



The land at the northern end of Ōrewa Beach looks very similar to how it would have done in the times when it was called Nukumea Pā or first saw the construction of Ōrewa House, the oldest building in our area.

At the northern end of Ōrewa Beach there is a stand of native bush that survived the changes that came when pākehā arrived on these shores. I visited this place often as a little girl, going to the Te Kawerau controlled Nukuhau Pā which overlooked Nukumea stream. My tribe, Ngāti Rongo, and Te Kawerau were allies and together our tribes faced the same immediate threat - Ngāpuhi. I would often sit with the elders of the tribes on the ridgeline high above the beach and stream, looking out over the ocean, as discussions were held as to how best to combat the musket. Some urged us to flee south in the face of this deadly weapon, others maintained that we should trade for our own muskets and prepare for the conflict we knew would come.

It was a mark of how important this settlement was that it was the last inhabited pā site in the region, although it met the same fate as all the others. In 1821 a heavily armed Ngāpuhi raiding party seeking utu (revenge) struck the pā, with the defensive trenches and small number of muskets used by Te Kawerau proving no match. Many were killed, with others fleeing the only place they had ever known. A few hardy souls stayed in the pā after the battle, those too old to start again somewhere else. They used the plentiful fishing grounds, cared for each other and waited for their time to die. My curse was knowing I would live to see their death too.

Just like the Kawerau and Ngāti Rongo peoples, Nukuhau Pā has disappeared. Today this important place has all but been forgotten, its defensive ditches overgrown with scrub, the whare and people returned to the soil and the flat living area of the pā now home to mighty kauri trees. The land, so unusual for this area, has become a place for people to visit with nature, a relic of the past with a view that was similar to those I had seen with my own eyes as a child. This reserve has been through the hands of many owners, both Māori and pākehā, who perhaps realised the beauty of this spot, mostly preserving it as it had always been.

The first pākehā owner of the land was Captain Rhodes who purchased it and had military forces fell many kauri trees to build Ōrewa House in 1857, on the beach side of Nukumea Stream. I worked for him in the new house for a couple of years in his role as postmaster, receiving mail that arrived by boat at the beach and helping deliver it to the few homes in

the region. It kept me busy and perhaps more importantly, isolated me away from the people who may recognise me. I liked the captain as he was a bit like me, a go-between. He had married a Māori wahine and had two children that looked a little like speckled potatoes too. I loved them all the more. I would often speak with the captain as we rode horses around the region, explaining why Māori had left the area, pointing out the unfairness of the Mahurangi Purchase to tribes, and showing him the best fishing spots or edible foods from the forest. He took his family away in 1861, being replaced by Captain Kripner of Bohemia, and a small period of normalcy and the **hint of family life** went with them.

When I next visited Ōrewa House it would be as a boarding house guest of the Eaves family, who had taken over ownership of the land in 1919. It was the late 1940's and my old postmaster's residence had taken on a new life, now filled with travellers. They, like me, had come via the new road that ran parallel to the beach. Most of the guests when I visited were shattered men that had returned from war with broken bodies and minds. These men did not dwell on their misfortune however, concealing their mental scars as best they could and not letting their physical ailments slow them down. Mrs Eaves, our host, provided a great atmosphere for all of us, holding sailing races in the stream during the day, stringing party lights from the trees and playing the latest dance music at night. Hearty home cooked meals and lawn games were the norm, as well as day trips over the hill on the new road extension that had been cut into the hill. The soldier's destination was always the same, the healing waters of Waiwera where they hoped to ease the physical pains from their time in service to their nation.

It would be Alice Eaves that eventually secured a large part of the heavily forested land that loomed over Ōrewa House. Her stated aim upon her deathbed in 1955 was to leave the land to the council so that the forested area would be made available for the enjoyment of the public. It was named in her honour becoming Alice Eaves Bush Park. Her son Victor (who also has a park named after him) extended the area by adding in the land that was originally Nukuhau Pā in 1973. In the years since, the council has created a walking track, large wooden boardwalks and placed signs that educate walkers about some of the history of this special place. One sign highlights the oldest kauri tree in the reserve that is estimated to have stood for over 800 years. My Kawerau friends and I would often hide in the hollow trunk of this ancient wonder when playing hide and seek, marvelling at being able to stand inside a living tree. When I walk through the park now (or stand in the might kauri) I am thankful to all the people, knowing that they all acted as guardians of this land.



The images here (left to right) show what Ōrewa House looked like when it was run as a boarding house by Alice Eaves. Additions have been made overtime, including signage throughout the reserve that now bears her name.

- 1) Who was seen as the biggest threat to the tribe living at Nukuhau Pā?
 - a) Pakehā.
 - b) Ngāti Rongo
 - c) Ngāpuhi
- 2) Who felled the kauri trees that were used to make Ōrewa House?
 - a) Captain Rhodes.
 - b) Military forces.
 - c) Te Kawerau tribe.
- 3) What was the job of Captain Rhodes and Captain Kripner when stationed at Ōrewa?
- 4) When did Captain Rhodes and his family leave Ōrewa?
 - a) 1857
 - b) 1861
 - c) 1919
- 5) Why was the land where Nukuhau Pā so unusual for this area?
 - a) The land had many kauri trees.
 - b) It had similar views to the past.
 - c) Both of the above.
- 6) Which one of these did Alice Eaves not offer her guests?
 - a) Cooking classes.
 - b) Day trips.
 - c) Sailing races.
- 7) List three options that the Te Kawerau tribe considered before the Ngāpuhi tribe attacked in 1821.
- 8) What is one experience from the story that Wikitoria had, that was the same as what it was when she was a child?
- 9) Why does Wikitoria view her long life as a curse in the second paragraph?
- 10) Briefly explain what you think Wikitoria means when she uses the words, “**hint of family life**”.

Word Salad

There are many unusual words and phrases in the story you have just read. Complete the following tasks to ensure your understanding:

- 1) Find the definitions of the following English words.
 - a) allies
 - b) flee
 - c) hardy
 - d) plentiful
 - e) relic
 - f) dwell
 - g) misfortune
 - h) marvel
- 2) Use each of the words above in its own sentence - check to see that it makes sense!

Parts of speech: Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that is used in place of a noun (a naming word). Identify the pronoun in each of these sentences:

- a) The horse jumped high over the fence and he struggled to stay on.
- b) It was so good to see them, a shape of how New Zealand might be.
- c) After seeing the view, I walked back along the path.



This is a model from Auckland Museum that shows a pā with similar terrain to that at Nukuhau Pā, within Alice Eaves Scenic Reserve.