

AKUHATA MOKENA: ELDEST SON OF MOKENA HOU

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

## AKUHATA MOKENA: ELDEST SON OF MOKENA HOU

**Abstract:** *Akuhata Mokena was recorded as being the first child of Mokena Hou and Rina. By the early 1860s he was living at the northern boundary of the Aroha Block as well as at Puriri, where he dug kauri gum. From 1857 to 1868 he also cultivated close to the southern edge of the future Thames township. Having run cattle on the Aroha block from 1867 onwards, he settled there in 1878, operating the first hotel to be erected at the hot springs.*

*In the land court he tried to obtain interests in as many land blocks as possible, and obtained income by selling some of these. After a brief involvement in Te Aroha mining, when he was the only member of his family to delay ceding their land for mining, he returned to live at Puriri. He also invested, very modestly, in mining at Thames and Puriri.*

*A rangatira who was steadfastly loyal to the Crown, when he died without issue his estate became a cause of conflict between Maori and Pakeha perceptions of how it should be shared amongst his wife and his family.*

### WHAKAPAPA AND AGE

Akuhata, otherwise August,<sup>1</sup> Mokena, was once referred to as having the alias Akuhata Te Poro.<sup>2</sup> His whakapapa is given in the paper on Mokena. The eldest child of Mokena Hou and Rina, according to one account he was born in about 1825, whilst an obituary was very precise: at Taumatawiwi, the site of the future battle in 1830, in 1822.<sup>3</sup> As their next child, or at least the next one to survive, was not born until 1842, on these dates it seems unlikely he was really their child, for Mokena was too young to have fathered him in c.1822, Rina's childbearing years would have been unrealistically long - and they were not married until about 1833.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps Akuhata was born later; or had he been adopted? If the latter, it was never mentioned in land court hearings. He told this court in 1889 that in or after 1863 he was aged either 15 or (much more likely, because he was married

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<sup>1</sup> For example, *Thames Advertiser*, 2 September 1882, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Aroha Block IX Section 15, Land Blocks, H980, Maori Land Court, Hamilton.

<sup>3</sup> Maori Land Court, Waikato Minute Book no. 13, p. 221; *Thames Advertiser*, 24 June 1885, p. 3; *Te Aroha News*, 25 January 1900, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> See paper on Mokena Hou and Rina.

by then) was ‘of age’, meaning over 21,<sup>5</sup> which would date his birth to the late 1830s or the very beginning of the following decade, a much more likely date than 1822 or 1825 (his next sibling, his brother Ranapia, was born in 1842).<sup>6</sup> In the same year he told the court that he had first cultivated land at Kaitawa, near the future Thames, in 1857; he was already married,<sup>7</sup> so must have been in his late teens.

‘Before the Taranaki war’ of 1860 he married Te Reiti Tuma, also known as Purewa Te Reiti because her mother was Maraea Purewa.<sup>8</sup> She presumably is the Purewa Morgan and ‘Mrs Morgan’ who received medical treatment in Thames in the mid-1880s under a government scheme for Maori, and who had been born either in 1837 or 1840.<sup>9</sup> (Possibly she was of a similar age to her husband rather than ten or more years younger.) She could trace her whakapapa back to Tumutumu, who was succeeded by

Te Ruinga

Kahumaru

Tuatara

Rimu, a woman, whose

daughter Paretaipu married Te Hauiti,

their second child was Te Rauponga.

whose son Tuma was her father.<sup>10</sup>

Another whakapapa revealed the relationship between her and her husband. They shared a common ancestor, Tuatara, from whose daughter Rimu she was descended, as listed above, except that her father’s name was given as Tuterangiwhatuma. The second child of Tuatara was Pare Autana, whose second child was Te Ngare, who was the parent of Hohepa Poto, who became her foster father. Pare Autana’s first child was Tukoro, whose daughter was Kirioho, the mother of Mokena Hou.<sup>11</sup>

## BEFORE THE OPENING OF TE AROHA GOLDFIELD

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<sup>5</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 20, p. 81-82, 225-226, 232-333.

<sup>6</sup> See paper on Ranapia Mokena.

<sup>7</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 20, pp. 207-208, 210-211.

<sup>8</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Books, no. 28, p. 15; no. 28A, p. 48; no. 53, p. 371; no. 52, p. 239.

<sup>9</sup> Medical Returns for District of Thames for quarters to 31 December 1885, 31 March 1886, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 21/19, ANZ-W.

<sup>10</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 28A, pp. 45, 46.

<sup>11</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, p. 242.

