

MAORI AND MINING IN NEW ZEALAND AND BEYOND

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Abstract: *Before the arrival of Europeans, Maori had known of the existence of gold but did not mine it and had no understanding of its value. Once mining commenced in California in 1849 and Australia in the early 1850s, many Maori participated on several fields, especially in Victoria. When gold was first discovered in New Zealand, at Coromandel in 1852, Maori were keen to learn prospecting skills, and soon found gold in several parts of both the North and South Islands. Some alluvial claims were worked communally, even some women participating. From the start, Maori were determined to protect their rights against Pakeha when they were rivals for the same ground.*

On the Hauraki Peninsula, which had no alluvial gold, Maori were prospectors rather than miners. Some were successful, often going against the wishes of rangatira who, fearing that opening goldfields would result in their losing their land, refused access to prospectors, particularly in Ohinemuri. At Thames, Maori prospectors succeeded where Pakeha ones had failed, finding the gold that led to the 1867 rush; a rush encouraged by one rangatira in particular, Wirope Hoterene Taipari, who understood how a successful field would benefit him financially (including obtaining a reward for discovering a payable goldfield). After the opening of this field, some Maori prospected throughout the peninsula and elsewhere for the remainder of the century, with varying success but with some good finds, particularly at Kuaotunu. A few even participated in the Klondike rush. By the twentieth century, Maori were overcoming their reluctance to mine underground, notably in the coalmines of the Waikato, but until then almost none had seen mining as a full-time career.

Indigenous inhabitants throughout the world successfully prospected for precious metals, but their achievements were commonly written out of history, as for example in Australia, where Aboriginal involvement is only now being uncovered. In New Zealand also, Maori achievements, although well known to contemporaries, have largely been forgotten. At the time, Maori prospector's successes were praised and many became owners of claims, and in some cases benefited financially from their involvement in mining.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOLD

That the Maoris were aware of the occurrence of gold, before the arrival of the European colonists, is an undoubted fact. When

making inquiries on this subject in 1862, I was informed by Mr Palmer, an old whaler ... that, many years previous to the settlement of Otago, he was told by a native chief ... that “plenty *ferro*,”¹ or yellow stone, such as that of which the watch-seals of the white men were made, and which had attracted the old chief’s attention, was to be found on the river beaches inland, and that the Matau or Molyneux River was the place where it principally occurred.... Other Natives freely made similar statements when they observed the value that the new-comers seemed to place upon golden coins and ornaments.²

Thus Vincent Pyke in his history of early mining in Otago. Twenty years previously, Abel Best, when about two hours’ walk away from the Waipa River, ‘found *Limestone* a specimen of which I knocked off to the great astonishment of an Ancient Maori who wished to know if I intended to make gold of it’.³ Clearly this ‘ancient’ had heard about gold, but did not recognize it nor understand how it was ‘made’.

J.H.M. Salmon, in his history of New Zealand gold mining, included an unsourced statement that, when some Maori seamen joined the California rush of 1849, ‘they reported in disgust that the whiteman’s gold occurred in similar fashion in their homeland’.⁴ An Englishman who was at the Collingwood goldfield in 1858 wrote, four years later, that it was possible Maori had been first to find gold there. ‘Some claim to have known the fact of its existence for many years before any attempt was made to turn the knowledge to profitable account. Others state, that when the first settlers went there, eighteen years ago, the natives exhibited gold to them’.⁵ A more recent investigation of Maori mining in Hauraki has concluded that, whereas they made use of coal and other underground resources, ‘no example of pre-contact knowledge or mythologizing of gold has been found’.⁶

¹ If this was whiro, this was ‘poor land’ or ‘barren soil’: P.M. Ryan, *The New Dictionary of Modern Maori* (Auckland, 1973), p. 56; Ryan, *The Reed Dictionary of Modern Maori* (Auckland, 2 ed., 1997), p. 374.

² Vincent Pyke, *History of the Early Gold Discoveries in Otago* (Dunedin, 1887), pp. 2-3.

³ *The Journal of Ensign Best 1837-1843*, ed. Nancy M. Taylor (Wellington, 1966), entry for 21 April 1842, p. 356.

⁴ J.H.M. Salmon, *A History of Goldmining in New Zealand* (Wellington, 1963), p. 46.

⁵ Edwin Hodder, *Memories of New Zealand Life* (London, 1862), p. 221.

⁶ Robyn Anderson, *Goldmining: Policy, Legislation, and Administration: Rangahaua Whanui National Theme N* (Wellington, 1996), p. 5.

Although there were obsidian and basalt quarries in the peninsula, there was no evidence of Maori extracting gold.⁷

That it took time for Maori to realize the value that Pakeha placed on what they considered to be insignificant rock was indicated by Thomas Archibald's 1862 account of an expedition up the Molyneux River ten years' previously to investigate rumours of gold. One Maori living there told him that

he once picked up a piece of "simon" (gold)⁸ about the size of a small potato on the banks of the Molyneux, but did not know its value, and he threw it into the river. They told me they had seen the small *simon* on the sides of the river, where their canoes had been lying. On seeing a small sample of gold (which, I think, Mr Meredith brought down from Tasmania, about the beginning of 1852), the natives were the more convinced we should find it in the sands of the Molyneux.⁹

INVOLVED IN OVERSEAS GOLD RUSHES

One scholar believed that Maori were amongst those listed as 'kanaks' in the Californian rush of 1849.¹⁰ An Englishman living in Otago was 'talked by his Maori crew into sailing his schooner to San Francisco. After they had dropped anchor the shipload of wayfarers trekked overland to the diggings'.¹¹ The number mining in Victoria in the mid-nineteenth century is unknown, but may have been considerable, for in July 1852 Sir George Grey published a circular letter warning Maori against participating in the Australian rushes because if they neglected their crops high prices would ensue.¹² In July 1856, the government's Maori newspaper noted that 'many'

⁷ Jennifer Dixon, 'Coromandel Gold: Conquest and Conservation', in *Mining and Indigenous Peoples in Australasia*, ed. John Connell and Richard Howitt (Sydney, 1991), p. 173.

⁸ Probably a corruption of *timata*, meaning 'heavy (stones)': Pyke, p. 121.

⁹ Pyke, p. 3.

¹⁰ A.P.F. Browne, 'The Otago Goldfields, 1861-1863: Administration and public life' (MA thesis, Canterbury University, 1974), p. 37.

¹¹ Steven Eldred-Grigg, *Diggers Hatters and Whores: The story of the New Zealand Gold Rushes* (Auckland, 2008), p. 20.

¹² Sir George Grey, *He Pukapuka Pa Nui* (Wellington, 1852): I am indebted to Phil Parkinson of the Alexander Turnbull Library for this reference.

had ‘gone to Port Philip, Geelong, and other parts of Australia in search of gold’.¹³ According to its issue of 1 January 1855, Maori working in the Australian goldfields were remitting as much as £240 at a time back to their kin.¹⁴ During that decade, Maori on the Victorian fields used banks to send money to their families.¹⁵ John Telford, a printer for the Church Missionary Society in Auckland at that time, was aware that ‘many’ Maori ‘from different parts of the island had gone to the Australian gold fields, & that many also were resident in Sydney in various capacities’. When travelling to Sydney for health reasons, ‘with an eye to their moral and spiritual necessities’ he took ‘a large supply of books on different subjects in the native language’. He met five young and ‘respectably dressed’ Maori who had ‘just returned from Bendigo & the other southern diggings, where they had all been fortunate’. They informed him

that there were numbers of their countrymen, but none of their countrywomen – at all the diggings they had visited: & that, notwithstanding the drunkenness, profane swearing, & immorality, and every species of crime, so awfully prevalent at those places, they assured me that they never neglected – morning or evening – to perform their religious duties. That in every place they were in the habit of working chiefly with one another, & of living much to themselves, altho’ in the midst of many thousands of foreigners from different countries. That the good plan of their matuas (i.e. their missionaries) in use in all their villages at home, they had adopted at the various diggings; viz, that of having a teacher chosen from among themselves – to conduct the morning & evening prayers throughout the week, & the services on the Lord’s day; & that the teacher’s tent, or hut, or shed, as the case might be – formed their house of prayer.

Questioned further, they gave more details of their adherence to religious duties despite being surrounded by ‘foreigners’, who were mostly in awe of this behaviour although some considered it ‘a token of mental weakness’. Almost all possessed a copy of the New Testament, but copies of service and hymn books were in short supply. Although four were about to sail to New Zealand, as the fifth was returning to Bendigo, Telford gave him

¹³ *The Maori Messenger*, vol. 2, no. 7 (31 July 1856), p. 3.

¹⁴ Cited in John Lincoln Hutton, ‘“Troublesome Specimens”: A Study of the relationship between the Crown and the Tangata Whenua of Hauraki, 1863-1869’ (MA thesis in Anthropology, University of Auckland, 1995), p. 83.

¹⁵ Paul Monin, *Hauraki Contested, 1769-1875* (Wellington, 2001), p. 153.

‘about 250’ such books to take with him. (It was unlikely there were 250 Maori miners on this field; he probably had many copies of a small number of titles.) Afterwards Telford met ‘many’ Maori in Sydney but did not mention whether they had participated in the rushes. Some were ‘in highly respectable situations’, earning the esteem of their employers, ‘and in point of morality & acquaintance with & respect for the Word of God & religion, very far above the generality of those of our own nation who stand upon the same level with them with society’.¹⁶ Whether all Maori were such paragons of virtue on a goldfield cannot be determined, nor whether their virtues were exaggerated to strengthen missionary claims of success in saving souls, but one non-missionary contemporary noted that the ‘many’ Maori on the Victorian fields were more sober than those who had remained in New Zealand.¹⁷ Others, when in funds, went on sprees.¹⁸

John Tully’s study of Maori on the Eaglehawk (near Bendigo), Dunolly, and Maryborough goldfields in Victoria estimated that from 400 to 500 mined on the central Victorian goldfields, which would have been about one per cent of the total Maori population; and more would have mined in New South Wales.¹⁹ Although many had adopted European names, making them difficult to trace, usually they were recorded as a ‘New Zealander’.²⁰ He was able to name 42 (one a ‘half-caste’), two of them women, and another 22 who may have gone to the goldfields, plus 67 miners who were unnamed (duplications are possible in these totals).²¹ Two married European women.²² Maori ‘stuck together in groups, were very hard working’, and fought ‘anyone who attempted to jump their claim’.²³ The latter characteristic was illustrated by an experience recorded by a Polish miner who had worked close by three Maori claims at Eaglehawk in 1853:

¹⁶ John Telford to Major Straith, n.d. [March 1855]; for his health, see John Telford to Major Straith, 28 October 1854, MS Papers 1863, folder 3, pp. 360-362, Archibald Turnbull Library.

¹⁷ I. Rhodes Cooper, *The New Zealand and Settlers’ Guide* (Auckland, 1857), p. 34.

¹⁸ John Tully, ‘Maoris on the Goldfields’ (2014), unpublished article emailed to Philip Hart, 8 October 2014, pp. 6, 7, 27.

¹⁹ Tully, p. 8.

²⁰ Tully, p. 2.

²¹ Tully, pp. 12-24.

²² Tully, pp. 10, 20.

²³ Tully, p. 2.

My Maori neighbours dressed and worked like all the other miners. Of the six I knew, I knew the names of only three: Tatika, Jehova, Morka. They were very kind and courteous to me, probably because of my grey hair, for I understand they have a lot of respect for age. They always put my billy on the fire at lunch time with their own billies, so that when I came out of the shaft I had hot water ready. Two of them had some English and kept telling me about the beauty of their country. They seemed very friendly and pleasant all around until the following incident occurred.

When their shaft petered out they moved to Sailors Gully and there had a good shaft. A couple of Englishmen wanted to take it away from them and one came early one day to start digging while the other was at the winch. One of the Maoris arrived, and seeing a stranger in his shaft, picked up a large stone to drop on the intruder. He was restrained by the man at the winch. The other Englishman, hearing the commotion, came out of the hole to help his companion. Realizing what was taking place, the Maori took out a revolver and calmly shot both the intruders dead.²⁴

(As this story was hearsay and there was neither inquest nor murder charges,²⁵ this shooting may never have happened; but it illustrated how Maori stood up for their rights. Maori could also be the victims of crime; a bushranger entered one party's tent, and one was burnt alive by 'rowdy' Irishmen.)²⁶ As another illustration of how Maori defended themselves from European miners, a visitor to the new Bendigo diggings in 1852 observed the following commotion:

As we proceeded towards Golden Point, we saw another rush in the distance. Men are coming towards up helter-skelter, and behind them are a body of dark, oliver-complexioned men, with tattooed features, and armed with picks, shovels, and other impromptu weapons, in hot pursuit of the men in front. We learn that they are New Zealand aboriginals, and that some of them having discovered a rich gully, attempts have been made by a gang of bullies to measure off their claims to the limited area allowed by the regulations, and even to "jump" some of them. These fierce, untutored Maoris had no conception of the legal aspect of the question; possession with them was nine points of the law; so when the rowdy pakehas attempted to peg them off, they resorted to hostilities, and their savage instincts being roused

²⁴ Seweryn Korzelinski, *Memoirs of Gold Digging in Australia*, pp. 93-94, reprinted in Tully, pp. 2-3.

²⁵ John Tully to , 5 February 2010, email.

²⁶ Tully, pp. 6, 27-28.

by the sight of blood, they chased the “pugs” off the field with what offensive weapons could be laid hold of. The general impression at that time was that all Maoris were cannibals, and although the discomfited ones – professional pugilists – would not have hesitated to attack people of other nationalities, they had a decided aversion to being “scoffed,” as they called it. However that may be, the Maoris were allowed undisputed possession of the ground. The sympathies of the more orderly miners were with them, and general satisfaction was expressed that their antagonists had been properly handled.²⁷

In 1852 one Eaglehawk claim owner ‘had more than fifteen Maoris working for him, most of whom had been sailors on whaling vessels’.²⁸ Perhaps one of them was William Wallace Rangi, a whaler, for ‘the discovery of gold in Victoria, in the early fifties, tempted Rangi and some other Maoris away from their seafaring existence, never to return to it’. In his case, ‘fortune smiled’ on him, ‘and with his little “pile” he went to England, where he succeeded in “going through” it all, thus necessitating a return to Victoria, whence he once again returned to his native land to join the Pakeha in the search for gold’.²⁹ Rangi was not traced by Tully, probably because like many others he identified he was not admitted to hospital.

As well as alluvial mining, some were successful prospectors and quartz miners. ‘Alexander McInnes, with his half-Maori son prospected a gully that started the rush to Blackmans Lead. This was one of the finds that started the Maryborough Rush’,³⁰ in 1853. It was believed that the find was named after his son, John Alexander.³¹ Alexander McInnes was recalled by the son of a Scottish miner then working on this field as being ‘a chemist by profession³² and had studied geology, and had been one of the first white settlers in New Zealand, and there had married a chief’s daughter. He brought over with him his half-caste son, a strong youth 17 years of age’. He ‘spent most of his time prospecting for gold. He disliked a crowd, and if a rush set in, would strike camp and move on to some new locality where indications were favourable for prospecting’. Father and son

²⁷ William Craig, *My Adventure on the Australian Goldfields* (London, 1852), pp. 218-219.

²⁸ W.E. Adcock, *Gold Rushes of the Fifties*, p. 88.

²⁹ *Free Lance*, 5 October 1901, p. 3.

³⁰ Tully, p. 3.

³¹ Tully, p. 14.

³² Confirmed in his son’s death notice: Death Certificate of John Alexander McInnes, 5 April 1915, 1915/3049, BDM.

prospected near Carisbrook, but after finding ‘some good colour of gold’ their prospecting shaft was jumped by other diggers whilst the elder McInnes was away hunting for a lost mule.³³

(Alexander had been a sheep farmer in Australia before moving to New Zealand, hoping to buy land for profitable re-sale.³⁴ John Logan Campbell, the most prominent of the four Scottish pioneers of Auckland, who in his memoirs referred to McInnes by his Maori name of ‘Makiniki’, in March 1840 travelled with him from Botany Bay to Wellington. There they shared a tent for two weeks, with McInnes teaching him such pioneering skills as making damper. After failing to find suitable land in the Hutt Valley, they moved on to Coromandel, where they met the other two of the Auckland foursome, and then, in April, sailed to the site of the future Auckland, where they negotiated, at first unsuccessfully, to acquire land from its Maori owners.³⁵

Failing to acquire land there, in June or July McInnes bought about 3,200 acres on the bank of the Piako River, about 40 miles from the sea, which had been acquired by a speculator in 1839. His claim for this land was abandoned on 8 June 1844.³⁶ Then, in April 1845, he requested that the Crown waived its right of pre-emption over 80 acres at Kohanga, sited about ten miles from the mouth of the Waikato River, which he intended to purchase from three rangatira, two of them being Kukati and Napaka, correctly Kukutai and his eldest son Ngapeka, of ‘Nate Te Pa’, meaning Ngati Tipa; this request was granted in the following month.³⁷ This purchase increased his personal association with the local iwi, Ngati Tipa part of Tainui, which had closer links to Pakeha settlers than many Tainui based further to the south. Because Kukutai, who died in 1846, had signed the Treaty of Waitangi, his son and successor Waata Kukutai felt obliged to uphold it. Waata and his family were Christians, setting aside land land at

³³ Recollections of James McInnes Sinclair, printed in Tully, pp. 3-4.

³⁴ R.C.J. Stone, *Young Logan Campbell* (Auckland, 1982), pp. 45, 50.

³⁵ John Logan Campbell, *Poenamu* (Auckland, 1973 [first published in 1881]), pp. ix, x, 62; John Logan Campbell, *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, ed. Russell Stone (Auckland, 2017), pp. 37-38, 43-44; R.C.J. Stone, *Young Logan Campbell* (Auckland, 1982), p. 45.

³⁶ Old Land Claims Commission, ACFC 16153, OLC 295 [and 16 other claims; R18461491], ANZ-W.

³⁷ Alex McInnes to Colonial Secretary, 1 April 1845, and memoranda, Old Land Claims Commission, ACFC 16153, OLC 1264 [R18462190], ANZ-W; Janine Stagpoole to Philip Hart, 26 December 2022, email.

Kohanga for a church and school.³⁸ Waata was generally against selling land, but he opposed the establishment of the Kingitanga; he also opposed a war in Waikato but when it broke out Ngati Tipa supported the Crown, even providing practical assistance; naturally, newspapers loudly praised Waata.³⁹ Possibly McInnes' marriage into this family strengthened its acceptance of the new, Pakeha, order.

