

100 Years At The Beach

KOITIATA
1917—2017

*Koitiata is a coming and
going kind of place.*

*It's been that way now for
100 years.*

*Some came for a short
time, others for longer, and
some have stayed forever.*

*They lived at the beach and
created Koitiata.*

*Eddy Mason
January 2017*

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NOTES: Several different property and street number systems were in use during the period from 1918 until 1979. To enable the location of properties referenced in this publication, the current street numbering system is used.

Preface to '100 Years At The Beach'

This isn't a comprehensive and detailed history of our village. It is a condensed view, the content being narrowed down to focus on the village itself, from the start-up until it became as it is today. There are a lot of other Koitiata stories to be told, but that is another challenge to be taken up, by somebody else.

So when did this project start? In 2007, when the centenary of the village was raised, a history project also seemed like a good idea. After all, a village of approximately 100 houses, around 100 permanent residents, and only 100 years old wouldn't have much of a story to tell. Would be a bit of a project, collect stuff, slap it together, we'll put it on the internet, no problems. Just needed someone who had nothing better to do for the next 10 years to put their hand up.

Then two events really kicked this off. A binder with a collection of newspaper reports about Koitiata, dating from 1913 arrived. They had been located and borrowed by Trevor Jurgens so that we could take copies. And then a bit later Chris Northover arrived bearing several cartons of old photos, with a comment that there might be some that were taken at the beach. Some were taken at the beach alright, starting from the 1920's. Those two sources of information about the beginning of Koitiata formed the foundation for this story of our history.

Eventually information was turning up from many sources. The hall contained a valuable collection of old committee minutes, newsletters, and other documents. Since those first documents were scanned back in 2007, it has grown into a collection of over 500 files, including documents, media clippings, maps, photos, and other bits of information. And it is still being added to. Recent documents provided by Central Archives via RDC, have been a gold mine of information that filled in many gaps.

It was originally intended that this would be an internet publishing project and that intention was the catalyst for creating the Koitiata web site. The quantity of information to be published wouldn't be too restricted on a web site, but when the decision was made to also have a printed version, size did matter.

So the task of condensing it down into a summary for a printed record began. The focus has been on the earlier period of our history, with the objective to include as many photos and other graphics as possible. After sweat and tears and several discarded versions we now have a 40 page booklet which will give you a broad picture of where Koitiata came from.

Most of the information that has been collected will be posted on the History page of our web-site and all of those documents will be accessible and readable. It is intended that the web-site content will be under similar headings, with some added groups for content and links to all of the source documents and other information.

If there is one thing that stands out in Koitiata's history, it is the tenacity of those who persevered all the way through from the 1920's, while mother nature was attempting to sink their efforts. If those few pioneers had all given up, there would not be any village. It would have reverted back to its original form, a camping and picnic ground.

What have I taken from all of this? There is no substitute for research, as frustrating as it became sometimes. Without the digging and prodding and reading over and over again until the gaps are filled and the bits all slot together, there is no history. The research changed it from memories and conjecture, into a document supported record of where our village came from and how it became what we have now.

Any surprises from the research? Yes, there have been a few. The 1942 aerial photo and the Yarrow connection are a couple. There were others, and it is finds like those and solving the 25 & 27 Rapaki street puzzle that has made it worthwhile.

Of course this would not have been created without our community's input. Thanks to everyone who has dropped in the material that has enabled this project to progress. And thanks especially to those who helped to get follow up information, for being a sounding board, for being critical when needed and especially for providing encouragement when it was required to keep it going. Special thanks to Joyce Smith for being all of the above, with a sharp stick. Creating 100 Years At The Beach is a team project.

Read on and if this whets your appetite for more, delve into the history collection at www.koitiata.nz/history. And if it jogs your memory about a photo or other bit of information that's filed away, dig it out so we can add it to Koitiata/history.

History is like rust, it never sleeps.

Eddy Mason

January 2017

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Map Title: 'Plate X. - Sketch-map from very old Maori sketches, showing early occupation of lower Whanga-ehu and Turakina Valleys by Ngati Apa people.'



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Before The Beginning

The earliest reference for the name Koitiata is in two maps from pre 1909. They were created by T. W. Downes from *"old Maori sketches"* and show Koitiata Stream, but there is no Lake Koitiata or any other Koitiata recorded.

A 1914 map of Koitiata Survey District shows Koitiata Stream and Lake Koitiata, but whether Lake Koitiata was just missed off the 1909 maps or was a name applied by settlers is unknown. At that stage, those appear to be the only three uses of the name Koitiata. It is assumed that the Koitiata Survey District gained its title from the stream and/or lake name.

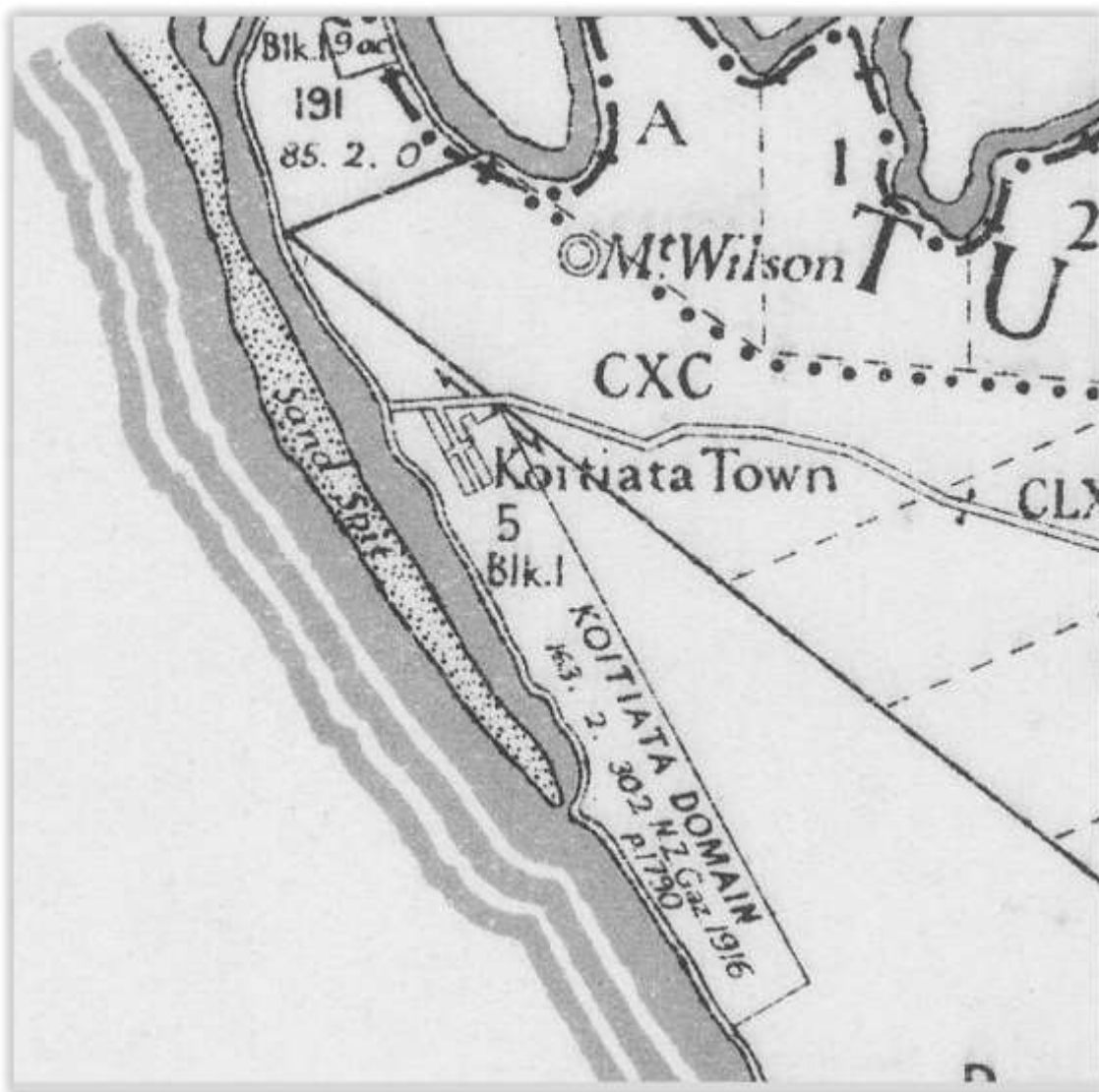
A report in The Rangitikei Advocate in July 1913, tells of Turakina Heads being very popular for camping and fishing during the summer. The area used was under lease from the Crown, and farmed by Simpson Bros who permitted access. The report says that a number of Turakina residents were seeking to have land for a 'seaside resort'. A public meeting was held in Turakina in August 1913 and a committee was formed to pursue the resort project. They met with Mr Duncan Simpson in August and he stated that he was willing to relinquish some of his leased land for the resort. A January 1914 report stated that The Premier had advised Rangitikei County Council that the land requirement would be actioned and Gazette issued.

A survey map dated 1915 shows the planned area for the un-named Seaside Resort. A later Koitiata Survey District map (circa 1917/18) shows the 165-acre reserve named as Koitiata Domain. The NZ Gazette recorded it as being, *"reserve for the purpose of a Public Recreation Ground"*.

Once established its seaward boundary was set along the inland side of a road reserve, which ran along the river bank and then south down the beach. The northern boundary was also established along a road reserve, which ran from Tunnel Hill, along the northern edge of where the village is now and out to connect with the river bank road at the mouth of the Turakina River. Those road reserves were established in 1906 and existed before the Koitiata Domain was established. On current LINZ maps they still appear as originally established.

Koitiata Domain Recreation Reserve became the title for the reserve area in 2009.

The Survey District map (circa 1917/18) has an outline of a proposed Koitiata Town to be established within the domain, and this is the first recorded usage of the name Koitiata being applied to the town.



Kaitiaki Begins

At the beginning of 1917 there was a Kaitiaki Domain but no surveyed village. The authorisation was given by Government later in 1917 *"for the erection of seaside cottages on Kaitiaki Domain"*. It appears from reports that camping was quite popular *"... by the river during summer."* but that there were *"a few more substantial camping type structures in existence"* prior to the setting up of Kaitiaki township.

