

ART. XI.—Early History of Rangitikei, and Notes on the Ngati Apa Tribe.

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[Read before the Wellington Philosophical Society, 6th October, 1909.]

Another visitor who arrived and journeyed through the district, eventually settling here, was Ma-tangi, who came from Wai-rarapa about eighteen generations ago. He came hither, having heard that the place swarmed with flocks of birds (*whirikoko*= a flock of birds in flight). When he reached the summits of the Tara-rua Mountains he saw the first flight, so he called the place Tiro-hanga. The flock alighted at Tahuna-a-rua (near Palmerston North), so he followed them; but when he drew near they arose and flew very high—hence the name of Te Ao-rangi (near Feilding). They next alighted at Purakau, below Whaka-ari (trig. station between Sandon and Awa-huri usually called Mount Stewart), in the bush; but again he disturbed them, and they flew on to Taumata-patiti. Next they alighted in the bush called Te Rakau-hou, near Mount Stewart. Matangi went into the bush, but found that the birds did not stay; and, as the trees were young, he gave the name above mentioned. Again they alighted in the bush, where he slept with his face to the ground; therefore he called that place Te Whaka-moe-takapu (near Kaka-riki), (railway-bridge near Greatford). Still following the birds, he arrived at a new country, and, taking a pole, he took a leap with it, calling the place Toko-rangi (a hill between Halcombe and the river on the cliffs above the Onepuhi Pa). Still following them, he reached a stream where he recited *karakias*; therefore he called the stream Wai-tapu (near Rata, one of the boundaries of the Manawatu Block). Again he followed the birds, and caught the sound of them, and so called the place Paroro-rangi. There are two ranges meeting at an angle—one is Paroro-rangi; on the other he stood and blew his horn, calling it Puto-rino (between Hunterville and the Rangi-tikei River). Still following the birds, he reached the upper Rangitikei, and, seeing that they had taken flight inland, he called the spot Tiro-hanga; but the place is now called Te Papa-o-Hauiti (Rata). He followed them to the top of the ridge, where he halted and stamped on the ground, and so called the place Tapuae (a trig. shown on most maps). Again he went on, and, seeing them high up in the air above him, he called the place O-tama-kapua. Then he went along the river and again blew a blast on his horn, and there he called the place Puta-tara. Still on up the river he went till he came to a place where he grounded his staff, and called it Te Tokotoko-o-Matangi. Then he climbed the range and reached the top, calling it Whaka-ara-waru. From this place he watched the birds cross the river, and saw them alight; therefore he called the place Rangi-tauria. He was now almost exhausted, and gave up the chase; but the birds were also tired, and could not fly any further: so he and his children (for his children had followed him all the way) caught and killed them, and there they stayed and settled, and his children are still living at Rangi-tauria to this day.

"If you ask me," continued the old man who gave the narrative, "whether I have been there and seen them, I answer Yes. I have seen the place, and have seen his children. They have been changed into 'spirits of the brook'—

i.e., taniwhas—because they disobeyed the voice of their father when he told them to bring some water. I have myself seen the posts of his house, for they are still standing (450 years since that house was built). I have seen his children with my own eyes. If we all went up to them it would make no difference. Many attempts have been made to secure them with ropes, but in vain—they can release themselves at once by their magic powers. Their names are Hine-te-iwaiwa and Horoputa, her brother, and they are still at that place, for there Ma-tangi left them.” The lake which Ma-tangi's children still inhabit is near O-kaha-rau, and is called O-toea. His house was built at Whiti-anga, near the lake, and it was there that our friend saw the totara posts. It was Matangi who brought to this land the *atua* Kahu-kura, which came from Hawaiki in the Takitumu canoe. This *atua* was first taken to Te Awarua, but in the time of Te Ngahoa it was removed to Owhioi. All inquiries regarding the shape and power of this *atua* have yielded but little information beyond the fact that it was very large, and shone like fire, something after the shape of a comet, and had power of flight or movement. (other

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accounts affirm that Kahu-kura was lost at the Huka Falls when Tamatea's canoe went over.) After Ma-tangi's children left him he was returning to his old home, accompanied by his dog. He travelled down the Rangi-tikei River, but had the misfortune to lose his dog; and, as its name was Ranga-tira, he went about calling “Ranga-tira, Ranga-tira”; so that place was ever afterwards known as Ranga-tira (a well-known block between the Pou-rewa and Rangi-tikei Rivers). Many of Ma-tangi's descendants intermarried with Ngati Hau-iti.