According to Te Keepa Wharau,<sup>12</sup> during the Taranaki War ‘Akuhata’ (the only name recorded) had reared seven cattle on the Aroha block, which he later sold to a Pakeha who had settled in Ohinemuri.<sup>13</sup> Another witness, also giving evidence in 1871, recalled seeing cattle belonging to ‘Akuhata’ running at Paharakeke, where the Mangaiti Stream enters the Waihou River, in the early 1860s.<sup>14</sup> Another one said that Te Meke Ngakura and Akuhata Mokena had run cattle on this block before the Waikato War.<sup>15</sup>

In 1889, when giving evidence about the Ngawhakupou Block, which he did not claim to own, Akuhata said that he had lived at Puriri for a number of years. The land being sought was ceded by Te Pukeroa ‘that we might get kauri gum’, and his family and hapu were also allowed to dig for gum on other blocks, including Pakirarahi, on the ridge between Puriri and Whangamata. ‘I was of age then – nobody ever interfered with us’. He did not know the ancestors who had owned this block nor its boundaries, although Karauna Hou<sup>16</sup> had told him some of the latter. ‘This block was given to our fathers to get gum on’. He was aged about 15 when he dug gum there. ‘We sold the gum to merchants.... I have got gum on that land at different times down to the present’.<sup>17</sup> Pare Teimana gave evidence that he had demanded payment of 2s per hundredweight from Akuhata and his wife for digging this gum, and had received £2 7s from him when it was sold. Akuhata dug gum with Maori refugees from Waikato who had been allowed to settle in Hauraki after 1863. ‘He collected the money from others and gave it to me with his own hand’.<sup>18</sup>

When Kaitawa No. 5, on the southern edge of Thames, was before the court, in the same year, he said that he was one of those who had cultivated it. ‘I was the representative of N. Rahiri – I occupied it by myself’.<sup>19</sup> His wife would not let Eru Wetana, who claimed to be an owner, have some of her land on the other side of the creek for a house. A Ngati Rahiri man, Ngahinu, ‘was on the land before I was – I was working at Ohaupo then

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<sup>12</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>13</sup> Maori Land Court, Auckland Minute Book no. 2, p. 224.

<sup>14</sup> Maori Land Court, Auckland Minute Book no. 2, p. 294.

<sup>15</sup> Maori Land Court, Auckland Minute Book no. 2, p. 295.

<sup>16</sup> See paper on Karauna Hou.

<sup>17</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 20, pp. 81-82.

<sup>18</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book, no. 20, pp. 225-226, 232-233.

<sup>19</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 20, p. 206.

with Eru Wetana and others – that is outside this land'.<sup>20</sup> He 'did not hear that anybody cultivated this part of land. I heard this in 1857'. He alone cultivated this portion, the rest of Ngati Rahiri occupying the southwestern part. 'I did not apply to Eru and Pahau to plant this land – I went on it without authority – just after the custom of our people in those days'.<sup>21</sup> 'I came on this land in 1857 – I then left in 1868 – no one has cultivated on it since my time'.<sup>22</sup> Despite his claims, the court awarded the block to other claimants.<sup>23</sup>

Te Roto, south of the Kauaeranga River, with a ridge between it and Parawai,<sup>24</sup> was before the court in 1889 also:

I cultivated after Pukeroa – I cultivated from the extreme south end to the centre of the block – I cultivated there on my own authority – I had no leave – Pukeroa did not object to my cultivating there. No one objected to my cultivating there.... I was living at Waiotahi before I cultivated on this land.... N. Rahiri came to plant wheat outside the eastern – and that was the reason I came on the land.<sup>25</sup>

He then explained his link to Te Karaone:

Te Karaone is partly related to me and partly to N. Rahiri.... I know Te Karaone partly belonged to N. Matau – that is the reason when N. Rahiri went there that I went as well – because N. Rahiri went on the land outside east boundary of this block – and Te Karaone went with them. Te Karaone owned that land and he gave them leave to settle there.<sup>26</sup>

'It was thro Karaone's relationship with N. Rahiri that I went on this land – he lived with N. Rahiri'.<sup>27</sup> He was asked to how much cultivating he had done:

I was working a long time on this land.

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<sup>20</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 20, p. 207.

<sup>21</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 20, p. 208.

<sup>22</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 20, pp. 210-211.

<sup>23</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 20, p. 218.

<sup>24</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 21, p. 132.

<sup>25</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 21, pp. 127-128.

<sup>26</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 21, p. 128.

<sup>27</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 21, p. 134.

I can't say how many crops I took out of this land – it was more than three.

N. Rahiri was working with me when I was cultivating outside this land.<sup>28</sup>

He planted peach trees.<sup>29</sup> 'I know the part south of the river well – I know the surrounding lands as well as I have worked on them'.<sup>30</sup> He was there before the Kauaeranga River changed its course. 'I was the first of N. Rahiri who went to cultivate on this land – I was the only one who cultivated on this block – N. Rahiri cultivated outside it'.<sup>31</sup> He concluded by saying that it was 'custom in those days to cultivate on other people's lands – when available – but they never claimed the land for doing so'.<sup>32</sup> The court did not make him an owner.<sup>33</sup>