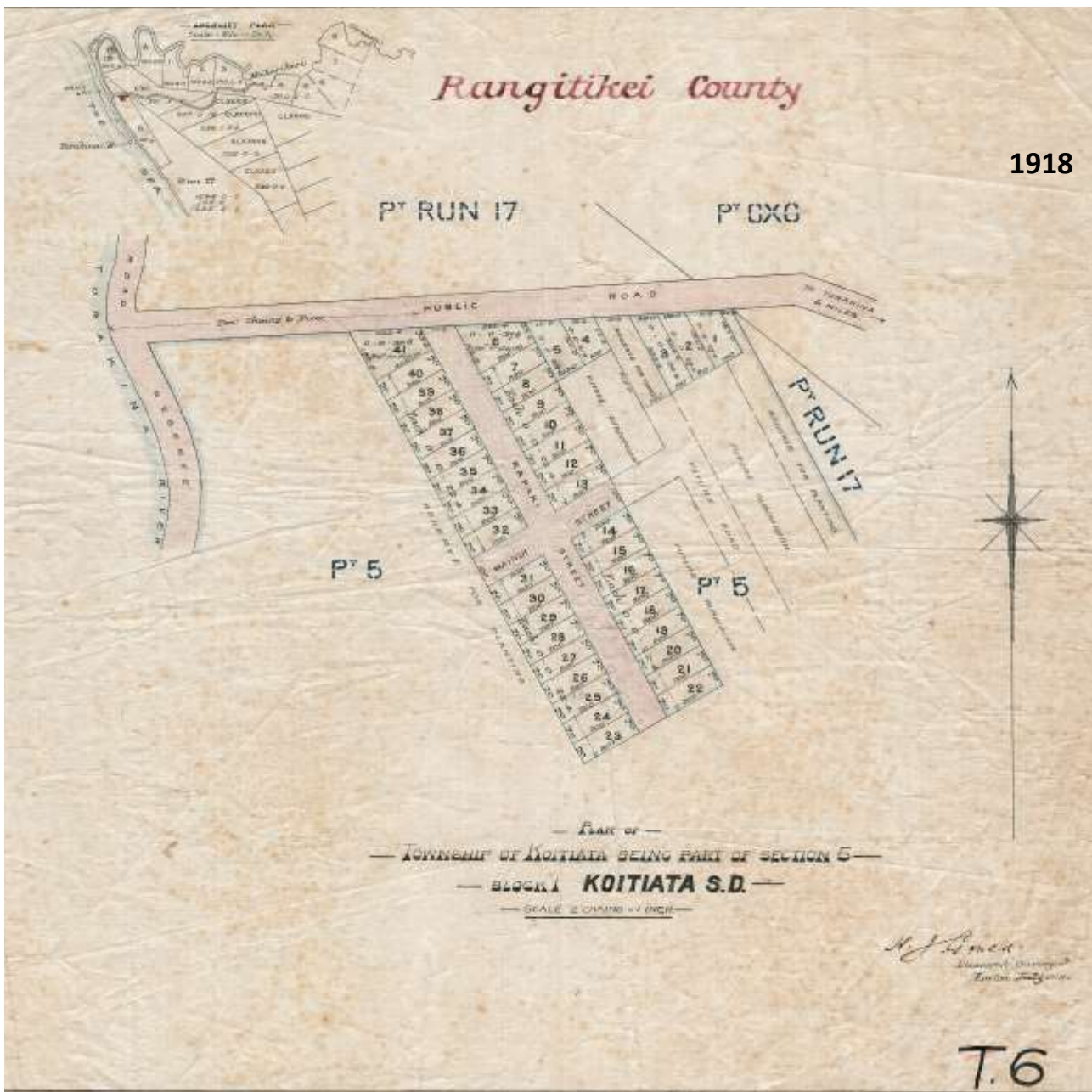
Kaitiaki Domain Board, (Rangitikei County Council), at their first meeting in December 1917, 'set the rules' for the Domain; *"... shooting not permitted ... pitching of tents to be permitted ... no fires other than cooking"*.

They also resolved *"that the chairman, the secretary and inspector report upon most suitable position ... for cottages"* and decided *"... to grant one year leases to those*

who had already erected cottages upon payment of £1; within 14 days from 1st January 1918."

It is therefore reasonable to claim that Koitiata was established by those who created that early camping village that existed at the beginning of 1917, (and also earlier).

In January 1918 the site for the planned township was selected . The map below, dated July 1918, lays out the beginning of the surveyed Township of Koitiata. But as history shows, in the future it would be more of the early-bird cottages in the village that would enable Koitiata to become established.



Village for Sale

The poster shows the surveyed 'Township of Koitiata' with 39 sections for auction.
The sections were for lease at £1 per year.

TOWN OF KOITIATA.

SEASIDE BUILDING-SITES FOR LEASE BY PUBLIC AUCTION.

The undermentioned sections will be offered for lease by PUBLIC AUCTION at the
CORONATION HALL, MARTON, at 3 o'clock p.m., on
TUESDAY, the 18th FEBRUARY, 1919.

Under Part II of the Public Reserves and Domains Act, 1908.

TOWN OF KOITIATA.

Block I, Koitiata Survey District.

Section No.	Area.	Upset Annual Rent.
1	0 0 274	1
2	0 0 272	1
3	0 0 328	1
4	0 0 310	1
5	0 0 288	1
6	0 0 224	1
7	0 0 224	1
8	0 0 224	1
9	0 0 224	1
10	0 0 224	1
11	0 0 224	1
12	0 0 224	1
13	0 0 224	1
14	0 0 224	1
15	0 0 224	1
16	0 0 224	1
17	0 0 224	1
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26	0 0 224	1
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28	0 0 224	1
29	0 0 224	1
30	0 0 224	1
31	0 0 224	1
32	0 0 224	1
33	0 0 224	1
34	0 0 224	1
35	0 0 224	1
36	0 0 224	1
37	0 0 224	1
38	0 0 224	1
39	0 0 224	1

TOWN OF KOITIATA.

H. J. DOUGLASS,
Surveyor,
Marton.

Scale: 2 inches to an acre.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

KOITIATA is situated near the mouth of the Turakina River and within easy distance of the sea and recreation grounds.

The sections offered for lease are situated in a nicely sheltered valley protected by low sand hills and provide good sites for the erection of seaside cottages.

The locality has been a favorite camping-ground for a number of years for residents of the district and Turakina District.

Excellent fishing grounds can be found in the neighbourhood and there are good bathing beaches.

The sections are mostly covered with vegetation and can be improved in advantage by planting of suitable shrubs, grasses, etc.

Access is by a public road from Turakina, about five miles distant. The road is situated on about three miles and is within easy distance of the sections.

The sections are now being shown to the public, but owing to weather conditions, motor vehicles can at present only be taken to within about half a mile of the town.

LOCALITY-PLAN

showing the position of
KOITIATA
and its proximity to Marton,
Turakina, Wanganui, etc.

Scale: 4 miles to an inch.

Conditions of Sale.

THE first year's rent, together with five per cent. of the improvement of land and the survey fee, to be paid on day of auction.

Leases to be made within two months of day of sale, otherwise the interest will be liable to forfeiture.

Further conditions in respect of any of the sections offered may be ascertained at the sale.

Abstract of Conditions of Lease.

1. RENTAL to be paid yearly in advance.
2. Lessee to pay all rates and taxes.
3. Lessee not to assign or sublet without the consent of the District Council.
4. Lessee to erect within two years residence of at least two rooms to approval of the District Council Board, and the "one" within which a residence is to be erected, to be a better period of two years.
5. Lessee to erect outbuildings, fences, etc. to comply with regulations.
6. Lessee to take possession of property on day of sale and continue to pay rates of up to 10% until the District Council Board.
7. Term of lease twenty-one years, the lease to be renewed with value of improvements if needed at the expiry of the term.

Printed copies of the lease form may be seen at the office of the Rangitikei County Council, High Street, Marton, and the office of the Wharfedale Town Board, Turakina.

Rangitikei County Council Office,
MARTON.
2nd January, 1919.

HAROLD M. RICHARDSON
Secretary Koitiata, 14, Main Street.

The Rangitikei Advocate

February 18, 1919

KOITIATA BEACH SECTIONS AUCTIONED

There was a fair attendance at the Coronation Hall, Marton, yesterday afternoon when seaside building sites in the town of Koitiata, on the Turakina river bed, were submitted by public auction. The following sections were sold:—Section 2, H. Waitere; 3, J. D. Morton; 30 and 31, J. H. McLean; 32, A. Way; 33, G. Morris; 34, W. D. McIndoe. Building sites can be obtained on application to Mr H. H. Richardson, the Rangitikei Council Chambers, at the upset rental price of £1 per year.

The first sections sold, using today's street numbers; Rapaki street the buyers were, 32 & 34 to J.H. Mclean, 36 to A. Way, 38 to G. Morris, 40 to W.D. McIndoe. Wainui street buyers were, 62 to H. Waitere and 64 to J.D. Morton.

A news item a year later in March 1920 states that a total of 11 sections had been "... disposed of ..." at that date.

A Condition of Lease was; "*Lessee to take precautions to prevent sand drift ...*". But as they were to learn, that was going to be a very difficult and drawn out process.

Shaky Start

Sand drift became a major issue. When Rapaki street was surveyed, it appears to have been a flat grass area — until the high dunes on the river bank decided to move inland. Following are extracts from reports and they illustrate the serious problem the sand drift caused for the new village of Koitiata.

November 1924: *"... sand has drifted over sections 23 to 41 which are now practically useless for building or camping sites. Out of 41 sections surveyed there are only a dozen of any use ..."*

December 1924: *" The site where the township is laid out has as far back as the European Settlers in the district could remember been a grass valley and free from any serious encroachment of sand drift. The place has been a favourite camping ground for years past. During the last two years the position has changed and the sand has encroached on the seaward side of the township and is threatening to further encroach from this direction and from the north side."*

October 1928: *"... The township is in a bad way. All houses are practically buried except three cottages, two of which have been recently built further back from the beach."*

January 1930: *"... still six cottages intact (in village) and one re-erected on private land just beyond the boundary ... The high sand ridge between ... river and ... grass flats where the township was laid off (surveyed), has now been practically levelled by high winds".*

An extensive marram grass planting program began and a 1933 report states, *"... marram grass planted 3 years ago has grown well, ... but ... about 1/4 acre needs to be replanted, and we should plant a further 2 acres at the north-western end."*

April 1936 report by the County Council Engineer; *"The marram grass stabilisation work was found in excellent order and the township area is now considered thoroughly safe for building purposes ..."*

1920's



The photo above is from the 1920's and shows the sand drift problem. These sanded-up buildings were probably located around the sea end of Wainui street or in Rapaki street. It appears that they were adjacent to a track, possibly to and from the beach. Some of the sanded-up buildings from Rapaki street were relocated to Omanu street area. Others were abandoned or demolished.

