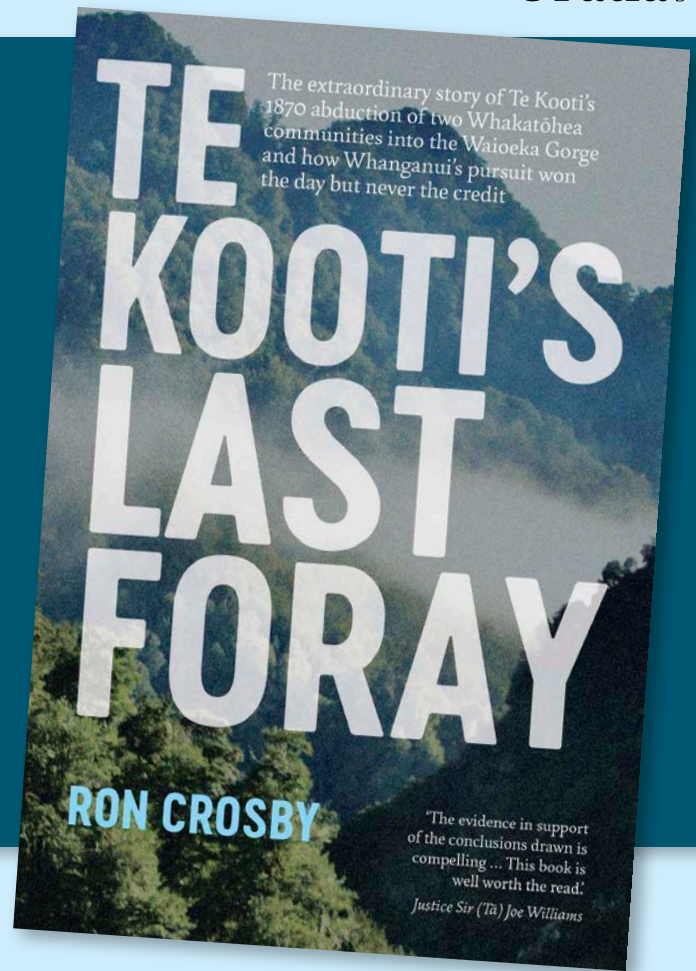


# TE KOOTI'S LAST FORAY

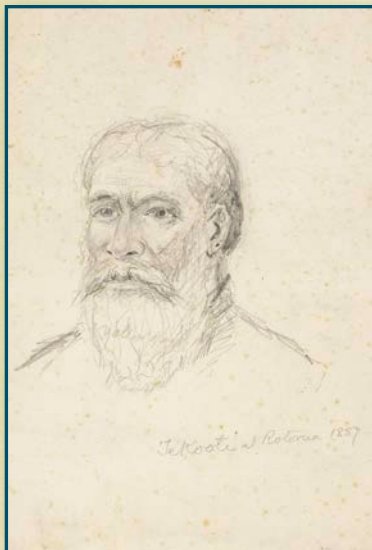
RON CROSBY



‘The following that Te Kooti sought and failed to achieve by abduction, coercion and aggressive war in 1870, he “won” in the long run by spiritual appeal.’

PUBLISHED BY ORATIA BOOKS

ISBN 978-1-99-004234-8



Lashley, Richard. 1816-97. [Ryan, Thomas Aldworth] 1864-1927. A-114-004-2. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki.

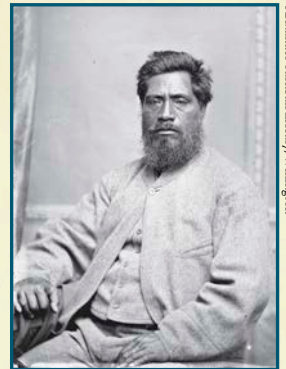
*Te Kooti's Last Foray* describes events in March 1870 when Te Kooti abducted 218 Whakatōhea people, and his pursuit by Whanganui and Ngāti Porou contingents solely under command of Māori officers. Te Kooti's supporters were defeated and dispersed and the 218 were rescued but Te Kooti escaped. Ironically, decades later many of the descendants of those abducted adopted Te Kooti's Ringatū religion. This book corrects a myth that credited Ngāti Porou with the success rather than Whanganui.