After his death, there was argument about the Rurunui block. One witness denied that Akuhata had built a house on this land, and another did not know.<sup>34</sup> A third witness provided information about his living there. Akuhata, assisted by some Ngati Rahiri, 'erected the fences on all four sides of the block' apart from the western boundary, which was fenced off by a Pakeha. He erected a house near the eastern end after his wife asked Pirika's permission to occupy the land. 'He agreed. This was when Thames was first laid out. Akuhata paid for the timber for the house'. They lived in it 'about 5 or 6 years', but 'then ceased to live in that house and went to live at Te Aroha and Puriri. The house was left empty and remained empty till it was burnt down', about 20 years after being abandoned.<sup>35</sup> Akuhata's youngest brother, Rewi, then gave evidence that the house had been erected in 1869, but in 1874 they moved to Te Aroha. Akuhata and his wife last lived in it in 1875, or 1876, or even 1878,<sup>36</sup> but sometimes went 'away to other places'. Matiu Poono occupied it until 1883, and then a Pakeha until 1897, when Akuhata ordered him to leave because he was not paying the

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<sup>28</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 21, p. 129.

<sup>29</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 21, p. 130.

<sup>30</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 21, p. 131.

<sup>31</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 21, p. 133.

<sup>32</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 21, p. 135.

<sup>33</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 21, p. 223.

<sup>34</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 56, pp. 338, 342.

<sup>35</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 56, pp. 345-346, 349.

<sup>36</sup> For the last date, see Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 56, p. 360.

rent. 'It was burnt down a month after he left it'. Akuhata obtained posts for the fence on the southern boundary, and when 'asked to pay rates. Akuhata said he wd when the title had been investigated'.<sup>37</sup> Concluding his evidence, Rewi stated, 'While we lived at Rurunui, from 1869-1892, we used to think the land belonged to Akuhata. But when Pirika came proposing to survey it, I knew that Akuhata was not the owner'.<sup>38</sup>

## LAND

Like everyone, Akuhata did his best to become an owner of as much land as possible, on one occasion being caught out when his evidence was inconsistent. After having been made an owner of one block, he then complained that it had been wrongly mapped. 'I did not say that the thing I objected to in the survey was the bend in the line'. It was noted in red ink in the minute book that 'He did say this last Saturday', and his objection was over-ruled.<sup>39</sup>

In 1900, his brother Ranapia explained how to came to own the Te Kapua block:

In Nov. 1867 Europeans lived at the Thames in tents. Hakipene Hura borrowed £3 from some baker, whose name I forget. Who demanded it back a few days after, threatening proceedings. Hakipene asked Akuhata for a loan, and offered Te Kapua in payt. Prior to this, Eru had given £12 to my father, Mokena, so Akuhata asked Mokena for this £12, to buy Hakipene's land with it. Mokena gave it, and the £12 was given to Hakipene Hura. And ultimately, the land was awarded to Akuhata alone.<sup>40</sup>

In 1870 he was referred to as owning land at Thames, between Karaka and Tararu.<sup>41</sup> Two years later he sought to be recognized as an owner of Otama, despite not knowing its boundaries. He had asked Katerina to have the land surveyed, but she would not let him arrange this and had it done herself. 'It was in my house that Katerina spoke of the land and confirmed the gift. There was no writing on the subject – There were many of us

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<sup>37</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 56, pp. 350-351.

<sup>38</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 56, p. 360.

<sup>39</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 33, pp. 90, 193-194.

<sup>40</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, p. 235.

<sup>41</sup> *Thames Mail*, 26 March 1870, p. 2.

present at the time'.<sup>42</sup> Although his wife and brother-in-law became owners, he did not.<sup>43</sup> In 1873 he became one of the owners of Waihekau No. 4, in Waikato.<sup>44</sup> After Ngati Tumutumu was granted the Aroha Block in 1878, James Mackay allotted Te Reiti Tuma 47 acres at Wairakau and 40 at Omahu.<sup>45</sup>

In 1884 he became one of the owners of Ohinemuri No. 20C, and the following year of Ohinemuri No. 13.<sup>46</sup> Three years later, he was granted his wife's share at the southern end of Mangakirikiri No. 3 South, 81 3/4 acres.<sup>47</sup> In 1892 he appeared on behalf of his wife, successor to Maraea Purewa's portion of Waikiekie. 'I ask the Court to cut out and define the share of Maraea Purewa.... I want her portion to be near my land'. This partition case was dismissed because all the owners apart from Maraea Purewa had sold their interests.<sup>48</sup> Later that year he became one of the owners of Kaikaho No. 4.<sup>49</sup>

In 1893 he was made an owner of Tieke No. 2, and received three shares in the Kairere Block.<sup>50</sup> After his death, his widow explained that she had used money from renting the Moanataiari Block to buy an interest in the former, and had included him as an owner. She also made him an owner of Kairere, along with his brother Ranapia for acting as her clerk.<sup>51</sup> Ranapia later explained that Akuhata was made an owner of Kairere because he had provided £10 to meet the cost of the hearing.<sup>52</sup> Ranapia also explained that Akuhata received an interest in Tieke No. 2 because he conducted the case for Te Reiti and his father and spent £6 on it.<sup>53</sup> Te Reiti Tuma's brother,

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<sup>42</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 7, p. 109.

