

Whirinaki Church and Urupa

(Upper Hutt's earliest known church and cemetery)

The Whirinaki Church and Urupa was once situated on the former Native Reserve Section No 84. The area where the church and urupa were situated is behind and part of the tennis court at St Patricks College in Silverstream.

The publication "*Upper Hutt - The History*" by J A Kelleher reads;

"At the entrance to the upper valley, in a turn of the track called Whirinaki, Ngati Tama moving up from Port Nicholson would establish a Christian chapel, as part of a village, before European churchmen were on the job. One day it would be Silverstream".

"One Pakeha version had the pa in place as early as 1837. It became the abode of the chief Taringakuri from Taranaki, known to the European settlers as Dog's Ear when he was at Kaiwharawhara".

(Reference Upper Hutt the History by J A Kelleher 1991 Upper Hutt City Council Wright & Carman Upper Hutt page 13)

Te Kaeaea



(Reference Archives NZ Wellington Surveyors Field Book No 58 page 73)

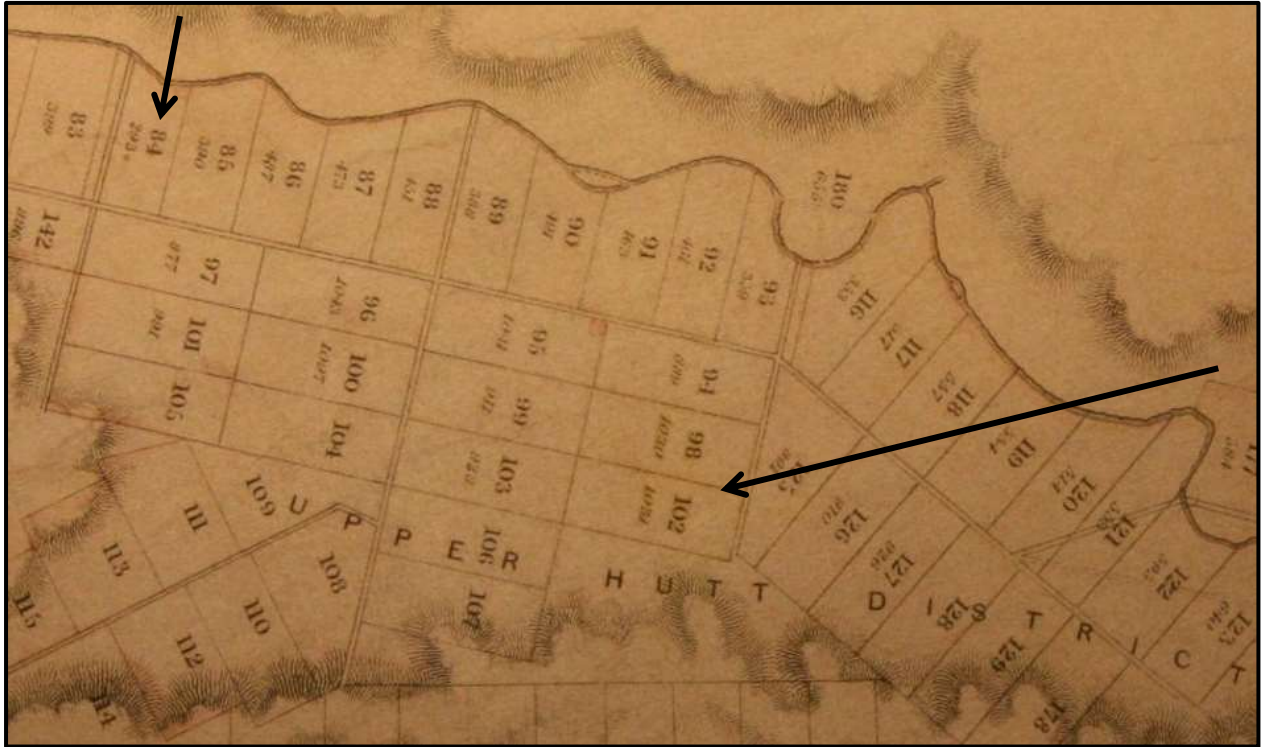
In 1839 Te Kaeaea and his people were settled in Kaiwharawhara in Poneke (Port Nicholson). Te Kaeaea was among those chiefs who accepted payment for the greater Wellington area. He welcomed the arrival of the settlers [New Zealand Company] and on 29 April 1840 signed the Treaty of Waitangi.