1920's



Photo is from the 1920's. This house belonged to Bert Wainwright and was located in Rapaki street, where number 25 is today. Because of the sand drift, the building was re-located to 68 Wainui street in the late 1920's. There is a photo of the re-located building on page 13. Rapaki street is on the right under the sand drift.

The Rangitikei Advocate

April 2, 1936

KOTIATA DOMAIN

Possibilities As Seaside Resort

The following report on Kotiata Domain (Turakina Beach) was submitted to to-day's meeting of the Rangitikei County Council by the Engineer, Mr S. A. R. Mair:—

With Councillor Stuart an inspection was made of Kotiata Township. Messrs Waiwright and Wilkie also attended.

The marram grass stabilisation work was found in excellent order and the township area is now considered thoroughly safe for building purposes and reforestation. There are a few small blanks of a few square yards requiring planting, and this will be done during the winter.

The road down, owing to the abnormal weather, was found in worse condition than I have previously known it, and necessary repairs will be put in hand when conditions are suitable.

With the improved conditions obtaining at the township a demand is setting in for sections, and it is considered advisable to have the sections occupied on temporary lease and further allotments surveyed so that proper titles can be granted to present and future occupiers.

In the meantime the exact requirements of the Lands Department regarding the township sections is being obtained. When this information is to hand with the cost of the proposed survey, I propose to submit a more comprehensive report as to developmental work embracing all the available funds.

I feel sure, and Councillor Stuart concurs, that now the sections have been stabilised, if the road was improved and suitable trees planted, the sections would become very popular and would be a boon to the sea-loving public over a very wide area even beyond the confines of this country.

While the County Engineer was confident in his report, it appears that the section owners had other ideas.

In spite of all the plans and intentions, it was going to be a slow and shaky start-up for our village!

From the reports it looked like all of the Rapaki street area was going to be 'abandoned', and that is what happened. There was a long pause in the development of Koitiata between 1917 until the early 1950's. Until then only 3 of the village's surveyed sections in Koitiata had buildings on them, at 60, 62, and 64 Wainui street.

The aerial photo from 1942 (*next page*) and Rangitikei County Council maps, show another 10 or more buildings located on un-surveyed sections, and a few outside the designated township boundaries. No buildings are visible in Rapaki street in the 1942 aerial photo, or marked on any of the 1950 era RCC maps.

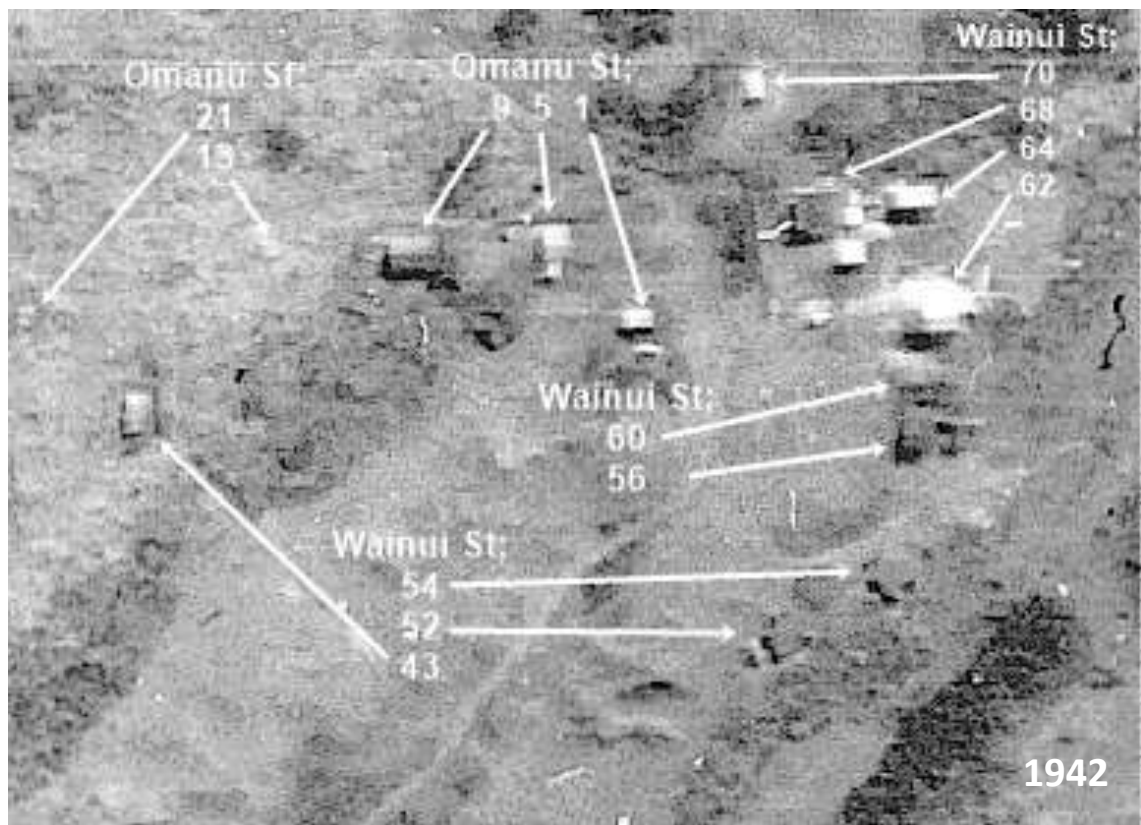


Bert Wainwright's house, re-built at 68 Wainui street, early 1930's, after being re-located from 25 Rapaki street because of the sand drift problem. See page 39 for a view of this house prior to sand drift and page 11 for view with sand problem.

1942



This aerial photo above was taken by RNZAF in December 1942. The localities of the buildings in the photo above are marked in the photo at top right on the next page. Current property numbers are used for locations. The track going into the village from the bottom of photo is now Wainui street.



Above are locations of buildings at left, using current street and address numbers.

The photo below is from the 1930's, in Wainui street. The buildings from left to right are; at 62 (Cameron), at 60 (Carter), at 56 (Heidrich/Kelly). They are marked in photo above. Closest bach is a good example of car case & malthoid construction.

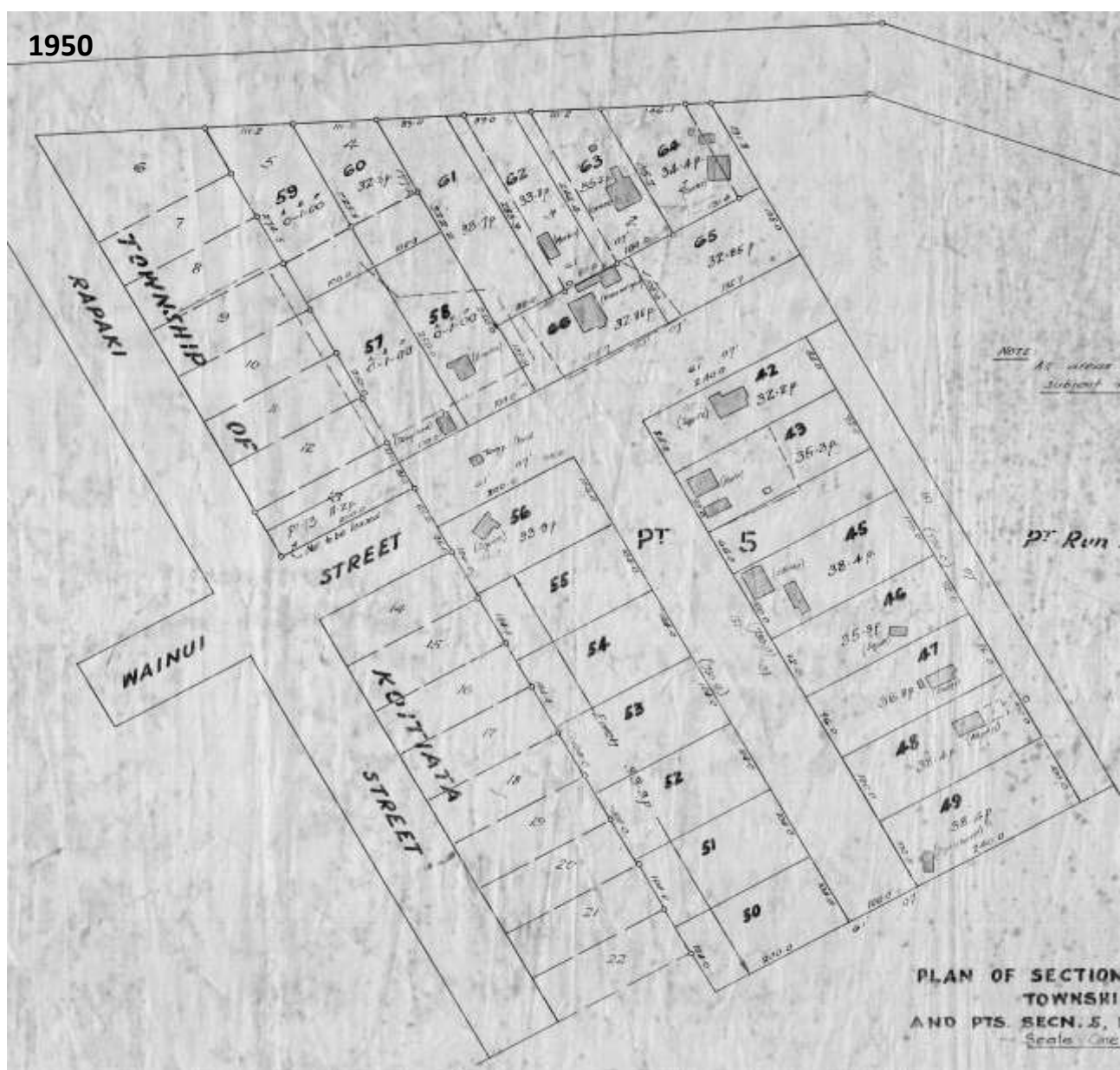


Village Grows

The 1950 map below shows the eventual subdivision of Omanu street. There were already 8 existing buildings when Omanu street was established and the section boundaries were positioned to accommodate those buildings.