<sup>43</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 7, p. 110.

<sup>44</sup> Maori Land Court, Waikato Minute Book no. 3, p. 113.

<sup>45</sup> James Mackay, Memorandum of 24 August 1878, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/86, ANZ-A.

<sup>46</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Books, no. 16, p. 406; no. 19, p. 12.

<sup>47</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 19, p. 137.

<sup>48</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 28, pp. 15, 145.

<sup>49</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 28, p. 339.

<sup>50</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Books, no. 33, p. 90; no. 35, p. 264.

<sup>51</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, pp. 234-235.

<sup>52</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, p. 236.

<sup>53</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, p. 236.



Watana Tuma, later denied this, for in both blocks ‘we put him in out of aroha’.<sup>54</sup> The last interest Akuhata acquired was in Awaiti No. 1, in 1894.<sup>55</sup>

### INCOME FROM LAND

In 1874, the Crown acquired some of Akuhata’s interest in the Aroha Block for £5.<sup>56</sup> Four years later he was one of 46 owners who received £264 for Waihekau No. 4.<sup>57</sup> The following year he was paid £17 for his interest in Waiharakeke East.<sup>58</sup> From his and his wife’s share in Morgantown, they received a regular, if small, income. For instance, between the beginning of 1882 and the end of March 1887 payments for ‘Te Reiti Tuma’s Block’, all given to her husband, amounted to £14 12s 10d.<sup>59</sup>

In 1886 he was the only member of his family to resist selling his interest in the extension to the Hot Springs Domain because, he first said, he preferred to lease it.<sup>60</sup> Then living at Puriri, later that year he sought part of Te Houte No. 2, at Puriri, in exchange, claiming, wrongly, that he had been promised 27 acres. He held out for this deal, ‘thinking it would be better, if possible, for him to bring about an exchange than to have to take his chance of purchasing the portion of Crown land he wants in the open market’.<sup>61</sup> The native agent believed that ‘a threat to have his piece cut out’ by the court ‘would cause him to agree to the sale’ at the ‘good’ price of £5 an acre, but not until August 1889 did he agree to sell, for £25 11s 1d.<sup>62</sup> He

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<sup>54</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, p. 244.

<sup>55</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 36A, p. 30.

<sup>56</sup> Register of Payments to Individuals for Purchase of Land 1873-1880, Te Aroha, Maori Affairs Department, MA-MLP 7/7, ANZ-W.

<sup>57</sup> Maori Affairs Department, Hamilton, BACS A806, box 3, no. 142, ANZ-A.

<sup>58</sup> Register of Payments to Individuals for Purchase of Land 1873-1889, p. 44, Maori Affairs Department, MA-MLP 7/7, ANZ-W.

<sup>59</sup> Waihi Warden’s Court, Te Aroha Gold Field Native Land Blocks 1880-1895, folio 170, 172, BAFV 13781/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>60</sup> Harry Kenrick to Under-Secretary, Native Department, 20 May 1886, Maori Affairs Department, MA-MLP 1, 1893/268, ANZ-W.

<sup>61</sup> C.J. Dearle to D.A. Tole, 20 October 1886, Thames Native Agent’s Letterbook 1883-1893, p. 243, BACL 14458/2a, ANZ-A; G.T. Wilkinson to Under-Secretary, Native Department, 15 October 1887, Maori Affairs Department, MA-MLP 1, 1893/268, ANZ-W.

<sup>62</sup> G.T. Wilkinson to Under-Secretary, Native Department, 15 October 1887; C.J. Dearle to Under-Secretary, Native Land Purchase Department, 30 July 1889 (telegram), Maori

wanted to receive his money immediately so that he could return to Puriri, but the head of the Land Purchase Department was unsympathetic. Akuhata 'has had many offers made to him which he has declined. There is now no reason why we should make any special arrangements to suit his convenience', and he would be paid when the native agent next visited Thames.<sup>63</sup> At the end of that month, he agreed to reduce the rent on Morgantown residence sites from £5 to £3; he was 'very nice over the matter, and consented without the slightest demur'.<sup>64</sup>

In 1894 he was paid £1 11s 5d for his interest in Ohinemuri 20B.<sup>65</sup> In 1900, his brother Ranapia explained that the £10 Akuhata had provided for the hearing of the Kariere Block 'derived from the lease of Te Kapua and of Te Aroha. My brother recd £530 rent from Te Aroha'.<sup>66</sup>

In 1883, his wife sold her interest in Ohinemuri No. 18 (118 acres) for £17 14s.<sup>67</sup> In 1892 she leased 40 acres at the southeastern end of the Ruakaka Block to a Pakeha for £10 per annum. To convince the authorities that by leasing she would not become landless, she listed her land: 100 acres at Tararu, 30 at Okauia and at Turua, 60 at both Wairakau and Piako, and ten at Irishtown, at Thames.<sup>68</sup> According to her brother, she received 'a lot of money' from goldfields revenue.<sup>69</sup> Six months after Akuhata's death she decided to sell her interest in part of the Aroha Block 'to pay debts'.<sup>70</sup>

Affairs Department, MA-MLP 1, 1893/268, ANZ-W; Register of Payments to Individuals for Purchase of Land 1873-1880, p. 273, Maori Affairs Department, MA-MLP 7/7, ANZ-W; Domain Board, *Te Aroha News*, 10 August 1889, p. 2.