(Reference website Te Ara The Encyclopedia of New Zealand Nga Tangata Taumata Rau Dictionary of New Zealand Biography Te Kaeaea)

There is additional information about Te Kaeaea (also known as Taringakuri) and his followers in the Te Ara article but nothing about the Whirinaki church or urupa.

The early New Zealand Company surveyors began to explore the Hutt Valley accompanied by local Maori guides. The surveyors followed the early Maori paths between the Hutt Valley and Remutaka Hill. The 1843 survey map records the 100 acre sections including Section No 84.

1843 Survey map – Section No 84 – Native Reserve
(Native Reserve Section No 98 & Section No 102)



(Reference New Zealand Defence Force Map Library 1843 NZ Company Survey Map saved as IMG_24132.jpg)

In the early 1840s surveyors field books there is no mention of any Maoris residing in the Upper Hutt district or information about the Whirinaki Church or Urupa.

Section No 84 was selected by J M Stokes [agent] for William Maxwell who held the land order No 293. In July 1851 William Maxwell was recorded as the owner of Section No 84.

(Reference Archives New Zealand Wellington R17533447 ADXS 19556 LS-W65 1 21 register of sections country districts Upper Hutt)

On 16 August 1853 the Crown Grant for Section No 84 was issued to William Maxwell.

(Source Archives New Zealand Wellington reference ADXS 19555 LS-W65 3 43 register of Hutt Valley selections and also outwards letters October 1848 to November 1850)

Wellington Independent newspaper 24 January 1855

Eligible Property at the Hutt - **SECTION NO 84** (Adjoining Mr Cotter's Section)

Mr J H Wallace has been honoured with instructions to sell by Public Auction at his extensive Land sales at Mr Bucks "Travellers Rest" Taita on Thursday 01st February 1855 at one o'clock – That splendid section of Country Land No 84 Upper Hutt having a frontage to the Road and bounded by the river at the back. Numerous applications having been made to the Proprietor W Maxwell Esq., for the purchase of portions of the above section and being desirous of suiting the views of intending purchasers and wishing to place it within the means of the small capitalist he has determined upon having the section surveyed and divided into lots of 10 acres each. The section will be laid out in such a manner as to give each purchaser the advantage of a frontage reserving a right of outlet to each allotment. The superior quality of the land the valuable timber

upon it situation and other advantages need no comment. The plan will be ready in a few days a copy of which will be deposited at Mr Bucks Traveller's Rest Taita and at the office of the Auctioneer. J H Wallace Land and Estate Agent Lambton Quay – The Town Acre belonging to this section No 237 Tory Street is for sale by private contract – Title Crown Grant – Terms of Sale 12 January 1855

(Reference Papers past website Wellington Independent newspaper 24 -27 January 1855)

02 February 1855

Mr Dear Bell

Taringa Kuri and his Natives are very anxious to purchase a Section of Mr Maxwells No 84 at the Hutt the price is £470 cash do you think the section is worth this amount or would you enquire of Mark what he consider the value of it could you render any assistance in advancing some money out of the land fund to make this purchase for the Natives if it is a good investment by their undertaking to repay the sum by instalments leaving the Crown Grant in your hands as security until the advance is refunded.

It is very desirable to keep Taringa Kuri in this Province as some of his followers might leave for Taranaki and take part in the disturbances there if we cannot by some means secure their residence here by purchasing land for them.

Yours faithfully Donald McLean 02 February 1855

[Written in red No 55/62 Donald McLean Very desirous for the purchase of Section 84 Hutt from Mr Maxwell for the Natives answered 02 February 1855]

(Reference Archives NZ Wellington reference R24432306 ADXS 19480 LS-W2 4/ 1855/62 from Donald McLean date 02 February 1855 subject Very desirous for purchase of section 84 Hutt from Mr Maxwell for the Natives year 1855 – Taringa Kuri)

In 1855 the Crown purchased Section No 84 from William Maxwell for a Native Reserve.