In 1917 the Domain Board granted one year leases to those who occupied land in the Rapaki street area before the village was surveyed. No information is available as to whether the early Omanu street residents paid any lease for their residency, prior to being surveyed into the Township of Koitiata.

A later 1952 map shows that all of the 14 Omanu street sections having owners.

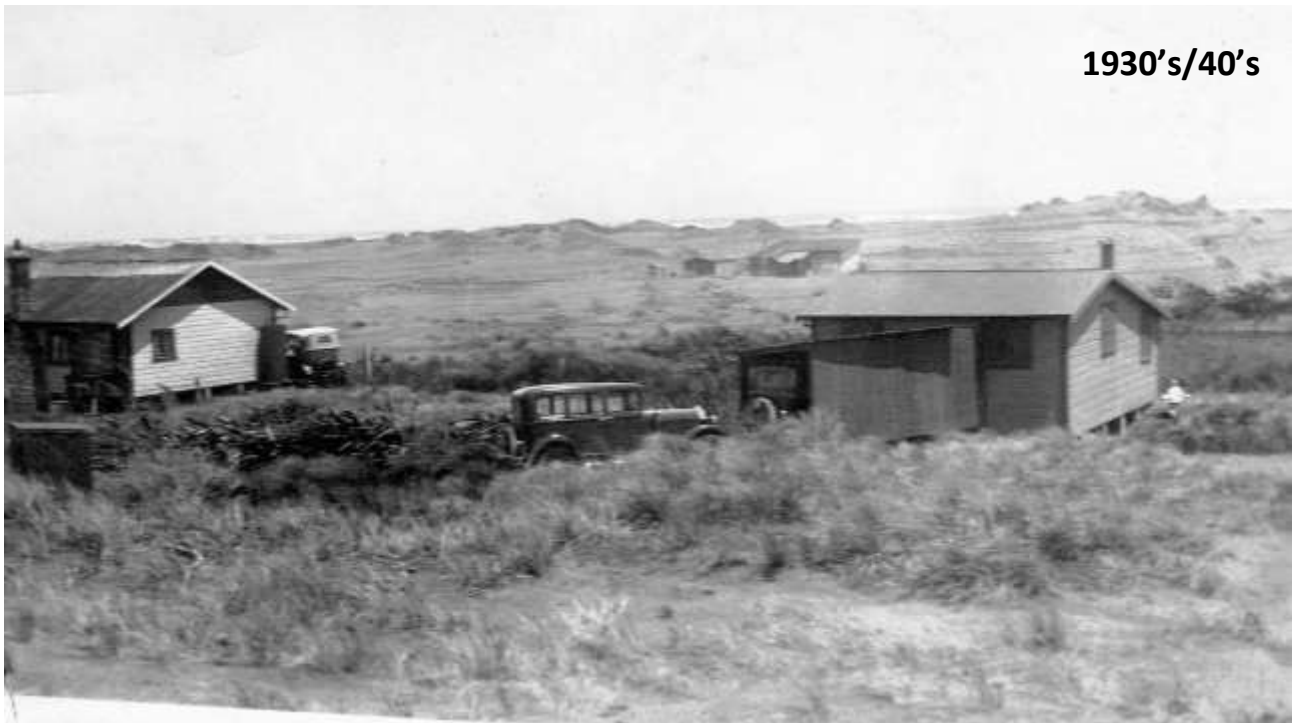




1930's/40's

Above: Wainui street, 1930's. Left is Bert Wainwright's at 68, right is Bob Morton's at 64.

Below: This is a bit of a puzzle; in Omanu street, probably taken 1930/40's. It is labelled, *"O'Brien 1 & 2 baches, now Ryland's"*. O'Briens had #9; suspect that it is #9 on left and #5 on right; the sea is in the background over top of dunes; bach in background is possibly located in area of Rapaki street. There were no houses in Rapaki in 1942, and none until early 1950's.



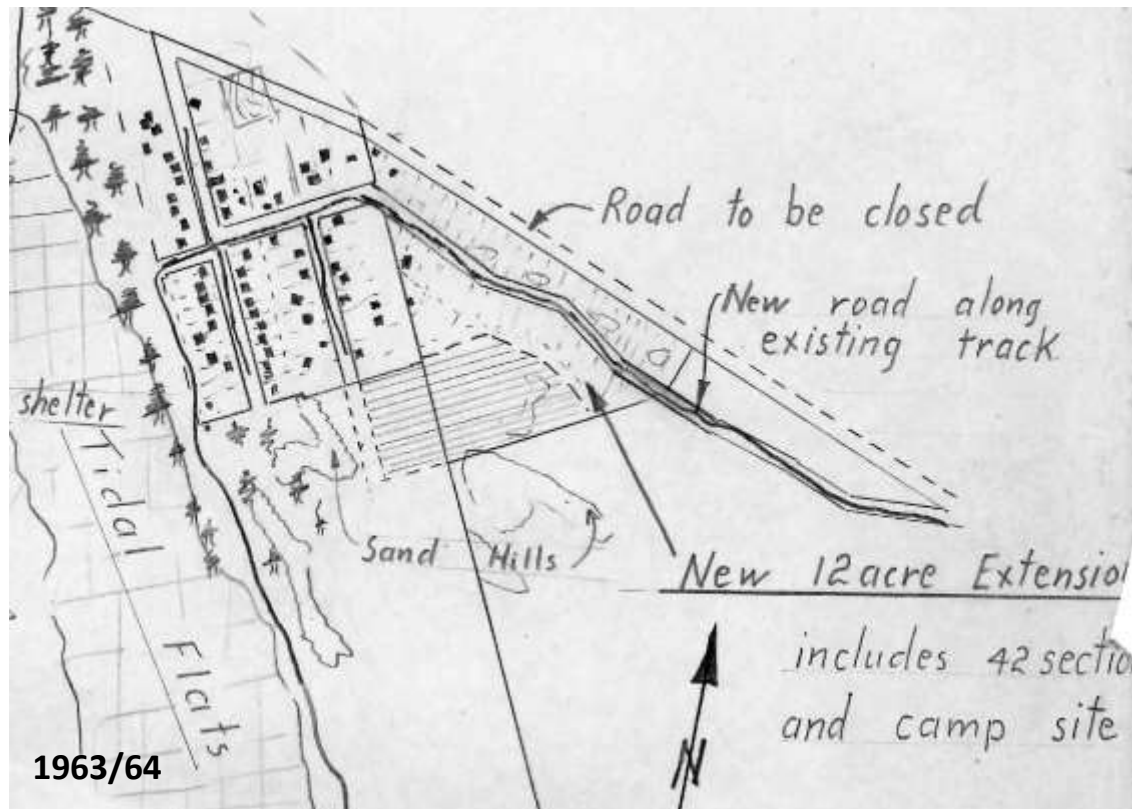
1930's/40's

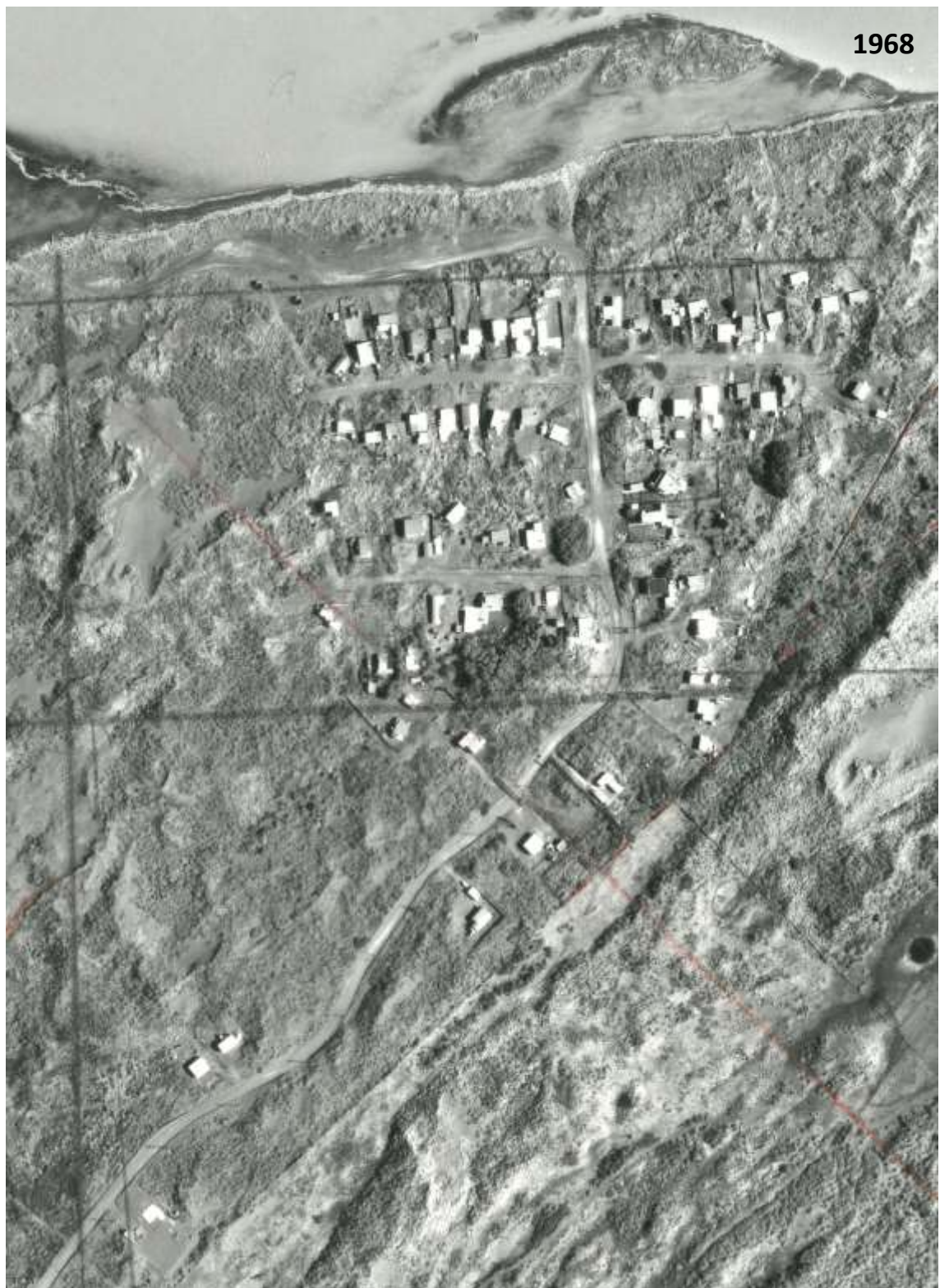
From anecdotal information it appears that the 'dust had settled' in Rapaki street and most of those sections had buildings established during the 1950's and 1960's period. A 1952 map on file shows all of the sections in Rapaki street and the new Omanu street subdivision having owners names marked on them. It appears that the 1950's & 1960's were a boom time for Koitiata and the 'shaky start' was history!