According to his son's obituary, Alexander had married (under Maori custom, and at an unknown date) a woman whom it described, incorrectly, as a sister of Tawhiao; in fact, she probably was a distant cousin.⁴⁰ Her name was Mere Kataraina Te Aho, a prominent member of Ngati Tipa, and the daughter of Kukutai's second son, Te Ahoterangi Kukutai. They had two sons, John Alexander, also known both as Hone Kinihi Te Aho and Hone Te Aho.⁴¹ The other son (it is not known who was the elder) was Te Awaiti Hira Kinihi Te Aro, also known as Hira Te Aho and as Te Awaiti Hira Te Aho, the ancestor of the Hira whanau of Ngati Tipa. Whether there were any other children is not known. It appears that the couple had separated by the late 1850s, possibly when Alexander took his son to the Victorian goldfields. Subsequently, Mere Kataraina took a second husband, with whom she had several children, probably born from January 1859 onwards.⁴²

Their son John Alexander (otherwise Hone Te Aho) was born in Waikato, probably in 1844,⁴³ and was married while in Victoria.⁴⁴ A

³⁸ *Daily Southern Cross*, 29 March 1859, p. 3; *New Zealander*, 17 December 1859, p. 5.

³⁹ See *New Zealander*, 23 January 1847, p. 2, 1 August 1857, p. 3, 8 March 1862, p. 8, 12 August 1863, p. 2; *Daily Southern Cross*, 5 June 1857, p. 3, 18 September 1860, p. 2, 1 August 1863, p. 5, 7 August 1863, p. 3, 12 August 1863, p. 3, 12 May 1864, p. 3, 13 March 1865, p. 4, 11 January 1867, p. 5; *New Zealand Herald*, 10 January 1867, p. 4; for scholarly accounts, see Gary Scott, 'Kukutai, Waata Pihikete', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (Wellington, 1990; available online on Te Ara; Denise Te Tuhe Ewe, 'Waata Kukutai: Rangatira o Ngaati Tiipa 1822-1867', (MA thesis, University of Waikato, 2020).

⁴⁰ *Thames Star*, 6 April 1915, p. 14; information on whakapapa provided by a descendant, Ella Newbold, in a discussion on 23 March 2021 and confirmed by Janine Stagpoole to Philip Hart, 22 November 2022, email.

⁴¹ Auckland Testamentary Register 1917-1918, folio 7, BBDB 4208/11, ANZ-A.

⁴² Janine Stagpoole to Philip Hart, 26 December 2022, 28 December 2022, 30 December 2022, 17 January 2023, emails.

⁴³ Death Certificate of John Alexander McInnes, 5 April 1915, 1915/3049, BDM; *Thames Star*, 6 April 1915, p. 4.

Cornishwoman, Alathea Scholastica Tyrrell, who had married her first husband in Victoria in 1866,⁴⁵ had soon been widowed. John's choice of wife must have seemed questionable to many Thamesites when, a few years after they settled in Thames, she was described in a court case as being a drunkard. Several neighbours gave evidence that she was 'in the habit of abusing people in that locality, spitting at them, and throwing stones ... when she was drunk'. One woman described her as being 'a nuisance to the neighbourhood', and revealed that 'a good many people in the neighbourhood to whom she had made herself a nuisance' had signed a 'paper' complaining about her.⁴⁶ This was the only time she featured in the press, so she may have sobered up

John and his wife had left Victoria for Thames by at least 1871.⁴⁷ A lifelong miner, in September 1877 'McInnes and party' were driving in old ground in the Caledonian mine there.⁴⁸ He would participate, briefly, in the Te Aroha rush, especially in the Tui district, where most of the Maori miners at Te Aroha worked.⁴⁹ From 1888 onwards, he mined at Puriri, managing several mines: his management in 1898 of several claims owned by an English company was described as 'able'.⁵⁰ A newspaper reported in January 1889 that 'To Jack McInnes ... belongs the honor of having erected the first residence on the Puriri goldfield ... at the mouth of the gorge'.⁵¹ In 1915, when he died, reportedly aged 71, his obituary described him as having taken 'an active part in the stirring incidents' on the Thames field

⁴⁴ Death Certificates of Alathea McInnes, 29 January 1905, 1905/1002; John Alexander McInnes, 5 April 1915, 1915/3049, BDM; .

⁴⁵ Tully, p. 15.

⁴⁶ *Thames Star*, 3 April 1875, p. 2, 6 April 1875, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 13 April 1875, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Thames Warden's Court, Warden's Note Book February-June 1871, Hearing of 8 March 1871, BACL 14457/2c, ANZ-A.

⁴⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 28 September 1877, p. 3.

⁴⁹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Miner's Right no. 952, issued 15 November 1880, Miners' Rights Butt Book 1880, BBAV 11533/1b; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 203, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 20 January 1881, p. 110.

⁵⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 27 April 1888, p. 2, 21 May 1888, p. 2, 9 October 1888, p. 2, 1 February 1889, p. 2, 4 February 1898, p. 3; *Thames Star*, 19 May 1888, p. 2, 8 November 1888, p. 2, 21 March 1889, p. 2, 4 April 1889, p. 2, 21 August 1890, p. 2; *New Zealand Herald* 1 March 1895, p. 6.

⁵¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 23 January 1889, p. 2.

‘in the good old days’. Many Maori and Pakeha in both the Thames and Waikato districts, where he was ‘well known’, would ‘regret the loss of one who had many friends and no enemies’ and was ‘certainly held in high esteem for the many excellent qualities he possessed’. Just before his death, his friend Walter Moorcraft accompanied him to see a doctor.⁵² The much-younger Moorcraft mined in some of the main Thames mines before becoming manager of a large Coromandel mine and then being McInnes’ partner in a mine and battery at Puriri.⁵³)

The names of some Victorian claims reflected their owners: Maori Lead, Maori Reef, Maori Reefs, Maori Gully (two), New Zealand Gully (three), New Zealand Reef (two), and Maori Creek.⁵⁴ Twelve Maori were mining in Louisa Gully in 1855, perhaps named after the ship some had arrived on.⁵⁵ One miner recalled ‘a number of New Zealanders’ in July that year ‘taking out a narrow gutter’ in ‘a rich little gully’ at Eaglehawk and ‘making from one to five ounces per day per man’.

As we sat before the fire in a melancholy mood one evening, a visitor with whom we had become pretty intimate entered. The new arrival was a young Maori, one of the chiefs of his tribe, and one of the most successful of the sixty or so who had worked in the little gutter alluded to previously. Willy as he was called, although his proper name was Koh-par-ah-mue [Koparamue], was a complete type of that grace of form which is often seen in the natives of New Zealand....

“Well, what news, Willy?” was the salutation he was greeted with.

“We have worked out our claim and washed up all the gutter stuff. Some of them fellows are going on the spree. Do you hear the noise they are making down there? Ah! That is nothing yet; they have only begun. Before morning some of them will have a little of their hot blood let out, and be more quiet and ready for a start. Twelve of us are going away home to Wellington in two days.”⁵⁶

⁵² *Thames Star*, 6 April 1915, p. 4.

⁵³ *Thames Star*, 31 December 1886, p. 2, 26 August 1902, p. 2, 24 September 1902, p. 6, 26 June 1928, p. 4; *Thames Advertiser*, 14 March 1898, p. 3; *New Zealand Herald*, 2 November 1905, p. 4.

⁵⁴ Tully, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Tully, p. 5.

⁵⁶ J.M. Barr, *Round the Country*, reprinted in Tully, pp. 5-6.

Several Maori were recorded at Dunolly, ‘about seven tents of Maoris’ being erected ‘near the Catholic Reserves’. Amongst other miners, ‘Harry the Maori’ and his mate found a 156-ounce nugget and other Maori discovered ones weighing 20oz and about 28 ounces.⁵⁷ In Munster Gully in late 1843 and January 1864 ‘a great deal of gold’ was obtained in ground ‘chiefly occupied by Maories, many of whom have been earning from one to three ounces per week’. One Englishman working with Maori found a 12oz nugget. ‘That the Maories are getting a large quantity of gold is evident from the fact that some of them have been on the spree for some weeks past’.⁵⁸ Despite their binge drinking, few were in trouble with the law, largely keeping to themselves although freely mixing with Chinese and Samoans.⁵⁹ An agent for a Melbourne newspaper recalled that in 1854 Sydney Flat and Whipstick, near Bendigo, ‘abounded in Maoris, and these were amongst my best customers, for every kind of publication. Some of them were very intelligent, and many a pleasant chat I had with them’.⁶⁰

In 1923, Hauraki Hereward Maning, recorded as being a mining prospector when he died in Melbourne aged 71, had lived in New Zealand for 40 years, in Tasmania (where he was married) for seven, and in Victoria for 30.⁶¹ His father was Frederick Edward Maning, a prominent Pakeha Maori who became a land court judge, and his mother was Moengaroe, a Ngapuhi of high rank; he was named after her brother Hauraki. His father disowned him for leaving the position ‘arranged for him in the Department of Native Affairs, and turned to less reputable ways of making a living’, unspecified.⁶² He had been a clerk in Auckland until becoming bankrupt in 1871, and eight years later, when accused of fraudulently issuing valueless cheques, had fled to be with his Maori relatives before being cleared at his trial;⁶³ had these events caused his father to disown him? He became

⁵⁷ Tully, p. 6.

⁵⁸ *Dunolly Tarnagulla & St Arnaud Express*, 21 January 1864, printed in Tully, p. 6.

⁵⁹ Tully, p. 7.

⁶⁰ ‘Five Years Victorian Experience 1852-1856’, *Dunolly and Bet Bet Shire Express*, 21 May 1875, printed in Tully, p. 8.

⁶¹ Death Certificate of Hauraki Hereward Maning, 8 August 1923, Deaths in District of South Fitzroy, Victoria, 1923, no. 10322, Victorian BDM.

⁶² *New Zealand Herald*, 7 July 1923, p. 4; David Colquhoun, ‘Frederick Edward Maning’, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, in Te Ara, *Encyclopedia of New Zealand* [webpage].

⁶³ *New Zealand Herald*, advertisement, 22 February 1871, p. 1, 27 October 1879, p. 5.

thoroughly respectable in Australia, in the Omeo district of Victoria for instance being prominent in dredging operations and was credited with finding a quartz reef.⁶⁴ In 1898, during a ‘Maori difficulty’ in Northland, he had ‘cabled to the Hauhaus to stop their agitation, and allow the Government to carry out the laws’, and when he spoke at a recruiting meeting in 1916 he was described as ‘chief of the Ngapuhi tribe in New Zealand’.⁶⁵ Two years previously, he had announced his intention to stand for Northern Maori because ‘we want a Ngapuhi to represent the Ngapuhi’.⁶⁶ He was recalled, as having been ‘at one time amongst the world’s champion athletes’,⁶⁷ with reason, as he had competed in a wide variety of athletics and rowing.⁶⁸

Some Maori made considerable sums of money from mining in Australia. Joshua Thorp, in his 1857 impressions of Auckland, recorded the following scene in Shortland Street:

Here are two Maoris who have just returned from gold digging at Melbourne and have lodged £150 in the bank. One is busy fitting himself with a new rig – trousers and shoes and a black satin waistcoat; he brings his former boots, not half worn, and offers them to a poorer native in the street, but vanity forbids him to touch them or even say “thank-you.” The traveller seems indignant and, after flinging his boots away, goes into another shop, gets a white shirt, black coat and beaver hat, leaving his former integuments⁶⁹ to the public. He then walks down the street with a grave, deliberate step, impressed with the responsibility he has taken on himself in wearing the clothes of a gentleman.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Nic MacArthur to Philip Hart, 27 September 2011, email.

⁶⁵ *Evening Post*, 5 May 1898, p. 6; *Brisbane Courier*, 6 May 1898, p. 6; *Malvern Standard*, 18 March 1916, p. 3.

⁶⁶ *Observer*, 21 March 1914, p. 4.

⁶⁷ *Hawera and Normanby Star*, 7 July 1913, p. 7.

⁶⁸ For instance, *Daily Southern Cross*, 4 January 1871, p. 3, 13 December 1871, p. 3, 21 March 1872, p. 2; advertisement, *Press*, 21 March 1873, p. 1.

⁶⁹ ‘Skin, husk, rind, or other (usu. natural) covering’: *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 5 ed. (Oxford, 1964), p. 633.

⁷⁰ ‘Joshua Thorp’s Impressions of the Town of Auckland in 1857’, *Historical Journal Auckland-Waikato*, no. 35 (September 1979), p. 4.

There were other benefits from joining in the rushes, as James Cowan described in his history of the New Zealand Wars. One of Rewi Maniapoto's 'lieutenants, his cousin Te Winitana Tupotahi,⁷¹ was a man of enterprise and some adventures', who had mined at Ballarat and 'returned with a little hoard of gold, although he had suffered losses by robbery on the goldfields'. There 'he had learned a good deal about shaft-sinking, tunnelling, and boarding-up, and this knowledge he turned to account in military engineering when the Waikato War began'.⁷²

THE FIRST NEW ZEALAND GOLD RUSHES

The first New Zealand rush was to Coromandel in 1852, after Charles and Frederick Ring⁷³ discovered gold 'near the source of the Kapanga stream, flowing into Coromandel Harbour'.⁷⁴ As Charles' obituary stated, 'some difficulty was experienced with the Maories, but they managed to placate them and to continue their prospecting with considerable success'. The method of placation was not stated, but the same obituary stated that Charles, 'a good Maori scholar', had 'great influence with the natives', even being able to remain at Coromandel during the Waikato War, though 'running at times a serious risk of his life'.⁷⁵ According to an 1895 account, when gold was first discovered there Maori 'were happily induced to leave the diggings to the Europeans, and to employ themselves in extending their cultivations for the production of food for the diggers'.⁷⁶

Some Maori were keen to learn the skills of prospecting and mining, and even to have their own goldfields. Hohepa Paraone told a meeting held at Coromandel to consider whether to open the district to mining that 'if we knew how to work the gold, we should reserve it for ourselves. The Europeans understand the working of it. Let them work it'.⁷⁷ Sir George Grey expected Maori to quickly gain these skills: 'It appears from the

⁷¹ See *New Zealand Herald*, 22 October 1886, p. 5; *Auckland Star*, 14 September 1935, p. 18; for photograph, see James Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars: A history of the Maori campaigns and the pioneering period*, vol. 1 (Wellington, 1922), p. 390.

⁷² Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars*, p. 366.

⁷³ See *New Zealand Herald*, 5 February 1887, p. 5.

⁷⁴ *New Zealand Graphic*, 20 July 1895, p. 64.

⁷⁵ *New Zealand Herald*, 26 March 1906, p. 5.

⁷⁶ *New Zealand Graphic*, 20 July 1895, p. 64.

⁷⁷ Cited in Anderson, p. 12.

character of the Maories to be tolerably certain that if they once see the method in which gold diggings are worked and the character of the rocks which it is to be found associated with, they will then themselves soon examine considerable districts of country'.⁷⁸ This prophecy was soon fulfilled: after the Coromandel field was abandoned by Pakeha by mid-1854, some Maori in 1858 found 50 ounces of gold in the Koputauaki Block,⁷⁹ north of Coromandel township. However, there was no record of their finding any more gold before Pakeha prospectors revived this field in late 1861.

In the 1857 rush to Aorere, near Collingwood, for the first time in New Zealand Maori prospected for and mined alluvial gold, either using skills learnt from others who had been in California or Australia or acquiring these from Pakeha miners. Salmon wrote that 'Maori seldom worked their claims in small groups on the European method, but the whole community, including, indeed depending upon, women and children, lent their labour'. This communal involvement 'enabled them to undertake larger projects than were usual among Europeans, and in some cases they engaged in attempts to divert the course of streams by primitive earth dams'.⁸⁰ His evidence was a description by Edwin Hodder of Maori mining in the Takaka valley, 12 miles from the Parapara River, in 1858:

We were very much interested with a large Maori party, who had turned the course of the river, and were working with some considerable success on one of the largest claims. There were about thirty men and women in the gang, and for every one actually engaged in work, two were looking on, giving directions, and occasionally lending a helping hand. Those at work were digging with their hard bare feet upon the spades, chuckling at every thrust, as if they were bent upon turning up a monster nugget. A group of women were round a pool, washing the "tailings" in tin dishes, and luxuriating in their pipes at the same time, while several half-naked little urchins were making themselves generally useful in multifarious odd jobs. Native ingenuity is as valuable upon the gold-fields as European knowledge, and with a geological instinct they pitch upon some of

⁷⁸ Dispatch of Sir George Grey, 9 November 1852, cited in Anderson, p. 16.

⁷⁹ Walter Brackenbury to Donald McLean, 9 November 1861, *New Zealand Gazette*, 22 November 1861, p. 304.

⁸⁰ Salmon, p. 36.

the best spots, and manage the working of their claims in a very masterly way.⁸¹

(Not only Maori women assisted in alluvial mining. In 1861, at Waimangaroa, in the Buller Gorge, a visitor found a former doctor and his wife working their claim unaided. The man was 'getting washdirt from under some immense blocks of granite rocks resting on a slate bottom, and the wife carried the dirt in a tin billy to a sluice-box set on the side of the river'.)⁸²

At Aorere, one mining historian wrote,

Maori flashed into the scene right in the foreground, picturesque and strikingly successful - so much so that several parties of dusky hue were said to be averaging easily 3oz a man per day. The Maori was not afraid of water even in the depth of the winter, and when the gold got beyond his reach he did not hesitate to dive, and often he came up with an ounce to reward his pluck.⁸³

On the Parapara field, along the coast from Collingwood, Maori for a time dominated the field, and their attempts to divert the Parapara River were 'generally more ambitious than the works of European miners'.⁸⁴ In all the Nelson goldfields in 1857, 600 Maori were working alongside 1,300 Pakeha.⁸⁵

On all goldfields rival parties argued over rights to claims, as in October 1857 on the Anatoki River, when there were serious disputes between Maori and Pakeha:

Large numbers of Maori prospectors had been among the first on the field. Lack of food, incessant rain, and the hostility of the Maoris drove the majority of European miners across the spur to a mining camp on the Takaka. When the rain stopped, those in the Takaka camp attempted to return to the Anatoki field, but all the claims had been taken up by the Maoris and violence was met with violence. George Taylor, the only constable in the area,

⁸¹ Hodder, pp. 176-177.

⁸² Harry Louis Moffatt, *Adventures by Sea and Land: An autobiography* (Nelson, 1979), p. 54.

⁸³ R.A. Loughnan, *The First Gold Discoveries in New Zealand* (Wellington, 1906), p. 8.

⁸⁴ Salmon, pp. 36-37.