(Source Archives New Zealand Wellington reference ADXS 19555 LS-W65 3 43 register of Hutt Valley selections and also outwards letters October 1848 to November 1850)

In 1857 the Ngata Tama followers of Te Kaeaea settled on Native Reserve Section No 84. The Native Reserve was purchased by Iraia, Wiremu Tamihana and Taiuha Tumoana.

Te Kaeaea cultivated the Native Reserve land on Sections No 98 and Section No 102 which later became the Wallaceville Animal Research Station and is now the Wallaceville Estate housing development.

In 1859 the weatherboard Whirinaki Church was erected by Mr Sidney Hirst a carpenter who arrived in New Zealand on the "George Fyfe" in 1842. The church was built on Section No 84 fronting the main road in Silverstream. The cost of the church was paid for by the Maoris from the Whirinaki kainga.

(Reference Archives New Zealand reference R24435042 ADXS 19480 LS-W2 11/ 1862/205 from Secretary of Crown Lands Wellington date 25 September 1862 subject Requesting to deliver the crown grant of a certain section at the Upper Hutt to Mr Wardell Resident Magistrate)

On Sunday 10 April 1859 the Whirinaki Church held its first service taken the (Church of England) Anglican Minister Rev Samuel Williams.

The Whirinaki Urupa was established behind the church but the date and details are unknown. I have been unable to locate any burial records.

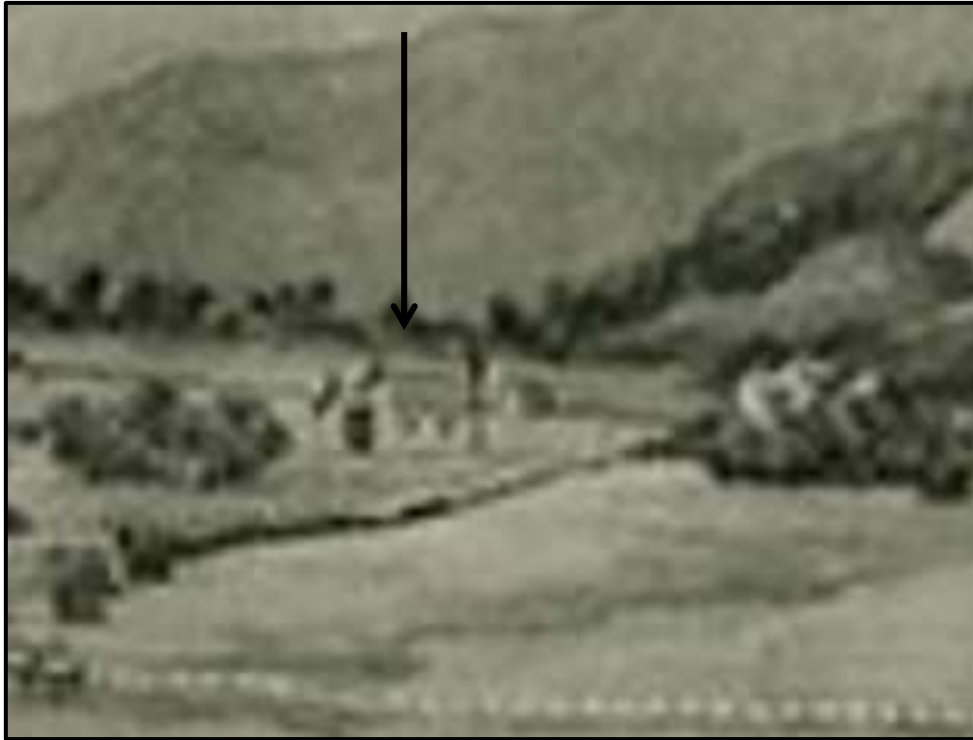
The Whirinaki Church was marked on the 1864 Survey map and is located on page 7 of this document. The painting of Silverstream by C Audrey includes the church.