<sup>63</sup> Memorandum by Patrick Sheridan, 30 July 1889; C.J. Dearle to Under-Secretary, Native Land Purchase Department, 1 August 1889 (telegram); Under-Secretary, Native Department, to C.J. Dearle, 1 August 1889 (telegram), Maori Affairs Department, MA-MLP 1, 1893/268, ANZ-W.

<sup>64</sup> R.S. Bush to A.J. Cadman, 29 August 1889, Maori Affairs Department, MA-MLP 1, 1902/37, ANZ-W.

<sup>65</sup> 'Statement of the Facts and Circumstances Affecting the Ohinemuri Block', Appendix H, Lands and Survey Department, LS 36/25a, ANZ-W.

<sup>66</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, p. 236.

<sup>67</sup> Ohinemuri, Interests Excised by N.L.C., Ohinemuri No. 18, Maori Affairs Department, MA-MLP 7/7, ANZ-W.

<sup>68</sup> Aroha Block IX Section 18, Block Files, H1016, Maori Land Court, Hamilton.

<sup>69</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, p. 244.

<sup>70</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, p. 232.

## AT TE AROHA BEFORE THE GOLDFIELD OPENED

Akuhata gave evidence when the Aroha Block was before the court in 1871. 'I know the Aroha. I know it on the map. I remember going with Te Meke [Ngakura] to take some cattle there. 7 head. We got the cattle from Hauraki'. They grazed them between Paharakeke and Totoro 'because that land belonged to us'. 'I left the cattle at Totoro in charge of Meke and his "teina" [younger siblings].<sup>71</sup> I returned to Hauraki. The cattle we put on the Omahu side', some time 'between the Taranaki and Waikato wars'. He later sold them to a Pakeha settler in Ohinemuri. 'He put the money into my hand - £7 each. I received the money after Shortland was occupied' by miners, meaning 1867 or later. 'I go to and fro' to Te Aroha.<sup>72</sup> Keepa Te Wharau<sup>73</sup> stated that in 1867 Akuhata was one of those running cattle at Omahu.<sup>74</sup> In 1878, Akuhata said he was living at Te Aroha. 'I have never lived or cultivated on the land since the hearing of Te Aroha case' in 1871, 'but I have pigs running there at the present time'.<sup>75</sup>

In December 1878, the licensing court heard an application from Akuhata for a hotel license at the hot springs. Te Meke Ngakura 'objected on behalf of the natives in the vicinity, because it would cause drunkenness'. The chairman responded that 'he had lately been over the house, and found it to be well-built and furnished, in a comfortable manner'; the license was granted.<sup>76</sup> In his 1894 memoirs, the pioneer Te Aroha storekeeper and publican, George Stewart O'Halloran,<sup>77</sup> described this rival hotel as a 'small cottage', and claimed that its license was 'contrary to the law'.<sup>78</sup> In early 1879 'August Morgan' was conducting the Hot Springs Hotel, 'situated at the foot of the Aroha mountain'.<sup>79</sup> In June the following

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<sup>71</sup> P.M. Ryan, *The New Dictionary of Modern Maori* (Auckland, 1974), p. 44.

<sup>72</sup> Maori Land Court, Auckland Minute Book no. 2, p. 241.

<sup>73</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>74</sup> Maori Land Court, Auckland Minute Book no. 2, p. 225.

<sup>75</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 10, pp. 366-367.

<sup>76</sup> Licensing Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 14 December 1878, p. 3.

<sup>77</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>78</sup> G.S. O'Halloran, untitled memoirs, 23 November 1894, p. 118, MS 1345, Alexander Turnbull Library.

<sup>79</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 9 April 1879, p. 3.

year, the license was transferred to O'Halloran,<sup>80</sup> as the latter explained: 'About the time I sold out of my place lower down the river (I had been doing all the trade – Morgan nothing) I was approached as to whether I would not buy or lease Morgan's place they no doubt thinking I would draw the trade with me'. O'Halloran agreed, for it was on the line of any future main road, and leased the hotel and two acres close to the hot springs for ten years.<sup>81</sup> Had Akuhata retained the hotel for another few months, he would have benefited from the greatly increased patronage created by the goldrush. Akuhata shared the ownership of the property with his father; they sold the hotel, other buildings, and one acre to O'Halloran in April 1882 for £255.<sup>82</sup>

### TE AROHA GOLDFIELD

At the end of October 1880, Akuhata was the only member of the Mokena family not to have signed the agreement ceding the land for mining.<sup>83</sup> By mid-November he still had not signed. 'Those of the Mokena family who have signified their willingness to dispose of their interests in the block, say that Akuhata's refusal to sign will not deter them from having the field thrown open'.<sup>84</sup> When he signed is not known.