⁸⁵ Hutton, p. 24; Anderson, p. 20.

reported that a state of near war existed between the two factions. The Maoris continued to occupy pakeha claims which they had worked during the rains, and when Taylor inquired as to their rights to apparently vacant claims he was informed that they belonged to “brothers in Manawatu.”⁸⁶

These disputes were resolved by officialdom, as was a later one with Maori landowners at Slatey Creek, near the West Wanganui inlet. Salmon concluded his summary of these conflicts by noting that the ‘speed with which the Maori learnt the trade of the goldminer was as disconcerting to the older settler as was the spirit of Maori independence to the new immigrant. Relations between the races slowly improved on the Nelson goldfields. The pakeha grew to respect Maori prospectors’.⁸⁷ This Maori determination to assert their rights would be repeated many times.

In January 1862, Maori prospectors found gold at Ngatuihi and immediately persuaded four Pakeha to assist them in a prospecting expedition.⁸⁸ The following year, at Wakamarina in the Marlborough Sounds, a party of Maori had a claim ‘below what was soon known as Maori Gorge’.⁸⁹

Between 1858 and 1865, Maori were the first to find gold on the West Coast and Otago in the following places: the Buller River, the Waimangaroa River, the Lyell River, the basin of the Molyneux, the Arrow River, the Shotover River at Maori Point, Taramakau, Greenstone Creek, Totara, and near Boatman’s Creek.⁹⁰ One historian of the West Coast fields has been able to trace, in addition to the many references to parties of Maori, the names of at least 19 Maori involved in that district (confusion over names means there could have been more than these 19).⁹¹ Reuben Waite, a storekeeper who in 1869 published *A Narrative of the Discovery of the West Coast Gold-Fields* to prove that he was a pioneer of mining in the Buller River, wrote that ‘without a shadow of a doubt’ Maori were ‘the first to find

⁸⁶ Salmon, p. 36.

⁸⁷ Salmon, p. 37.

⁸⁸ Anderson, p. 20.

⁸⁹ Eldred-Grigg, p. 116.

⁹⁰ Salmon, pp. 39-40, 46, 84, 87, 88, 127, 129, 132-134, 143; Philip Ross May, *The West Coast Gold Rushes* (2 ed., rev., Christchurch, 1967), pp. 66-69, 84, 92-96, 157, 160; Mark Pickering, *The Colours: The search for payable gold on the West Coast from 1857 to 1864* (Christchurch, 2010), chronologies on pp. 35, 67, 99, 115, 147, 163.

⁹¹ Pickering, pp. 67, 70, 72, 75-83, 87-90, 124, 148, 150, 179, 190.

and bring in gold in any quantity' and 'were the pioneers for a long time'.⁹² He wrote that, 'on or about' May 1861,⁹³ he was 'on the Collingwood gold-fields ... when a party of Maoris came overland from the River Buller by travelling up the sea coast, and thence by the Aorere to Collingwood ... bringing with them a parcel of gold, which they said they had obtained from a place some twenty miles of the River Buller'.⁹⁴ Although it was believed by some that John Rochford's survey party had earlier found gold in the Buller gorge, that party was also 'composed of Maoris - once more is the *tangata* to the front', Loughnan commented.⁹⁵

Waite later argued that Maori 'knew but little about gold, as, when they came to the Aorere, they did not know the value of it'.⁹⁶ If that was the case, they quickly came to understand its value. Excited by the quality of the gold he had been shown, Waite chartered a boat and left with provisions for three months of prospecting. At the mouth of the Buller River, he had

not been long been there before I sold all my goods for gold to the Maoris. It appeared that a lot of the Collingwood natives, knowing that I was going to take round provisions, started overland with two white men, and were at the Buller when we arrived with the vessel. They were catching fish and gathering pipis, on the first river north of the Buller, named by them as the Orawaiti, meaning, "Come on, Waite," because they could see the vessel approaching, and were in want of provisions.⁹⁷

Whereas he and other Pakeha prospectors struggled unsuccessfully with the rigours of the Buller gorge, Maori prospectors found gold on the Waimangaroa River, producing a small nugget as proof.⁹⁸

Pakeha prospecting on the West Coast was slow to start, due largely to geographical difficulties. Late in 1862, when Waite took provisions to other

⁹² Reuben Waite, *A Narrative of the Discovery of the West Coast Gold-Fields*, ed. W.H.L. Leech (Nelson, 1869), p. 23; his belief that they were alerted to the fact that gold was to be found there by the surveyor John Rochford is refuted by the chronology of events given in Salmon, p. 39.

⁹³ The published version of his account mistakenly gave the date as 1860: see May, p. 532.

⁹⁴ Waite, p. 1.

⁹⁵ Loughnan, p. 15.

⁹⁶ Waite, p. 23.

⁹⁷ Waite, p. 3.

⁹⁸ Waite, p. 4.

prospectors, he found they 'had scattered themselves along the coast with the Maoris getting mussels and other native food. The Maories deserve great praise for the help they gave us bringing in lots of eels, nikau, pipis, &c, which they gave away freely to the pakehas'.⁹⁹ Shortly afterwards, a Maori named Simon discovered a rich goldfield on the Lyell Creek.¹⁰⁰ Maori also found the topography difficult, but could overcome the obstacles, Waite recording that in 1863

a lot of Maoris came to the Buller overland from the Grey. I say 'overland', although their style of travelling from the one river to the other was by going up the Grey or Mawhera in a canoe as far as the Little Grey or Mawera-iti, and up that river to its head. There they would haul up the canoe out of the way of the freshets [rapid rises in river levels], and walk over the saddle; on the other side they had another canoe, which they always kept there, and thence they went down the Inangahua into the Buller, and down the Buller to its mouth. These Maoris had with them some very nice pieces of gold which they said they had got in the Grey district.¹⁰¹

Visiting the Grey River himself, he found several men who pretended that they had found the gold; one, Albert Hunt, claimed to be the original discoverer. In fact, these men were

loafing amongst the Maoris. It was not these men who found the gold at all, but the Maoris; yet the former had the impudence to ask the Government of Canterbury for a bonus; in fact, I believe Hunt did get a bonus. As I have before stated, the Maoris has gold in their possession, which they had found at Teremakau long before Hunt was at the Grey.¹⁰²

Waite established a store at the mouth of the Grey River, where the Maori village contained only women because the men 'had all gone to get gold, which made the white men all the more anxious to go' to the Taremakau River, where they were digging.¹⁰³ After about a week, a Maori party returned with 'a sample of about fifty ounces of the finest gold I had

⁹⁹ Waite, p. 7.

¹⁰⁰ Waite, p. 8.

¹⁰¹ Waite, p. 9.

¹⁰² Waite, p. 10.

¹⁰³ Waite, p. 11.

ever seen'.¹⁰⁴ 'Ihaia Tainui and Haimona Taukau shovelled wonderful yields out of the shingles of a river known to them as Hohunu, soon to be known to colonists as Greenstone Creek'.¹⁰⁵ The Maori miners, hearing of a large number of Pakeha arriving on the coast, came down to the unprofitable Teremakau River, having blocked off the track to the Greenstone, thus misleading the new arrivals about the location of their find.¹⁰⁶

'The next diggings were again found by the Maoris - ever restless, they seemed to be proud of being the first to find the gold'.¹⁰⁷ This find was at Totara Creek, south of Hokitika, and very rich, according to Waite; also according to him, Maori

had no idea of fine gold working. They did not understand working with quicksilver ... as a proof of which I recollect one time on the Buller I gave some provisions to a party of Maoris to go south, towards what is now called Charleston, to prospect. After being away some time they came back saying there was fine gold everywhere, but no heavy gold. They have learned better since.¹⁰⁸

Maori also learnt the economic value of land, though Pakeha were soon to make much more money from speculating in it. At first, being 'averse to persons building on their land', when Waite

first went to the Grey, they let me an acre of ground on condition that I would let no one else build on it, as they would not allow another store to be put up there, although repeated offers were made to them. But when the great rush came, they asked me if they should let it. I told them to do so by all means, as it would bring them in money; then of course I had the chance of letting mine. One day there was a perfect rush for Maori ground, and any amount of speculation in it. Some people made a very good thing with it.¹⁰⁹

William Martin, another early prospector, in his account of his experiences confirmed Waite's emphasis on the role of Maori. To prove that

¹⁰⁴ Waite, pp. 11-12.

¹⁰⁵ Eldred-Grigg, p. 128.

¹⁰⁶ Waite, p. 12.

¹⁰⁷ Waite, p. 16.

¹⁰⁸ Waite, p. 16.

¹⁰⁹ Waite, p. 18.

the opening up of the West Coast goldfields was ‘a combination of labours, both of the white man and the brown’, he described his 1863 experiences ‘coupled with information given me in 1865 by the Maori friends then resident on the Teremakau’. The consequence of mining at Collingwood was that

Maoris from Nelson to the Teremakau were familiar with the methods of prospectors, and some few of them had done a little desultory gold getting with shovel and tin dish, one of whom was John Tainui, who had in his possession in 1862 a fine sample of fairly coarse gold obtained about two miles up the Kapiti Creek, a little south of Teremakau, where he built a rude whare, being himself interested in gold mining.... Gold then had been found by two different persons, which induced our party to go round by the sea in the Emerald Isle, advertised to sail from the Heathcote River, with a six months’ supply of provisions, and we found gold, but not in payable quantities. We found it almost anywhere, and believed ultimately in a rich discovery. Before leaving the Coast I was talking on this matter with Simon (a Maori).... I afterwards learned in 1865 from Simon that in January, 1864, his mate, Samuel (a Maori) and himself went up the Hohuna River, and in its main branch (the Greenstone Creek) they found an embedded boulder of pure greenstone, which, with the aid of levers cut in the bush, they eventually rolled out of its deep bed in the stream, and by rolling with the fall of the creek, placed the boulder in the bush out of sight and floods. An hour or two afterwards they went to the spot where the boulder had lain, with the discoloured water away, and on the side and bottom, embedded in the debris, they clearly saw shining in the clear water lumps of gold from one pennyweight to four or five.

His account confirmed Waite’s that Maori, not Hunt, had discovered gold at Greenstone Creek. As Hunt was the first to report the find about two years after Simon and Samuel’s discovery, the latter were the first to find payable gold. Hunt had been idling for months beforehand in the Maori settlement, ‘and out of good nature Simon and his mate disclosed their find to him, and directed him where to go, giving him a lift in their canoe to the Hohuna, where Tainui and Simon had each a whare. It was an easy day’s walk from there to the Greenstone’.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ William Martin, ‘A Pioneer’s Birthday Story’, in *The Diggers’ Story, or Tales and Reminiscences of the Golden Coast, from Westland’s Earliest Pioneers*, ed. Carl J. Pfaff (Wellington, 1914), pp. 93-97.

In 1866, a party led by 'Felix the Maori' and a Pakeha, George Fairweather Moonlight, found gold in the Maruia Valley, and another Pakeha, John Redman, headed a party of Maori who found gold in a tributary of the Inangahua.¹¹¹ Philip Ross May's assessment of Maori on the West Coast was that

they took to gold-digging with enthusiasm and skill. Some pakehas worked with Maori mates, and several big parties of Maoris, men, women, and children, prospected new fields.... Though Maoris were never prominent on the big fields in their settled phase, the rumour that a Maori party was starting out to prospect could set half a mining camp striking tents and rolling swags. The recognition accorded the Maoris contrasted with the diggers' poor opinion of the Australian "blacks."¹¹²

Although Maori were less prominent on the Otago goldfields, some played an important role in some early discoveries. 'A good many' were at Gabriel's Gully;¹¹³ one account, written in 1861 by an Australian visitor, noted a camp of Maori there. In the writer's opinion,

their weak point is that they wash every bucketful of stuff they take out of the ground, and, of course, their success is consequently limited. Men and women together, there are about fifty of them. They are amenable to authority in a marked degree, though a quarrel with some other miners some weeks since excited them very much. They had dammed the creek, so as to create a backwater, and the commissioner's interference was at once sought. The war of words ceased as soon as Mr Strode appeared, and to his questions they had only one reply, "Kia koi te tikanga" (Do as you please). Not so tractable have been the European miners.¹¹⁴

Although it was generally claimed that William Fox was the first to discover gold in the Arrow River, Vincent Pyke, secretary of the Otago goldfields, in his October 1863 report on these stated that 'the real discoverer was the well known Maori Jack, who obtained a fine example of

¹¹¹ Eldred-Grigg, pp. 150-151.

¹¹² May, p. 298.

¹¹³ Eldred-Grigg, p. 235.

¹¹⁴ 'Special Correspondent' [a Mr Wheeler], *The New Zealand Goldfields, 1861; A Series of letters reprinted from the Melbourne Argus* (Dunedin, 1976), p. 40.

gold from the same stream in May, 1861'.¹¹⁵ In his history of Otago mining Pyke repeated that 'in truth the real discoverer was a Thames native - Hatini Whiti, otherwise Anthony White, but who was best known as "Maori Jack" ', whom local runholders and prospectors recalled as having been the first to find payable gold there. Miners were drawn to this area in August 1862 by news that Whiti, despite being a bullock-driver not a miner, had found payable gold.¹¹⁶ Alfred Duncan first met 'Maori Jack', whom he also knew as Jack Tewa, and his Maori mate, Bill Leonard, when shearing near Lake Wakatipu in that year; they had tried prospecting but after 'a week or so' of searching without any success decided to go shearing instead.¹¹⁷ Maori Jack, a 'good-hearted giant', saved the life of a Pakeha in heroic circumstances.¹¹⁸ In September he found 'colour' in 'all the rivers of the Lake district'.¹¹⁹ Three years later, Duncan 'chanced to meet him in Queenstown. He had just arrived from the Shotover, where he had been successful in taking £400 worth of gold out of a claim in which he had a share'.¹²⁰ This was the first recorded evidence of a Maori from so far afield prospecting in the South Island, but from that time onwards some Maori travelled to areas far from their tribal lands to hunt for gold. Hatini Whiti/Jack Tewa would not be recorded as a prospector in his home district of Thames.

At the Shotover River, in 1863, Pakeha were most impressed by the discovery of what became known as Maori Point by Hakaria Haeroa and Dan Ellison, a 'half-caste', both from the North Island. Pyke visited the former to obtain his account of the find:

As Dan and Hakaria, with other miners, were travelling along the eastern bank of the river, they found some Europeans working with great success in a secluded gorge. On the opposite shore was a beach of unusually promising appearance, occupying a bend of the stream, over which the rocky cliffs rose perpendicularly to a height of more than 500 feet. Tempting as

¹¹⁵ Vincent Pyke, 'Report on the Gold Fields of Otago', *Otago Daily Times*, 17 October 1863, p. 10.

¹¹⁶ Pyke, pp. 82-83.

¹¹⁷ Alfred Duncan, *The Wakatipians, or, Early Days in New Zealand* (London, 1888; reprinted, Arrowtown, 1964), p. 32.

¹¹⁸ Duncan, pp. 39-41, 59.

¹¹⁹ Duncan, p. 43.

¹²⁰ Duncan, p. 58.

this spot was to the practised eyes of the miners, none of them would venture to breast the impetuous torrent. The Maoris, however, boldly plunged into the river, and succeeded in reaching the western bank; but a favourite dog that had followed them was carried away by the current, and drifted down to a rocky point, where it remained. Dan went to its assistance, and observing some particles of gold in the crevices of the rocks, he examined the sandy beach beneath, from which, with the aid of Hakaria, he gathered twenty-five pounds weight - 300 ounces - of the precious metal before nightfall.¹²¹

At Nokomai, ‘a Maori party from Riverton, with Solomon at their head’, did well for a while, Patu mining ‘with such good luck that he was able to buy a store and ferry at Luggate’.¹²² Maori Point was the site for ‘a sensational incident’ involving Wallace Rangi, formerly of the Victorian goldfields, that illustrated both the conflicts between miners and the wealth it was possible to win – and lose:

A party of white roughs, seeing that the Maoris were on good gold, and scattered about in the search for it, resolved to take possession of the claim by force. Armed with long-handled shovels, they soon effected their unlawful object, for the natives, taken y surprise, could make but little resistance. But they were not to be beaten. A consultation ended in them all arming themselves with shovels and knives, and anything they could find, and, thus prepared, they attacked the foe, now in their turn surprised.

It was a warlike array that Rangi and his mates presented, for they were stripped to their waists, and in “battle costume,” which is not very elaborate. But the preliminary – a war dance – was enough for the roughs, who fled to save their skins from the weapons of the thoroughly aroused Maoris. It was in Rangi Creek [on the West Coast]¹²³ that Rangi found the largest nugget ever found on that side of the Grey, over 57oz in weight, and worth about £220. Yet the generous and noble-hearted old fellow died poor [aged 96],¹²⁴ an old-age pension placing him above want in his declining years.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Pyke, p. 87.

¹²² Eldred-Grigg, p. 235.

¹²³ Pickering, p. 70.

¹²⁴ *Grey River Argus*, 19 September 1901, p. 2.

¹²⁵ *Free Lance*, 5 October 1901, p. 3.

HAURAKI BEFORE THE THAMES RUSH

Maori next featured as prospectors in the Hauraki district. From the 1860s to the 1880s, some played a significant role in the development of Hauraki mining, partly as prospectors but in particular because, as they owned the land, neither prospecting nor mining was possible until agreement had been reached with them. However, once most of their land was sold and prospecting was replaced by intensive mining, few had any further involvement with the industry.

Wiropo Hoterene Taipari, the rangatira responsible for opening the Thames district for mining in 1867, claimed that gold had been found in the Hape Creek in 1849. According to Taipari's evidence, given when seeking all or part of the £5,000 reward offered by the provincial government for the first discovery of gold, 'a slave, who had been in Australia, discovered gold-bearing quartz in the creek, while taking gravel from it and making plantations across the flat'.¹²⁶ As this man must have been on the Victorian or New South Wales goldfields, the date Taipari gave was too early, the first Australian rushes being in 1851.¹²⁷ In one of his letters justifying his claim to the reward, Taipari implied that the correct date was 1854.¹²⁸ Piniha Marutuahu,¹²⁹ a rival claimant for the reward, with the support of other Ngati Maru claimed to have found gold in the Kuranui and adjacent creeks in 1851.¹³⁰

Whatever the date of the first discovery, from the early 1850s onwards Pakeha sought permission to prospect in the Thames and Ohinemuri districts, and sometimes searched for gold without the landowners' leave. According to Taipari's father, his son gave permission to first one and then another Pakeha to prospect the Hape and Karaka Creeks before allowing

¹²⁶ *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 April 1870, p. 3.

¹²⁷ Jay Monaghan, *Australians and the Gold Rush: California and Down Under 1849-1854* (Los Angeles, 1966), p. 170; John Molony, *Eureka* (Melbourne, 1984), pp. 5-9.

¹²⁸ Wiropo Hoterene Taipari to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 4 March 1870, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, MS 595, Box 21, Session 26, Auckland Public Library.

¹²⁹ See *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Waikato Times*, 18 November 1890, p. 2.