Whirinaki Church – Silverstream – C Audrey painting



(Reference Upper Hutt City Library Heritage collection recollect website Whirinaki Chapel by C Audrey painting P5-74-778)

Whirinaki Church - Silverstream



(Reference Upper Hutt City Library Heritage collection recollect website Whirinaki Chapel by C Audrey painting P5-74-778)

Colonist Newspaper Friday 29 April 1859

Those natives some years ago were living at Waikanae, under the charge of Archdeacon Hadfield but when peace between the tribes was established, they returned to their homes at Taranaki, and now they have no teachers. There are many other tribes in a like condition.

There is another body of people still nearer to us in the valley of the Hutt, they are much scattered, but three Sundays ago, there were 200 of these assembled on the occasion of the opening of a weather board church which they had built at their own expense at the Upper Hutt, when the Rev. S. Williams administered the Lord's Supper to forty communicants, on which occasion the Offertory collection amounted to upwards of four pounds, and on the Sunday following, I had a congregation of forty at the Lower Hutt, when that venerable old chief Te Puni, whose portrait is hanging before us, was present, and after service, according to custom, attended school and repeated in his place the catechism of our church, but all these natives, since the removal of Mr. Hutton, are without instruction. It has been proposed that in the districts where the population consists of a mixture of the races, the clergyman who has charge of our own countrymen shall be also held responsible for the native race, but experience tells us in most cases the system will not work. A clergyman whose special care is the white population, having withal a new language to learn, finds that the charge is difficult; and while the English settlers will have seven eights of his attention, the natives will scarcely receive the remaining portion. The only remedy for this state of things is to raise up a native pastorate, and I am thankful at being able to state for the information of the Synod, that there is every prospect that this provision will be made. There is already the Rev. Rotu Waitou at the East Cape, who after living for a long period under the care of your lordship, was ordained, and has now been several years a native clergyman much respected by his countrymen over whom he exercises a most beneficial influence. Then again there is the Rev. Riwai Te Ahu, who was with us at St. Peter's church yesterday he too is a most satisfactory instance to shew how well the plan of a native pastorate is likely to succeed. There are many other natives also preparing for ordination at the central schools at Turanga, Auckland, and elsewhere.

(Reference Papers past website Colonist newspaper 29 April 1859 page 3)

The same newspaper article above appeared in the Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronical newspaper on 14 May 1859.

Wellington Independent newspaper 25 October 1859

The Ven Archdeacon Hadfield gave notice that on next sitting day he would move – That the Standing Committee be authorised to consider and act according to their discretion in reference to an offer made by Te Harawira about a chapel at Winnaki [sic] in the Upper Hutt.

(Reference Papers past website Wellington Independent newspaper 25 October 1859 page 5)

The question now ask is what was the offer made to Ven Archdeacon Hadfield by Te Harawira regarding the chapel at Whirinaki in Upper Hutt? I have been unable to locate anything about the offer.

“The chapel was offered to the newly established Church of England by chief Te Harawira. Standing Committee declined the offer on the grounds that there was no established title to the on which it stood, so it could not change hands. But it went on being used, including by the first Upper Hut vicar Edward Herring”.

(Reference St John’s Anglican Church Trentham 1863-2013, Mother Church of the Upper Valley by Julia Stuart page 7)

Missionary, Bishop Octavius Hadfield (Anglican) had studied the Maori language and spoke Te Reo Maori. The Bishop of Wellington Octavius Hadfield conducted the burial service of Te Kaeaea when he was buried at the Te Puni urupa in Petone in 1871.

(Reference website Te Ara The Encyclopedia of New Zealand Nga Tangata Taumata Rau Dictionary of New Zealand Biography)

The 1862 correspondence below confirms that the Whirinaki church was built by Sidney Hirst.

Crown Land Office Wellington 24 September 1862

Sir

I have the honour to request that you will deliver to Mr WARDELL Resident Magistrate at Wairarapa the Crown Grant for a Section at the Upper Hutt upon which a Church was erected by the late Mr Sidney HIRST and which was sold to certain natives some years back to whom the purchase money for the section was advanced by Government. The balance due by the Natives on this purchase has been remitted by Government.