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**TE KOOTI WAS A MĀORI LEADER** who was wrongly imprisoned on Wharekauri/Chatham Islands in 1866, along with about 350 other Māori who had been involved in rebellion against the Crown. (Te Kooti had actually fought alongside Crown forces.) None of these people, whom Te Kooti later called his 'whakarau', were properly charged or tried in a court, and in a gross breach of their rights were held on Wharekauri without a finite sentence for more than three years. In the end, in July 1868 Te Kooti led them in seizing the supply vessel *Rifleman* and escaping to the East Coast at Whareongaonga Bay south of Gisborne.

**FROM THEN ON THEY WERE ATTACKED RELENTLESSLY** by Crown forces. The stakes were increased even more by Te Kooti's own ruthless actions in killing many Māori from a range of iwi on the East Coast, Bay of Plenty and central Volcanic Plateau areas. Moreover, he had commenced a religion now known as the Ringatū Movement while on Wharekauri. Many rangatira of different religions viewed him as a threat to their own rangatiratanga and religions.

**AMONG THEM WERE** Te Kēpa Te Rangihwinui and Topia Tūroa of Whanganui, and Ropata Wahawaha of Ngāti Porou from the East Coast (Tai Rāwhiti). They were all experienced fighters, and in 1870 all were accorded the rank of major. Minister of Defence Donald McLean had decided in February 1870 that only Māori forces would be involved in the pursuit of Te Kooti, after Te Arawa near Rotorua had inflicted heavy casualties on Te Kooti's forces, whereas conventional Pākehā-led forces had failed to bring him to heel over the previous year.



Cornell, Samuel 1892-1920: Māori portrait negatives. 14-02227-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington

**THE TWO WHANGANUI RANGATIRA** led their contingent numbering about 400 men from Whanganui all the way up that mighty river, across the central North Island and out to Tauranga, where the government took them by ship to the Ōpōtiki area in February 1870. The Ngāti Porou contingent of about 350 men went on foot across the rugged bush-covered ranges of Te Urewera before reaching the Ōpōtiki area in March 1870.

Ropata (Rapata) Wahawaha.

**ON 7 MARCH 1870** Te Kooti emerged from the ranges to the south of Ōpōtiki and abducted 218 Whakatōhea men, women and children from two kāinga called Ōpape and Ōmarumutu, just east of Ōpōtiki. He took them on a three-day march into the Waioeka Gorge where they had to build their own pā, which was called Waipuna. Te Kooti himself had separated from them and moved downriver to a pā built a few years earlier called Maraetahi. Maraetahi was built by Hira Te Popo as a refuge pā for Ngāti Ira, a hapū of Whakatōhea, who had suffered harsh treatment by Crown troops in an invasion of their lands at Ōpōtiki in retribution for the killing of the Rev. Carl Volkner in 1865.

**THREE WEEKS LATER**, after moving up the Tutaetoko River and climbing over the Raupō range, Whanganui attacked and took a small pā and six puni (camps) of whakarau at night, before attacking Waipuna pā and releasing all 218 Whakatōhea. In total, it is estimated 25 whakarau were killed and 110 captured over two days.

**THE NEXT DAY NGĀTI POROU WERE SURPRISED** at the rocky Te Karoro a Tamatea (Hell's Gate) gorge by Te Kooti's sentries and the noise of the heavy exchanges of firing enabled Te Kooti and his people to escape from Maraetahi pā. The following day Whanganui burnt Waipuna pā and moved downriver for nearly six hours to link up with Ngāti Porou. After a few more days of searching for Te Kooti without success, Maraetahi pā was also burnt and all 1100 of the two contingents, their whakarau captives and the released Whakatōhea took two days to walk down the Waioeka to Ōpōtiki.