That demand was the catalyst for the rest of Wainui street being developed, from the hall to the village entrance.

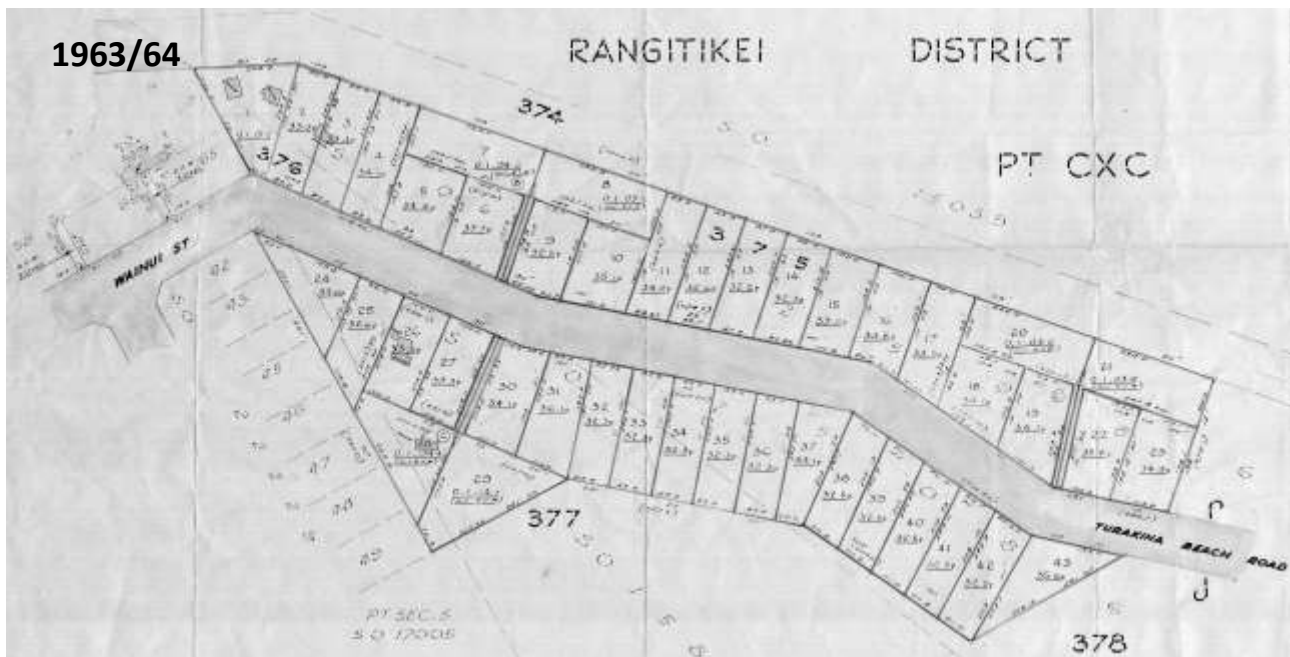
The map below is of the proposal for that expansion of the village including a new subdivision, a new entrance road into the village, (Wainui street), and a camping ground. The land to be used wasn't in the village at that time and the process of acquiring it began in 1958. Some of the area was Crown Land and the land where the 'existing track' (now Wainui street) ran through was owned by D. H. Simpson. Agreements were all finalised in 1960 and the proposed village extension was approved with sections becoming available in 1964.

Like Omanu street, the Wainui street extension also had to contend with buildings outside the surveyed village catchment. The map shows clearly the buildings that had existed in Rapaki, Omanu and Wainui streets at that time, and it shows four which were outside the surveyed village boundaries.





This 1968 aerial photo shows that most of the sections in Rapaki and Omanu streets, have buildings and there are several new buildings in the new Wainui street extension.



The 43 sections in the Wainui street subdivision were released in 1964. There was a waiting list when released and all sections had eventually been taken up by 1974. Enquiries for further sections started the process for the Rapaki street extension.

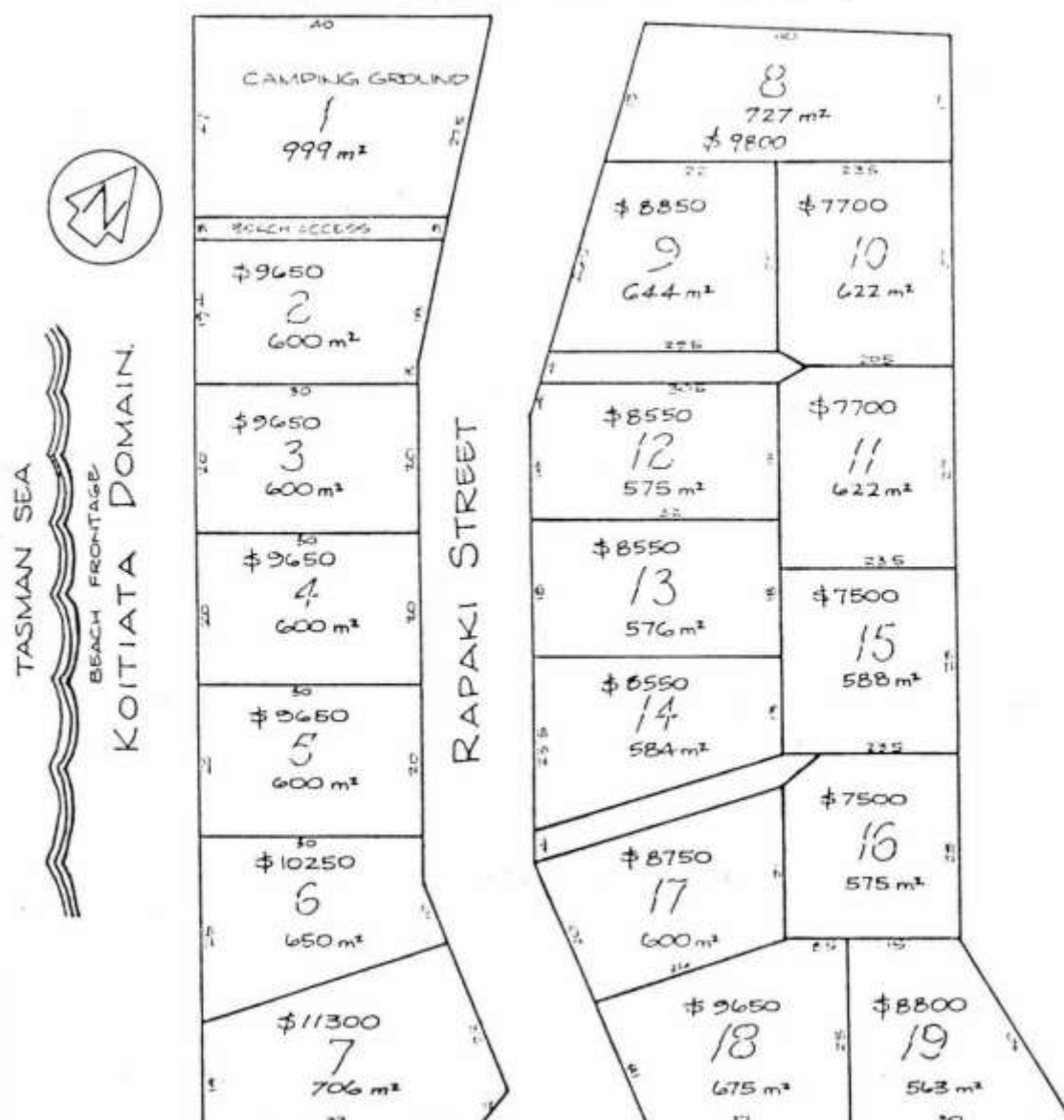


Today's village area was completed when Rapaki street was extended to the southern village boundary in 1985. The new subdivision added 18 residential sections and the current camping ground.

BEACHFRONT SUBDIVISION

Koitiata [Turakina Beach]

1986



18 desirable serviced sections are now available for sale on this unique beachfront location at the quiet retreat of Koitiata.

As the village grew so did the number of residential buildings. In the mid-1930's there were "6 or 7 baches, plus 2 huts" and in 1942 it had increased to "around 15." An early 1950's map shows 17 buildings in the Omanu/Wainui streets area and a 1962 RCC letter quotes, "settlement comprises some 45 beach cottages" (Rapaki/Omanu). In 1968, after Wainui street was added to the village, there were 65 buildings and then a 1979 aerial photo shows 96 buildings. The total in Koitiata, in mid-2016, is 116 residences.

Getting Serviced

When the village started, it was an un-serviced camp ground. The streets were just lines on a map, they didn't actually exist. It was just tracks in the sand, through the marram grass, low scrub and lupins — and more sand. There was no electricity, no telephones, no street lights, no services of any kind. And that's the way it was for almost the first fifty years.

Electricity only came as far as Tunnel Hill in 1960 and residents petitioned the Power Board, asking for them to extend the power lines. The response in 1961 was *"yes, but ... and only if the 'settlers' guarantee £400 (collectively) per year."* RCC took up the case and it appears that the leasehold status of the village was an issue. RCC followed it up in 1963 and finally, after 4 years of effort from residents and RCC, a connection was planned and approved Sept. 1964 and installed in 1965, *(actual date not known)*.