¹³⁰ 'Report of the Gold Field Reward Enquiry Commission', 26 April 1870, p. 1, Auckland Provincial Council, Session 26, 1870, A-No. 1, Auckland Public Library.

Joseph Cook, a Pakeha Maori then trading in Hauraki, to prospect there.¹³¹ According to Piniha Marutuahu¹³² and his supporters amongst Ngati Maru, they employed Cook, whom they described as a half-caste, in 1856, and instructed him to inform Donald McLean, the Chief Land Purchase Commissioner, of the 1851 discovery. This faction of Ngati Maru claimed that ‘from 1856 till the outbreak of the Waikato wars they supplied themselves with clothes and the necessities of life by their discoveries of gold’. All their claims, apart from having found a nugget in 1851, were refuted by everyone else who gave evidence to the Gold Fields Reward Enquiry Commission, which noted their opposition to opening Thames to mining.¹³³ However, there was one newspaper report that during the 1860s some Ngati Maru had found gold accidentally, which they ‘disposed of surreptitiously’.¹³⁴

What is certain is that, in November 1857, Cook reported finding gold on Ngati Maru land.¹³⁵ Rumours of gold having been found had already reached the authorities, for Cook was asked ‘whether the gold-field referred to by you is that on the Kakuranga Creek’, correctly Kauaeranga.¹³⁶ Following Cook’s report, Robert Graham,¹³⁷ the future owner of the Grahamstown section of Thames, received Taipari’s permission to prospect.¹³⁸ Cook would claim to have obtained four tons during 1857 and 1858, which, when crushed in England provided ‘a profit of £4 after paying all expenses’.¹³⁹ All this prospecting had been on land where Taipari was the principal owner; no other owners were as welcoming. John William

¹³¹ Evidence of Te Hoterene Taipari, under cross-examination by Wiropo Hoterene Taipari on 27 August 1872, Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 7, pp. 122-123.

¹³² See *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Waikato Times*, 18 November 1890, p. 2.

¹³³ ‘Report of the Gold Field Reward Enquiry Commission’, 26 April 1870, p. 4, Auckland Provincial Council, Session 26, 1870, A-No. 1, Auckland Public Library.

¹³⁴ *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 July 1867, p. 4.

¹³⁵ Joseph Cook to Donald McLean (Chief Land Purchase Commissioner), 28 November 1857, ‘Papers Relative to the Probability of Finding Gold at the Waikato and at the Thames’, *AJHR*, 1863, D-8, p. 5.

¹³⁶ Donald McLean to Joseph Cook, 17 December 1857, ‘Papers Relative to the Probability of Finding Gold at the Waikato and at the Thames’, *AJHR*, 1863, D-8, p. 5.

¹³⁷ See *New Zealand Herald*, 27 May 1885, p. 5.

¹³⁸ Evidence of Te Hoterene Taipari, 27 August 1872, Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 7, p. 123.

¹³⁹ *Daily Southern Cross*, 18 January 1869, p. 4.

Richard Guilding, a Pakeha Maori trader who first went to the site of the future Thames in 1860,¹⁴⁰ claimed to have found gold early in 1865 'but was not allowed to prospect there'; Rapana Maunganoa,¹⁴¹ a leading rangatira Ngati Tamatera, 'threatened to burn my house'.¹⁴² Another Pakeha Maori, Daniel Tookey, who lived at Thames with his wife Hera Matahau and family from 1857 onwards,¹⁴³ discreetly, and successfully, prospected the area, but kept his discovery secret until he pegged out a valuable claim when the field opened.¹⁴⁴

Unlike Pakeha, Maori could prospect without drawing attention to themselves, but, should they succeed, faced the reluctance of others to permit Pakeha intrusion, for only a minority supported or assisted prospecting. One of the several men who assisted Cook was Karauna Hou,¹⁴⁵ the senior rangatira of Ngati Rahiri who later lived at Te Aroha,¹⁴⁶ but was then living south of the Kauaeranga River on his land at Kaitawa and nearby.¹⁴⁷ When, in November 1857, rangatira of Ngati Maru and other unspecified hapu met at the site of the future Thames township to discuss Cook's discovery of gold, Karauna Hou [recorded as Te Rarounga Koropango] spoke: 'Hearken, fathers and grandfathers, I dug this gold, but do not suppose that by digging I wish to dispose of it to the Europeans. I dug it without any intention. The arrangement of the land is with you, as I have no place here myself'.¹⁴⁸ In other words, he was not one of the owners of the land where the gold was found, and he shared the general feeling that

¹⁴⁰ See paper on his life.

¹⁴¹ See *Thames Advertiser*, 17 July 1876, p. 2; *New Zealand Herald*, 30 September 1876, p. 5, letter from D[avid] Stewart, 3 October 1876, p. 2.

¹⁴² Evidence of J.W.R. Guilding to Goldfield Discovery Reward Investigation, April 1870, p. 278, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, MS 595, Box 21, Session 26, Auckland Public Library.

¹⁴³ See paper on Maori in Hauraki in the nineteenth century.

¹⁴⁴ 'Report by Mr Commissioner Mackay Relative to the Thames Gold Fields', 27 July 1869, *AJHR*, 1869, A-17, p. 5.

¹⁴⁵ 'Report of the Gold Field Reward Enquiry Commission', 26 April 1870, p. 5, Auckland Provincial Council, Session 26, 1870, A-No. 1, Auckland Public Library.

¹⁴⁶ See paper on his life.

¹⁴⁷ Maori Land Court, Auckland Minute Book no. 2, p. 321; Hauraki Minute Books no. 2, pp. 83, 165, no. 3, pp. 382-384, 388, no. 4, pp. 181-183, no. 6, pp. 391-391.

¹⁴⁸ 'Papers Relative to the Probability of Finding Gold at the Waikato and at the Thames', *AJHR*, 1863, D-8, p. 3.

Pakeha should be kept out and the gold remain under the control of rangatira. That several Maori had been involved in prospecting was indicated by Te Kapihana Tauhuru's lament that Ngati Maru were digging up the gold: he pointed out the inconsistency in driving off Pakeha while Maori

persist in digging yourselves. Who are you digging it for? If for yourselves it will be right, however it will not be right. The greenstone is the only treasure of the Maoris; gold is the Pakeha's treasure. The only plan to keep away the Europeans is for the Maoris to cease digging. If the Maoris dig it, they do not know how to make it into money; and then not being able to make it into money themselves, they will say, - I will sell my gold to the Pakehas. Then when the Europeans see it, they will ask, - Where did this gold come from? Perhaps they will reply, "From Hauraki." Then the Pakehas will flock thither, and the fault will not be theirs, but the Maoris in persisting to dig. But now cease digging.¹⁴⁹

Even rangatira were happy to assist prospectors, as John Wallanora Thorp, a son of the first Pakeha to settle in Ohinemuri,¹⁵⁰ told an 1875 investigation into the first prospecting there. 'In April, 1862 he went with one of the native owners to prospect, and found gold at Rotokohu', on the ridge on the eastern side of Karangahake mountain traversed by the track to Te Aroha. 'They also prospected Waitawheta, and subsequently he had natives prospecting all over the district. Nepia Te Ngarara was one amongst others. They prospected in Rotokohu, Waitawheta, Waitekauri, and elsewhere, and got some loose gold and specimens. The best they got at Waitekauri'. James Mackay, who had been appointed resident magistrate and Civil Commissioner for Hauraki in May 1864, recalled that in early 1863 Nepia Te Ngarara and the Thorp brothers found gold at Rotokohu. 'Nepia had been at Collingwood. He diverted the stream', creating a landslip that was still visible in 1875. 'He showed me the gold which he

¹⁴⁹ 'Papers Relative to the Probability of Finding Gold at the Waikato and at the Thames', *AJHR*, 1863, D-8, p. 4.

¹⁵⁰ G.S. Cooper, *Journal of an Exhibition Overland from Auckland to Taranaki by Way of Rotorua, Taupo, and the West Coast: Undertaken in the summer of 1849-50, by His Excellency the Governor-in-Chief of New Zealand* (Auckland, 1851), pp. 16, 18, 20; *Auckland Weekly News*, 28 March 1868, p. 19; *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 30 October 1912, p. 3.

found in 1864'.¹⁵¹ Nepia, a member of Ngati Raukawa, was assisted in this prospecting by Te Koroneho, of Ngati Koi.¹⁵² Being one of the Maori with experience in mining in other districts who assisted Mackay to open Hauraki,¹⁵³ was he the Ngarura who was a partner in a Waiorongomai claim in January 1882?¹⁵⁴

Mackay wrote, in 1896, that after being appointed to his official positions he 'constantly visited the settlements of Hauraki; then the Natives became acquainted with me, and a friendship arose between us, which has never been broken to the present day'. As a consequence, they told him that there was gold in Hauraki.¹⁵⁵ Between February and April 1864, Taipari showed him some small pieces of gold that had been found on the Waiotahi and Karaka Blocks at Thames.¹⁵⁶ In April, Mackay reported that on his recent visit he had 'received information from various sources that gold had been discovered in Kauaeranga and Ohinemuri Streams'. Nepia Te Ngarara and another, unnamed, Maori, both of whom had mined at Collingwood, told him the Ohinemuri gold was alluvial. (That this was incorrect was not realized until 1875.) They had been unable to prospect adequately, being, Mackay explained, 'prevented by the jealousy of the Natives, who feared that if it became known a European population would be attracted to the district'.¹⁵⁷ According to Guilding, all Ngati Maru, except for Taipari and 'a few of his relations, were strongly opposed to the opening of the field'.¹⁵⁸ Between 1864 and 1869 Taipari supported Mackay at all his meetings

¹⁵¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 15 March 1875, p. 3.

¹⁵² *Thames Advertiser*, 23 December 1874, p. 3.

¹⁵³ 'Report by Mr Commissioner Mackay', p. 4.

¹⁵⁴ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Miners' Rights Butt Book 1881-1882, no. 1857, BBAV 11533/1i; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1889, folio 245, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁵⁵ James Mackay, *Whakaaturanga o nga Tikanga o te Whakapuretanga o Hauraki mo te Mahinga Koura; Narrative of the opening of the Hauraki District for gold mining* (Auckland, 1896), p. 24.

¹⁵⁶ Evidence of James Mackay to Goldfield Discovery Reward Investigation, April 1870, p. 285; Wirope Hoterene Taipari to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 4 March 1870, MS 595, Box 21, Session 26, Auckland Public Library.

¹⁵⁷ James Mackay to Colonial Secretary, 22 April 1864, appended to 'Report by Mr Commissioner Mackay', p. 16.

¹⁵⁸ Evidence of J.W.R. Guilding to Goldfield Discovery Reward Investigation, April 1870, p. 278, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, MS 595, Box 21, Session 26, Auckland Public Library.

seeking permission to mine, whereas, in Mackay's words, Ngati Maru, 'as a rule, objected to any innovations or to any pakeha encroachments'.¹⁵⁹ Taipari himself blamed the Land League and the King movement for his inability to gain the consent of his hapu.¹⁶⁰ King Tawhiao, to whom many Ngati Maru owed allegiance, did indeed ban mining on land owned by 'Kingite' Maori.¹⁶¹

PROSPECTING LEADS TO THE OPENING OF THAMES

Taipari ignored Tawhiao's ban, as he explained in one of his letters seeking the reward for discovering the goldfield:

The applicant at various times between the years 1854 and 1864 did express to Messrs Cook Simpson R Graham D Graham Fletcher and J Cook (half Cast[e]) his belief that there was payable Gold at and near to Kauaeranga and elsewhere within the district ... and did on all occasions aid and assist the said persons in searching for Gold in the said district in despite of the opposition of several persons of the tribe Ngatimaru. That Gold was at various times during the above period discovered by the said persons but in consequence of the Jealousy of the Natives it was found impossible to open the Gold field at that time.¹⁶²

During 1865, Mackay had 'many conversations' with Taipari and his father, Te Hoterene, about permitting prospecting, 'but at that time the Hauhau Natives showed a very threatening attitude towards the Ngatimaru and myself'.¹⁶³ On Mackay's advice, Taipari continued to urge Ngati Maru to consider the desirability of opening a goldfield, despite meeting, in Taipari's words, 'great opposition from the other members of the tribe'. After 'considerable trouble', he managed to obtain the consent of his hapu, Ngati Rautao, for prospecting to take place over their own land, the

¹⁵⁹ Evidence of James Mackay to Goldfield Discovery Reward Investigation, April 1870, p 285, MS 595, Box 21, Session 26, Auckland Public Library.

¹⁶⁰ *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 April 1870, p. 3.

¹⁶¹ See, for example, his letter, with translation and explanation, *Daily Southern Cross*, 17 February 1868, p. 3.

¹⁶² Wiropo Hoterene Taipari to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 4 March 1870, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, MS 595, Box 21, Session 26, Auckland Public Library.

¹⁶³ Mackay, *Whakaaturanga*, pp. 24-25.

Karaka Block, of which he was 'the principal owner'. Once this permission was reluctantly granted, Taipari arranged with Mackay for two experienced prospectors, Walter Williamson and Joseph Harris Smallman, to test it, Taipari agreeing to provide 'a large proportion' of their food.¹⁶⁴ Smallman later settled near Te Aroha and took part in the rush there.¹⁶⁵ In 1881 he claimed to have had considerable experience in prospecting on Maori land before or after he was at Thames, managing 'to explore into places where no other white man at the present day dare plant his foot. Twice in my expeditions I have been taken prisoner by the Maories, and released again when they saw the advantages to be had by any discovery made on their territory'.¹⁶⁶

Working from late April until the end of August 1865,¹⁶⁷ Williamson and Smallman soon discovered signs of what they believed to be alluvial gold in the Karaka Creek. In view of the great interest in any discovery, Williamson wrote occasional articles for the *Daily Southern Cross*.¹⁶⁸ In one, written on 17 May, with his identity disguised as 'Our Special Correspondent', his comments on this example of early cultural contact were so illuminating that much of his article is quoted at length:

In every instance I have observed a desire on the part of the Maoris to cultivate the good opinion of myself and those associated with me. When we arrived in the district a general understanding was evinced to show us that they were disposed to be friendly. They loaded us with the produce of their land, and whenever it was requisite to ask for assistance to enable us to carry out our project, many hands were willing to help us. In order that we might not create a feeling hostile to their traditions, we were conducted over several pieces of tapued land, and after

¹⁶⁴ Wirope Hoterene Taipari to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 4 March 1870; Walter Williamson's diary entries for 5, 12, 20 April 1865, appended to Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 4 March 1870, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, MS 595, Box 21, Session 26, Auckland Public Library.

¹⁶⁵ See paper on his life.

¹⁶⁶ Letter from Joseph Harris Smallman, *Thames Star*, 5 March 1881, p. 2.

¹⁶⁷ Extracts from diary of Walter Williamson, enclosed with Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 4 March 1870, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, MS 595, Box 21, Series 26, Auckland Public Library.

¹⁶⁸ Walter Williamson, diary entries for 27 June 1865, 17 January 1866, appended to Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 4 March 1866, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, MS 595, Box 21, Session 26, Auckland Public Library.

promising not to break faith in keeping away, or otherwise infringing on the law of the tapu, we were permitted to act as we might please. As it was well known to all the natives from Coromandel as far up the Thames [Waihou River] as Ohinemuri, that we were visiting this place for the purpose of testing the creeks and low grounds for alluvial gold, an inclination to give us every facility to carry out our undertaking was freely shown, by not only the natives in our immediate locality, but by those visiting from distant places. We have been careful not to act in any way that might deprive us of this confidence, and I am glad to report that the natives appreciate our consideration. Since we have been here two or three of the most intelligent of the natives have gone out with their pick and tin dish, and have succeeded in finding several specimens of quartz charged with gold, and on every occasion they have presented us with the results of their search, pointing out to us the spots where the gold was found. They have no idea of the existence of a quartz lode bearing gold, nor do they perceive that the detached pieces must have been at one time part of a mass, neither do they believe that the specks of gold found in the creek have been thrown out of the quartz, and deposited in their course downwards; but they are quite alive to the importance of the discovery as relates to the value of their land, and the market that will be thus opened to their industry. Several chiefs from other districts have been here, and from what I learn from our own chief, Te Taipari, they are anxious that we should be successful; and I believe that, in the event of Kauaeranga [Thames] proving a payable gold-field, all the eastern side of the Hauraki Gulf, and the river Thames will be opened to the Europeans.... The social character of the Maori is well known to the majority of your readers. Every where in the settlement is open to us; and though we would rather dispense with the attention shown, yet we receive in our own whare sometimes over a dozen at one time to share our supper. As a rule, whenever we come upon a hut, whatever there is eatable is presented to us, and I must say the native in liberality surpasses the European; he cannot see why the pakeha should be so exclusive, but let him know that his presence is not desired, and he will not trouble you again; and should he discover any weak point that may be painful in the course of conversation, he will take care not again to recur to the subject. ¹⁶⁹

Within a week of such a positive report on how enthusiastically many Maori supported his work and how the ‘most intelligent’ were learning prospecting skills, attitudes changed. On 18 May, Williamson recorded that

¹⁶⁹ Special Correspondent, ‘The Thames’, *Daily Southern Cross*, 31 May 1865, Summary for May, p. 3.

they had discovered 'a reef with indications of gold, but were not permitted to follow up the search'.¹⁷⁰ When one of them went to the nearby Waiotahi Creek he was told by the owners of the land that 'if he put a pick in the ground, his shirt would be taken off his back'. Despite this, three days later Williamson's diary recorded that when sluicing in Karaka Creek 'several natives from motives of curiosity were anxious to render assistance'.¹⁷¹ To ensure that they did not stray onto land owned by others, and also possibly because of a desire to learn how to prospect, 'not a day passed without one or more of the natives accompanying us wherever we went'.¹⁷² On 2 August they made 'a final endeavour with the natives to be permitted to go on the Waiotahi creek, or the range dividing that creek from the Moanataiari, without success'.¹⁷³ Mackay later wrote that they 'were most jealously watched by the other members of the tribe, and brought back immediately they trespassed beyond the Karaka Stream on the north, or the Hape on the south'.¹⁷⁴ Nor were they permitted to prospect further up-river, where they thought the land looked more promising.¹⁷⁵

Williamson and Smallman told Taipari on 28 June that there was 'a prospect of a payable goldfield on his land',¹⁷⁶ but he considered they were 'scratching like hens, and eating my pork', and sent them away after becoming tired of supplying them with food while they failed to find gold.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁰ Walter Williamson, diary entry for 18 May 1865, appended to Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 4 March 1870, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, MS 595, Box 21, Series 26, Auckland Public Library.

¹⁷¹ Letter from Walter Williamson, *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 July 1867, p. 21.

¹⁷² Letter from Walter Williamson, *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 July 1867, p. 8.