**AS A RESULT**, earlier steps taken by the Crown to confiscate Whanganui and Ngāti Porou lands, on the basis that some of their hapū had 'rebelled' against the Crown, were ceased. By contrast Whakatōhea had suffered the confiscation of most of their lands. Ngāti Ira suffered the destruction of all their whare and māra (gardens) by Crown forces in the upper Waioeka. In mid-winter 1870 they emerged back out to the coastal areas, finally settling around their modern marae of Ōpeke at the mouth of the Waioeka gorge.

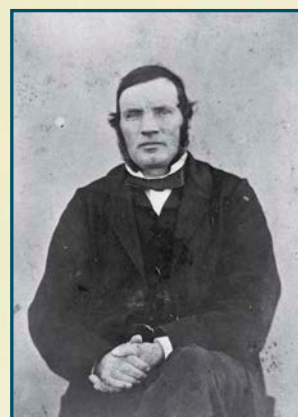
Te Kooti survived a continued pursuit by Māori forces over the next 18 months, before escaping in 1872 to the refuge of the Kingitanga in the upper Waikato catchment. There he lived under the protection of the Māori King until pardoned by the government in 1883. In that period he visited in peace areas where he had earlier attempted to use force and won many adherents to his religion. In the 2018 Census about 12,500 people described themselves as followers of his Ringatū religion.



Looking upriver at Te Karoro a Tamatea (Hell's Gate) gorge.

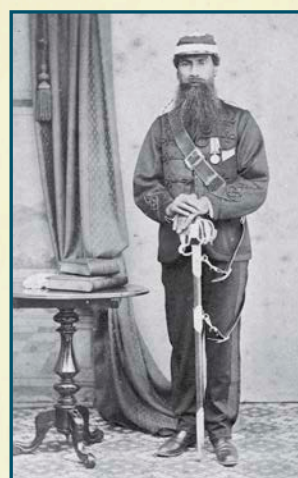
# QUESTIONS

- Who decided that only Māori forces were to be used in the pursuit of Te Kooti? When did that occur and why?
- Why did Whanganui and Ngāti Porou fight under Te Kēpa and Ropata Wahawaha for the Crown?
- Why were the two pā of Waipuna and Maraetahi built? Where? By whom?
- Who destroyed those two pā and the gardens? Why do you think that was done?
- How many people were in each of the two attacking contingents? What river or ridge routes did they each follow as they approached Waipuna and Maraetahi pā? **SEE MAP A**
- Which of the Whanganui and Ngāti Porou contingents was the most successful in their attacks and why do you think they were successful?
- What happened to Te Kooti after Maraetahi pā was attacked? **SEE MAP A**
- What happened later to Whanganui and Ngāti Porou lands, and to Whakatōhea lands?
- What happened to Ngāti Ira? Who was their rangatira and what is the name of their modern marae?



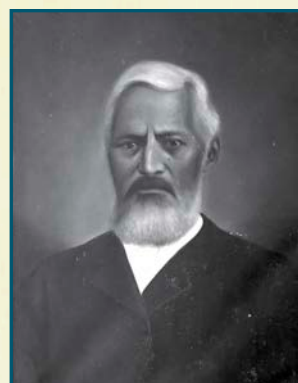
P/2-26/93, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ

Sir Donald McLean.



P/2-25/62, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ

Te Kēpa Te Rangihiwini.



Te Rau Kakarua, Opake marae

Hira Te Popo.



Above: Maraetahi pā (circled area), looking southwest.  
Harvey Brunt drone image