Street lights were approved for installation by RCC in February 1965, but nothing happened. The lights were out. A *"Leaseholders meeting"* in Aug 1978 voted against street lights. Lights still out. A survey in Nov. 1978 voted to have street lights and in January 1979 the street lights had been installed and were finally turned on.

Until 1968 the streets were gravel over sand, and sometimes under the sand. From records it appears that it was 1969/70 before all streets were sealed in the village.

A document from 1979 states that *"... streets renamed ... and signs put up."* We don't have any information as to what the origin is of our street names or what they mean. The different development stages had resulted in section numbering being a bit of a mish-mash and in 1979 the current street number system was implemented.

There was talk re a phone box in 1968, and it appears there were phones connected in the village in Aug 1972. It is not known when phone system was first installed.

A broadband internet service became available in Koitiata in 2010 but was unreliable and replaced in 2011 by the current Inspire Wi-Fi internet and phone system.

The first sign of any retail commerce in the village was in September 1920, when RCC gave permission to Mr Alfred Yarrow, a baker of Turakina, to *"build a dwelling-house and shop combined."* This was to be on the section he leased at 25 Rapaki street, but it never happened and Alfred Yarrow moved to Manaia in 1923. Yes, it's the same Yarrows and look at where that business is now. Imagine the smell of fresh bread wafting over the village every morning.

There are anecdotal reports of a shop being operated from the premises at 22 Rapaki street but no records have been located.

Section Freeholding

When Koitiata village sections were made available they were not freehold, but were in the Reserve and leased from the Crown. A document quotes annual leases in 1962 being £10 (\$20), with a right of renewal at 21 years and review every 7 years. It has been quoted *"in early 1980's the annual lease was between \$40 and \$50 per year."*

In August 1978, a Koitiata residents meeting was advised that *"... with the passing of the Reserves Act 1977 the existence of the Beach Settlement becomes an anomaly."* It was moved that the RCC take up the matter on their behalf with government.

As the land area was a reserve, that designation for the land of Koitiata Township had to be revoked by government. The land within the village then became non-reserve Crown Land in 1982.

The changes allowed residents to be offered two freeholding options, *"Purchase for Cash, or Purchase with Deferred Payment."* A third option was to continue with the present lease.

Examples of the freeholding cost; a Rapaki street section was \$1900, (*Land Value at the time being \$2300*). The freeholding price for a Wainui street property was \$1800.

All of the other land not leased by residents within the village was also freeholded and sold to RCC by the Crown. The remainder of the reserve retained its status and the area is now formally titled the Koitiata Domain Recreation Reserve.

The Rangitikei Mail
January 22, 1982

Freeholding Favoured at Turakina Beach

A meeting of Turakina Beach residents was unanimously in favour of freeholding their sections at the beach, last Saturday. The meeting was called by the Koitiata Community Council and the Rangitikei County Council.

The sections are on Crown land, at present leased by the County Council. All are valued at between \$2400 and \$2500, though the cost of some has been reduced through improvements by the residents leasing them. About 107 sections are involved.

The meeting was attended by more than 80 residents.

Floods

There have been a number of flooding incidents in the village over the years, but no record to hand of any major flooding within the village being directly caused by the Turakina River.

The major and damaging flood events in the village have been caused by uncontrolled run-off water from adjacent rural land. There are four of these events recorded and all appear to have resulted from on-farm actions combined with a period of heavy rain.

1936: 21 Omanu



1936: A period of rain plus the breaking of a dam on an inland farming property caused water to run down the gully where Wainui street is now. It flowed into the yard of 68 Wainui and appears to have also flooded at least one other bach, at 21 Omanu. To drain the water a channel was manually dug, towards the river, through the sand ridge in Wainui street.

1936: 68 Wainui



1970: "... heavy rain ... turned the nearby swamp into a lake and overflow was travelling down ... into the settlement" ... *"its source is thought to be a large hole left by recent excavation on the gas line."* RDC brought in a dragline and put in the drain that runs alongside the northern boundary to drain the water and provide future protection.

1970: 46 Wainui



2010: Heavy rain and uncontrolled farm run-off water flowed down Wainui street. Properties at the village entrance were flooded.

2015: Another repeat of the 2010 farm run-off problem, this time flooding all the way down into Omanu street. Properties in Wainui and Omanu streets were flooded.

2010: Wainui Street



2015: Omanu Street



Prior to 1998 it appears to have been a common occurrence for the river mouth to close off and for water to back-up into the low area of Teone street. There are records to hand of this happening on numerous occasions, but no reports of any major damage being caused. This issue was usually resolved by a new mouth being formed and/or the tide going out.

The mouth blocked in 1987 and the river backed up and encroached into Teone street. Documents from 1990 refer to "*...flooding of basement at 22 Rapaki ...*", but whether this refers to 1987 or another event is unknown.

In January 1997 the river backed up again and this time the event was well documented with aerial photos and news reports (see below). A digger was brought in to create a channel and drain the "*lake*"; this was after locals had dug a channel which was "*claimed to be helpful*" but also "*reported as being futile*". Civil Defence spokesman said "*... water had not been life-threatening, nor had it threatened houses — it had just been annoying.*"



RIGHT: (also above)

When the Teone street flooding happened in January 1997 the water encroached into the camping ground and caused the campers to move out.



RIGHT:

The most negative effect on Koitiata of the river flooding, is the numerous times Beach Road is flooded and the village becomes isolated.



Recollections

Recollections are documents we have been given by residents, and information gleaned from other publications, that give an insight into people's life-at-the-beach. Of particular value and interest are those records of people's personal experiences during those early years. Space does not enable any more than some extracts to be printed in this summary of our history. The full un-edited versions of these *Recollections* documents, and others as they are obtained, will be available to read on the Koitiata web site/History page.

1920's: Scott Cameron, 62 Wainui Street: *"There was a sand track from Simpson's house, The Planes, down to the river where tents were used, transport being provided by brake or gig. Cooking was done on open fires or camp ovens." "The first building was a cookhouse and later a few lean-tos. These were on the waterfront, which at that time was the banks of the Turakina River. The houses became sanded up – some to the roofs – and they were subsequently shifted further inland to the middle of the present settlement."*

1920's: Ross Cameron, 62 Wainui Street: *"In the 1920's the lure of river and sea bathing did not attract many people to Koitiata when they found that there were two miles (3Kms) of sand to cross, three gates to open and shut, having to live in tents and having to cross the river to get to the sea." "The surveyed road into the Domain ran along the Northern fence line to the river but this was never used. The track into the Domain used in those days was through a Manuka marsh in the gully. During the summer it dried out sufficiently to make a damp but firm ground to drive on. This track later became the formed road in use today. During the winter the gully track became too wet and unusable so the cars went along the Northern ridge, now covered with cottages."*

1930's: Allpress Family, 21 Omanu Street: *"The family rented a small bach with two rooms and an outdoor toilet at the back of the section. There was a little black stove in one room and some bunks made of old sacks. Lighting was provided by oil lamps and there was no refrigeration. There were so many children. No one really remembers where everyone slept in the two room bach." "The family loved their holidays at Turakina Beach and Bert eventually bought a bach."*

1930's: Maurice Heidrich, 56 Wainui Street: *"My earliest memories go back to the mid-1930's when our bach was erected at the beach. The bach, consisting of three bunkrooms and a large dining-kitchen area, was constructed from large Oregon carcasses and other material, then covered with Malthoid sheets. This meant an annual task of tarring and sanding to keep the Malthoid cover in good repair." "Lighting was provided from car batteries. These were kept charged by a wind-powered generator consisting of a propeller-driven car generator first mounted to the side of the bach, but due to vibrations was then mounted on a pole away from the bach."*

1940's: Charles Haar, 5 Omanu Street: *"My father and mother retired from their dairy farm at Putorino and bought a cottage at Turakina Beach. This was during World War 2 probably about 1944." "The house my folks had bought was really a fishing shack, it was weatherboard*

of four rooms, with dunny outside. It was a fairly isolated place in those days of the mid 1940's. People from Marton and Wanganui had shacks down there which they used for the holidays and weekend fishing." "Mum and Dad were the only permanent residents at first, with no telephone or neighbours; I think Mum used to go a bit troppo by the time the weekends came and some friendly faces appeared. Dad of course was in his element as there was plenty of fish or whitebait to catch in the river and sea."

1960's: Hilton & Maisie Farr, 48 Rapaki Street: *"They moved there permanently in 1961." "In 1961 there were hardly any baches, no electricity and no telephone." "Hilton & Maisie lit their house with a tilly lamp and cooked on a coal range." "The fishing was better then. Families used to get together and stake out nets in the surf overnight. They would cook the fresh flounder and sole in the morning on beach fires." "You could go out for an hour and come home with a boatload of fish."*

The Mayor

One name that keeps popping up in the history of Koitiata, is Bert Wainwright. There are several references in people's recollections to Bert being the "Mayor of Koitiata". He was here before the village started and was here at the start-up of Koitiata. He built at 25 Rapaki in the early 1920's. But his first house sanded up and he moved that house in the 1920's or early 1930's to 68 Wainui street. The house was flooded in 1936, and then to cap it all off, the house burnt down in the late 1930's. Bert rebuilt the house using the same chimney in the same place. You get the impression that Bert was serious about being in Koitiata. He was a builder and as a testament to his skills, that same house is still standing at 68 Wainui street today!



Hall and Fire Shed

The hall and fire shed complex has had six stages of expansion to arrive at the facilities we have today. It began in late 1981 when the concrete floor was poured for a 7.5m x 6m shed to house fire gear provided by the Forestry Department.

That stage was completed in 1982 and at that point it was '*the fire shed*'. County Council personnel decided that to avoid any future issues with the building's use and/or ownership, it would be better to call it '*the hall*'. It has continued to be 'The Hall' ever since. That 1981 version was available for use by the Koitiata community for meetings and functions, as well as being a store for the fire-fighting gear.

Soon after in 1983/84 the extension for the toilets and kitchen was added. The single roomed building continued to serve as both the community centre and the fire shed.

Another shed was added to the south side of the existing building in 1985, which doubled the building's size. That area also stored the County's tractor and mower.



Life was easier with this extension, as quoted from the KCC chairman "*the two sliding doors on the original building have been incorporated on front and back end of portion housing tractor and trailer.... now possible to drive through this portion of building.*"

The relocation of the fire gear enabled the hall area to extend and encompass all of the internal floor area, and that is the current main hall area as it is today.

