

REWI MOKENA: YOUNGEST SON OF MOKENA HOU

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REWI MOKENA: YOUNGEST SON OF MOKENA HOU¹

Abstract: *The youngest child of Mokena Hou, Rewi Mokena moved from place to place when young, finally settling permanently at Te Aroha. Having received some education, he was fluent in English. Like the typical rangatira of the time, he acquired interests in several blocks of land, obtained income from these in the short term, but because of financial difficulties was brought before the court several times.*

His involvement in gold mining started in a small way in 1875. Five years later, he would assist Hone Werahiko to prospect Te Aroha – and to fend off inquisitive Pakeha. He invested in claims in all of the three areas where gold was found.

By the twentieth century, Rewi was the most important rangatira at Te Aroha, and had wider influence, assisting the King Movement to seek redress for lost land. From a young age he participated in Pakeha society, notably as a rugby player, and became a prominent Mormon. His complicated private life, including bigamy and a wife's attempted suicide because of his adultery, did not lower his high standing in Maori society nor damage his popularity with Pakeha.

EARLY LIFE

Rewi Mokena, commonly known to Pakeha as David or Davy Morgan,² told the land court that he had been present when his father made his will, three days before his death. He was the youngest child of Mokena Hou³, and he and the next youngest, Ema,⁴ inherited his land 'because we always lived with him'.⁵ According to the records kept by his church, he was born in 1863 or 1865, either at Hikutaia or, very vaguely, Hauraki.⁶ According to the age

¹ For photograph of Rewi Mokena posing as 'Appealing to Caesar', *New Zealand Graphic*, 15 March 1911, p. 1, and included in group of Maori leaders farewelling King Mahuta on his departure to take his seat in the Legislative Council, *Auckland Weekly News*, 26 July 1903, see Auckland Libraries 'Heritage Images' collection.

² For example, *Thames Star*, 1 November 1880, p. 2.

³ See paper on his life.

⁴ See paper on George Lipsey and Ema Mokena.

⁵ Maori Land Court, Waikato Minute Book no. 13, p. 221.

⁶ Church of Latter Day Saints, Record of Members, Early to 1919, Te Aroha Branch, nos. 1, 74, LDS Archives, Hamilton.

recorded at his death in 1911, 55, he was born in 1856.⁷ Rewi himself stated that, when living at Thames in 1868 'I was old enough to observe things', and that when he lived on the Rurunui Block in 1869 'I was then 9 yrs. old'.⁸ According to the age he gave at his marriage, he was born in 1861.⁹ This year of birth was confirmed by his father's statement in March 1885 that 'my youngest child is 24 years old'.¹⁰

Only once did Rewi mention his early life in the land court. In 1907 he said that at the age of nine, when living on the Rurunui Block 'with my brother Akuhata I was going to school'. In 1870, Ngati Rahiri 'went to Te Aroha. We came back same year & lived again at Rurunui. In 1871 we went to live at Puriri. And ret. to Rurunui in 1873. In 1874 we went to Te Aroha to live'.¹¹ His brother Ranapia stated that at one time Rewi lived at Komata.¹² In 1880 a journalist wrote that he had 'a very fair English Education', without revealing where or when.¹³ In 1892, Rewi said that in 1877 'I and my relations were inside' the 'fighting pa' erected at Omahu against Ngati Tamatera.¹⁴ 'It was previous to the building of this Pa we cut the manuka for the roads' being constructed across the Aroha block.¹⁵

LAND

In 1873, Rewi was an owner of Waihekau No. 4,¹⁶ on the western side of the Waihou River near Te Aroha. In 1879, his house and farm at Te Aroha enabled him to be enrolled, as David Morgan, on the electoral roll.¹⁷ Five years later he became an owner of Maurihero and Ohinemuri No.

⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 8 July 1911, p. 2.

⁸ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Books, no. 52, p. 355; no. 56, p. 350.

⁹ Marriage Certificate of David Morgan, 30 May 1882, 1882/1181, BDM.

¹⁰ District Court, Thames, Notebook of Bankruptcy Cases 1885-1887, Hearing of 3 March 1885, BACL 14415/1a, ANZ-A.

¹¹ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 56, p. 350.

¹² Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 19, p. 19.

¹³ Own Correspondent, 'The Te Aroha Gold Find', *Thames Advertiser*, 20 October 1880, p. 3.

¹⁴ See paper on Ngati Rahiri versus Ngati Tamatera.

¹⁵ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 28A, p. 58.

¹⁶ Maori Land Court, Waikato Minute Book no. 3, p. 113.

¹⁷ *Thames Electoral Roll, 1879*, p. 57.

20D.¹⁸ In 1885 he was listed as an owner of Ohinemuri No. 10.¹⁹ In 1885, he and Ema inherited their father's interests in Okauia No. 4, Waiharakeke West No. 2, and Hungahunga No. 2, all near Matamata.²⁰ He immediately arranged that their interest be cut out of Waiharakeke West No. 2. They obtained just over 51 acres going south from the mouth of the Maungapukuhea Stream on the Waihou River; the southern part was swamp, the northern 'dry and good'.²¹ Not till 1897 did he and Ema inherit Aroha Block XII Section 48 from their father.²² Rewi's attempt to succeed his father in Te Kapua in 1896 was sabotaged by his brother Ranapia stating that Mokena had not been an owner.²³

In 1889 he was granted one share in Komata North No. 1B, one of the 36 shares in Ohinemuri No. 20, and became an owner of Te Arawhakapekakepa.²⁴ He received the interest in Ohinemuri No. 20 through acting as clerk for claimants in the court.²⁵ Having land at Komata meant that he received compensation in 1893 when the railway line was built across it.²⁶ The following year he became an owner of Awaiti No. 1.²⁷

In 1901 he objected to his wife's sale, two years previously, of Te Komata North No. 1B No. 3 for £12. He gave details of their marital disharmony and what he alleged was her being bullied by others, and said he would not have sold for less than £25. She did not, as she claimed, own much land. 'My wife has never lived on the land. She got the land thro' me, as payt for my services as clerk' in the court.²⁸ In response, Hoera Tareranui deposed that Rewi's wife had asked him to buy the land for £12, which he paid; when she afterwards asked for another £7 he paid £4.²⁹ Rewi was unwilling to call his wife as a witness, but when she was called by the

¹⁸ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 16, pp. 38, 408.

¹⁹ Maori Land court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 19, p. 16.

²⁰ Maori Land Court, Waikato Minute Book no. 13, p. 221; Otorohanga Minute Book no. 3, p. 368.