I have the honour to be Sir Your obedient Servant – Alfred DOMETT

To Commissioner of Crown Lands Wellington

[Written in red Sec for Cr Lands Requesting to Deliver the Crown Grant of a certain Section at the Upper Hutt to Mr Wardell R.Ch No 62/305 received 25 September 1862 Answered 26 September 1862]

(Reference Archives New Zealand reference R24435042 ADXS 19480 LS-W2 11/ 1862/205 from Secretary of Crown Lands Wellington date 25 September 1862 subject Requesting to deliver the crown grant of a certain section at the Upper Hutt to Mr Wardell Resident Magistrate)

In October 1861 the Rev Herrings wife Margaret’s wrote a letter which read *“there is no church in the Upper Hutt”* but in later letter she wrote about *“a little native chapel”*. Also her letters read: *“Ed trudged down to the Maori chapel in the lower road this morning and saw some of his future flock”*.

(Reference Alexander Turnbull Library MS-Papers-6902 Margaret Herring b 838 Letters saved as IMG_4165 to IMG_4208)

At the village Inn the van stops, you jump out, pay your 2/- each and enter the car for the Upper Hutt, for your transit in which you will have to pay 2/6 each leaving the village you come shortly on another Pa very superior to the last. Neat wooden houses, cultivated fields, and a little native chapel. These are the dwellings of Te Pine’s people. As yet we have not seen Te Pine but the Bishop tells us it is a treat to see and know him. A fine intelligent old man, with long grey beard and as worthy of respect in reality as in appearance. A perfect contrast to the chief of the next Pa. Rangikuri (I am not quite sure of the name, But it means *“the dog’s ear”* – Te Pine lives in a nice wooden house with bright polished glass windows and neat garden all around, he has comfortable chairs and tables – Passing on we come to more English houses scattered along the

road, the valley begins to narrow, by and bye a little sparkling stream (by name the Silver Stream) crosses our path, the horses plunge through it as a matter of course and we come to what are called the Gorges; and the gorges they are. The hills overhanging the road most threateningly on one side while the river rolls past broad and deep on the other.

(Reference Alexander Turnbull Library MS-Papers-6902 Margaret Herring b 838 Letters saved as IMG_4165 to IMG_4208)

The letter above refers to the Pa and little native chapel in the Hutt Valley not the Whirinaki church in Silverstream.

Tenders for Building a Church at the Upper Hutt will be received until 13th April by the Rev J E Herring Upper Hutt. Plans and Specification may be seen at the Rev F Thatcher's Thorndon Parsonage Wellington. The Committee are not bound to accept the lowest tender. John E Herring 13 March 1863. [This tender was for St John's church in Trentham].

(Reference Papers past website Wellington Independent newspaper 14 March 1863 page 2)

