve policemen. Wiremu King will require a carriage." On the morning of 24th July 1880, Wiremu King Matakatea, Isaac Newton Watt (who was Sheriff to the Supreme Court, Dunedin, and Coroner as well as being Resident Magistrate) and four others travelled by cab to attend Tupuhi's burial. This is the only known burial of any Maori prisoner who died in Dunedin that was attended by other prisoners. On the same day Watt received a telegram about the Maori Prisoners Act whereby the prisoners could be kept in jail indefinitely. Six years later Watt was also buried in the Northern Cemetery in Block 134, Plot 6.

Northern Cemetery



Above:- Gravestones of later burials at the Northern Cemetery some of which are on top of the Maori burials.

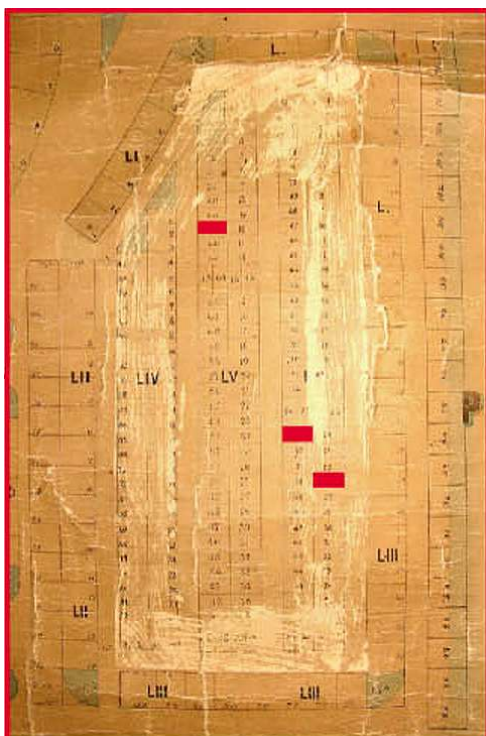
Left:- Plan of the cemetery as it is today.



Right:- carved memorial Maori head gifted by Taranaki Maori in 2000.

Right:- the dedication.

Left:- Expanded plan of the area, as it is today, containing the graves of the three prisoners from Taranaki Iwi who died in Dunedin.



Left:-The original layout of the cemetery with red marking the burial places of the three prisoners from Taranaki Iwi who died in Dunedin.



"He kawai rangatira i puta mai i a maunga Turanaki
He Kakano i ruia mai i Ragiataea
Ka Hinga atu ki te mura o te ahi, i riro atu te iwi hereherei
kawea mai ke te hauaitu o te Wai Pounamu, he taurekareka
o te Pakeha
wehea i te ukaipo.
Kia kuru pereki.
Enei hipi hiroki.
i hingahinga atu, i hungahinga mai, i ngaro whakaterunga,
i ngaro whakateraro ki te po
Kua huna taurekareka, te hoki atu ai.
Watea kau anate mata o te whenua, takahia e ratou nona
nga ture

Tera te raukura tikapa i titia hai tohu whakateitei i te
whenua, te warewaretia"
They grew under the protective mantle of the mountain
Taranaki

They were firmly connected to their Turangawaewae
Then arrived the colonial wars, that uprooted their lives,
and resulted in their captivity

They were brought as prisoners to the deep south, to the
colder climes, to this strange land

They were separated from their whanau.

They were put to work building roads.

Sickness and death befell them.

One by one many died, and they were buried in the
Northern and Southern cemeteries.

Buried in unmarked paupers' graves.

Lonely graves, in the midst of those who were their
captors and also those who enjoyed the rights and dignity
of free people.

We will not forget them, the suffering and their loss can
only be imagined, their sacrifice will be remembered. "

The Parihaka Memorial Stone:

"e Kare au e mate

Ka mate Ko te mate

Na ora tonu aau"

"I shall not die

When death itself is dead

I shall still be alive"

- pai marire

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