²¹ Maori Land Court, Waikato Minute Book no. 13, p. 246.

²² Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 46, p. 42.

²³ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 39, p. 63.

²⁴ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Books, no. 23, pp. 50, 57; no. 24, p. 5.

²⁵ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 32, p. 81.

²⁶ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 31, p. 129.

²⁷ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 36A, p. 31.

²⁸ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 50, pp. 260-263.

²⁹ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 50, pp. 264-265.

court she said she had ‘no objection to the deed of sale to Hoera. The money was all paid for me’.³⁰ Rewi asked for the land to be valued, which his opponents saw as a delaying tactic. The court stated that ‘Rewi should have been ready with his witnesses’, but was willing to grant an adjournment on condition he paid £5 as security for costs. Rewi responded, ‘Well, I withdraw’ the application, and the court was ‘of opinion that the objections raised by Rewi have not been substantiated. Deed will be confirmed’.³¹

In 1902 he applied for a share in the Nelson Tenths, obtained by Maaka Tarapiko, who had bought land there 40 or 50 years previously. His wife was the next of kin. He had petitioned parliament in mid-1901, and been told how to apply. The court stated that he should provide this evidence to the chief judge.³² There is no record of his receiving this share.

These blocks of land provided him with an income, in the short term. In 1878 he sold his interest in Waiheka No. 4 for £264, to be shared amongst 47 owners.³³ In 1886 he sold one share in the Te Aroha domain extension for £25 15s 7d and another, inherited from his parents, in 1889 for £25 11s 1d.³⁴ In 1892 he sold one and a half shares in Morgantown for £300.³⁵ Four years later he received £87 0s 3d for his interest in Ohinemuri 20E.³⁶

Rents brought in a steady but increasingly minor income. Between 1885 and 1887, for instance, he received £36 14s 5d as his portion of goldfield revenue.³⁷ By 1902, he had the last Maori interest in Morgantown,

³⁰ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 50, pp. 264, 286, 269.

³¹ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 50, p. 269.

³² Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 50, pp. 353-355.

³³ Maori Affairs Department, Hamilton, box 3, no. 142, BACS A806, box 3, no. 142, ANZ-A.

³⁴ Register of Payments to Individuals for Purchase of Land 1873-1880, p. 273, Maori Affairs Department, MA-MLP 7/7, ANZ-W.

³⁵ A.G. Bate to Patrick Sheridan, 6 April 1892 (telegram), Maori Affairs Department, MA-MLP 1, 1902/37; Register of Payments to Individuals for Purchase of Land 1873-1880, p. 275, Maori Affairs Department, MA-MLP 7/7, ANZ-W.

³⁶ ‘Statement of the Facts and Circumstances Affecting the Ohinemuri Block’, Appendix H, Lands and Survey Department, LS 36/25a, ANZ-W.

³⁷ Native Revenue, Te Aroha, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/35b, ANZ-W.

a quarter share.³⁸ Between November 1900 and January that year, he received £12 8s 11d in rent.³⁹

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

On three occasions, Rewi sued others for money. In 1882 he sued a Te Aroha publican, George Stewart O'Halloran,⁴⁰ for £5, cash lent, but withdrew the suit, presumably because O'Halloran had paid.⁴¹ Ten years later he sued a farmer for 12s, but was non-suited.⁴² At the end of that year he sued two Paeroa Maori for £2 6d for 'services rendered'.⁴³

All other suits were against him, some for more significant amounts. In March 1882 a surveyor sued him for £10, but the case was settled out of court.⁴⁴ In December a draper and upholsterer, John Frederick Cocks,⁴⁵ sued him and his father for £25 3s, but was non-suited.⁴⁶

In February 1883, another draper, William Wilson,⁴⁷ successfully sued for £12 11s 9d.⁴⁸ The following month, Wilson took out a distress warrant to enforce payment, but as the bailiff found no assets to seize, this was not

³⁸ R.S. Bush to Minister of Mines, 30 January 1902, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/87, ANZ-W.

³⁹ Waihi Warden's Court, Te Aroha Receiver of Gold Revenue Letterbook 1900-1903, pp. 77, 103, 120, 169, 187, 239, 254, 296, 322, 343, 367, BAFV 13699/1a, ANZ-A.

⁴⁰ See paper on his life.

⁴¹ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1884, 21, 22/1882, BCDG 11221/1a, ANZ-A.

⁴² Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1889-1896, 1/1892, BCDG 11221/1c, ANZ-A.

⁴³ Paeroa Magistrate's Court, Plaintiff Book 1881-1896, 122/1892, BACL 13745/1a, ANZ-A.

⁴⁴ Thames Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1883, 39/1992, BACL 13735/1b, ANZ-A.

⁴⁵ See *Waikato Times*, 8 January 1881, p. 3, advertisement, 8 February 1881, p. 4, 19 July 1883, p. 3.

⁴⁶ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1884, 78/1882, BCDG 11221/1a, ANZ-A.

⁴⁷ See *Thames Advertiser*, 30 November 1880, p. 3; advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 21 July 1883, p. 3.

⁴⁸ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1884, 18/1883, BCDG 11221/1a, ANZ-A.

paid.⁴⁹ The same fate awaited a builder, John Farrell,⁵⁰ when he attempted to obtain £31 14s 11d.⁵¹ In July the magistrate gave a ‘verdict by default for £30 9s 11d balance on building a cottage, and for goods supplied’,⁵² but in December, asked to issue a judgment summons, he refused, ‘considering that there was no proof of defendant’s ability to pay’.⁵³ After being ordered to pay £8 10s for calls in the Bonanza claim, a judgment summons was sought. ‘Plaintiff proved that defendant offered a horse in satisfaction, but he refused to take it. The Magistrate held that was not sufficient evidence of the defendant’s ability to pay’, for it could be someone else’s horse. He suggested that the case be withdrawn and a distress warrant issued instead, which was done.⁵⁴ A tailor, Pietro Faes,⁵⁵ sought £4 5s in April 1883.⁵⁶ This not being paid, he sought a judgment summons in June, but ‘plaintiff could not show that defendant had means to pay, and the case was adjourned’.⁵⁷ Faes again applied for this order in December, which was

⁴⁹ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Home Warrant Book 1883-1928, 5/1883, BBAV 11498/1a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁰ See *Waikato Times*, 16 December 1880, p. 2.

⁵¹ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Home Warrant Book 1883-1928, 13/1883, BBAV 11498/1a, ANZ-A.

⁵² Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1884, 94/1883, BCDG 11221/1a, ANZ-A; Magistrate’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 7 July 1883, p. 3.