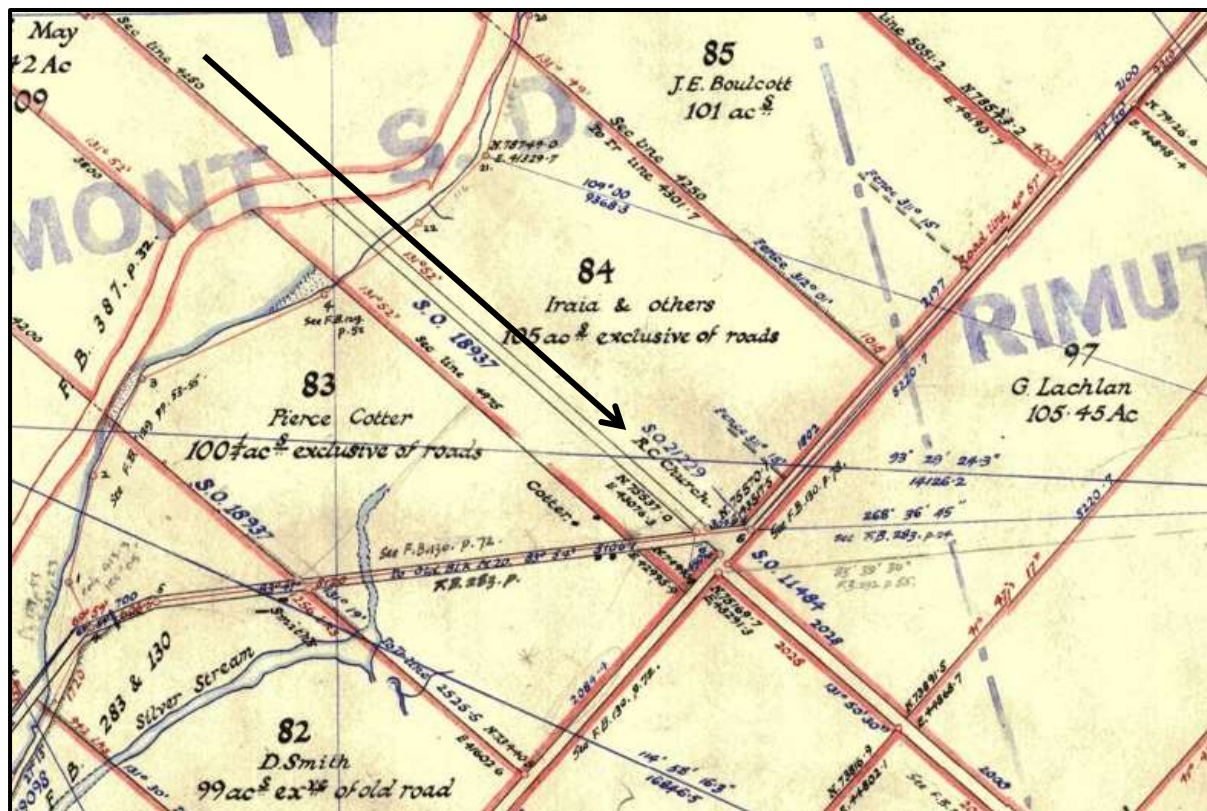
In 1864 Rev John Edward Herring gave a service to the local Maori in "their neat little chapel" at Whirinaki. In the same year Iraia, Te Kerei and Hamuera were resident in the Upper Hutt district

(Reference Wellington Independent newspaper 16 February 1864 page 3)

The 1864 survey map on the next page records the position of Section No 84, the names of the owners of section 84 Iraia & others and where the Church was situated.

Why the initials R C are recorded on the survey map before the word "Church" is not known. The church denomination was not Roman Catholic but Church of England (Anglican). Perhaps R.C. was short for rural church.

1864 - Section No 84 – Iraia & others – R C Church



(Reference 1864 Map Survey Office SO 10985 saved as WNC_SO_10985_1_1.jpg)

In 1871 Te Kaeaea died in Silverstream and was buried in an unmarked grave at the Te Puni Urupa in Petone. Bishop of Wellington Octavius Hadfield conducted the burial service.

On 09 December 1872 a Crown Grant for Section No 84 was issued to Iraia and Others. On 19 December 1872 the conveyance from Iraia and Others for Section No 84 went to Pierce Cotter.

To the Commissioner of Crown Lands Wellington

We hereby authorise Pierce Cotter to receive the Deed of Grant in our favour for section No 84 Hutt District

Dated 09 December 1872

Iraia X & Wiremu Tamihana & Taituha Tumoana or Timaka Tumoana

Witnesses E C Baker Country Interpreter Wellington & P Book Settler of Wellington & C Henzie Surveyor Wellington

[Written in red 72/523 Iraia & others authority for Pierce Cotter to receive Grant for Section 84 Hutt District 09 December 1872 transfer Register 2-1412]

(Reference Archives NZ Wellington R24439846 ADXS 19480 LS-W2 23/ 1872/523 from Iraia [Iraia] and others Wellington date 09 December 1872 subject Authority for Pierce Colter [sic] to receive grant for Section 84 Hutt District year 1872)

To the Commissioner of Crown Land Wellington

We hereby authorise Pierce Cotter to receive Deed of Grant in our favour for section No 84 Hutt District. Dated 09 December 1872