¹⁷³ Walter Williamson, diary entry for 2 August 1865, appended to Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 4 March 1870, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, MS 595, Box 21, Session 26, Auckland Public Library.

¹⁷⁴ 'Report by Mr Commissioner Mackay', p. 4.

¹⁷⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 13 July 1867, p. 4; letter by Walter Williamson, *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 July 1867, p. 8; *New Zealand Herald*, 31 July 1867, p. 4; Walter Williamson to Superintendent of Auckland Province, 12 January 1869, Applications for Reward for finding Goldfield, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, MS 595, Box 19, Session 24, Auckland Public Library.

¹⁷⁶ Walter Williamson, diary entry for 28 June 1865, appended to Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, MS 595, Box 21, Session 26, Auckland Public Library.

¹⁷⁷ *Auckland Weekly News*, 14 May 1870, p. 6.

Permitted by Tanumeha Te Moananui, of Ngati Tamatera,¹⁷⁸ to search for gold on his land further along the coast at Waiomu, they worked there during September and October.¹⁷⁹ In March and April 1866, Williamson prospected Mercury Bay and the Tapu Creek area, on his own, without meeting any opposition.¹⁸⁰

The *Daily Southern Cross* explained the problems of gaining approval to prospect as being yet another 'native difficulty'.

It is to be hoped the Government will step in and make such arrangements with the natives as will give them confidence that the development of the gold resources of the Thames will be as advantageous to themselves as to the Europeans. The prospecting party had not been profitably employed more than a week when an indisposition to allow them to proceed was manifested.

The newspaper described samples of gold found,

the natives having taken care, with the permission of the prospectors, to secure a good share of it themselves. The prospectors were on very friendly terms with the natives, but there was an evident feeling amongst some of them that the discovery of gold in any quantity might be the cause of their losing their land. There were some hopes, however, that they would soon have more confidence in the intentions of the Europeans, and that the prospecting might be resumed.¹⁸¹

It was reported that other prospectors had found alluvial gold (an illusion), all such prospecting being 'carried on under considerable disadvantages from the jealousy of the natives'.¹⁸² According to Williamson,

¹⁷⁸ See Hutton, p. 171.

¹⁷⁹ Walter Williamson, diary entries for September and October 1865, appended to Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 4 March 1870, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, MS 595, Box 21, Session 26, Auckland Public Library; 'Report by Mr Commissioner Mackay', p. 4.

¹⁸⁰ Walter Williamson, diary entries for March and April 1866, appended to Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 4 March 1870, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, MS 595, Box 21, Session 26, Auckland Public Library; two letters from Walter Williamson in *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 July 1867, p. 21.

¹⁸¹ *Daily Southern Cross*, 31 August 1865, Summary for August, p. 4.

¹⁸² *Daily Southern Cross*, 20 September 1865, p. 4.

the opposition of the chief Rewai (or Riwai) Te Kiore¹⁸³ had prevented his prospecting the Waiotahi Creek. He had been

driven off before he could prosecute his search to any extent; but not before he had satisfied himself of the richness of the creek. Rewai was the only man of consequence who opposes the prospectors, and he has been doing his best, for a length of time, to get up a bad feeling between the Europeans and natives.

In his account, three other Pakeha working with him for four months 'left in consequence of the Pai Marire [Hauhau] fanatics becoming menacing. Since then he has been accompanied by two natives'. He claimed many rangatira were willing to let prospectors onto their land but the 'main obstacle' was Rewai, 'who had used threats'.¹⁸⁴ In 1863 Rewai had warned Hauraki rangatira that gold 'will cause our land to be taken. But those Europeans must not be allowed to come on shore. I will act as a chain to hold our land'.¹⁸⁵ One newspaper report of Williamson's party being turned off the Waiotahi Block cited Maori saying: 'When four men cannot be kept under rule, what would it be if a crowd came?'¹⁸⁶ Williamson himself told the Superintendent that, after Maori had told him that gold could be found in Waiotahi Creek, he had been told to leave for fear of Pakeha coming from Auckland and Coromandel.¹⁸⁷

A Coromandel correspondent commented that the prospectors' report of being 'were well watched' was 'likely enough', for the owners would want to learn of any discoveries so they could 'put a high value on their land'.¹⁸⁸ If rangatira did not see their land in that light, for the comment implied a desire to sell it, their successors might. A principal owner of the Waiotahi

¹⁸³ See *Thames Advertiser*, 27 June 1879, p. 3; *Auckland Star*, 5 July 1879, p. 3; *New Zealand Herald*, 23 July 1879, p. 4.

¹⁸⁴ *Daily Southern Cross*, 18 January 1866, p. 4; see Walter Williamson, diary entry for 17 January 1866, appended to Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 4 March 1870, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, MS 595, Box 21, Session 26, Auckland Public Library.

¹⁸⁵ 'Papers Relative to the Probability of Finding Gold at the Waikato and at the Thames', *AJHR*, 1863, D-8, p. 3.

¹⁸⁶ *Daily Southern Cross*, 30 July 1867, p. 4.

¹⁸⁷ Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 2 May 1865, printed in *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 August 1867, p. 8.

¹⁸⁸ Coromandel Correspondent, *New Zealand Herald*, 28 August 1867, p. 5.

block, Aperahama Te Reiroa,¹⁸⁹ refused to open it until after the Thames rush had started;¹⁹⁰ his sons, Reha Aperahama and Aihe Pepene,¹⁹¹ later encouraged Pakeha settling on their land in the Aroha Block on terms financially beneficial for themselves.¹⁹²

In March 1866, an Auckland newspaper was unenthusiastic about another ‘alleged gold discovery’ because ‘discoveries of gold at the Thames have something of the nature of intermittent fever, seizing on the patient at intervals’.

Some parties who had been prospecting, or rather camping out, in the direction of the Thames, having run short of provisions, returned to town [Auckland] on Saturday night, and have reported great discoveries, rich leaders, &c. The people of Auckland, however, have been so often gulled [duped]¹⁹³ by these gold discoveries, that they are scarcely likely to be led away in the present instance. The very mention of “quartz leaders” is quite sufficient. The finding of “auriferous leaders” generally ends in the emptying of Auckland pockets.¹⁹⁴

In February 1867, Pakeha, still not permitted to prospect, were titillated by another story of an encouraging find. A Maori passenger on a steamer from Puriri, upstream from the future Thames and later to become a minor goldfield, reported ‘having discovered some good samples of gold and gold-bearing quartz; but declines to intimate the locality of the precious deposit. We may however state that the specimens may be seen in the possession of the native, and are worth an inspection’.¹⁹⁵

Clearly some Maori, either through past involvement with mining in the South Island or at Coromandel or by observing Williamson and Smallman, had acquired prospecting skills. Because of these reports and the economic depression, in May 1867 the Superintendent of the Auckland Province, John Williamson, offered a reward of £5,000 for the discovery of a

¹⁸⁹ See James Mackay’s account of his unwilling opening of Waiotahi: *New Zealand Herald*, 10 August 1901, p. 5.

¹⁹⁰ ‘Report by Mr Commissioner Mackay’, p. 6.

¹⁹¹ See papers on their lives.

¹⁹² See paper on Maori Te Aroha.

¹⁹³ *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, p. 548.

¹⁹⁴ *New Zealand Herald*, 27 March 1866, p. 4.

¹⁹⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 February 1867, p. 3.

payable goldfield; a Maori translation was published simultaneously.¹⁹⁶ Shortly afterwards, a party of four prospectors 'who have been engaged in prospecting a district which we are not at liberty to mention', showed an Auckland newspaper some gold 'similar in colour to that obtained at Coromandel'. The newspaper considered that, instead of the reward, £1,000 should be offered 'to assist a party of prospectors'; it understood 'three other parties of Victorian and Hokitika diggers' were prospecting.¹⁹⁷ The offer of the reward, according to an unnamed correspondent living at Thames, did

a little good. At Hauraki a native has picked up a good specimen in one of the creeks near the mouth of this river, and at a meeting of 200 natives of the Ngatimaru tribe, at Hauraki, some thirty of the more enlightened proposed that the district should be opened to prospectors. This was opposed by the majority, with old Rewai at their head, who said that if the pakehas were allowed to dig they would swamp the Maoris and take all their land.¹⁹⁸

The concept of the 'more enlightened' Maori was a typical contemporary view, meaning one whose opinions were of benefit to Pakeha; in hindsight, Rewai was also enlightened.

In July 'Taraia, a Thames native' (in fact, the paramount rangatira of Ngati Maru and Ngati Tamatera),¹⁹⁹ arrived in Auckland with a story of having found gold on his land at Ohinemuri. Although he did not bring any samples, the master of a schooner on which he had travelled, a former digger, confirmed both the report and that the gold was of 'excellent' quality. One response was that such reports were 'so stale that no inducement is offered to entertain great expectations';²⁰⁰ clearly two years of rumours and nothing but rumours had created a jaundiced view of all such reports. Also in July, Walter Williamson told the Auckland press that, since he had left the Thames district in 1865,

the Maoris have turned to themselves, stimulated by two or three natives, who have recently arrived from the West Coast of the Middle [meaning South] Island. According to their notion the

¹⁹⁶ Advertisement, *Auckland Weekly News*, 4 May 1867, p. 1.

¹⁹⁷ *Auckland Weekly News*, 18 May 1867, p. 8.

¹⁹⁸ Thames Correspondent, *Daily Southern Cross*, 30 May 1867, p. 5.

¹⁹⁹ See Angela Ballara, 'Taraia Ngakuti Te Tumuhia', *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, vol. 1, 1769-1869 (Wellington, 1990), pp. 427-428.

²⁰⁰ *Auckland Weekly News*, 13 July 1867, p. 4.

Thames was to be an exclusive Maori diggings, and their countrymen have some remarkable stories about the results of the working.

These stories were unconfirmed, as no samples had been produced.²⁰¹ Within a week, another report stated that an unnamed Maori had arrived at Coromandel to inform his unnamed chief, presumably Taipari, that ‘some natives of his tribe’ had found good gold in the Karaka Creek at Thames, a locality ‘spoken of by experienced miners, who have attempted to prospect the district, as most likely ground’. Readers were warned not to become too excited by this report, for ‘it must be borne in mind that natives are apt to be more sanguine in their ideas with regard to gold than the experienced miner’.²⁰²

In fact, there were Maori prospectors at work who had more experience than this man realized. On 20 July, a Thames correspondent reported that ‘two natives from Hokitika have been digging for some time, but only getting a little fine gold, as the natives will not allow them to prospect the best creeks’. Ngati Maru were divided: ‘many of the owners’ were prepared to open their lands but some wanted only Maori to mine.²⁰³ Some Maori had begun sluicing on Taipari’s land, for at this stage all prospectors expected to find alluvial gold; one correspondent believed the sluicing had been stimulated by the reward.²⁰⁴ Immediately afterwards, when Taipari arrived in Auckland with ‘a small phial, containing a few particles of gold’, the *Weekly News* was unimpressed, giving a summary of the latest discoveries to prove that ‘we do not now know anything more than we did two years ago’:

Several months ago, a native named Paratene came up here from the West Coast, where he had been working. This man belongs to Otago, and has been so long on the mines that he had acquired considerable experience in the simpler modes of finding gold. About three months ago, Paratene, who is accompanied by his wife, began work at Taupo, in the Firth of Thames, and from thence worked up the Wharekawa range to Pukorokoro [on the western side of the firth]. In all that ground he did not find even the colour of gold. He then crossed over to Kauaeranga, and was

²⁰¹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 13 July 1867, p. 9.

²⁰² Thames Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 July 1867, p. 13.

²⁰³ *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 July 1867, p. 12.

²⁰⁴ Coromandel Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 July 1867, p. 13.

attracted by the appearance of the country about that neighbourhood. He was joined in the work by a native named Hamiora. The land about here belongs to a chief who rejoices in a multitude of names, and, as confusion has arisen in this matter in consequence, we may once for all give a complete list - Wiropi Hotereni Taipari Hauauru Tikapa. [On being told that gold had been found, Taipari and others] found Paratene, his better half, and Hamiora busily engaged at the Karaka creek. These pioneers had gone to work in a scientific manner. They had built walls on each side of a small dry creek next to the Karaka creek, and, by a dam, let a stream of water through it. Here the three were operating with a "long tom" and a tin dish, and they intend by-and-by to turn the water out of the main creek, expecting to find there a good return for their labour. They said they thought that gold-working there could be made to pay, but that they were too few really to test the place. In the mean time the Maoris of the place were sitting quietly by, and smoking their pipes.... The very important question of how much a man could produce in one day has not yet been properly tested, as there were no proper implements upon the spot. A part of the dirt was washed out in the presence of the Europeans, and we believe a sample has been brought to Auckland.²⁰⁵

This report revealed yet again that some Maori had acquired skills and by moving to other districts had taught others these skills. In one of his accounts of these developments, Mackay emphasized these points, writing that Taipari 'arranged with Paratene Whakautu, a Native who had been engaged in goldmining at Nelson, and Hamiora Kewa, of Ngatipaoa', to prospect his lands.²⁰⁶ In a later version, Mackay wrote that Paratene Whakautu had not lived at Otago, as had been reported,²⁰⁷ but was of Ngati Rarua, who lived at the Aorere goldfield near Collingwood. His companion in this account was Hamiora Te Nana, of Ngati Paoa, who had gone to Collingwood to dig for gold and upon returning to Hauraki had brought Paratene Whakautu with him.²⁰⁸ (Mackay did not mention Paratene Whakautu's wife, Aniria, as being a prospector, though he must have known of her existence; in December 1868, when all three applied for the reward for first finding gold, their letter did not indicate that Aniria had a lesser

²⁰⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 July 1867, p. 12.

²⁰⁶ 'Report by Mr Commissioner Mackay', p. 4.

²⁰⁷ *Daily Southern Cross*, 22 July 1867, p. 3.

²⁰⁸ Mackay, *Whakaaturanga*, p. 22.

role.²⁰⁹ This was the last time a woman was recorded as being involved in prospecting or mining.)

After two months of prospecting, in July gold was found in the hillside above the Karaka Stream. Mackay later recorded that ‘at that time Judge [John] Rogan²¹⁰ was holding a Native Land Court at Kauaeranga (now Shortland), that was the first sitting held there’.²¹¹ Taipari took Rogan and the local magistrate to see the ‘two experienced Native gold-diggers’ at work. ‘After making several enquiries, as to the results of their prospecting, &c, these gentlemen watched their proceedings, and remained there till the operations were completed’. One of the prospectors, who had ‘just arrived from Hokitika’, was ‘satisfied of its ultimate success immediately he bottoms it’.²¹² Rogan, with Taipari and an interpreter, Charles Oliver Bond Davis,²¹³ went to Auckland, where Taipari ‘called at’ Mackay’s office ‘and showed me the stone’.²¹⁴ His samples were shown first to Daniel Pollen, agent of the central government, on 22 July, and then to all the bank managers.²¹⁵ Mackay selected ten experienced miners to accompany him to Thames, where they found traces in the Karaka and Waiotahi streams of what they believed was alluvial gold.²¹⁶ The immediate result was an announcement that a goldfield was to be opened, for ‘Taipari says that all confusion in future must be avoided as far as possible, by the working being conducted under proper regulations’. It was expected that the goldfield would be payable, for ‘the parties most immediately concerned have taken

²⁰⁹ Henry Elmes Campbell [a solicitor acting on behalf of the three claimants] to Superintendent of Auckland Province, 23 December 1868, Applications for Reward for Finding Goldfield, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, Box 19, Session 24, MS 595, Auckland Public Library.

²¹⁰ See *Auckland Star*, 1 July 1899, p. 1.

²¹¹ Mackay, *Whakaaturanga*, p. 25.

²¹² Coromandel Correspondent, *New Zealand Herald*, 22 July 1867, p. 4.

²¹³ See Alan Ward, ‘Charles Oliver Bond Davis’, *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography: vol. 1: 1769-1869* (Wellington, 1990), pp. 99-100.

²¹⁴ Mackay, *Whakaaturanga*, p. 25.

²¹⁵ ‘Report of the Gold Field Reward Enquiry Commission’, 26 April 1870, p. 4, Auckland Provincial Council, Session 26, 1870, A-No. 1, Auckland Public Library; Evidence of Wirope Hoterene Taipari to Native Affairs Committee concerning Petition 61, 1887, Legislative Department, LE 1, 1887/5, ANZ-W.

²¹⁶ Mackay, *Whakaaturanga*, pp. 25-26.

care for years to conceal the gold'.²¹⁷ On 27 July, an agreement was signed with Te Hoterene Taipari, Wirope Hoterene Taipari, Rapana Maunganoa, Te Meremana Konui, and Raika Whakarongotai²¹⁸ to open their land. When Pollen, Mackay, and the miners returned to Auckland, Mackay informed Taipari that he 'would return with a large party' on 1 August.²¹⁹ On 12 August the two successful prospectors would be the first Maori to take out miners' rights for the new field.²²⁰

MINING AT THAMES

After the opening of the goldfield, the first discovery of payable gold was made by William Albert Hunt²²¹ and party at the base of a waterfall in Kuranui Creek; according to one account, 'they were directed by a native' to this spot.²²² Piniha Marutuahu claimed to be that person, who had pointed out to Hunt 'the spot where Karauna had discovered the gold in 1851, and in return received a gun and £30 as payment'.²²³ Maori joined in the rush, staking out and working some claims. Within a few days, they were sluicing in the Waiotahi and Karaka Creeks, and Pakeha who attempted to explore the Waiotahi Block were turned off: 'They say the natives may dig, but not the pakehas'.²²⁴ Gaps in the surviving records mean it is not possible to give the total number of claims in which Maori were shareholders, nor did contemporary newspapers comment on their success as miners. Certainly in the early years of the field, some Maori continued to be involved; for instance, in July 1869, when the Golden View at Karaka was registered, all ten owners being Maori.²²⁵ In other claims Maori were part owners.²²⁶ None of the claims they worked were notable gold producers.

²¹⁷ *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 July 1867, p. 4.

²¹⁸ See *Thames Advertiser*, 28 May 1884, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 9 June 1888, p. 4.

²¹⁹ Mackay, *Whakaaturanga*, p. 26.

²²⁰ Kae Lewis, *Goldrush to the Thames: New Zealand 1867 to 1869* (Thames, 2017), p. 701.

²²¹ See *Thames Star*, 20 August 1883, p. 2; *Auckland Star*, 7 June 1900, p. 1; F.W. Weston, 'Thames Reminiscences', *New Zealand Herald*, 4 April 1923, p. 9.

²²² *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 August 1867, p. 8; *Te Aroha News*, 18 July 1888, p. 7.

²²³ *Daily Southern Cross*, 29 April 1870, p. 4.

²²⁴ *Daily Southern Cross*, 12 August 1867, pp. 3, 4.