⁵³ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1884, Judgment Summonses dated 5 November 1883, 4 December 1883, BCDG 11221/1a, ANZ-A; Magistrate’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 8 December 1883, p. 2.

⁵⁴ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1884, 39/1883; Judgment Summons dated 19 June 1883, BCDG 11221/1a, ANZ-A; Magistrate’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 23 June 1883, p. 2.

⁵⁵ See advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 6 October 1883, p. 1.

⁵⁶ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1884, 29/1883, BCDG 11221/1a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁷ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1884, Judgment Summons dated 19 June 1883, BCDG 11221/1a, ANZ-A; Magistrate’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 23 June 1883, p. 2.

granted the following February but then withdrawn.⁵⁸ In December, Cocks sued him for £20, but Rewi was only ordered to pay £2 5s 9d.⁵⁹

In November 1883, the estate of a bankrupt merchant sued him for £27 7s 9d; he confessed to owing £15, and this sum was to be paid within a month.⁶⁰ It was not, and in the following October he was sued for £17 6d, the increase caused by legal fees. He was ordered to pay £6 at once, £6 in three months time, and £6 1s one month later, in default imprisonment for one month.⁶¹

Probably because his chances of obtaining goods on credit had diminished, he was not sued again until 1887. Farrell once again sought a judgment summons against him, this time for £6 10s 11d, but the case was withdrawn.⁶² He continued to incur debts, and in 1890 an order was issued to take 15s from his goldfields revenue to help pay these.⁶³ The following year, a Paeroa shopkeeper sued for goods valued at £2 6d.⁶⁴ This, or part of it, was paid, but in October 1893 the same shopkeeper sued for £1 3s.⁶⁵ Two years later, another Paeroa merchant, James McGimpsey Robson,⁶⁶ sued him for £3 11s.⁶⁷ In 1896 his brother-in-law, Alexander Watson Edwards,⁶⁸ sought payment of £23 1s 7d owing on a promissary note, but was non-

⁵⁸ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1884, Judgment Summonses dated 4 December 1883, 5 February 1884, BCDG 11221/1a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁹ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1884, 178/1883, BCDG 11221/1a, ANZ-A; Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 8 December 1883, p. 2.

⁶⁰ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1884, 160/1883, BCDG 11221/1a, ANZ-A.

⁶¹ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1884, Judgment Summons dated 28 October 1884, BCDG 11221/1a, ANZ-A; Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 1 November 1884, p. 2.

⁶² Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1884-1889, Judgment Summons dated 6 December 1887, BCDG 11221/1b, ANZ-A.

⁶³ C.J. Dearle to Receiver of Goldfields Revenue, Te Aroha, 15 May 1890, Thames Native Officer's Letterbook 1883-1893, p. 402, BACL 14458/2a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁴ Paeroa Magistrate's Court, Plaintiff Book 1881-1896, 3/1891, BACL 13745/1a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁵ Paeroa Magistrate's Court, Plaintiff Book 1881-1896, 65/1893, BACL 13745/1a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁶ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 856.

⁶⁷ Paeroa Magistrate's Court, Plaintiff Book 1881-1896, 56/1895, BACL 13745/1a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁸ See paper on Ani Lipsey and Alexander Watson Edwards.

sued on a technicality.⁶⁹ In December that year the smallest suit was lodged: a Te Aroha butcher sought 9s, but settled out of court.⁷⁰ A suit for £1 was struck out in March 1897, but in November a judgment summons was issued at Robson's request for £5 7s 6d.⁷¹ The following year one Te Aroha firm sued him for £6 16s 10d; this not being forthcoming, a judgment summons was issued for £8 15s 4d, which was paid into court.⁷² A publican then sought £1 7s 6d, was not paid, sought a judgment summons for £1 16s, but had this application struck out the following January.⁷³ After this date his finances were sufficiently robust for him not to be sued again.

MINING

Rewi had no known involvement in mining before May 1875, when he was one of 32 owners, 29 being Maori, of an unsuccessful Tairua claim.⁷⁴ In 1880, when Hone Werahiko first prospected Te Aroha,⁷⁵ he was assisted by two Germans, but after they gave up Rewi joined the party which found gold.⁷⁶ In late October 1880, when Charles Featherstone Mitchell,⁷⁷ a Paeroa storekeeper, climbed up to the find he was accompanied by 'one of the oldest natives of the district and his youngest son David. As we went along David ... was quite as anxious as I was about the gold, and we broke

⁶⁹ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1889-1896, 8/1896, BBAV 11221/1c, ANZ-A.

⁷⁰ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1896-1907, 44/1896, BBAV 11221/2a, ANZ-A.

⁷¹ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1896-1907, 13/1897, BBAV 11221/2a, ANZ-A; Paeroa Magistrate's Court, Judgment Summonses Issued 1894-1926, 80/1897, BACL 13747/1a, ANZ-A.

⁷² Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1896-1907, 25/1898; Judgment Summons dated 12 August 1898, BBAV 11221/2a, ANZ-A.

⁷³ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1896-1907, 36/1898; Judgment Summons dated 16 December 1898, and hearing of 27 January 1899, BBAV 11221/2a, ANZ-A.

⁷⁴ Thames Warden's Court, Register of Claims 1875-1876, folio 32, BACL 14397/9a, ANZ-A.

⁷⁵ See paper on his life.

⁷⁶ Special Reporter, 'The Gold Discovery at Te Aroha', *Thames Advertiser*, 25 October 1880, p. 3.

⁷⁷ See paper on the Thames Miners' Union.

up any amount of stones', finding gold three times.⁷⁸ When Mitchell took the warden to see a reef he claimed was exceedingly valuable but then was unable to find it, he said, 'If young Morgan, the native, was there he could find it'.⁷⁹ Seemingly unaware of Rewi's real age, he told the warden that 'he could not find the reef without the Maori boy (meaning Davy Morgan), who had broken the stone from the reef with him'.⁸⁰ Rewi joined with Mitchell to peg out a claim next to the Prospectors'.⁸¹

In late October, a 'special reporter' met Werahiko and 'Davy Morgan, a son of the chiefs', in the Hot Springs Hotel. He judged them to be 'very intelligent natives and able to converse in fluent English'. Rewi had a sample of ore found with Werahiko in his whare, which he showed to Pakeha visitors, but 'became very angry' when some of it was purloined.⁸² He provided the warden with a sample.⁸³ When Adam Porter⁸⁴ offered to lease 25 acres of Mokena's land, the arrangement 'was put in writing by his son David'.⁸⁵ Another journalist met him in early November, at the same hotel.