(Signed by) Iraia (his X mark) - Wiremu Tamihana - Taituha Tumoana

Witnesses

Baker interpreter Wellington – Booth settler Wellington – Humphries surveyor Wellington

(Reference Archives New Zealand Wellington ADXS 19480 LS-W2 23 1872/523 Iraia and others (Maori) Wellington 09 December 1872 Authority for Pierce Cotter to receive grant for Section 84 Hutt)

1872 - Uncomfortable rumours are rife as to the intention of the Hutt Maoris, who are selling off their lands and stock. The fact is that a portion of the Ngatitua have sold a section of 116 acres to Mr Pierce Cotter. That they intend to migrate somewhere is evident and a report which we are unable to verify states that they are going to Taranaki.

(Reference Papers past website Evening Post newspaper 19 December 1872 page 2)

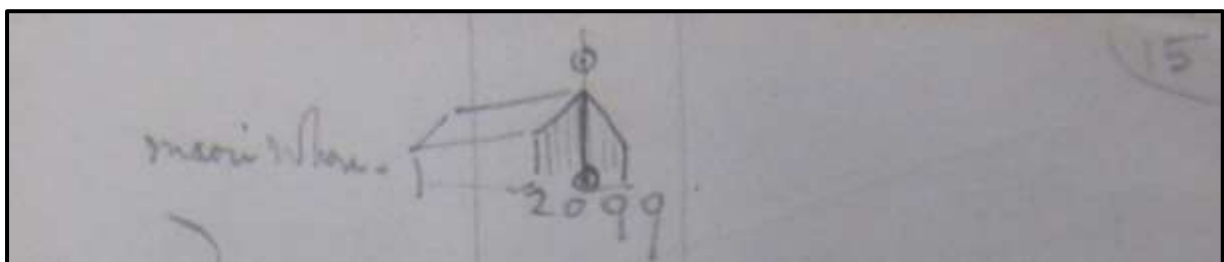
After the death of Te Kaeaea it appears that the Ngata Tama and/or Nganti Toa Maoris decided to sell the section and return to Taranaki.

In 1873 Thomas Cotter was resident in Silverstream and his father Pierce Cotter in Greytown.

(Reference Papers past website Wairarapa Standard newspaper 12 April 1873 page 3)

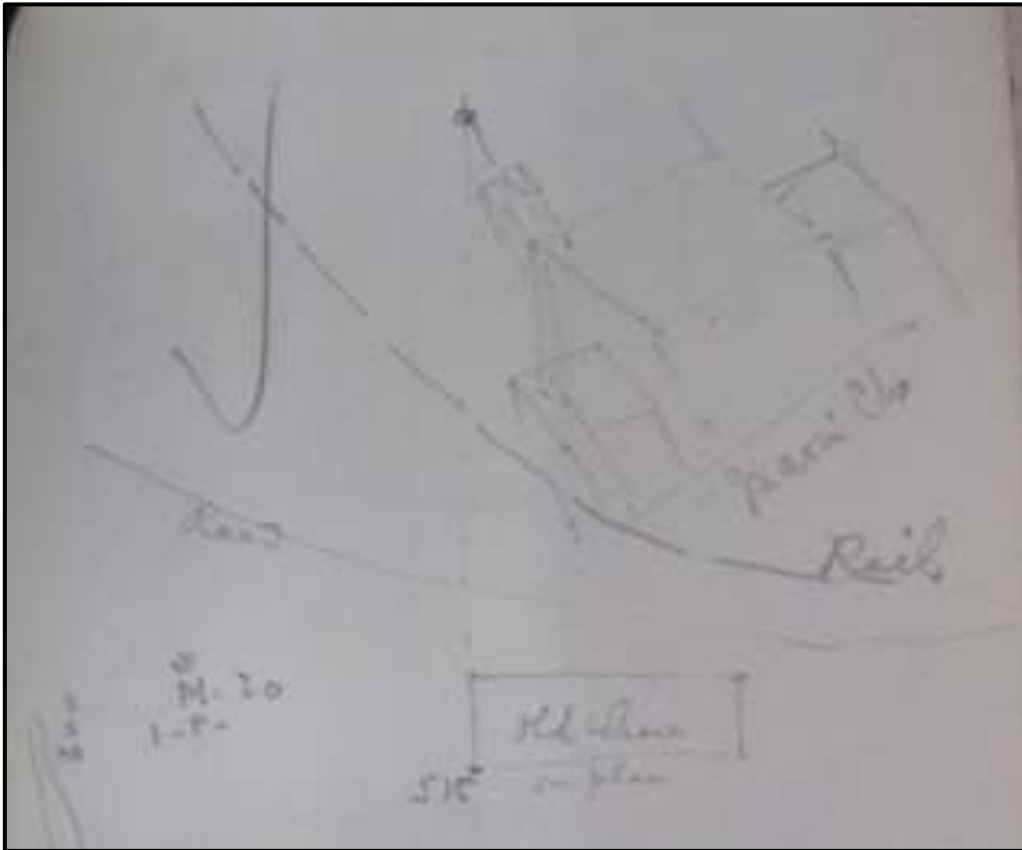
The various 1874 surveyors Field Diaries record sketches of a Maori whare, Church & graveyard (urupa) behind the church (Whirinaki), Maori fences, Whare, Maori Church and Old whare.