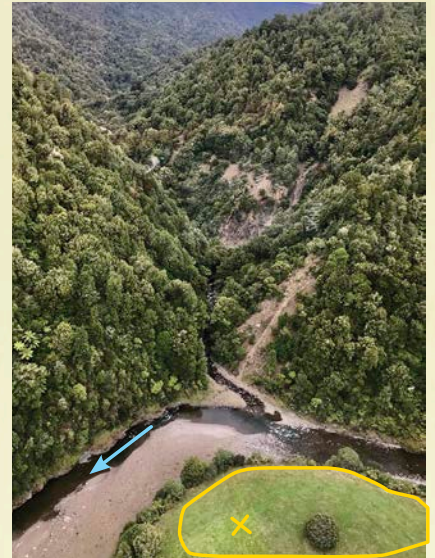


Left: Looking south upriver from the top of the elevation just south of modern Wairata. This is the likely view Whanganui scouts would have obtained by climbing a tree to get a view above the canopy. The probable location of Waipuna pā is marked with the yellow arrow just this side of the central high points on the skyline. The Te Pato Stream catchment is just visible in sunlight to upper left, beyond the cleared spur to upper left. Nikau Flat hut is beyond the craggy ridgeline in the upper centre. The blue arrow indicates the direction of the flow of the water.

Stu Spicer collection

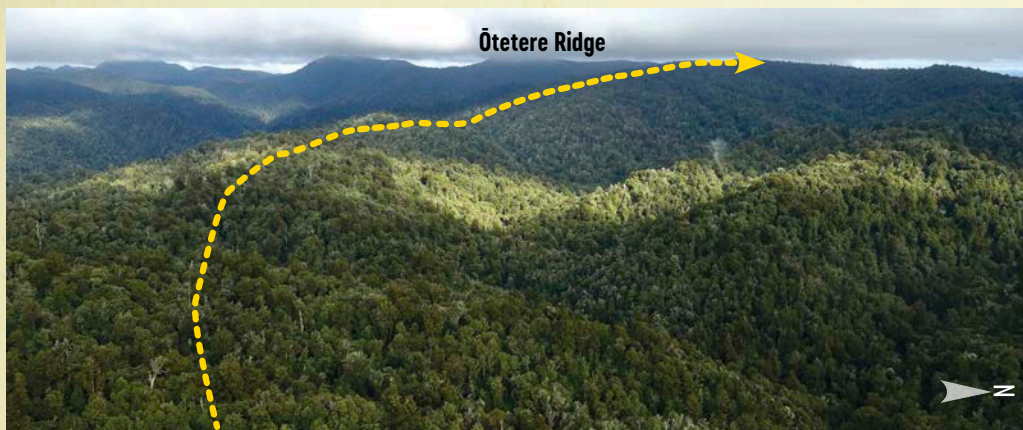
## DISCUSSION POINTS

- Who were the whakarau and why were they sent to Wharekauri/Chatham Islands? Discuss how unjust it was for them to be held there and consider how long they were imprisoned. How did they escape?
- If you were Te Kooti and heard the firing break out in Te Karoro gorge downriver of Maraetahi pā, where would you have gone to escape and why? **SEE MAP B**
- Discuss how hard and long the two approach routes would have been that were followed by Whanganui and Ngāti Porou before March 1870. Compare that distance to the distances of the routes followed by Te Kooti. What was the name of the bush-covered ranges where they all ended? **SEE MAP C**
- What is the name of Te Kooti's religion? Why do you think many followers are descendants of those he abducted in 1870?



The probable position of Waipuna pā.

Ron Crosby



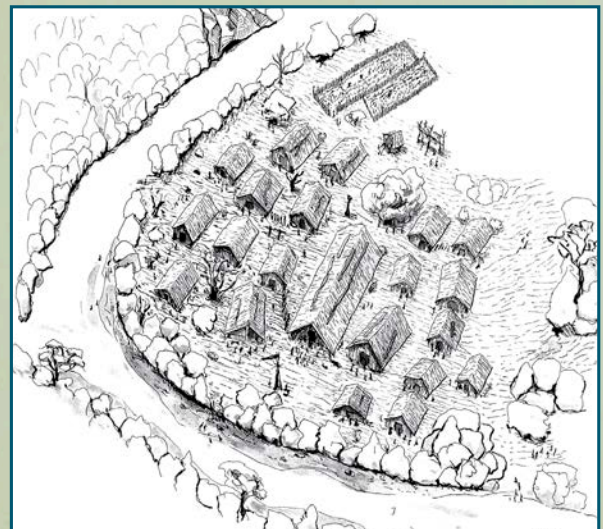
Stu Spicer collection

The large, flat elevated Ōteterē kererū 'food basket' area for Ngāti Ira. The Wairata Stream catchment area is in upper left and the Opanae Stream valleys are at centre and right. This was the likely route linking Maraetahi pā to the Waimana. The dotted line is the probable escape route followed by Te Kooti.