A native named Morgan, one of the partners in the Prospectors' Claim, showed me a very rich specimen of quartz for which he refused one of our party £5. Though we tried hard, he did not consider it quite the thing to say where he got it and became indignant when we pressed him with questions. At last in order to finish the "big talk," he made a circle with his hand taking in all the points of the compass, from SW to NE, going N about saying he found it there. On my asking him if he was going to work, he answered with "a child-like and bland smile" that the pakeha might work but he would make plenty of money and live at his house. Truly these sons of the soil are becoming highly civilised.⁸⁶

⁷⁸ Own Correspondent, 'The Gold Find at Te Aroha', *Thames Advertiser*, 20 October 1880, p. 3.

⁷⁹ *Thames Star*, 27 October 1880, p. 2.

⁸⁰ *Thames Star*, 1 November 1880, p. 2.

⁸¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 25 October 1880, p. 3.

⁸² Special Reporter, 'The Te Aroha Goldfield', *Thames Star*, 25 October 1880, p. 2.

⁸³ Harry Kenrick to Secretary, Gold Fields, 27 October 1880, Mines Department, MD 1, 12/353, ANZ-W.

⁸⁴ See paper on his life.

⁸⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 28 October 1880, p. 3.

⁸⁶ 'A Word of Counsel to the Tauranga Folk', *Bay of Plenty Times*, 11 November 1880, p. 2.

Rewi was still prospecting with Werahiko and John McSweeney⁸⁷ in early November and helping to open up the Prospectors' Claim.⁸⁸ On opening day, he took out one of the first miner's rights.⁸⁹ As he had interests in four claims, one being the Morgan, presumably named after his family,⁹⁰ he needed to employ someone to work one of his interests, and obtained another miner's right in early December under his name for this man.⁹¹ By early December, he was the only Maori shareholder to have retained his interest in the Bonanza.⁹² He had 166 shares in the Aroha Company, which worked the Prospectors' Claim, giving 'Tangata' ['person']⁹³ as his occupation.⁹⁴ He had 390 shares in the Waikato Company and 261 in the Bonanza, his occupation given as landowner in the list of shareholders in the former and farmer in the latter.⁹⁵ Both companies failed, but after the Bonanza claim was re-registered he purchased half a share in 1882, retaining it until the claim was abandoned.⁹⁶ As Davy Morgan, and giving his occupation as storekeeper, he applied for and received 100 shares in the Te Aroha Quartz Crushing Company, which erected a battery.⁹⁷

Once the Waiorongomai field was discovered, he was the largest shareholder in Union Jack No. 2, which he and two other Maori had marked out; he applied for it on behalf of the owners. Although unsuccessful, it was profitable for him, as he sold three quarters of one share for £25.⁹⁸ He

⁸⁷ See paper on his life.

⁸⁸ *Thames Star*, 2 November 1880, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 15 November 1880, p. 3.

⁸⁹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Miner's Right no. 305, issued 25 November 1880, Miners' Rights Butt Book November 1880, 11533/1a, ANZ-A.

⁹⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Plaint Book 1880-1898, 2/1880, BBAV 11547/1a; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folios 192, 212, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, 6 December 1880, p. 3.

⁹¹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Miner's Right no. 675, issued 4 December 1880, Miners' Rights Butt Book 1880, BBAV 11533/1e, ANZ-A.

⁹² *Thames Advertiser*, 6 December 1880, p. 3.

⁹³ P.M. Ryan, *The New Dictionary of Modern Maori* (Auckland, 1974), p. 41.

⁹⁴ *New Zealand Gazette*, 30 December 1880, p. 1796.

⁹⁵ *New Zealand Gazette*, 30 December 1880, p. 1797, 20 January 1881, p. 111.

⁹⁶ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 254, BBAV 11567/1a; Transfers and Assignments 1882, no. 545, BBAV 11581/2a, ANZ-A.

⁹⁷ *Thames Star*, 28 January 1881, p. 2; *New Zealand Gazette*, 28 April 1881, p. 476.

⁹⁸ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Notices of Marking Out Claims 1881, no. 378, BBAV 11557/1b; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 241, BBAV 11567/1a; Register of

successfully sued Hone Werahiko and Hore Aperahama⁹⁹ for surplus ground in their adjoining Smile of Fortune, being awarded 15 men's ground.¹⁰⁰

In 1888, he applied for one man's ground at Tui but then withdrew his application and instead, with others, sought ten men's ground as the Morgan claim.¹⁰¹ He had the largest number of shares in this, soon selling one-third of his holding to other Maori.¹⁰² When protection was needed, he was the shareholder who applied for it.¹⁰³

As late as 1909, 'D. Morgan' of Te Aroha, presumably Rewi, sent two samples of quartz to be tested in the Thames School of Mines, 15 grains being extracted from the second one.¹⁰⁴

A LEADING RANGATIRA

Rewi took an active part in many important events, even when young; for instance, in 1878 he was present at the third hearing of the Aroha Block.¹⁰⁵ When the Mokena family met with Warden Stratford in 1886 to discuss the possible lease of some of their land adjacent to the Hot Springs Reserve, Rewi was 'spokesman for his relatives'. He said that they 'were glad to have met Mr Stratford, and were pleased to know that, like the late Mr Warden Kenrick, he took a warm interest in the welfare of the natives'.¹⁰⁶ After the deaths of other rangatira, Rewi became the most important one living at Te Aroha, in 1910 being described as the 'reigning

Applications 1880-1882, folio 119, BBAV 11505/3a; Register of Licensed Holdings 1882-1887, folio 62, BBAV 11500/9a; Transfers and Assignments 1882, no. 74, BBAV 11581/1a; Transfers and Assignments 1882, no. 500, BBAV 11581/2a, ANZ-A.

⁹⁹ See paper on Hone Werahiko.

¹⁰⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Plaint Book 1880-1898, 5/1882, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁰¹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications by Date of Hearings, 1883-1900, 24, 28/1888, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁰² Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 325, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁰³ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications by Date of Hearings, 1883-1900, 49/1888, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A; Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 25 July 1888, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ Thames School of Mines, Assay Book 1907-1919, entries for 25 May 1909, 14 July 1909, School of Mines Archives, Thames.

¹⁰⁵ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 56, p. 122.