²²⁵ Thames Warden's Court, Claims Register 1868-1869, no. 1465, BACL 14397/3a, ANZ-A.

²²⁶ For example, Thames Warden's Court, Thames Claims Register 1868-1869, no. 1213, BACL 14397/3a, ANZ-A.

As in the South Island, many Maori mining at Thames were not from local iwi. In November 1868, after a year and a quarter of mining, a missionary wrote that about 75 from the northern Ngapuhi and Rarawa tribes were seeking 'their fortune in our auriferous hills; they are chiefly young men under the charge of steady elders of their own tribes'. They were working in several claims,²²⁷ unspecified. Many of these men cannot have held miner's rights, for only 78 of the 14,124 rights issued from the opening of the goldfield until 30 November 1868 were issued to Maori.²²⁸ This total may be a slight exaggeration, as bad handwriting makes the names uncertain in some cases, and the helpful, but usually superfluous, note 'a Native' after names recorded in the first register was no longer included after early 1868. On the other hand, this total did not include any Maori with Anglicized names, nor any half-castes: for example, John Gage²²⁹ and James Gordon²³⁰ were two of the latter to be traced.²³¹ It should be noted that some miner's rights were issued to Maori such as Taipari who had no intention of being anything other than sleeping partners.²³²

In general, it seems that, as in the South Island, Maori became prospectors for relatively brief periods, unlike many Pakeha who made mining their life's work. An index to miner's rights granted for Thames from 1876 to 1886, for example, included 77 Maori in 1876, but only one in the following year, one in 1885, and three in 1886.²³³ Once again, any Maori

²²⁷ G. Maunsell to Church Missionary Society, 30 November 1868, in 'Letters to the Church Missionary Society, from the Reverend G. Maunsell and Archdeacon R. Maunsell, 1866-1869' (typescript), MS 1355, Alexander Turnbull Library.

²²⁸ Thames Warden's Court, Registers of Miners' Rights 1867-1868, BACL 14358/1a, 14358/2a, ANZ-A.

²²⁹ See Maori Land Court, Waikato Minute Book no. 2, pp. 71-72, 129-136, 139; Hauraki Minute Books, no. 3, p. 219, 277-278; no. 14, p. 299, 304, 306; *Auckland Weekly News*, 30 January 1869, p. 10, 29 March 1869, p. 23, Supreme Court, 18 June 1870, pp. 3, 5; *Thames Advertiser*, Magistrate's Court, 30 September 1876, p. 3; *Thames Star*, 22 December 1880, p. 2.

²³⁰ See paper on his life.

²³¹ In 1868, George Gage had no. 13512 and James Gordon nos. 8282 and 9543: Thames Warden's Court, Register of Miners' Rights 1868, BACL 14358/2a, ANZ-A.

²³² Miner's Right no. 2532, Thames Warden's Court, Register of Miners' Rights 1867-1868, BACL 14358/1a, ANZ-A.

²³³ Thames Warden's Court, Index to Miners' Rights, Thames, 1876-1886, BACL 14357/1b, ANZ-A.

with an Anglicized name cannot be included, and some of these rights were issued to sleeping partners: Taipari, for instance, held one.²³⁴

PROSPECTING IN OTHER DISTRICTS

To get access to Maori land, Pakeha promised to abide by Maori restrictions. An Auckland meeting held at the end of July 1867 was told that ‘there was a piece of land at the Thames, about four acres in extent, which was held sacred by the natives, being tapued. Would the diggers respect the feelings of the natives in respect to that land?’ When this question was put by the chairman, ‘the meeting unanimously replied with a firm and manly “yes” ’.²³⁵ In practice, at Thames and elsewhere all Maori land was treated as being open to exploration, and many Maori encouraged them to prospect. In December 1867, a ‘great gathering’ of miners held at Thames finally got tired of their arguing about where were the best areas to prospect beyond the existing field:

Several Maoris amused the multitude by their gesticulations, and ludicrous efforts to speechify in broken English, the matter for discussion being which was the best field for a new rush. One energetically declared that the new ground to the south was the best, while another, mounted up behind him, continuously vociferated, “No fear! No fear!” at the end of every sentence the speaker uttered. The meeting was eventually put an end to, by the Maoris being suddenly pushed over the stock of timber on which they were standing, and unceremoniously hustled by the mob.²³⁶

Some reports survive of Maori involvement in mining elsewhere on the peninsula. At Kennedy Bay, in 1865, at least three Maori were mining: Tamati Tuti²³⁷ and his wife, both of Ngapuhi, and a half-caste woman of unknown tribal affiliation named Hoana.²³⁸ In 1869, Maori were part owners of a small number of mines at the new goldfield at Tokatea, above the Coromandel settlement; for example, they were seven out of nine

²³⁴ Thames Warden’s Court, Index to Miners’ Rights, Thames, 1876-1886, p. 312, no. 1376, BACL 14357/1b, ANZ-A.

²³⁵ *New Zealand Herald*, 31 July 1867, p. 4.

²³⁶ Theophilus Cooper, *A Digger’s Diary at the Thames 1867* (Dunedin, 1978), p. 22.

²³⁷ See *Daily Southern Cross*, 14 April 1865, p. 5.

²³⁸ Hutton, p. 57.

owners of the Bay View, 13 out of 14 of the New Zealander, and 13 out of 15 of the November.²³⁹ It was likely that, as later at Te Aroha, the few Pakeha partners in these claims, being more experienced miners, supervised the work. That Maori were not merely ‘sleeping partners’ was indicated by a Coromandel correspondent writing that ‘a new feature in connection with this goldfield is that several natives are working shareholders in many of the claims, and appear quite as much interested in the result as their white confreres’.²⁴⁰

Having learnt the necessary skills, some Maori prospected in other areas, likely and unlikely. In 1868, the Tauranga magistrate told a settler who was considering searching for gold that ‘he had some years since seen Gold brought in by Natives from Kaimai not above 20 miles by land from Tauranga’.²⁴¹ The precise locality of this find was unknown, but what is certain is that this district never produced gold. In 1872, there were three more reports of Maori prospecting in unpromising places. First, some Thames Maori travelling in the Taupo region ‘kept their eyes open to endeavour to find “kiripaka,” or quartz’, and brought back ‘some pieces of what they considered “likely” stone’.²⁴² There were periodic reports of gold being found in the King Country:²⁴³ according to one journalist, ‘over a period of many years gold has been occasionally picked up in that district, but, as the Maoris had no knowledge of the nature of their find, little notice was taken of it’. As the Thames goldfield had given ‘many Maoris a practical knowledge’ of geology, such reported finds were treated seriously.²⁴⁴ The last report was of Maori at Mangakahia, near Whangarei, producing specimens of possibly gold-bearing quartz.²⁴⁵

Maori were also involved in exploring districts highly likely to be gold-producing, and even rangatira assisted Pakeha to explore districts closed to prospectors both by the government and by some of the principal owners. In July 1867, for instance, Rapata Te Arakai, otherwise Rapata Te Pokiha, a

²³⁹ Coromandel Warden’s Court, Certificates of Registration of Claims 1868-1871, nos. 49, 50, 61, ZAAAN 1159/1a, ANZ-A.

²⁴⁰ Coromandel Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 9 October 1869, p. 22.

²⁴¹ *A Soldier’s View of Empire: The reminiscences of James Bodell, 1831-92*, ed. Keith Sinclair (London, 1982), p. 172.

²⁴² *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 January 1872, p. 4.

²⁴³ For instance, *Wanganui Herald*, 22 April 1872, p. 2.

²⁴⁴ *Auckland Weekly News*, 4 May 1872, p. 13.

²⁴⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 May 1872, p. 4.

rangatira of the Te Uriwha hapu of Ngati Tamatera,²⁴⁶ a persistent advocate of the opening of Ohinemuri for mining,²⁴⁷ gave a Pakeha a sample of gold found there.²⁴⁸ In August and September 1868, William Logan,²⁴⁹ Philip Holes, and Alexander Mackay²⁵⁰ were given permission to prospect from Kepa Te Raharuhi,²⁵¹ principal rangatira of the Ngati Koi hapu of Ngati Tamatera.²⁵² They informed him of uncovering a reef at Karangahake,²⁵³ as Kepa described in 1875:

In September, 1868, I spoke to Phil and Willy to go and look for gold at Karangahake. In the same year, about the 3rd of November, I heard they had found gold. It was after they found it they told me they had got the reef at Karangahake. I said I would go and see it. I went with Phil to see it, and found their workings there, which were covered in. They told me it was a good reef, and I suggested that they should keep that place for themselves. I told Phil that, as I was one of the principal owners of the land. It was in consequence of this discovery that I made such strenuous endeavours to open up the country. Some time after this discovery the land was surveyed.... After the survey I was one of those who made application to have this land passed through the Court.... I did not intend to sell the land to strangers after getting it through the Court, but to keep it for myself and European mates, and it was on account of the gold being found there that it was surveyed. The signature to the letter produced is mine. It was a letter to Sir Donald McLean, requesting him to grant protection to a claim.... The natives signing the letter had consistently endeavoured to open the ground, and now refused to do so unless their claim to the prospecting claim was allowed.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁶ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 11, p. 296.

²⁴⁷ See paper on Maori land in Hauraki.

²⁴⁸ *Daily Southern Cross*, 24 July 1867, p. 4.

²⁴⁹ See *Thames Advertiser*, 6 March 1875, p. 3, 10 April 1876, p. 2; *Thames Star*, 18 May 1875, p. 2, 24 October 1888, p. 2.

²⁵⁰ See paper on his life.

²⁵¹ See Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Books, no. 5, pp. 60, 175-176; no. 13, p. 105; no. 14, p. 364; no. 22, p. 227; no. 23, p. 157; no. 28A, p. 171; no. 28B, p. 20; no. 48, pp. 227-229; *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 13 July 1903, p. 2.

²⁵² Thames Warden's Court, Native Agent's Letterbook 1883-1893, p. 191, BACL 14458/2a, ANZ-A.

²⁵³ *Thames Advertiser*, 13 March 1875, p. 3, 15 March 1875, p. 3 [The year was mistakenly given as 1867].

²⁵⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 15 March 1875, p. 3.

It was. According to Daniel Pollen, Ngati Koi made it a condition of opening Karangahake 'that a prospectors' claim should be reserved for them; a reserve of ten men's ground was accordingly made and after a public enquiry by the Warden into the merits of several applications for this reserve it was awarded to Native applicants, as having been the real discoverers of gold'.²⁵⁵ In fact, this ground was allotted to a party comprising both Pakeha and Maori, headed by John Wullanora Thorp.²⁵⁶ In the obituary of the latter it was stated that, upon his return from the Otago goldfields in May 1862, 'accompanied by' Kepa had prospected 'on Kepa's land and found gold at Rotokohu and also near Karangahake. That was the first gold found in that part of the district'.²⁵⁷

Kepa told the land court that, before 1870, he had wanted Waihi, where he lived, surveyed to assist prospecting.²⁵⁸ This desire was all the more remarkable by his having been a Hauhau until 1864.²⁵⁹ Although he took no part in the Te Aroha rush, a younger brother Hoani Raharuhi²⁶⁰ had shares in three claims, and another, Marakai Raharuhi,²⁶¹ in one.²⁶²

In December 1869, at a hui held in Ohinemuri, Meha Te Moananui²⁶³ spoke about Pakeha exploring Ohinemuri. 'The Maoris brought them up; do not say the Pakehas came of themselves'. Those prospecting 'without leave, that is their own doing; but even that would not be done without the knowledge of the Maoris and their consent thereto'. Another rangatira agreed that 'the Queen Natives invite the diggers'.²⁶⁴ In 1870 five Pakeha

²⁵⁵ Daniel Pollen (Colonial Secretary) to Deputy Superintendent, Auckland Province, 24 March 1875, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, ACFM 8180, 906/75, ANZ-A.

²⁵⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 15 March 1875, p. 3.

²⁵⁷ *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 19 December 1919, p. 2.

²⁵⁸ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 5, pp. 175-176.

²⁵⁹ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 5, p. 60.

²⁶⁰ See Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Books, no. 14, p. 208; no. 23, p. 157; no. 28B, p. 56; no. 29, pp. 19, 67-68, 285-286; no. 36, p. 283.

²⁶¹ See Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Books, no. 23, p. 157; no. 29, pp. 285-286; no. 64, p. 263.

²⁶² Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folios 204, 211, 219, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

²⁶³ See *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 20 July 1917, p. 2.

²⁶⁴ 'Notes of a Meeting which took place at Ohinemuri, on Thursday, 9th December, 1869', *AJHR*, 1870, A-19, p. 9.

prospectors reported finding gold at Waihi Beach. They were assured by 'a resident native' that they were the first to do so, and, far from driving them off, a Maori informed other Pakeha of the discovery and brought them 'there by stealth' because of Hauhau opposition and showed them the reef.²⁶⁵

In 1872, an Ohinemuri correspondent was informed that 'a well-known and much-trusted chief' was 'on his way to the Aroha, to bring down specimens, and to put the pakeha in possession of certain information as to the alluvial character of the upper country'.²⁶⁶ Could this rangatira have been Rapata Te Pokiha?. Nothing further was heard about this; there were no alluvial specimens to find and, as the land was in dispute between Ngati Maru and Ngati Haua, prospecting was forbidden both by the rival owners and the government. An unnamed Pakeha who claimed to have secretly prospected at Te Aroha from 1872 to 1874 was assisted for that whole time by 'a native mate'; they had both 'suffered great privations'.²⁶⁷

Four Pakeha prospectors working near Whangamata in 1872 did so against the wishes of the government and many of the owners, but had written authorization from three of the principal owners of the Whangamata No. 3 Block to prospect it.²⁶⁸ In early 1873, a reef near Hikutaia found by two Maori was shown to Pakeha.²⁶⁹ Another reef, closer to Whangamata, was found by Maori prospectors on the vertical face of a spur between the forks of a creek who they took samples for testing. A nearby block was taken up by a Maori party 'in the employment of some white men'.²⁷⁰ A Maori known to Pakeha as John Prince was reported to have found excellent gold in the ranges between Hikutaia and Whangamata. He pegged out the Hikutaia Virgin, named 'as a burlesque

²⁶⁵ Jonathan Brown, John Macpherson, William J. Grundy, Arthur A. Crapp, John S. Talbot to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 21 April 1870, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, ACFM 8180,1764/73, ANZ-A.

²⁶⁶ Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Thames Guardian and Mining Record*, 24 January 1872, p. 3.

²⁶⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 5 November 1880, p. 3.

²⁶⁸ James Mackay to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 25 January 1873, quoting letter from Dudley Eyre, John Cashel, Robert Evans, and Peter Ara, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, ACFM 8180, 276/1873, ANZ-A.

²⁶⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 24 February 1873, p. 3.

²⁷⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 27 February 1873, p. 3.

allusion to the single speck of gold discovered in it'.²⁷¹ Prince was 'well known' at Thames,²⁷² and a jocular account of his attempt to woo some Pakeha women at Hikutaia revealed that he was an elderly man who had once visited England:

This old beau, adopting the customs of the refined society he mixed with in London, endeavoured to improve his personal appearance, and for this purpose he visited the chemist, and had his grey hair dyed black; John also wanted his face to receive an extra coat of black, but all efforts to colour the tattoo marks were unavailing.²⁷³

Nothing further was heard of the reef he had found, which he admitted did not show signs of gold.²⁷⁴ There were no reports of his making any more discoveries, but gold was to be found in several parts of this district in later years. Riki Paka²⁷⁵ was working with Pakeha prospectors in the Waitekauri Valley in early 1873.²⁷⁶ In February 1874, a party of two Pakeha and one Maori were the first to investigate Komata,²⁷⁷ without any indications of success; this also became a notable mining district.

A Pakeha who visited Waitekauri in January 1875 stated that Hohepa Kapene,²⁷⁸ later to be involved in the Te Aroha rush,²⁷⁹ 'and several other Maoris were out, but they are getting rather disgusted at the rough work of prospecting; it is harder to find gold than they expected'.²⁸⁰ Many Maori

²⁷¹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 8 March 1873, p. 6, 15 March 1873, p. 6; *Thames Advertiser*, 28 February 1873, p. 3, 3 March 1873, p. 3.

²⁷² *Thames Advertiser*, 28 February 1873, p. 3.

²⁷³ *Thames Advertiser*, 24 February 1873, p. 3.

²⁷⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 28 February 1873, p. 3.

²⁷⁵ See *New Zealand Herald*, 4 March 1870, p. 4; *Auckland Star*, 14 May 1873, p. 4.

²⁷⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 8 May 1873, p. 3.

²⁷⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 5 April 1884, p. 3.

²⁷⁸ See Maori Land Court, Coromandel Minute Books, no. 1, pp. 242, 329-332, 334, 336; no. 2, pp. 140-141; Hauraki Minute Books, no. 11, pp. 167-169; no. 16, pp. 143, 145, 149, 151; no. 18, pp. 189-190; no. 23, pp. 24-26, 28, 30-31, 35-37, 46, 48, 128-130, 135-136, 143; no. 32, pp. 148-149, 154, 168, 177-179, 184-185; no. 53, pp. 130-131; no. 55, p. 172; no. 56, pp. 136-137, 143-144, 146, 149; no. 65, pp. 128-133.

²⁷⁹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Miners' Rights Butt Book, no. 1619, BBAV 11533/1g; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folios 203, 211, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

²⁸⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 16 January 1875, p. 3.

participated in the rush that followed the opening of Karangahake in 1875; the precise number cannot be given, as the register of miner's rights and all the butt books of miners' rights bar one have been lost; in the surviving book, 15 of the 100 names were Maori.²⁸¹ The *Thames Advertiser* reporter who watched the opening rush was 'told that over a hundred miners' rights have been applied for by Maoris. I am glad to see them going into the affair with spirit'. After the miners' rights were issued, a Maori 'led for some part of the distance' in the race to the mountain.²⁸² Another reporter watched both Pakeha and Maori horsemen 'riding for grim death down hill, over rise, and across the undulating country' to the prospectors' claim. 'It was stated that the Maoris would try very hard to get next to' it, but Pakeha prevented them doing so. 'In their marking out, although they were second on one part of the ground, they were wholly at sea in marking out, pegs not proper length, &c, &c'. The reef 'over the high precipices' in the gorge was pegged off by Maori where gold had been found 'recently',²⁸³ presumably by them. Another correspondent's report of the rush was expressed unfortunately for later sensitivities. He estimated there was 'close upon 2000' men participating, and the starting point, at Mackaytown, on the opposite side from the new goldfield,

was taken up by tethered "nags," indicating that our dusky friends meant business. It got about that they intended to make a push to peg off the line of reef adjoining the prospectors' claim.... Word went round to "bluff" the darkies, as they were well mounted, and would outride the pakehas. This was capitally carried out, and here and there a pakehas nag turned obstinate at some boggy crossing, and the result was that, with the exception of those in [Adam] Porter's party,²⁸⁴ our dark friends will have a poor show.... Two pounds to one, cries a newspaper correspondent, in the line of wild horsemen, that a white man is first on the ground; and to make good his offer, he is balking every Maori who attempts to pass. Of the horsemen, two pakehas – [Alexander] Hogg²⁸⁵ and Porter - are on the ground, closely

²⁸¹ Thames Warden's Court, Miners' Rights Butt Book for Ohinemuri, March 1875, BACL 14043/7h, ANZ-A.