Akuhata had earlier been involved, in a minimal way, with mining. In 1868, with his father, brother Ranapia, and three other Maori he was an owner of a claim at Karaka, which had 'no payable gold'.<sup>85</sup> The following year he took out a miner's right,<sup>86</sup> but no further investment has been traced, and it is unlikely that he did any mining. At Te Aroha, he did not

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<sup>80</sup> *Thames Star*, 12 June 1880, p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> G.S. O'Halloran, untitled memoirs, 23 November 1894, p. 118, MS 1345, Alexander Turnbull Library.

<sup>82</sup> Akuhata Mokena and Mokena Hou to G.S. O'Halloran, 1 April 1882, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Transfers and Assignments 1882, BBAV 11581/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>83</sup> G.T. Wilkinson to Frederick Whitaker, 30 October 1880, Mines Department, MD 1, 85/1006, ANZ-W.

<sup>84</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 17 November 1880, p. 3.

<sup>85</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Application for Protection of Shortland Claims 1868, no. 94, BACL 13819/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>86</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Register of Miners' Rights 1868-1869, no. 5531, BACL 14358/3a, ANZ-A.

take out a miner's right until 11 days after the field opened.<sup>87</sup> During the initial rush, he was an owner of three claims and had shares in one company.<sup>88</sup> In 1888 he was one of the owners of the Morgan claim, at Tui.<sup>89</sup> During the 1880s, he continued to live at Puriri; in April 1889 he said that his house was 'some little way off from Te Puku', more precisely 'at Te Aki on the Puriri block'.<sup>90</sup> The previous year he was one of ten Maori who acquired a claim at Puriri.<sup>91</sup> He had no further involvement in mining.

### A LEADING RANGATIRA

Akuhata was mentioned several times as a leading figure amongst Hauraki Maori. In 1869 he attended a levee in Auckland for the Duke of Edinburgh, Queen Victoria's son.<sup>92</sup> He also signed the petition of 73 of the principal men of Hauraki for the re-hearing of the Aroha case.<sup>93</sup> The following year, the Goldfields Reward Commission took evidence from three 'leading chiefs' of Ngati Maru, one of them being Akuhata.<sup>94</sup> Also in that year he attended an important meeting at Kerepehi.<sup>95</sup> According to his wife, he was one of those who allotted the Aroha Block amongst Ngati Rahiri in 1878.<sup>96</sup> In 1882 he accompanied Wiremu Hoterene Taipari on a visit to a Maori prophetess at Ahipara.<sup>97</sup> He was regarded with favour by the Pakeha authorities. In 1873 he was one of those recommended by the native agent

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<sup>87</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Miner's Right no. 675, issued 4 December 1880, Miners' Rights Butt Book 1880, BBAV 11533/1e, ANZ-A.

<sup>88</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Plaint Book 1880-1898, 2/1880, BBAV 11547/1a; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folios 190, 212, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 20 January 1881, p. 111.

<sup>89</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 325, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>90</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 20, pp. 83, 84.

<sup>91</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Claims Register 1886-1888, no. 1688, BAAL 14397/17a, ANZ-A.

<sup>92</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 15 May 1869, p. 19.

<sup>93</sup> Petition of April 1869, Legislative Department, LE 1, 1869/133, ANZ-W.

<sup>94</sup> *Thames Mail*, 26 March 1870, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 1 October 1870, p. 2.

<sup>96</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 28A, p. 48.

<sup>97</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 2 September 1882, p. 2.

to be permitted to buy ammunition for sporting purposes, for they were 'all trustworthy men'.<sup>98</sup>

#### DEATH, AND A QUARREL OVER HIS ESTATE

Akuhata died in January 1900, at Tui pa.<sup>99</sup> The *Te Aroha News* described him as 'a well-known chief' who was 'well-known and greatly respected throughout the whole of the Peninsula'. Like his parents, he was a member of the Church of England. About 200 Maori had arrived from Hauraki for his tangi, and an equal number was expected from Waikato.<sup>100</sup>

As Akuhata left no children,<sup>101</sup> and did not make a will, conflict resulted between Maori custom and Pakeha views about who should be the beneficiaries of his estate. On 1 August, his sister Ema Lipsey listed his estate as comprising one revolver, one breech loader, one loading machine, half the ownership of a wagon (his sister Eta owning the other half), one buggy and harness, one spring cart, two plough horses, one unbroken horse, one plough, one set of harrows, one scarifier, two cartouche boxes, and two flax mats. One new set of clothes and one new Macintosh raincoat were listed but crossed out and marked 'struck out'. 'Money buried' was crossed out, it being noted that this was 'not proved'. She added, 'Don't know how much, nor where it is buried'. Two greenstone mere were also crossed out and noted as 'withdrawn': one was now with Piahana Hou<sup>102</sup> and the other with Putu Pepene and Te Hutana. 'That is all'.<sup>103</sup> Ema then made a bid for this estate, leading to conflicting evidence that revealed aspects of the lives of Akuhata, his wife, and the Mokena family:

I say that we four, the brothers & sisters of Akuhata, should succeed to this property.