¹⁰⁶ *Waikato Times*, 19 December 1886, p. 3.

chief of Tui Pah'.¹⁰⁷ He inherited his father's greenstone patu 'Te Hoeroa'.¹⁰⁸ He had a house on the pa reserve, Section 31.¹⁰⁹ In 1908 he was recorded as the owner of this section, of over 58 acres, valued at £1,004, which included a house valued at £445 and a meeting house valued at £50.¹¹⁰ (While the house would have been his own property, he would have been a trustee rather than the owner of the land and meetinghouse.) In 1892 he said that he had arranged the burial of Pineha Marutuaha and erected a fence around his grave.¹¹¹ 'I am a relative of Pineha, I purchased food for the Tangi, none of the other parties did so who say they are relations. I can't say who made the coffin for the deceased.... I forget, I am in doubt if I provided it or not'. When an agreement was made with a Pakeha about the burial costs, he was the interpreter.¹¹²

Rewi assisted others with leasing or selling Maori land.¹¹³ In June 1898, he wrote, in Maori, to the Minister of Railways, Alfred Jerome Cadman, expressing pleasure that a station had been built at Tui Pa. 'You having adjusted my matters, I trust that your government will remain in office for many years to come' and have the longest term ever. 'I am a supporter of your government'. He then asked Cadman to remove restrictions on the sale of Aroha Block IX Section 29, owned by other Maori, who had sold it for more than it was worth at the time of Reha Aperahama's¹¹⁴ death 'to enable arrangements to be made according to Maori custom at his funeral'. He added a postscript about an earlier meeting with the Premier, Richard Seddon, who was also Native Minister:

Please remind the Honble Native Minister of the conversation I had with him when Wi Pere [Member of Parliament for Eastern

¹⁰⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 5 November 1910, p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 28A, pp. 59.

¹⁰⁹ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 28A, p. 58.

¹¹⁰ Ohinemuri County Council, Waitoa Riding, 1 April 1908, folio 3, Valuation Department, BBBC A150, no. 647, ANZ-A.

¹¹¹ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 28A, pp. 53-54.

¹¹² Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 28A, pp. 58, 61 [punctuation added].

¹¹³ For example, offer made by Rewi Mokena on 20 April 1895, Maori Affairs Department, MA-MLP 1, 1895/204; Aroha Block V Section 5B, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 06/1059, ANZ-W.

¹¹⁴ See paper on his life.

Maori, 1884-1887, 1893-1905]¹¹⁵ and I went to see him on 27-7-96 when he said that I would be appointed an Assessor, I mention this as I wish you to interest yourself on my behalf.¹¹⁶

This appointment was never made. The only time he had an official role was on one occasion when he was an interpreter in a case over maketu.¹¹⁷

Rewi regularly appeared on behalf of claimants in the land court, or acted as their clerk. For example, at the first hearing of Ohinemuri he was the clerk for Ngati Karaua and at the rehearing for Ngati Kiriwera, payment being an interest in Ohinemuri No. 20. During hearings at Thames he lived with leading claimants in a large house.¹¹⁸ He was recorded as being involved in cases in every Hauraki minute book in the early twentieth century.¹¹⁹ He assisted Te Aroha Maori lease land to Pakeha.¹²⁰ In 1907 he expressed his willingness to act for one claimant but had 'no funds to pay' court fees.¹²¹ One year before his death, when the court opened at Paeroa, 'there were only seven Natives present and Rewi Mokena on their behalf addressed & welcomed the Court'.¹²²

In 1902, it was reported that 'Rewi Mokena (better known as Davy Morgan), of Te Aroha, has been chosen as one of the Maori representatives to accompany the Premier on his Coronation trip'.¹²³ Another report clarified that he had left Te Aroha for Wellington, 'being a candidate for the Maori Contingent' which was to accompany Seddon on this trip;¹²⁴ he did

¹¹⁵ *New Zealand Parliamentary Record 1840-1949*, ed. Guy H. Scholefield (Wellington, 1950), p. 132.

¹¹⁶ Rewi Mokena to A.J. Cadman, 16 June 1898, Aroha Block IX Section 29, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 08/164, ANZ-W.

¹¹⁷ *Auckland Weekly News*, 28 May 1903, p. 39.

¹¹⁸ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 32, pp. 80-81.

¹¹⁹ For instance, Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 57, p. 42.

¹²⁰ For instance, Rewi Mokena to James Carroll (Minister of Native Affairs), 30 December 1902, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 06/1059; Rewi Mokena to James Carroll, 27 January 1903; W.T. Rowe to James Carroll, 14 April 1903, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 06/1215, ANZ-W.

¹²¹ Maori Land Court, President, Native Appellate Court, Minute Book no. 2, p. 37.

¹²² Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 59, p. 221.

¹²³ *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 11 April 1902, p. 2; *Thames Star*, 11 April 1902, p. 4.

¹²⁴ *Auckland Star*, 11 April 1902, p. 1.

not go on it. At the end of the year, he concluded a letter to James Carroll, Native Minister, 'May it go well with you, O Timi. From your friend of long ago'.¹²⁵ Four years later, when Maori planned to visit England to petition the king, it was announced that Tupu Taingakawa Te Waharoa, a descendent of Wiremu Tamihana,¹²⁶ would be accompanied by Rewi.¹²⁷ Taingakawa did not go on this mission until 1914,¹²⁸ by which time Rewi was dead. In early 1908, when a petition to King Edward was drawn up protesting at the loss of land, the 'chief executive officer' of this movement was Tupu Taingakawa, whose private secretary was Rewi.¹²⁹ Later that year he was one of three representatives of local hapu at the Te Aroha hearing of the Native Land Commission into the selling of Maori land.¹³⁰ In August the following year he was still acting as Taingakawa's private secretary.¹³¹

PARTICIPATING IN PAKEHA SOCIETY

As a fit young man, sport provided much social contact with Pakeha, even before gold brought settlers rushing to the district. In May 1880, he captained a mixed side of Maori and Pakeha in a football match at Waihou, winning 6:1. He was reported to be one of the best players, and a good captain. After the match, the Waihou Football Club elected him as the only Maori member of its committee.¹³² In August 1883, he played for the Te Aroha football team against Thames.¹³³ The following month he played in another game against Thames.¹³⁴ In May the following year, a team to play

¹²⁵ Rewi Mokena to James Carroll, 30 December 1902, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 06/1059, ANZ-W.

¹²⁶ See *New Zealand Herald*, 26 June 1929, p. 12, 28 June 1929, p. 8.

¹²⁷ Hamilton Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 8 December 1906, p. 4.

¹²⁸ *New Zealand Herald*, 26 June 1929, p. 12.

¹²⁹ *Marlborough Express*, 18 March 1908, p. 3.

¹³⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 29 August 1908, p. 2.