²⁸² Own Reporter, *Thames Advertiser*, 4 March 1875, p. 3.

²⁸³ Own Correspondents, *New Zealand Herald*, 4 March 1875, p. 3.

²⁸⁴ See paper on his life.

²⁸⁵ See paper on Maori in Hauraki in the nineteenth century.

followed by the Maoris, who have ridden utterly regardless of life or limb.²⁸⁶

Though many Maori, like many Pakeha, acquired interests hoping to sell these quickly for a good profit, others intended to work their claims. Several claims were worked solely by Maori or were owned predominantly by Maori.²⁸⁷ Legal restrictions on Maori being permitted to have explosives, a consequence of the land wars, had to be removed to permit them to obtain the blasting powder required.²⁸⁸

In March 1875 it was rumoured that some Maori had arrived in Paeroa 'from Waihi with goldbearing stone',²⁸⁹ but nothing further was published about this discovery. In 1877, 1880, and 1881, Hone Werahiko found gold on Te Aroha mountain.²⁹⁰ Some Maori who had been involved in the Te Aroha rush prospected other areas in later years. 'About a dozen' who went to the Tiki rush at Coromandel in March 1881 were reportedly 'on very good gold'.²⁹¹ A small number invested in Coromandel companies: for instance, in 1881 one rangatira invested in the Perseverance Company and two months later he and five other Maori, all describing themselves as miners, were half the shareholders in the Maori Win Company at Tiki.²⁹² No other Maori were listed as shareholders in companies during that year apart from some at Te Aroha.²⁹³ A visitor to Waihi in early 1881 noted interest in prospecting by local Maori:

About half-a-mile from the original prospectors, there is a Maori reserve, which contains a large body of quartz similar to that found in the part now being taken up, but when the Maoris found that Europeans had taken a look at it, they ordered them off.... The natives intend working this ground in their own interests, and for that purpose, I am informed, Mr C[harles] F[eatherstone]

²⁸⁶ Own Correspondents, *New Zealand Herald*, 5 March 1875, p. 3.

²⁸⁷ For example, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Ohinemuri Claims 1875, folio 6, BBAV 11568/1a, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, 26 March 1875, p. 3.

²⁸⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 27 August 1875, p. 2, 3 December 1875, p. 3.

²⁸⁹ *Thames Star*, 20 March 1875, p. 2.

²⁹⁰ See paper on his life.

²⁹¹ *Coromandel Mail*, 12 March 1881, pp. 4, 5.

²⁹² *New Zealand Gazette*, 26 May 1881, p. 695, 14 July 1881, p. 912.

²⁹³ See paper on Maori and mining at Te Aroha.

Mitchell²⁹⁴ has been arranged with, who, with two men well equipped with tents, tools, and provisions, on Sunday were met proceeding to their scene of future operations. It is said that Mr Mitchell has made very good terms with the natives.²⁹⁵

Nothing came of their prospecting.

A limited number of experienced Pakeha miners, including some who had worked at Te Aroha,²⁹⁶ were finally permitted, in late 1882, to prospect the Rangitoto Range in the King Country, assisted by 'half-castes', but found that the rumours spread by Maori over several years about gold in this area were unfounded. According to a disappointed correspondent, 'if they pick up a piece of quartz, they at once jump to the conclusion that there is gold in it; to them "it is all gold that glitters"'.²⁹⁷ According to an English mining investor who visited the King Country in the early 1880s, Maori in the Kaimanawa and adjoining districts 'assured us of the existence of gold in these mountains, as likewise of a mineral which, by the description they gave of it, I judged to be silver'.²⁹⁸ He was not shown any samples, and whatever the minerals were they were neither gold nor silver.

The finding of gold at Te Aroha encouraged Maori to prospect the Kaimai range. In January 1881, a party of Pakeha prospectors who had made a quick profit in one mine traveled upstream, 'visiting the natives as we went along. They were very friendly to us', and offered food which 'did not look very tempting. They have all caught the gold fever, and wanted to gain as much information as possible from the Pakehas regarding the precious metal'.²⁹⁹ In 1939, Edward Clifton Firth, who had been working with his brothers on his father's Matamata Estate, recounted an 1886 experience:

A Maori came to the station one day with a piece of quartz showing gold, and said that it came from a place in the ranges, if

²⁹⁴ Then a Paeroa storekeeper: see papers on the prospecting of Te Aroha before the opening of that field for details of his involvement there.

²⁹⁵ 'Pendulum', 'A Visit to Waihi', *Thames Advertiser*, 16 June 1881, p. 3.

²⁹⁶ For example, Charles McLean: *Thames Advertiser*, 5 October 1882, p. 2.

²⁹⁷ Alexandra [Pirongia] Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 10 October 1882, p. 2.

²⁹⁸ J.H. Kerry-Nicholls, *The King Country; or, explorations in New Zealand: a narrative of 600 miles of travel through Maoriland* (London, 1884), p. 236.

²⁹⁹ Albert George Allom, 'Prospecting in the Upper Thames', *Thames Star*, 19 January 1881, p. 2.

we wanted to see where he had found it he offered to show us. This was too good an offer to refuse, so next morning four of us with the Maori as a guide, rode down the foothills of the range for ten miles to where a creek, flanked with high precipitous rocks, flowed out of the range.

Tethering our horses at the edge of the bush, we walked up the rocky creek bed, as far as we could and then struck into the bush. After a climb of about a mile we came to a rock jutting out of the range, and forming a roof for a hundred feet or so. "This is the place where I got gold stone," said the Maori. We spent a long time examining the rock, breaking off pieces here and there with a miner's pick, but found no sign of gold, and decided that the Maori had not found gold there, he was either fooling us or had come to the wrong place.

Tired of looking for gold, they investigated a cave under the outcrop and discovered (in the 1886 version)³⁰⁰ five skeletons or (in the 1939 version) at least 12, the remains of what they interpreted to have been a cannibal feast. Notable amongst the bones was a soldier's red coat, a mystery that they could not solve because their guide insisted that, as the cave was tapu, they must not touch anything and must leave immediately.³⁰¹ His 'terror and excitement'³⁰² indicated that he had not been playing a joke, for he would not have deliberately led them to a tapu site. The gold he claimed to have found was never discovered by anyone else.

The following year, during the excitement over the Waitoa 'find',³⁰³ some Maori reported finding alluvial gold there.³⁰⁴ One month later, a rangatira living at Mangatautari, near Cambridge, announced that he was willing to permit prospecting there 'provided a native accompanies the party'. He had shown residents of Cambridge 'some likely-looking stone', but 'declined to say where he obtained it, but averred there was "plenty more" '.³⁰⁵ There may well have been, but it was not auriferous.

³⁰⁰ *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 March 1886, p. 6.

³⁰¹ Edward Clifton Firth, *Waves of Chance: New Zealand, America, Australia* (Cambridge, 1997; written in 1939), pp. 11a-11b.

³⁰² *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 March 1886, p. 6.

³⁰³ See paper on this fraudulent rush.

³⁰⁴ *Auckland Star*, 30 September 1887, p. 5.

³⁰⁵ *Auckland Star*, 24 October 1887, p. 5.

Arapeta Tineia,³⁰⁶ who held shares in two claims at Tui in December 1880 and January 1881,³⁰⁷ in 1884 explored Komata Creek. He was part of a party, whether of Pakeha or Maori not being recorded, ‘who have some knowledge of mining, have made tests of the creek, and have found gold in all the tests’.³⁰⁸ Mining did not begin there until further explorations by Pakeha prospectors in 1891.³⁰⁹

In November 1887, it was reported from Paeroa that ‘at a late hour last night quite a number of miners left here en route for Tairua, where a Maori named Taitua made a gold discovery’ a few days previously.³¹⁰ He appears to have been Taituha, otherwise Taituha Moewaka,³¹¹ who in 1882 had been a shareholder in the Union Jack No. 2 at Waiorongomai.³¹² Some Maori continued to prospect the Tairua district, and in 1895 it was reported that ‘the gold fever seems to have infected the Maoris, for a new find is reported to have been made at Tairua by two natives called Witika Taupo³¹³ and Tukukino Hurua,³¹⁴ who are described as most energetic prospectors’. Over the past 12 years Tukukino had traced signs of gold in Rocky Creek, and with a Pakeha they had now applied for a claim.³¹⁵ In 1881 Witika

³⁰⁶ See Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Books, no. 13, pp. 76, 78; no. 25, pp. 207, 210-211; no. 56, p. 187.

³⁰⁷ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folios 203, 211, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

³⁰⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 5 April 1884, p. 3.

³⁰⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 1 September 1891, p. 2, Warden’s Court, 4 September 1891, p. 2, 18 September 1891, p. 3.

³¹⁰ Paeroa Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 4 November 1887, p. 3; see also *Thames Star*, 4 November 1887, p. 2.

³¹¹ See Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Books, no. 28A, p. 50; no. 53, p. 83; no. 54, pp. 332-339.

³¹² Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folio 63, BBAV 11500/9a, ANZ-A.

³¹³ See Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Books, no. 16, pp. 341, 344; no. 29, p. 94; no. 49, pp. 13-15, 90-93, 96, 102, 106, 108; no. 52, pp. 373-374; no. 54, pp. 302-304, 306, 314; no. 58, pp. 228, 234, 254, 311-312; no. 60, p. 217; *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 15 March 1905, pp. 2-3.

³¹⁴ Not traced; he was not involved in Te Aroha mining.

³¹⁵ *Auckland Star*, 27 September 1895, p. 5.

Taupo was a partner in several Waiorongomai claims and in the following year had an interest in a Karangahake one.³¹⁶

In 1888, William Anderson, who despite his Pakeha name may have been the Maori ‘chief’ at the Maori settlement of Kirikiri, between Thames and Puriri,³¹⁷ with other Maori discovered gold at the latter and were granted the prospectors’ claim, known as the Maori.³¹⁸ They were able to sell their claim to an Auckland investor for £1,000.³¹⁹ This area was developed further by Pakeha miners in future years.³²⁰

A significant find was made in 1889 at Kuaotunu by Charles Kawhine, locally known as ‘Coffin’, who was ‘offered a tidy little sum for an interest in his claim’.³²¹ Six years later a newspaper described how the ground held by Try Fluke Company, the ‘best known’ on the field, was originally pegged out by him one mile from the original Waitaia Creek discovery:

He arrived on the Kuaotunu field just after a party had pegged out the Carbine claim (now included in the Try Fluke property), and asked the “boss” of the party, “Where are your pegs?” They were pointed out down the side of the hill, and Mr Kawhine responded with laconic cheerfulness, “All right; I’ll try a fluke further down.” It was a lucky fluke indeed, not merely for himself, but for a vast number of people who have made money out of this very valuable property since that date.³²²

According to local legend, a prospecting party had seen Kawhine at work, ‘and by way of greeting called out, “What are you doing there, Coffin?” Which brought forth the laconic reply, “Oh, try fluke,” and with this the party went on its way’. Yet another version had it that, when asked by

³¹⁶ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Miners’ Rights Butt Book 1881, no. 1735, BBAV 11533/1h; Notices of Marking Out Claims, December 1880, no. 99, BBAV 11557/1a; January 1881, no. 163, April 1881, no. 204, May-July 1881, no. 226, BBAV 11557/1b; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folios 218, 226, 245, BBAV 11567/1a; Thames Warden’s Court, Claims Register 1882-1884, no. 1097, BAAC 14397/14a, ANZ-A.

³¹⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 18 December 1883, p. 2.

³¹⁸ *Thames Star*, 2 February 1888, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 1 March 1888, p. 2 (and subsequent issues).

³¹⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 5 April 1888, p. 2,

³²⁰ See section on John Alexander McInnes, above.

³²¹ *Te Aroha News*, 22 June 1889, pp. 4, 5.

³²² *New Zealand Graphic*, 24 August 1895, p. 226.

Pakeha what he would call his mine, he replied ‘I think I call him the Try Fluke. He the big fluke all right, I get him’.³²³ In mid-1889, he was not the only Maori was mining at Kuaotunu; not only was ‘Kawhine, *alias* Coffin’, bagging five tons, but ‘Thomson (native)’ also had a ‘good show’.³²⁴ In 1893 ‘Kawhena’, perhaps the same person, was one of the prospectors finding new lodes.³²⁵

During the mining boom of 1895 Maori made ‘several’ discoveries. In late October, ‘considerable excitement was caused’ after one ‘brought in a quantity of stone containing much gold’ from Kaimai, in the Bay of Plenty. The watchmaker he took the samples to ‘immediately set off for the locality’, starting a small rush. The same report cited another Maori, Poihipi Kukutai,³²⁶ bringing quartz which ‘appeared to contain gold’ from near Maungatautari.³²⁷ Both areas were barren. More successful was at the Wires, near Hikutaia, where two prospectors, one a Pakeha prospector and the other a Maori named Clarke, made a good discovery. ‘The fact that a Maori was instrumental in making the discovery has attracted the attention of a great number of Maoris to the locality, and another party of Maoris’ reported finding a large reef and immediately took out miners’ rights.³²⁸

The last recorded find by Maori in the nineteenth century was another illusory one at Maungatautari in 1896.³²⁹ But prospecting continued, for example in the Rotorua district.³³⁰

KLONDIKE

‘A group of Maoris, fresh from New Zealand, put up strange huts of wattles to keep out the winds’ at Sheep Camp, at the foot of the Chilkoot Pass, during the Klondike rush of 1898.³³¹ ‘Bob the Maori’ and another

³²³ R.A. Simpson, *This is Kuaotunu* (rev. ed., Kuaotunu, 1979), p. 7.

³²⁴ ‘Kuaotunu’, *Te Aroha News*, 6 July 1889, p. 5.

³²⁵ Warden to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 19 May 1893, *AJHR*, 1893, C-3, p. 11.

³²⁶ Not traced; he was not involved in Te Aroha mining.

³²⁷ *Waikato Times*, 22 October 1895, p. 4; *New Zealand Graphic*, 2 November 1895, p. 566.

³²⁸ Paeroa Correspondent, *Auckland Star*, 24 September 1895, p. 5.

³²⁹ *Bay of Plenty Times*, 20 March 1896, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 15 October 1896, p. 2.

³³⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 13 June 1896, p. 2, 14 August 1897, p. 2.

³³¹ Pierre Berton, *Klondike: The last great gold rush, 1896-1899* (rev. ed., Toronto, 1986), p. 241.

unnamed Maori were members of a party of New Zealanders, but they had no mining experience, soon suffered from scurvy, and returned home.³³² Ropata (otherwise Robert Hector) Manihera (was he 'Bob the Maori?'), from Papawai pa in the Wairarapa (hardly a mining area), who had traveled with his Pakeha brother-in-law George Elers and the latter's 'half-caste' stepson Peter Cowan, had been a member of the Wairarapa Mounted Rifles Volunteers.³³³ In late summer 1898 he wrote that he and Iriatara Kingi (otherwise Isaac King), whom he had met after Elers and Cowan had departed for New Zealand, were the only Maori at Dawson City, where they were constructing 'a Maori house'; they were finding work but no gold.³³⁴ The wrongly spelt or transcribed records of the North West Mounted Police do not make it easy to trace these adventurers, but three men who entered the Yukon in late May 1898 may have been Maori: Whaw (no first name), N. Ngherer, and F. Myere. If originally members of one party, they were now scattered amongst other New Zealand prospectors on other boats.³³⁵ It is perhaps more likely that these names were not of Maori but an example of dreadful handwriting; as usual, any Maori with English names cannot be traced.

UNDERGROUND MINING

Initially, Maori had been involved in surface prospecting and alluvial mining, not underground work, although some worked underground at Thames and Ohinemuri in the 1870s. According to 'an old mining reporter', writing in 1892, 'I never met but one Maori quartz miner', namely Hone Werahiko.

When the Maori will exert himself he is perhaps quite as good as the average white laborer at road making or any surface work, but he has a rooted objection to underground work. His savage fancy peoples the bowels of the earth with all manner of eerie

³³² *A Kiwi in the Klondike: Memories from the diaries of Francis William Hiscock*, ed. Stella M. Hull (Waiuku, 1993), pp. 6, 8, 15, 18, 44, 49.

³³³ *Press*, 18 August 1898, p. 4; *He Reta Ki Te Maunga: Letters to the mountain: Maori letters to the editor 1898-1905*, introduced and translated by Margaret Orbell (Auckland, 2002), p. 24; photograph on p. 25.

³³⁴ *He Reta Ki Te Maunga*, pp. 39-40, 43-44.

³³⁵ Filson's Pan for Gold Database, <http://www.gold-rush.org/ghost-07.htm>.

things, and he would as soon think of walking knee deep in lava as he would of losing sight of daylight in the recesses of a mine.³³⁶

Reportedly the first time Maori investigated the Thames lower levels was in December 1874, when Hoera Te Mimiha, principal chief of Ngati Koi, Hone Werahiko's future father-in-law, and a future shareholder in claims at Ohinemuri and Te Aroha,³³⁷ and Haora Tareranui, of Ngati Tamatera,³³⁸ went down the Crown Prince shaft. The *Thames Advertiser* recorded them as being 'astonished', and believed this was 'the first time a Maori has ever had the courage to descend a shaft. They will stroll into a drive, but they do not like to descend into the bowels of the earth'. Haora Tareranui was impressed with the skills used to extract and refine the gold and stated he now wanted Ohinemuri opened to mining.³³⁹ Hoera Te Mimiha had already spoken in favour of opening Ohinemuri,³⁴⁰ and with some Pakeha had illegally prospected and found gold at Karangahake, his party being granted claims when the goldfield was opened.³⁴¹ He wrote to a newspaper to describe his experience of going down the Crown Prince shaft and the lessons he had learnt, which may have been translated more crudely than his original:

At three o'clock in the day, I went to a claim where they mine for gold, the Crown Prince. That claim is a good one. The name of the Captain [mine manager] is John [Blennerhasset] Beeche.³⁴² There was the reef carrying the gold plain enough, but what would put the Maori all wrong was its great depth below the surface. If the Maori had good brains, it would be all right. Well, indeed, how

³³⁶ 'The Thames Goldfield. Reminiscences of the Past. From an old Mining Reporter's Note Book', *Thames Star*, 24 December 1892, p. 1.

³³⁷ See paper on his life; he was not involved in Te Aroha mining.