[illegible]

Many internal improvements have been made in the hall recently. New kitchen units were installed during 2010/11, a new gas hot water system for the kitchen in 2014, a new suspended ceiling with insulation and lights in 2015, and new soft wall lining and a colour change inside during mid-2016.

Causeway and Ford

Most people who use the beach causeway, (both villagers and public), are not aware that it is man-made via the efforts and labour of Koitiata residents. The stories from our history confirm that access to the beach has always been a challenge.

When the river moved its mouth to north of the village again in July 1998, this time the old river bed area became closed off at each end, resulting in a 4km long lagoon. Without the tidal benefits of the river, the water level stabilised making the access tracks across the lagoon, very wet and often impassable. In 2000 a proposal was formulated by residents, to build a causeway, starting just past the playground, and going all the way across to the sea side of the lagoon.

Because it was planned for the causeway to cross the old river bed, it was rejected by the authorities as it would be a barrier to the lagoon's water flow. Consent was not required for the part that went to the lagoon, only where it crossed the water.

2001



The work on the causeway/track followed during June 2001 and involved many loads of sand being moved and levelled.

Drains were dug and pipes were installed under the track.

The later planting of flax and toitoi along the sides established the causeway.

In May 2001 a modified design was proposed, for a 33-metre long submerged ford through the lagoon, from the end of the new causeway.

This was approved and consent issued to the KRC by Horizons in June 2001.

2001



GOING FORD: Koitiata Residents' Committee chairman Peter Smith expects a big turnout next Saturday for the final phase of work to build a ford across the lagoon at Turakina Beach



2001

Saturday 15th Sept 2001 was the day half the world turned out in Koitiata to help the residents to fill and distribute sand-bags for the ford. The result of all that endeavour, plus the other drainage and roading activities, was an all-weather causeway, and a navigable ford providing vastly improved beach access for everyone.



2001

Of course that was then and this is now. In between, mother nature has stamped her authority all over the ford part of the project. That has ranged between having the sea and river push right into the lagoon and across the ford, to leaving it all high and dry as it is today in 2016.



2008

Only a solitary white marker, from the beach end of the ford, is left standing above the driftwood, which serves as a monument to the energy and skills of our residents and their beach access endeavours.

The KRC continues to maintain the track and its drainage system with financial help from RDC.

Organising the People

Projects like the Hall and Causeway are great examples of the Koitiata community's organisational abilities and the achievements of the residents committees and other bodies that have existed throughout our history.

The Rangitikei Advocate
December 20, 1917
**SEASIDE RESORT AT TURAKINA
HEADS**
—◆—
KOITIATA DOMAIN BOARD.

A meeting of the above Board, which is comprised of the members of the Rangitikei County Council, was held this morning at the Council Offices, Marton, Mr B. P. Lethbridge presiding.

The following resolutions were carried.—That Mr H. H. Richardson, County Clerk, be appointed secretary and treasurer, to the Board and that Mr A. Thoms be appointed inspector.

That the secretary prepare the report for the year ending 31st December, 1917, and forward a copy to the Minister.

That shooting on the Domain be not permitted.

That the pitching of tents on the Domain be permitted during the pleasure of the Board in such localities as the chairman, secretary or inspector of the Board approves, provided that no public nuisance is created, and that no camp gear or litter is left on the ground when the tents are removed.

That no fire be lit on the Domain except for the purpose of cooking and that all temporary fire-places be constructed to the satisfaction of the Board in such a manner that the fire will not spread to the surrounding vegetation.

That the chairman, secretary and inspector report upon the most suitable position for the setting aside of an area for the erection of cottages.

That a temporary license for one year from the 1st January 1918 be granted to those persons who have already erected cottages on the Domain to occupy the said cottages during the period named upon the payment of £1 each; such payment to be payable within 14 days from the 1st January, 1918.

That the annual meeting of the Board be held on Saturday, 2nd February 1918.

The first organisation was the Koitiata Domain Board. It was designated by Government in 1917 to administer the newly formed Koitiata Domain. The board was comprised of members of the Rangitikei County Council and it continued until 1978.

A letter dated November 1962, from RCC to the Turakina Beach Residents Association is the first record to hand of any community committee. There must have been good support for that committee; the chairman's report of the 1978 annual meeting, records "*... at a meeting of 70 members of the Association, a new Committee was elected.*"

In May 1980, the RCC proposed to TBRA that they consider, "*In view of number of permanent residents ... the possibility of constituting a residential area ... under the Local Govt Act 1974.*"

Meeting of residents in August 1980 moved to go ahead with forming a Community Council. Ratepayers were informed that from April 1981 the new Council would operate, and that in early 1981, "*Ratepayers and (Residents ... to have lived in Koitiata Community district for three months)*" could vote in elections for council members. Seven members then formed the new Koitiata Community Council, which was a "sub-committee" of the Rangitikei County Council.

A Dec 1988 report states, "*KCC will cease to exist ... with the new Government Scheme of Regional Councils ...*" The final meeting of the KCC was held in Oct 1989. They advised of a public meeting to be held in November to

discuss the formation of a new committee. The inaugural meeting of the Koitiata Residents Committee was held January 1990. That new Koitiata Resident's Committee was the start-up of our current residents committee system.

Fire Brigade

The Fire Brigade is a relatively recent part of our history. Following extracts from documents, outline where it came from and the expansion, between 1978 and 2001.

1978: *Turakina Beach Residents Assn requested via RCC "... portable water-pump and hoses for temporary firefighting purposes until a permanent fire service was established."*

1982: *"... new shed ... to house equipment for village and forest ... pump, hose, siren, beaters supplied by Forestry, system of calls on siren being arranged, key in glass fronted box beside door... residents offered to make trailer."*

1983: *"... decided to hold fire drill Saturday for purpose of forming volunteer fire brigade."*

1984: *"...a trailer chassis was donated ... much time putting a deck on ... now stationed at hall with fire equipment on board for immediate use ... need 9 residents to form a Brigade."*

1987: *"... new Fire Appliance, new Fire Station ... eight willing men in team ... new appliance used in real fire, and ... agree fire team made good save."*

1988: *"... team consists of twelve men and two ladies, as telephone operators."*

2001: *"... new fire shed ... built in place of 1987 shed ... to house two fire appliances."*

Camping Ground

The first camping ground was at the end of Omanu street on the grass area known as the domain. It was established when Wainui street was added to the village in 1964. There appears to have been dressing sheds and public toilets from around 1962, in the area where the camping ground is now. The 1968 aerial photo on page 19 clearly shows two buildings in that location. Plans on file for the current shower and toilet block suggest they were built at the end of 1977 or early 1978.

The council suggested in 1982 that the camp be relocated to *"a spot adjoining present conveniences"*, also that a recreation area be developed. In 1986 the camp was eventually relocated to its current location in the new Rapaki street subdivision. It was intended that 14 Rapaki street was to be purchased to allow for the camp area to be expanded, but that never eventuated.

Ship Wrecks

There are two recorded ship wrecks on our end of the beach, both pre-dating the establishment of Koitiata. The Fusilier which ran aground in January 1884 is well known, probably because the remains were still visible and accessible for many years. Less well known, although much closer to Koitiata, was the wreck of the Robina Dunlop, which ran aground at the mouth of the Turakina river in August 1877. Both vessels were under ballast at the time and no lives were lost in either wreck. Copies of photos and newspaper reports from the time will be able to be viewed on the History page of the Koitiata web site.

Socialising the Village

It's not just the organising that has made Koitiata a community, it's the social stuff that does it too. From the beginning, social activities have always been up there at the top of the community's priority list, and what better way to have social activities than with a Social Committee to organise it!

With the new Community Centre upright in 1982, no time was wasted in organising a social function. *"Christmas Gathering. In an effort to promote fellowship in the settlement it is suggested that a gathering be held at the Community Building 8pm Saturday 18 December."*

The hall became the centre for the community's organised regular activities and there has usually been a Social Committee behind it all. While the hall has been the hub, not all community activities were indoor.



When the river was just out the front, often a wide lagoon would form in front of the village. Some complained about how it restricted their ability to go fishing. Others just had fun having raft races.

A community event during the 1990's was the Xmas parade. People dressed up like clowns. Residents also decorated their tractors and motor bikes and bicycles.



And one of the community activities involved a fire engine which would drive around town while full of Xmas Carol singing ladies.



But one event is a mystery; from a 1985 newsletter *"...the group which organised the band function on the Domain a year or so ago ...permission given to organise similar band function on the Labour Day week-end."* Phoned Pink Floyd, it wasn't them.

Just Doing Stuff

Of course people didn't come here to be organised, they came for fun. They came to go fishing or swimming or to go to the beach or to just play around on the river in a boat. Whether permanent or weekender or day visitor, going to the beach is for fun!

1922



Above: Rowing across the river 1922

1948

Right: Having a swim in 1948 while Dad and his mates catch fish. Then just over 50 years later we came back to live here in Koitiata.



Below: If it's a bit far to walk to the beach, catch a bus. You'll get your exercise when the bus gets stuck.

2008



1930's / 40's



2005



Above: Many hands make light work of a net full of fish.

Left: Building shelters on the beach.

