10. TAWHITINUI MARAE

TE WERANGA

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The phrase “Te Weranga” or “the burning” describes a time of conflict and sadness in the Tauranga Moana rohe. During the rise of the Hauhau or Pai Mārire movement in the 1860s, many battles occurred between Government troops and a number of hapū, who were trying to defend and continue to occupy their ancestral whenua.

Kōrero passed down through generations explain how many papa kāinga were attacked - settlements that were not fortified or entrenched, but rather areas where many people lived and where gardens thrived. Crops that grew on fertile lands were destroyed by armed constabulary and many people had to flee their villages; there are stories that describe how those who fought attempted to protect their kaumātua from harm, and how women and tamariki were loaded into waka and pushed downstream so that they could escape.

In 1867, conflict over whenua that was being surveyed by the Government for their own purposes was the catalyst for intensified military action which would later be known as the “Tauranga Bush Campaign.”

Taumata, Akeake, Maeneene, Te Irihanga, Te Mahou, Omanawa and Whakamarama were kāinga throughout the Tauranga Moana rohe that were attacked and scorched in an effort to force people from their homelands; the government militia destroyed homes and set fire to long-established gardens with large volumes of crops; these actions devastated the people.

Approximately 290,000 acres of land was taken by means of raupatu (confiscation) during this time and much of it was given to members of the military. Later, large parts of this land would be used for the construction of Tauranga City as it is known today.

The battles, confiscation, and destruction are remembered today; these are the events behind the name Te Weranga - a name that calls us to reflect on these tragic events, and honour our tūpuna who acted bravely in defence of our ancestral whenua.