¹³¹ Letter from Rewi Mokena on behalf of Taingakawa, 27 August 1909, Maori Affairs Department, MA-MLP 1, N1909/419, ANZ-W.

¹³² *Waikato Times*, 27 May 1880, p. 2.

¹³³ *Thames Star*, 29 August 1883, p. 2.

¹³⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 24 September 1883, p. 3; *Te Aroha News*, 29 September 1883, p. 2.

another match against Thames was chosen from a list on which his name did not appear.¹³⁵ He played for the Te Aroha team again in September.¹³⁶

In 1885 he was a member of the all-Maori Hauraki Football Club,¹³⁷ but continued to play in Pakeha teams as well. In 1889 he was a member of the combined Te Aroha and Waiorongomai team that beat Paeroa, and presumably participated in the subsequent dinner and dance.¹³⁸ In 1895 he played in the Te Aroha team against Paeroa, Karangahake, and Waihi.¹³⁹ An emergency for the game against Morrinsville, he was required to play, unsuccessfully kicking for goal.¹⁴⁰ Later in the year he played against Waitekauri, Karangahake, and a combined Waiorongomai-Waitoa team.¹⁴¹ In the absence of the local newspaper after 1895, it is not known when he ceased to play rugby, but he was no longer playing in 1900.

When the first Te Aroha race meeting was held in 1881, Rewi was a steward.¹⁴² He was not recorded as having any official role at later meetings. He may have been the Private David Morgan who joined the Paeroa Volunteer Corps in 1880; if so, he was not the only Maori, for quite apart from Maori and 'half-castes' with European names, Hare Takerei¹⁴³ was another member.¹⁴⁴

RELIGION

Rewi was brought up as a member of the Church of England by his devout parents. In December 1880, he was elected to the Te Aroha vestry.¹⁴⁵ Then in December 1888, when a Mormon missionary baptized him, he

¹³⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 17 May 1884, p. 7.

¹³⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 20 September 1884, p. 2.

¹³⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 13 June 1885, p. 3.

¹³⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 29 May 1889, p. 2.

¹³⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 5 June 1895, p. 2, 15 June 1895, p. 2, 3 July 1895, p. 2.

¹⁴⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 10 July 1895, p. 2, 17 July 1895, p. 2.

¹⁴¹ *Te Aroha News*, 7 August 1895, p. 2, 14 August 1895, p. 2, 31 August 1895, p. 2.

¹⁴² *Thames Star*, 26 January 1881, p. 3.

¹⁴³ See Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 211, BBAV 11567/1a; Testamentary Register 1920-1921, folio 700, BBCB 4208/12, ANZ-A; advertisement, *Auckland Star*, 27 February 1901, p. 1.

¹⁴⁴ Thames No. 3 Scottish Rifle Volunteers, Capitation to 31 December 1880, Army Department, ARM 41, 1882/1o, ANZ-W.

¹⁴⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 26 January 1881, p. 3.

became the first Te Aroha convert to the Church of Latter Day Saints.¹⁴⁶ Curiously, he had been earlier appointed a deacon, at an unspecified date, and a priest in April 1887. In July 1898 he became an elder,¹⁴⁷ and as such 'blest' children at Te Aroha on that day and again three months later.¹⁴⁸ In that year he described himself as 'a Mormon' and 'a friend of the Church', and provided the land court with details of Mormon baptism rituals. 'I have often taken part in this ceremony.... It is part of my duty to see that the rules are observed', for example that details were correctly recorded.¹⁴⁹ Excommunicated for adultery in July 1899, he was re-baptized in June 1900, re-appointed a priest two weeks later, and remained a member of this faith until his death.¹⁵⁰ His first wife was a member,¹⁵¹ and his daughter, Clara Titipo Mokena, was blest aged four years and baptized when almost eight years old.¹⁵²

PRIVATE LIFE

On 30 May 1882, Rewi, who signed the notice of intention to marry and the marriage register as David Morgan, and whose occupation was given as a farmer, was married under Pakeha law at Thames to Henrietta (otherwise Henareeta, sometimes Heeni Ruta)¹⁵³ Cook, who like him was

¹⁴⁶ Church of Latter Day Saints, Record of Members, Early to 1919, Te Aroha Branch, no. 1, LDS Archives, Hamilton.

¹⁴⁷ Church of Latter Day Saints, Record of Ordinations to the Priesthood in the Te Aroha Branch of the New Zealand Mission, no. 3, LDS Archives, Hamilton.

¹⁴⁸ Church of Latter Day Saints, Record of Children Blest in the Te Aroha Branch of the New Zealand Mission, entries for 10 July 1898, 16 October 1898, LDS Archives, Hamilton.

¹⁴⁹ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 47, pp. 302-304.

¹⁵⁰ Church of Latter Day Saints, Record of Members, Early to 1919, Te Aroha Branch, nos. 1, 74; Record of Ordinations to the Priesthood in the Te Aroha Branch of the New Zealand Mission, no. 8, LDS Archives, Hamilton.

¹⁵¹ Church of Latter Day Saints, Family Files [microfilm], Rewi Mokena and Heeni Ruta, LDS Archives, Hamilton.

¹⁵² Church of Latter Day Saints, Record of Members, Early to 1919, Te Aroha Branch, no. 14; Record of Children Blest in the Te Aroha Branch of the New Zealand Mission, no. 28, LDS Archives, Hamilton.

¹⁵³ See Church of Latter Day Saints, Family Files [microfilm], Rewi Mokena and Heeni Ruta, LDS Archives, Hamilton.

recorded as being aged 21. She had been living at Hikutaia for the past ten months. Her deceased father, Joseph, had been a gum buyer.¹⁵⁴ He claimed to have found gold in the Kauaeranga and Waihou Rivers in about 1854 or 1855 before Maori stopped his prospecting,¹⁵⁵ a claim supported by Piniaha Marutuahu, who referred to him as a half-caste.¹⁵⁶ Henrietta's mother, Marara Hikori, was a witness at their wedding,¹⁵⁷ which disproved part of Hikari Paraone's response to Rewi's question in 1905: 'Was I not the husband of Henareeta at one time?' 'Yes, you married her surreptitiously, when she was only 15 yrs old'.¹⁵⁸ She certainly had her mother's approval.