Maori Whare - 1874



(Reference Archives NZ Wellington 1874 Survey book No 8 saved as IMG_2484.JPG)

Maori Church – Old Whare - 1874



(Reference Archives NZ Wellington 1874 AATE W3401 Box 2 Survey Field book No 8 = IMG_2485.JPG & IMG_2470.JPG)

We can now confirm from the survey field books that in 1874 the Whirinaki Church and urupa were still situated on the land of Section No 84 in Silverstream.

In 1880 the conveyance of Section No 84 of Pierce Cotter was leased the land to his son Thomas Cotter.

10February 1887 from Cotter to Rev E H Bell and others

Thomas COTTER died in 1889 and the Trustee was E A Cotter.

New Zealand Mail newspaper 15 June 1894

Camera Notes – Photographic Exhibition - Mr W C Stephens the energetic secretary of the Club shows a first class enlarged photograph of Mr J H Pope (chief inspector of Native schools) seated in smoking cap and dressing gown in front of his sidereal telescope. It is a speaking likeness. Mr Stephens has also a variety of smaller works all manifesting careful treatment. The little river study “*Three Men in a Boat*” a picturesque sketch of the bush road, Kereru, the “*deserted Maori church at Silverstream*”, and a skilful reproduction from a steel engraving of Turners “*Oberwessek on the Rhine*” are all deserving of notice

(Reference Papers past website New Zealand Mail newspaper 15 June 1894 page 9)

We can now confirm from the newspaper article that in 1894 the Whirinaki Church and urupa were still situated on the land of Section No 84 in Silverstream. I am searched but cannot locate the image of the deserted Maori church at Silverstream from the Photographic Exhibition.

Folk lore states that the church was destroyed by fire c1900 but I have been unable to locate any details about the fire.

Whirinaki Urupa – Silverstream - 1920



(Reference Trentham Camp and Upper Hutt's Untold Military History by Howard Weddell 2018 page 23)

When was the above photograph of the urupa taken? It had to be after the church was destroyed but when was that? I have been unable to answer these questions.

In February 1931 the new St Patricks College was opened on part of Section No 84. In November 1933 the new Home of Compassion was dedicated on land adjoining the college.

(Reference Papers past website Hutt News newspaper 08 January 1931 page 5 & Evening Post newspaper 18 October 1933 page 7)

St Patrick College Tennis Court - Silverstream 2017



St Patrick College Tennis Court

Upper Hutt Weekly Review newspaper 18 June 1937

Correspondence – The Maori village where St Patrick's College now stands was just Maoris, dogs and peach trees with a little church and a cemetery. J MARTIN [full article not transcribed]

(Reference Papers past website Upper Hutt Weekly Review newspaper 18 June 1937 page 3)

There are many questions without answers regarding the final history of the church and urupa. Perhaps in time we will locate the answers but at least we know they existed and we all know a little about the history of the Whirinaki Church and Urupa.
