



*Today Tiritiri is a Department of Conservation reserve where bird life flourishes. The lighthouse still shines as a beacon to guide ships to safety.*

Tiritiri Mātangi had always been an important, if isolated, outpost for the Kawerau people as it was close to the important shark fishing grounds nearby. The grounds were an important winter food resource for many tribes so the area had been heavily fought over, that is until the Ngāpuhi people had swept the land clean during the musket wars. Some of the Kawerau tribe reoccupied it in the 1830's but all Maori had left by 1856.

The island had been controversially included in the Mahurangi Purchase which was disputed by multiple tribes that claimed ownership. In the 1867 Land Court Case, Māori tribes pointed out that the island had not been included on the purchase documents, with the Crown being unable to produce the sale agreement. The judge however decided that the Crown should continue to own the land, especially seeing as the government had built the country's first lighthouse in 1865 to mark the approach to Auckland's Waitemata Harbour. The land had been cleared by the Crown and farmers who would burn off any bush or trees, sow grass seed and run large numbers of sheep.

Never wanting to be too far from the places I loved, yet still remain isolated from anyone that might recognise me, I disappeared to my island retreat. I walked the deserted beaches and looked out over the water to the Whangaparaoa Peninsula's beaches and headlands, my home for close to a century. The only other person on the island was the lighthouse keeper, who was easy to avoid as he was usually drunk. This was commonplace in both Māori and pākehā society during this time. One incident that highlighted this was the wreck of the cargo ship *Triumph* in 1883 onto the rocks directly under the Tiritiri lighthouse. The *Triumph's* captain was drunk and had retired to his cabin, explaining to his inexperienced second in command before he left, to steer for the light. He managed to do this so well that the boat steamed right into the rocks at full speed!

I had settled in a small valley that still clung to the last of the original stands of bush and trees, in one of the shacks built by the unfortunate Chinese workers that had been marooned here for months after the crash of the boat *Triumph*. Chinaman's Bay was this place's name now. Here I listened to the chorus of bird calls made by those that were trying to find a mate in the very small original stand of nature.

- 1) Why did the Kawerau tribe (and others) value Tiritiri Mātangi?
  - a) The winter bird hunting.
  - b) The ability to see all boats travelling.
  - c) The nearby shark fishing grounds.
- 2) What was the main reason why the **Triumph** crashed?
  - a) The captain was drunk.
  - b) The lighthouse keeper was drunk.
  - c) The crew was incompetent.
- 3) What is the reason why part of Tiritiri Mātangi is called Chinaman's Bay?
- 4) Why do you think that Wikitoria labelled the Chinese as unfortunate?
  - a) Because their ship was wrecked.
  - b) Because their houses could best be described as shacks.
  - c) Because they had been marooned on the island.
- 5) What was the key reason why the judge granted the island to the government?
  - a) It had already been turned into farms.
  - b) There was a lighthouse there now.
  - c) It was at the mouth of Auckland's Waitemata Harbour.
- 6) When was the lighthouse constructed?
  - a) 1856
  - b) 1865
  - c) 1867
- 7) Why did multiple Māori tribes feel they had a good case to get Tiritiri Mātangi back in the **1867** court case?
- 8) What three things did farmers, backed by the Crown, do to change the original landscape of the island?
- 9) Where on the island would have been the best place for Wikitoria to hear native birds?
- 10) Do you agree with the decision of the land court to keep the land in government possession? Provide your reasoning.

### 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) outpost
  - b) controversial
  - c) approach
  - d) sow
  - e) marooned
- 2) Use each of the five words/phrases in five separate sentences using your own words.

### Parts of Speech:

The following sentences have many different parts of speech. Identify a verb, an adverb and a conjunction in each sentence:

- a) Ray spoke loudly so the students could hear him.
- b) Many of the birds flew swiftly because of the stiff breeze.
- c) After they slowly climbed the steps, they had a great view.

### Did You Know?

*The last lighthouse keeper on Tiritiri Mātangi, before it became fully automated in 1984, was Ray Walter and his wife (seen in the picture below). They loved the place so much that when they were replaced by automation, they went to work for the Department of Conservation on Tiritiri Mātangi. They planted thousands of native trees, eradicated pests and cared for all the native birdlife that made the island their new home. They are still board trustees of the island, caring for this important habitat.*



*Local Histories / Mātauranga Māori*

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