As Henrietta's birth was not registered, her exact age is uncertain. The *Te Aroha Mail*, getting their names slightly wrong and possibly writing at least partly facetiously, reported their nuptials: 'Marriage in High Life. – Mr Daniel Morgan, son of the old chief Mokena ... returned on Wednesday from a visit to the north, where he had been to carry off the young and lovely daughter of the late Mr Joseph Cooke, storekeeper of the Bay',¹⁵⁹ presumably the Bay of Islands. 'Young' suggests she may have been underage. She gave different ages when receiving medical treatment in 1885 and 1886, but all except one suggested that she was indeed younger than 21 when she married. Apart from one entry that made her 31 in 1882, the others made her 16.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴ Notices of Intention to Marry 1882-1885, entry for 27 May 1882, Thames BDM; Marriage Certificate of David Morgan, 30 May 1882, 1882/1181, BDM.

¹⁵⁵ Joseph Cook to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 25 November 1867, Applications for Reward for Finding Goldfield, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, box 19, Session 24, MS 595, Auckland Public Library.

¹⁵⁶ Piniaha Marutuahu to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 29 February 1868, Applications for Reward for Finding Goldfield, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, box 19, Session 24, MS 595, Auckland Public Library.

¹⁵⁷ Marriage Certificate of David Morgan, 30 May 1882, 1882/1181, BDM.

¹⁵⁸ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 54, p. 334.

¹⁵⁹ *Te Aroha Mail*, 3 June 1882, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ Medical Returns for District of Thames for Quarters to 30 September 1885, 31 December 1885, 30 June 1886, 30 September 1886, entries for Henrietta Morgan, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 21/19, ANZ-W.

Their daughter, Kiria, otherwise Clara, Titipo was born in November 1884, at Hikutaia.¹⁶¹ In September 1899, when his former wife, now known as Henareeta Paraone, applied to be joint trustee of their daughter with Rewi in a block of land, Rewi immediately objected. ‘This woman was my wife married in 1882. That child Titipo was born in 1884 after that child was born she ran away & left me and the child and went to [Hikari] Paraone, her present husband – from that time to the present, the child has not lived with her’ but remained with him. He had included Titipo in land adjudicated upon whereas she had not. ‘She had never been near the child – nor given her money to buy clothes to the present time’.¹⁶²

Henareeta denied ‘everything he says – everyone knows he went and misconducted himself with another, and for two years, during which I remained single he had two other wives (Court not interested in this)’. She claimed Rewi took her daughter ‘forcibly away’. Titipo ‘only lives sometimes with him’, usually living ‘with his aunts. She was five or six years old when she was taken away from me – now fifteen’. Rewi replied. ‘I wish to point out that the child was suckling when she left it. I had to feed it from a bottle – from that time to this the child has not lived with anyone else – and the money she has in the Savings Bank was given by me, and I am looking after it’.¹⁶³ The court determined that, since Rewi had brought up his daughter, he alone should be the trustee.¹⁶⁴ As Titipo was 15 months old when she and her mother received medical treatment in the first half of 1886,¹⁶⁵ Rewi may have exaggerated how young she was when she was abandoned. As Henareeta was living at Parawai during 1885 and 1886,¹⁶⁶ she may have separated from Rewi by then. Titipo was living at Thames in late 1887,

¹⁶¹ Church of Latter Day Saints, Record of Members, Early to 1919, Te Aroha Branch, nos. 14, 98; Record of Children blest in the Te Aroha Branch of the New Zealand Mission, no. 28, LDS Archives, Hamilton.

¹⁶² Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 51, pp. 229-230.

¹⁶³ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 51, p. 230.

¹⁶⁴ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 51, p. 236.

¹⁶⁵ Medical Return for District of Thames for Quarter to 30 June 1886, entries for Henrietta and Clara Morgan, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 21/19, ANZ-W.

¹⁶⁶ Medical Returns for District of Thames for Quarters to 30 September 1885, 31 December 1885, 30 June 1886, entries for Henrietta Morgan, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 21/19, ANZ-W.

when aged three,¹⁶⁷ probably with her mother. Henareeta continued to live in Thames while her daughter was being brought up in Te Aroha.¹⁶⁸ Titipo attended the Te Aroha school from 1892 until mid-1897, when she moved to Thames.¹⁶⁹

In March 1895, Merea Wikiriwhi¹⁷⁰ sued Rewi for assault. He pleaded not guilty, but was fined £4, half to go to Merea, in default one month's hard labour in Mount Eden prison.¹⁷¹ The local newspaper's account of the court hearing has been lost, but a Te Aroha correspondent summarized what he described as a serious offence:

It appears that Morgan has become a Mormon and desired to add to the number of his wives. He wanted Mrs Wilkinson to enter his harem, but she emphatically declined. In order to induce her to alter her mind he went to her house at ten o'clock one night and brutally assaulted her, doing her severe bodily injury. The S[tipendary] M[agistrate] found Morgan guilty, and severely reprimanded him for his brutal conduct and fined him £4 and £40 costs, or in default one month's imprisonment. It is thought here that the sentence was a very light one indeed, as Morgan knows as much as any average European.¹⁷²

At some time in the late 1880s or early 1890s he married, bigamously, and under Maori custom, Mareana Peka, also known as Peka Te Hamene and Peka Te Raniera, whose father was Raniera Waiau and whose mother was Mere Te Hamene. She had previously been married to Hoani Te Huia, by whom she had had two children, Te Kahuranga and Hoani Te Huia.¹⁷³ Born in 1848 at Matamata, she was baptized into the Mormon faith at Te Aroha in January 1889, possibly under Rewi's influence (she was registered

¹⁶⁷ Medical Return for District of Thames for Quarter to 31 December 1887, entry for Titipo Mokena, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 21/19, ANZ-W.

¹⁶⁸ Thames Magistrate's Court, Complaint Book 1890-1895, complaints against Henrietta Cook, 29 June 1892, 12 September 1893, BACL 13737/2a, ANZ-A.

¹⁶⁹ Te Aroha School, Admissions Register no. 2 (1889-1897), nos. 762, 826, Primary School Archives, Te Aroha.

¹⁷⁰ See paper on Merea Wikiriwhi and George Thomas Wilkinson.

¹⁷¹ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1881-1896, 4/1895, BCDG 11220/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁷² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 13 April 1895, p. 23.