All the property, except the meres, is at Puriri, at the last kainga of Akuhata. The widow, Te Reiti Tuma, still lives there.

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<sup>98</sup> E.W. Puckey to Daniel Pollen, 3 May 1873, Agent for the General Government, Auckland, Agent General Auckland, ACFL 8170, 73/565, ANZ-W.

<sup>99</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 50, p. 293; *Te Aroha News*, 25 January 1900, p. 2.

<sup>100</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 25 January 1900, p. 2.

<sup>101</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 50, p. 293.

<sup>102</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>103</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, pp. 238-239.

One of the meres is partly spoiled by fire. Maraea Herepehe said they would be brought here last Monday, but they were not. She said it had been left with Rewi Mokena, but I do not know whether that is so.<sup>104</sup>

Te Reiti Tuma opposed their claim:

The revolver belongs to me personally. I bought it myself, for my husband & for myself. With money I got from Moanataiari, £6. The breech loader belonged to Akuhata, not to me. He set it aside for Akuhata Ripihia [Augustus Lipsey],<sup>105</sup> & always intended to give it to him. Also the Loading Machine. The Wagon belonged half to Akuhata & half to Eta Mokena. I agree that it should go to the brothers & sisters of the dec.

The Buggy was bought by Akuhata for us both. That also can go to the relatives.

The Spring Cart belongs to my brother Te Watana Tuma. Tho' we sometimes had it. It is no part of the estate.

The black horse Boxer belongs to myself. I bought it myself, for £8, at the Pound. It was my own money, tho' my husband bought it (with my money). Lipsey bought the horse from Akuhata, & afterwards sold it to a man at Taupo. The horse came back, 3 yrs after. We told [John William Richard] Guilding the Pound-keeper,<sup>106</sup> to let us know, if the horse came back. So we went & bought it from the Pound-keeper.

The other horse Naku belonged to my husband & myself. We bred it from a mare I got from my foster father. I claim it as my property I think the 1/2 that belonged to my husband should come now to me.

The unbroken horse had been given by Akuhata to Tohe, who looked after our horses. We gave it to him in payt.

The plough belongs to me. I bought it with my own money. I gave £7 for it many years ago.

The Harrows belong to my brothers, Pirika & Watana. They do not belong to the Estate.

The Scarifier belongs to Watana Tuma. The two Cartridge Boxes can go to the relatives. The two Flax Mats are my own. Given to me by my N. Maniapoto relatives.

The suit of clothes I know nothing of. The Macintosh can go to the relatives, if they want it.

The Meres belong to Mereana Taipari [wife of Wiremu Hoterene Taipari]. They are not in my possession.

I have two of my own, but not the two spoken of.

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<sup>104</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, p. 239.

<sup>105</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>106</sup> See paper on his life.

There are two taiahas: they do not belong to the estate.  
 There is no buried money.  
 There was only £2 in a purse, which I gave to Eta Mokena.  
 And there is no money in the Bank or Post Office.<sup>107</sup>

She was cross-examined by Hare Renata, husband of Eta Mokena,<sup>108</sup> who had lived with Akuhata and Te Reiti Tuma.<sup>109</sup> Her brother had bought the spring cart from a Pakeha at Puriri; 'Akuhata went with him to buy it'. She claimed Boxer the horse, which had originally belonged to Wiropo Hoterene Taipari, 'who gave it to Te Karauna. After death of Te Karauna, Taipari gave it to Akuhata. Who then exchanged it [with George] Lipsey,<sup>110</sup> for another one'. When it came back from Taupo, she paid the pound keeper £7 7s for it.<sup>111</sup> Akuhata gave the unbroken horse to her. The two mere belonged to Ngati Rahiri, not to Akuhata, who had received them after being cursed by Te Tamai, for reasons not explained. In payment for the curse, Taipari had given a piece of greenstone to some Ngati Rahiri women, who gave it to Akuhata, who returned it to them. 'They had the stone divided & made into two meres'. Neither Akuhata nor Ema had asked for them back. 'N. Rahiri gave them to Ema Ripihia [Ema Lipsey].<sup>112</sup> It was not Akuhata's idea to do this', and she did not claim them.

Akuhata did not leave a new suit of clothes. 'He did die in a suit of clothes. The coat was burned'. The flax mats were bought by Rangiteremai 'for myself & brothers', and not given to Akuhata. 'I did give two others away to the daughter of Ema Ripihia. There were 5 altogether'. She gave two to Ema and Eta, and one to Kihama Tuma.<sup>113</sup>

Her brother, Watana Tuma, in supporting her evidence about the spring cart, the harrows, and the scarifier, said Akuhata had been put into Te Tieki No. 2 and Kairere through aroha, not ancestry.<sup>114</sup> Eta Mokena then gave evidence that there had been four horses. 'One black one. It belonged to Taipari. Who gave it to Te Karauna. Who lived with Akuhata.