³³⁸ See *Thames Advertiser*, 20 September 1880, p. 2.

³³⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 14 December 1874, p. 2.

³⁴⁰ 'Ohinemuri', *Thames Advertiser*, 9 December 1874, p. 3.

³⁴¹ James Beeche (for himself, Hoera Te Mimiha, William Logan, and John Clarke) to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 4 November 1874, and note by D.A. Tole, 13 January 1875, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, ACFM 8180, 3835/1875, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, 26 February 1875, p. 2, 27 February 1875, p. 3, 4 March 1875, p. 3, 10 March 1875, p. 2, evidence of William Logan, 13 March 1875, p. 3, evidence of James Mackay, 15 March 1875, p. 3, 22 March 1875, p. 3, 25 March 1875, p. 3.

³⁴² See *Auckland Weekly News*, 13 April 1895, p. 21.

the thing has been lying unused. Our ancestors were ignorant, and we are also, and we continue [to make] mistakes.³⁴³

His later claim to have spent three years mining at Te Aroha in the early 1880s³⁴⁴ cannot be verified; any involvement was probably only spasmodic, and would not have required descending a shaft, there being none then.

Reluctance to go deep underground was probably not so much because of cultural or spiritual concerns but rather sensations of claustrophobia or fear of the dark, from which many Pakeha also suffered.³⁴⁵ No spiritual concerns were expressed at the many meetings held with officials before the opening of the various Hauraki fields; had they been raised, newspapers would certainly have reported them, being always happy to print examples of 'Maori superstitions',³⁴⁶ and officials would have informed their superiors. Instead, the meetings discussed Pakeha intrusion affecting the Maori way of life, political independence, control of land, and financial recompense for permitting mining.³⁴⁷

Over time, many Maori were willing to become miners and were at ease underground. In the coal industry there was a 'long tradition of Maori mining underground, particularly Ngati Mahuta people from Waahi Pa', at Huntly, where a large percentage continue to be Maori.³⁴⁸ A 1951 study noted that Maori were employed in coalmines at Kamo, Hikurangi, and Huntly and in the Waihi goldmine, where 27 of the 62 employed worked underground.³⁴⁹ Some later mined for Norpac at Tui, and were remembered by a fellow miner as being good workers; one, Murray Hemopo, was one of

³⁴³ Letter from Hoera Te Mimiha, *Thames Advertiser*, 16 December 1874, p. 2.

³⁴⁴ Evidence of Hoera Te Mimiha, 22 April 1884, Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 15, pp. 288-289.

³⁴⁵ For example, interview with Eric Coppard, on 8 December 1985, at Waihi, p. 27 of transcript.

³⁴⁶ For example, deaths claimed to have been the result of maketu: *Thames Advertiser*, 12 November 1877, p. 3; *Thames Star*, 20 August 1880, p. 2.

³⁴⁷ See paper on Maori and goldfields revenue.

³⁴⁸ Evelyn Stokes, *Huntly Coal Miners* (Hamilton, 1978), p. 8.

³⁴⁹ A.J. Metge, 'The Distribution and Character of the Maori Population of the Auckland Province: A contribution to the regional geography' (MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1951), pp. 74-75.

the principal rescuers of those trapped in the cave-in of the Kaimai railway tunnel.³⁵⁰

During the First World War, 43 Maori Pioneers dug tunnels in preparation for the battle of Arras.³⁵¹ The pioneers' main tasks were digging and repairing trenches and deep dugouts in addition to making railways and roads.³⁵² The Tunnelling Company had nobody with an obviously Maori name amongst its members,³⁵³ but in 1917 these 43 Maori pioneers were 'lent to assist in the big job' at Arras. They were recalled as 'great favourites with everybody, splendid toilers, always willing and cheerful', and were 'sadly missed when they were recalled'.³⁵⁴ At least two carved their names on the chalk walls: Jack Kake, a bushman from Whangarei and a member of the 3rd Maori Reinforcements, and Toi Karini, from Mangatuna, Tologa Bay.³⁵⁵ Infantrymen also assisted, including Manu Tuki Taipari, who was killed in the following year.³⁵⁶

In contrast to these Maori who willingly worked underground, one part-Maori, born in 1910, who from 1929 to 1931 sledged ore downhill from the Tui mines, recalled never going underground, instead waiting for the ore to be brought outside; this was not for any spiritual reason but for fear the roof might give way.³⁵⁷

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

³⁵⁰ Interview with Eric Coppard on 8 December 1985, at Waihi, pp. 20, 22-24 of transcript.

³⁵¹ Margo White, 'Written on the Walls', *Listener*, vol. 158 no. 2972 (19-25 April 1997), pp. 30, 32; Catherine Field, 'Great War Tunnellers Honoured', *New Zealand Herald*, 16 February 2008, p. A15.

³⁵² For digging deep dugouts, see James Cowan. *The Maoris in the Great War: A history of the New Zealand Native Contingent and Pioneer Battalion* (Auckland, 1926), pp. 108-109, 118.

³⁵³ War Archives, WA 170/1, ANZ-W: *The New Zealand Tunnelling Company 1915-1919* (Auckland, 1922), pp. 145-155, plus photographs.

³⁵⁴ *New Zealand Tunnelling Company*, p. 69.

³⁵⁵ Chris Pugsley, 'The Moles of Arras', *New Zealand Defence Quarterly*, Spring 1997, p. 30 [Kit Wilson of Waihi drew this to my attention].

³⁵⁶ Pugsley, p. 31.

³⁵⁷ Interview with Ted Abraham on 1 November 1987, at site of Norpac tailings pit, Tui Creek, Te Aroha.

It can be assumed that Maori continued to be involved in the declining goldmining industry, but they are not easy to identify, if for no other reason than the adoption of Pakeha names. For instance, in 1933 one of the subsidized prospectors at Te Aroha who found an apparently valuable reef was described as a ‘superb bushman’ and ‘quite an acquisition to the party’, but without his ethnicity being mentioned in a letter to the Mines Department it would not be known that he was a Maori; his name was Thomas Rifle.³⁵⁸ During the Waihi strike of 1912, some who worked in the Waikino battery were ‘drafted’ in as strikebreakers; Peter Fraser described them as ‘mostly Maori boys and derelicts’.³⁵⁹ One striking miner was ‘a Maori of considerable bulk’ known as Peter the Painter,³⁶⁰ possibly a reference to the Russian Anarchist involved in London’s ‘Siege of Sidney Street’. In contrast, a ‘scab’ who signed on ‘on the first day of the resumption of work’ was ‘a six-footer Maori’ known as the ‘white hope’.

He is a most combative individual, fears no man, and has challenged all and sundry to “have a go.” His arrival at Waikino was marked by rather a dramatic incident. Instead of getting out of the train at the railway station proper he disembarked in the Waihi Company’s yard. The strike pickets pointed out to him that that spot was not a station. The visitor replied that he had arrived at his destination and was going to work. That settled it, and the fat was in the fire immediately. When getting his traps together a pair of blood-stained boxing gloves tumbled out, which acted in a somewhat soothing manner upon the pickets.

When he arrived in Waihi ‘he took up a position on one of the tipheads in full view of the crowd below, and executed a Maori haka in fine style’. Lodging in the Central Hotel instead of in Waikino like the other strike breakers, when abused by two strikers when he was standing on the hotel balcony he slid down the verandah post ‘and the amused spectators witnessed the ludicrous spectacle of two men fleeing from a fightable-looking and fierce Maori, with an anxious man in blue [policeman] bringing up the rear’.³⁶¹ After riots in Waihi in November led to courts cases, a

³⁵⁸ Entries in work diary of Te Aroha Prospectors’ Association for 10, 16, 18, 24 May 1933; Charles Scott to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 13 May 1933, Mines Department, MD 1, 23/1/20, Part 1, ANZ-W.

³⁵⁹ Telegram from Peter Fraser, n.d., printed in *Poverty Bay Herald*, 2 October 1912, p. 6.

³⁶⁰ *Colonist*, 11 November 1912, p. 6.

³⁶¹ Waihi Correspondent, *Poverty Bay Herald*, 26 October 1912, p. 5.

witness for the Federationists described two-thirds of the 158 ‘scabs’ as ‘half-bred Maoris’, whereas a company official stated ‘that there were not at any time more than 20 Maoris and half-castes’ employed.³⁶²

In the 1940 obituary of James Rukutai, ‘a first-grade Native interpreter and a prominent leader in affairs of the Maori race’, it was noted that, although born in Kawhia, ‘as a young man’ he had mined at Waihi.³⁶³

CONCLUSION

Just as Maori learnt Pakeha skills in sailing, horse riding, and farming, many became adept prospectors and miners. This was through ‘self-help’: no government training was provided, and often they had to ignore the wishes of their rangatira by becoming involved. This outline of Maori involvement proves that Grey’s 1852 expectation that Maori ‘character’ would soon mean active involvement³⁶⁴ was correct.

In 1895, the *Thames Advertiser*, writing of the periodic reports of gold being found in the still, to Pakeha, mysterious and only partly-explored King Country, claimed that some Maori amused themselves by deliberately misleading gullible Pakeha prospectors:

The native is cute enough to see that the pakeha is “clean gane wud” on the subject and will drink in greedily the most improbable yarns as they relate to the whereabouts of “the money.” So the Maori puts on a mysterious air and gives some very indefinite hints at the rich colours found by some other Maori long ago, they can never be pinned down to the exact spot. So away goes the prospector on this very slight data and comes back as wise as he went. We know an old prospector in the Mokau district, who for the last sixteen years or so has been kept on a string in this way by the joke-loving Maoris, but he has never struck the spot yet; but he never loses heart, and is always ready for some more weary, lonely tramp, whenever another Maori gives him a new tip. And so it will go on till some day the old man will start on his last journey and his bleached bones will be found by future prospectors at the foot of some forest giant and lonely gully.³⁶⁵

³⁶² *Auckland Weekly News*, 28 November 1912, p. 29.

³⁶³ *Evening Post*, 12 January 1940, p. 9 [thanks to Sue Baker Wilson for this reference].

³⁶⁴ Dispatch of George Grey, 9 November 1852, cited in Anderson, p. 16.

³⁶⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 1 February 1895, p. 2.

Two tales of Pakeha being fooled by Maori, to make money rather than just for fun, came from the Coromandel field:

Hone worked as a machine driller, in the Royal Oak mine, but this was too constant for him and he had to get out occasionally. He took to prospecting, and was not slow, when opportunity offered, to put one across, as is shown by this story.

Riding home in the rain one evening he noticed a fresh landslide coming down. Having some stone, he pounded this in the mortar, ran to the top of the slip, and poured it so that it worked its way down in the newly broken ground. Then he waited until the big mining men were riding past. He was in the creek washing his "prospects." What he had in the dish caused some excitement, and offers to buy in the claim were refused. He accepted an invitation to talk the offer over in the hotel, and when he had been shouted as much drink as the miners thought he could hold, he was offered forms to buy shares in his claims. Hone had his head on the table and mumbled something unintelligible. A pen was pushed into his hand, his mark made, a witness signed, and the money pushed into his pocket. Having bought their way in, the unscrupulous miners were well satisfied. So was Hone, as he counted the money and disappeared.

Another Maori prospector reported finding a payable reef in the Waverley. The big miners tried to get it. A Mr Dick Harrison picked up the manager of the West Tokatea mine and went to investigate. Each time the Maori washed a prospect the ground showed quite a corner of gold. When anyone else washed a dish there was nothing. Closer scrutiny showed the wily prospector spitting from a mouthful of gold into each dish. When his fraud was discovered he turned a quick somersault and disappeared into the bush.³⁶⁶

A trick no doubt learnt from Pakeha, in an industry where trying to trick rivals was endemic. Maori were hardly unique in providing false information, either as a joke or to make some easy money. Pakeha practical jokes also may have included providing deliberately misleading information, and certainly some false rushes were started by Pakeha prospectors for financial gain, a notable example being the 'Brogan' rush to a salted reef near Whangamata in 1873.³⁶⁷ The number of Maori who

³⁶⁶ Sam Chapman, *Coromandel in the "Golden" Days* (Hamilton, 1974), pp. 34-36.

³⁶⁷ *Auckland Weekly News*, 1 February 1873, p. 6, 22 February 1873, p. 16, 8 March 1873, p. 6, 7 April 1888, p. 29; 'Ohinemuri Goldfield', *Thames Advertiser*, 14 December 1885, p. 3.

perpetrated such ‘jokes’ appears to have been miniscule, and more commonly they gave real assistance to prospectors, even when others of their tribe opposed opening their land for mining.

Maori were not unique amongst indigenous peoples in learning the skills of prospecting and mining. One historian of goldmining throughout the world, in referring to a find in Ontario in 1926, noted that ‘in 1872 those ubiquitous and generous Native people who recur so often in such situations helpfully pointed out gold deposits to a government geologist’.³⁶⁸ In 1686, in the same province, ‘Native people’ showed a French miner an outcrop they had mined.³⁶⁹ Two Native Americans helped two Europeans to find the first gold at Klondike.³⁷⁰

The last examples, from Australia, are of Aborigines, unadmired by settlers yet pioneers of some goldfields. Geoffrey Blainey noted that, after one Aboriginal found gold in 1851, others on a mission station joined in the resultant rush.³⁷¹ They were involved in other discoveries,³⁷² including at Broken Hill, where the ‘black boy, Henry Campbell’, became ‘the keenest of prospectors’ and found the richest ore there in 1885.³⁷³ There was no mention of his receiving a reward. In Victoria, some Aborigines successfully prospected and fossicked for alluvial gold, sometimes alongside white miners.³⁷⁴ ‘One of the most spectacular finds in the early days of the gold rushes’ in New South Wales was the ‘Hundred-weight of Gold’ found by ‘an aborigine named Jemmy Irving, employed by Dr Kerr, owner of a sheep station in the Bathurst district’. In July 1851, when driving sheep,

Jemmy saw three pieces of detached rock and tried to turn over the largest with a stick. It proved to be much heavier than he expected. Stooping down, he noticed, lying beside the stone, a piece of yellow metal. Turning over the lump, Jemmy saw that

³⁶⁸ Douglas Fetherling, *The Gold Crusades: A social history of gold rushes, 1849-1929* (rev. ed., Toronto, 1997), p. 181.

³⁶⁹ Fetherling, p. 165.

³⁷⁰ Fetherling, pp. 128-130.

³⁷¹ Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended: A history of Australian mining* (Melbourne, 1963), p. 26.

³⁷² Blainey, pp. 169, 171.

³⁷³ Roy Bridges, *From Silver to Steel: The romance of the Broken Hill Proprietary* (Melbourne, 1920), pp. 109-110.

³⁷⁴ David ‘Fred’ Cahir, ‘The Attraction of Gold Mining in Victoria for Aboriginal People’, *Journal of Australasian Mining History*, vol. 6 (September 2008), pp. 47-56.

the whole of the undersurface consisted of the same metal. Before heading his sheep for home he examined the two other masses of rock and they, too, were heavy and charged with the same mysterious yellow stuff.³⁷⁵

Although he did not know what he had found, he knew that it was unusual, hid the stone from a white shepherd, and took it to his employer.³⁷⁶ ‘Dr Kerr presented black Jimmy’, as the author now called him, ‘and his brother with a flock of sheep, two saddle-horses and rations; he also supplied them with a team of bullocks to plough some ground, in which they planted a crop of maize and potatoes’. But the story did not have a profitable ending for the discoverer: after diggers rushed to where the find had been made ‘the two blacks parted with most of their sheep for tobacco and grog; the remainder were bought for a song by neighbouring station owners’.³⁷⁷ In many outback fields, Aboriginals were used by prospectors ‘to tend their horses, to guide them to water, and to look for gold; the honour of finding many valuable finds no doubt belonged to, though was never credited to, blackboys’.³⁷⁸ The last discovery was in 1932; ‘his master’ pegged out the find.³⁷⁹

An Aboriginal historian, Galiina (Kal) Ellwood, seeking to discover Aboriginals who had been written out of history, has traced about 22 named individuals, 17 named families, and believes there were an unknown number of nameless Aboriginals who were miners and prospectors in northern Queensland.³⁸⁰ Some achieved ‘economic success and social recognition within European society’, working with and sometimes employing non-Aboriginals.³⁸¹ Several Aboriginals, including one woman,

³⁷⁵ James Jarvis, ‘Early Discoveries in New South Wales’, in *Gold in Australia*, ed. Charles Barrett (Melbourne, 1951), pp. 18-19. This appears to be the find mentioned as happening on the Turon diggings: John Shaw, *A Tramp to the Diggings: Being notes of a ramble in Australia and New Zealand in 1852* (London, 1852), p. 255.

³⁷⁶ Jarvis, p. 19.

³⁷⁷ Jarvis, p. 20.

³⁷⁸ Blainey, p. 173.

³⁷⁹ Blainey, p. 321.

³⁸⁰ Galiina (Kal) Ellwood, ‘Aboriginal Prospectors and Miners of Tropical Queensland, from Pre-Contact Times to ca. 1950’, *Journal of Australasian Mining History*, vol. 12 (October 2014), pp. 59, 62, 75.

³⁸¹ Ellwood, p. 59.

found copper and gold, and had settlements or lodes or claims named after them.³⁸² Some families were believed to have made 'a living from gold'.³⁸³ Tracing their names was made more difficult by some having European names or using dummy Europeans to avoid 'the Protection Act which deprived Aborigines of civil rights'.³⁸⁴ 'It would appear that Aborigines were able to possess miner's rights and claims but in order to be granted mining leases they needed to go into partnerships with non-Aboriginal people'.³⁸⁵ Nor were they well rewarded; although one successful prospector, Pluto, had £196 in his bank account in 1912, other miners at the Argylla copper mine were paid 'with flour and corned beef', and men and women working at Russell River received 'food and clothing in return for their labour'.³⁸⁶ Pluto's wife Kitty received a full government pension for being the only Aboriginal woman in Queensland to find a goldfield,³⁸⁷ clearly a unique honour. One alleged honour was having 'kingplates', meaning inscribed brass breastplates, bestowed on them,³⁸⁸ but the inscription on one, 'Tubby the Terrible, King of the Kalkadoons',³⁸⁹ does not sound respectful.

In New Zealand, in contrast, Maori not only made many discoveries but, like Pakeha, received the credit for doing so, registered their ownership of these finds, and benefited financially.

³⁸² Ellwood, pp. 66, 70, 71.

³⁸³ Ellwood, p. 68.

³⁸⁴ Ellwood, p. 70.

³⁸⁵ Ellwood, p. 71.

³⁸⁶ Ellwood, pp. 65, 69.

³⁸⁷ Ellwood, p. 71.

³⁸⁸ Ellwood, pp. 64, 67.

³⁸⁹ Ellwood, p. 65.