Below: Bob Morton was a real favourite with the kids, taking them for a ride in his horse and dray. *(photo at 68 Wainui street)*

1930's / 40's

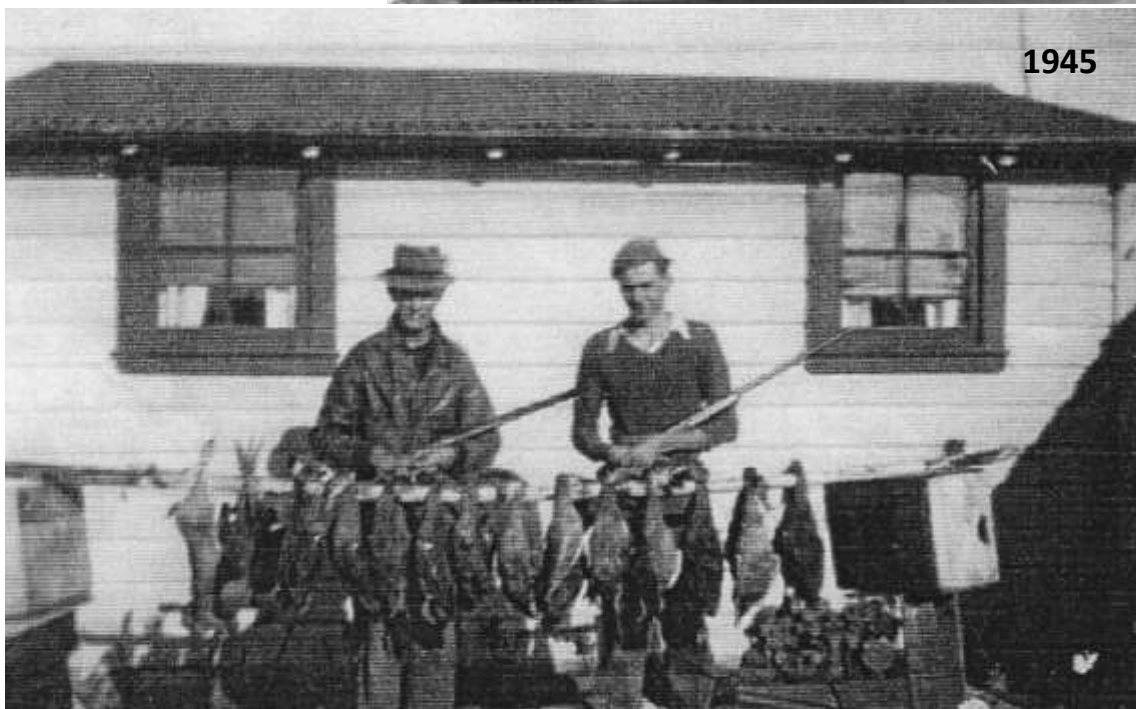




Above: Are there ever any more than a few whitebait?

Right: No outboards needed back in the 1920's.

Below: George and Charles Harr with bags of ducks at 5 Omanu street in 1945.



The Piano



The Piano mysteriously arrived on the dunes 2.5km south of the village early one morning in late December 2005.

While most of the village were still having their morning sleep-in, a piano laden tractor was navigated down the track via the forest to secretly deposit their soon to be discovered load.

Alas it was only a matter of a few hours later when two young ladies, who were out doing their early morning exercise of riding quad bikes up and down the beach, discovered 'The Piano'.

The village was alerted, and when the rest of the world heard about it in January 2006, Koitiata and Turakina Beach were on the world stage.

It was the new-year-dead-news-period and the media were waiting poised for anything to disrupt their boredom. This was in the days when the media had reporters who would go out into the sticks and battle the elements to cover very important stories. Locals were prevailed upon by media for transport down the beach to the location, and they were prevailed upon to pose playing, or pose pretending, for the cameras. Champagne corks popped. They became stars. Television news, newspaper reports; they were heady piano at the beach days!

Eventually The Piano capitulated to the inevitability of being overcome by the elements of salt, sand, wind and rain. Just like the Fusilier.

A Puzzle Solved. After nine years of mystery about the location of the houses below, a solution. The photo is from the early 1920's and labelled, "*Left: First Bach; Right: Stroud's bach*". We knew the bach on left was Wainwrights, before it was moved, but nobody or any records could identify the Strouds or the bach locations.

Finally, from some recently received Domain Board files, we now know that left is at 25 and right is 27 in Rapaki street. This would have been taken, looking towards the sea from where Omanu street is now. It shows how that area was flat before the sand moved inland and elevated the land in that locality as it is now. If you look back at the photo at bottom of page 11 you will see what happened within a few years of when this photo was taken. There's no more information on CB & HH Stroud or their bach.



A Puzzle Unsolved. The photo below is from the 1920's or 1930's, but that's all that is known. It appears to be looking across the river towards the village. A digital chocolate fish to anyone who can identify the buildings and location.



Acknowledgments, *(plus Nods, Winks and Waves)*

We have been collecting information for this project since 2007 and it has not been possible to keep track of all contributors. Some are known but many are not, and some information just turned up. If you have contributed and are not listed, apologies. You'll be listed next time, when 200 Years At The Beach is published.

Some information has been used in this summary, some may be included in the web-site, and other used only as a reference source. Several media sources no longer exist.

The known sources of material and information, other contributors, together with all the other recollected enablers and encouragers are listed alphabetically below:

Air Force Museum, Allpress Family, Arnold Nation, Cate Smith, Central Archives, Charles Haar, Chris Northover, David Young, District Monitor, Gavin Sandilands, Horizons Regional Council, Jacob's Creek, Jim & Robin Mant, Joyce Smith, Kaye & Peter McDonnell, Koitiata Residents Committee, Koitiata Fire Brigade, L.H. Cornish, LINZ, Liz & Peter Hawes, Manawatu Standard, Maurice Heidrich, Muriel Oldfield, Noel Bostock, Pat Powell, Peter Fraser, Pink Floyd, Rangitikei Advocate, Rangitikei District Council, Rangitikei News, Ross Cameron, Suzi Bryant, Trevor & Jeanette Jurgens, Trish & Tom Dooney, Wanganui Chronicle.

Thanks heaps to all who are or have ever been a member of the Koitiata community.

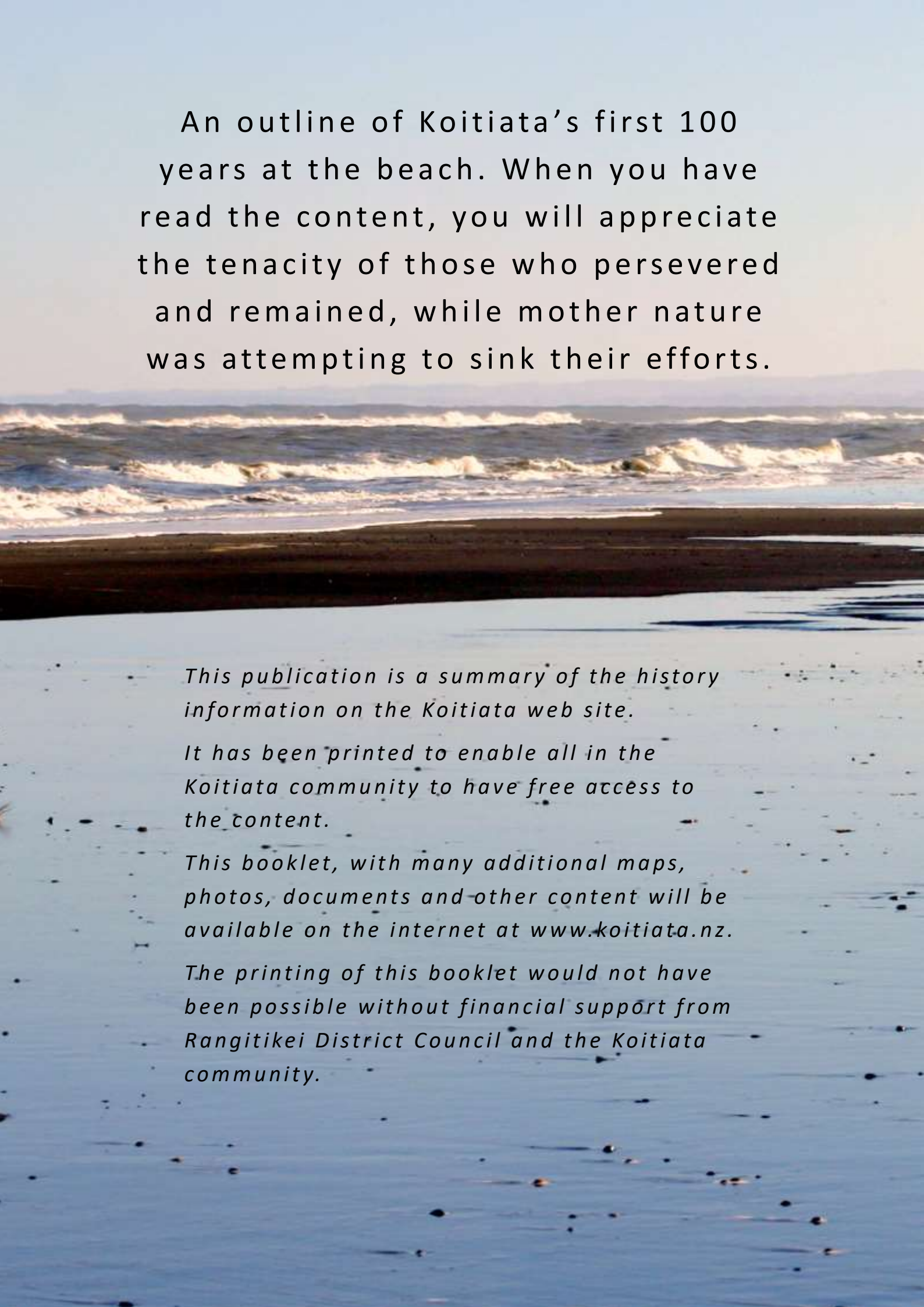
Web Site / History Page

A new Koitiata web-site is being setup for the contents of the history project, to be online in February 2017. This publication will be available online in the same form, enabling it to be read and/or printed as required. There will be a guide to navigating around all of the content on the main History page.

The same subject headings are also being used for the online history pages. Those individual web pages will have the copy from this booklet with links to the original documents, maps, and photos. Plus there will be additional content that didn't fit into these pages, with some additional subjects, and links to referenced documents. That information will be accessed via the side menu on the main History page.

All of the documents, photos, maps and other material that has been sourced will be posted online to be accessible within groupings of Subject, Date, and Type via links on the main page. All new material will be posted into these document groups.

The Koitiata History project is ongoing and if you would like to be emailed when new information is posted on the site send an email to koitiata@gmail.com *Please note the new web-site address from February 2017 will be www.koitiata.nz*



An outline of Koitiata's first 100 years at the beach. When you have read the content, you will appreciate the tenacity of those who persevered and remained, while mother nature was attempting to sink their efforts.

This publication is a summary of the history information on the Koitiata web site.

It has been printed to enable all in the Koitiata community to have free access to the content.

This booklet, with many additional maps, photos, documents and other content will be available on the internet at www.koitiata.nz.

The printing of this booklet would not have been possible without financial support from Rangitikei District Council and the Koitiata community.