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<sup>107</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, pp. 239-241.

<sup>108</sup> See paper on their lives.

<sup>109</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, p. 243.

<sup>110</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>111</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, p. 242.

<sup>112</sup> See paper on George Lipsey.

<sup>113</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, pp. 242-243.

<sup>114</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, pp. 243-244.



When Te Karauna died, the horse was left with Akuhata. Hare Renata, myself & ors went to Te Aroha. There was an accident', the details of which the clerk did not record. Although she did not know how much was paid for the impounded horse, she considered it belonged to Akuhata because he had paid the pound keeper. The dam of a foal, Naku, had belonged to Hohepe Poto (Te Reiti's foster father). Naku, along with another foal, went to Akuhata 'because he it was who was the favourite child of the old man. When Hohepe died, the horses were left to Akuhata. He was not married at the time', which was 'long before the town' of Thames 'was founded'.<sup>115</sup> She insisted that the revolver had belonged to Mokena Hou, who had given it to Akuhata at his request. Cross-examined, she gave more details of the extended family:

Hohepa Poto, his wife, Akuhata, Te Reiti, & I all lived at the same kainga. When Hohepa grew old, it was I and Akuhata who looked after him....

Yes, Hohepa agreed that Akuhata should marry Te Reiti. So did all the tribe.<sup>116</sup>

At the conclusion of the evidence, Hare Renata withdrew the claim to the mere.<sup>117</sup> The court accepted the evidence of the widow and her brother about the ownership of land, and divided up the rest of the estate between her, her brother, Tohe, who got the unbroken horse, and Akuhata Lipsey, who received the breech-loader and loading machine. After allocating the remainder to the widow's in-laws, the judge commented 'that the next of kin have shown an ungenerous spirit towards the widow'.<sup>118</sup>

Te Reiti Tuma died in May 1903.<sup>119</sup> In October, Judge William Gilbert Mair determined that her successors were her brother Watana Tuma and his five-year-old son.<sup>120</sup> Three days later, the Mokena family wrote to the chief judge seeking 'relief in the misfortune that has come upon us' concerning their Te Aroha land. They explained that in the initial division of the Aroha Block, Te Reiti Tuma had received 40 acres in Block IX Section 15 and 47 in Block XII Section 48; the Mokena family had 707 acres in the

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<sup>115</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, pp. 244-245.

<sup>116</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, p. 247.

<sup>117</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, p. 247.

<sup>118</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 52, pp. 247-248.

<sup>119</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 53, p. 371.

<sup>120</sup> Wairere Block 11 Section 71, Block Files, H1571, Maori Land Court, Hamilton.

former and 400 in the latter. She ‘was admitted into that Block through “aroha” this was the reason’. When Watana Tuma applied to have the shares adjudicated upon, ‘Judge Mair would not listen to what we said’, stating ‘that he would not listen to Maori ground of claim (custom) in connection with the case’. They requested a rehearing.<sup>121</sup> Mair explained to the chief judge that Watana Tuma had applied to succeed his sister:

This was opposed by the Revd Ranapia Mokena, who claimed that the land should revert to Te Reiti’s brothers in law – of whom he was one – in accordance with Maori custom. The Court decreed that the Native title was defunct, and Maori custom could not over-ride English law in the case of Crown granted land, therefore the nearest in kin, the brother of the deceased ... was entitled to succeed.<sup>122</sup>

The Mokena family appealed, but despite being informed that they must lodge £10 as security for costs failed to fulfil this requirement, and accordingly their application for a rehearing was dismissed and Watana Tuma was confirmed as the successor.<sup>123</sup> Te Reiti Tuma’s family therefore benefited from selling her Aroha land.<sup>124</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Akuhata Mokena lived and cultivated mostly at Puriri and the Aroha block, and ran the first hostelry at the latter’s hot springs. Like all other rangatira, he attempted to acquire interests in as much land as possible and to make as much money as possible by selling these. A leading rangatira, the quarrel over his estate illustrated the different Maori and Pakeha attitudes to how to share it amongst his relatives.

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<sup>121</sup> Ranapia, Ema, Eta, and Rewi Mokena to Chief Judge, Native Land Court, 16 October 1903, Aroha Block IX Section 18, Block Files, H1016, Maori Land Court, Hamilton.

<sup>122</sup> William Mair to Chief Judge, Native Land Court, 12 November 1903, Aroha Block IX Section 18, Block Files, H1016, Maori Land Court, Hamilton.

<sup>123</sup> Registrar, Native Land Court, to Mokena family, 12 December 1903; application of Registrar, Native Land Court, 10 November 1904; decision of Native Land Court, 16 November 1904, Aroha Block IX Section 18, Block Files, H1016, Maori Land Court, Hamilton.

<sup>124</sup> For example, Aroha Block XII Section 32, Block Files, 3434, Maori Affairs Department, Hamilton, BACS A102, ANZ-A.