¹⁷³ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 50, pp. 262, 267; Maori Land Court, President, Native Appellate Court, Minute Book no. 2, pp. 6, 24.

immediately after his name in the ‘Record of Members’).¹⁷⁴ In mid-1899, when aged 50,¹⁷⁵ she responded to Rewi’s woman-chasing ways in dramatic fashion. ‘A Maori woman of the Te Aroha Pah is alleged to have attempted to commit suicide by taking a dose of “Rough on Rats,” but was frustrated in the act by the timely appearance on the scene of her husband’.¹⁷⁶ The Te Aroha newspaper for this period no longer exists, depriving posterity of greater details of his domestic affairs, but its initial report was reprinted in the Thames paper:

Some months back her husband left Te Aroha for Coromandel to attend the sitting of the Land Court in that district. It appears he returned to Te Aroha about the middle of last week, and took up his abode at the Pah. On Friday a domestic altercation took place, which appeared to upset the wife’s peace of mind. About five o’clock she obtained a box of the poison before mentioned, and put about a teaspoon in a mug with some water, and commenced to drink it down. Her husband, who was close at hand, suspected what she was doing, and dashed the mug and its contents to the floor, not, however, before some of the poison had been drunk. Emetics were at once administered, and the would-be suicide was soon little the worse for the attempt on her life.¹⁷⁷

When Mereana Peka was charged with committing suicide, it was revealed that ‘the trouble between the couple had arisen through’ Rewi’s ‘action in bringing another wife (from Coromandel) to live with him’.¹⁷⁸ The name of the additional wife was not recorded. When Mereana appeared in the Supreme Court, she was described as middle-aged and well-dressed.¹⁷⁹ She pleaded guilty and was discharged, entering into a recognizance of £20

¹⁷⁴ Church of Latter Day Saints, Record of Members, Early to 1919, Te Aroha Branch, no. 2, LDS Archives, Hamilton.

¹⁷⁵ Armed Constabulary Force, Report of Charges taken at Te Aroha Lock-Up 1880-1903, 8/1899, in private possession.

¹⁷⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 15 June 1899, p. 3.

¹⁷⁷ *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Advertiser*, 15 June 1899, p. 3.

¹⁷⁸ Police Court, Te Aroha, *Thames Advertiser*, 19 June 1899, p. 3.

¹⁷⁹ Supreme Court, *Waikato Argus*, 29 August 1899, p. 2.

‘to come up to receive judgment when called upon’.¹⁸⁰ It was Rewi’s adultery that led him to be excommunicated by his church for one year.¹⁸¹

In 1901, Rewi gave his version of her attempted suicide, which he wrongly dated as 1898, a year early. In May that year ‘my wife became insane. On 9 June 1898 she took poison, to commit suicide’. In July, when asked by Haora Tareranui to sell her interest in Komata North No. 1B No. 3, ‘I was then separated from my wife’, who ‘was still insane’. Two months after she was charged with attempting suicide ‘we lived together again, having settled our quarrell’. She was then no longer insane.¹⁸² The Supreme Court ‘decided my wife was insane & did not punish her’; the doctor ‘could not decide whether or not she was sane at the time of the trial.... Since Oct 1898, my wife has not been insane (Witness replies three times to this question in the same way)’.¹⁸³ Hoera Tareranui insisted that she had not been insane when agreeing to sell land. ‘I heard that Rewi had treated her badly. It was jealousy that made her take poison, so I heard. She was not mad’.¹⁸⁴ John Thorp¹⁸⁵ confirmed the agreement to sell, adding ‘I never heard that Peka was ever out of her mind’.¹⁸⁶ After this date nothing was recorded of Mereana Peka apart from her being assaulted by Wharepapa Ngakuru at Tui Pa in February 1904 with the intent to cause grievous bodily harm. Her assailant pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of assault, and was ordered to pay £3 plus costs, in default three months in Mt Eden prison, and had to keep the peace for three months.¹⁸⁷

DEATH

The deaths of Rewi’s known wives have not been traced. On 8 May 1911, he was admitted to the Thames hospital, and discharged on 2 July,

¹⁸⁰ Conolly J, Criminal Notebook 1898-1899, entry for 28 August 1899, p. 295, Judge’s Notebooks, Justice Department, BBAE A304/127, ANZ-A.

¹⁸¹ Church of Latter Day Saints, Record of Members, Early to 1919, Te Aroha Branch, nos. 1, 7, LDS Archives, Hamilton.

¹⁸² Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 50, p. 260.

¹⁸³ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 50, p. 263.

¹⁸⁴ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 50, p. 265.

¹⁸⁵ See paper on Maori in Hauraki in the nineteenth century.

¹⁸⁶ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 50, p. 267.

¹⁸⁷ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 10/1904, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

owing £10 11s 6d in fees, the bill for which was sent his sister Ani Edwards¹⁸⁸ but never paid.¹⁸⁹ On 7 July he died at Tui Pa, aged only 55; the cause of death was not recorded, and no death certificate was issued. The *Te Aroha News* described him as ‘a man of high standing and besides being exceedingly popular amongst the natives was held in high respect by the residents of Te Aroha’.¹⁹⁰

Five months later, Ani Edwards sought to be recognized as his successor. She deposed that he ‘made a will by which the residue of his estate is left to me. (Will produced).¹⁹¹ Know nothing of Rewi’s child’, by which she implied that his daughter was to receive nothing. Henareeta Cooke, as his first wife now called herself, objected. ‘I am Rewi’s legal wife. My only means of existence is cultivating and gum digging. I am again married according to Maori Custom. My daughter has other small interests. She was married but has no husband at present time’. The court adjourned the matter ‘for search of interest’.¹⁹² In its decision, it allocated Kapua No. 2 and Okauia No. 4E to Ani, and Komata North No. 1B No. 3B was shared between her, his daughter, and his first wife, who was then living at Manaia. ‘The interest of Herareeta Mokena is to be for life only – right of reversion is to Ani Jane Edwards’.¹⁹³

CONCLUSION

Rewi Mokena was the most prominent of Mokena Hou’s children, sometimes, because of his marital complications, for the wrong reasons. He was a leading rangatira with influence beyond Te Aroha, and also popular with Pakeha, with whom he had fraternized from an early age. Like all other rangatira, he tried to obtain ownership of as much land as possible, and obtained income from selling land as need be. He was the only member of his family to actively assist with the prospecting of Te Aroha, having been involved in one Tairua claim in 1875, and also had more investments

¹⁸⁸ See paper on Ani and Alexander Watson Edwards.

¹⁸⁹ Thames Hospital, Fees Register 1910-1912, entry for 8 May 1911, YCAH A431/73, ANZ-A.

¹⁹⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 8 July 1911, p. 2; reprinted in *Te Aroha Correspondent, Auckland Weekly News*, 13 July 1911, p. 49.

¹⁹¹ Not held in any official repository.

¹⁹² Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 61, p. 20.

¹⁹³ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 61, p. 79.

than the others. Despite his personal life, he was of high standing in both the Maori and Pakeha communities.