## ACTIVITIES

This is an artist's impression of what **WAIPUNA PĀ** may have looked like from the air. One of the whare in that pā was large enough to hold over 100 people one night when it rained. **DRAW** what you think that whare might have looked like from the ground. The main whare was surrounded by other smaller whare making enough room to house about 325 people.

Using the artist's impression and your images and the aerial photos of the location, try to **DESCRIBE HOW**, if you were the abducted Whakatōhea people, you might have gone about building a pā with whare for shelter, and māra (gardens) for about 325 people, with bush covering the river terrace where you had arrived. Bear in mind winter is approaching so you do not have much time.



Artist's impression of Waipuna pā before the Whanganui attack.

Stu Spicer

This is an artist's impression of what **MARAETAHI PĀ** might have looked like. It contained a huge whare karakia (church building) that Ngāti Ira built for Te Kooti. It was described as:

a fine house 80 ft long, 30 ft broad, and 9 ft high at the eaves. The floor was covered with two flax mats or takapau, the whole length of the building. A great deal of time and labour must have been expended in the manufacture of the Maori carpets; they were worked in various patterns and devices in wools of different colours.

Pretend you are standing at the doorway and looking into the whare karakia. **DRAW WHAT YOU THINK** it may have looked like looking inside from its doorway.



Artist's impression of Maraetahi pā before the Ngāti Porou attack.  
Stu Spicer

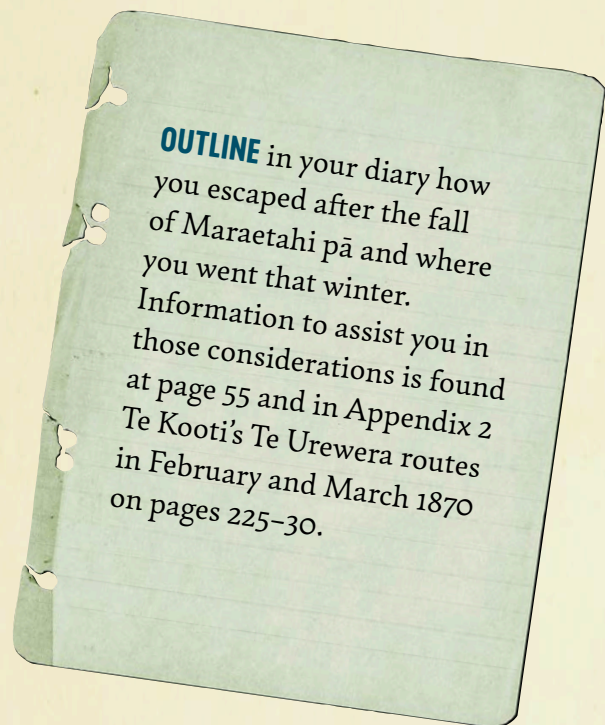
## ACTIVITIES FOR THE ADVANCED AND MATURE READER

Use your **RESEARCH SKILLS** to understand why the Crown attacked Whakatōhea, and Ngāti Ira in particular in 1865, leading Hira Te Popo to take his people so far up the Waioeka and to build Maraetahi pā there.

With teacher guidance, **DISCUSS** the difficulties of providing food for the abducted Whakatōhea in the forthcoming winter. Information to assist you in those considerations is found in Appendix 1 Food and other resources, on page 218.

Using the book, **RESEARCH** the reasons why Te Kooti may have decided to abduct 218 Whakatōhea and **WRITE A DIARY** as if you were Te Kooti explaining:

- how you planned and conducted the long trip to abduct them and bring them back to the Te Pato Stream junction with the Waioeka
- why you did not take them with you to Maraetahi pā where there are food gardens.



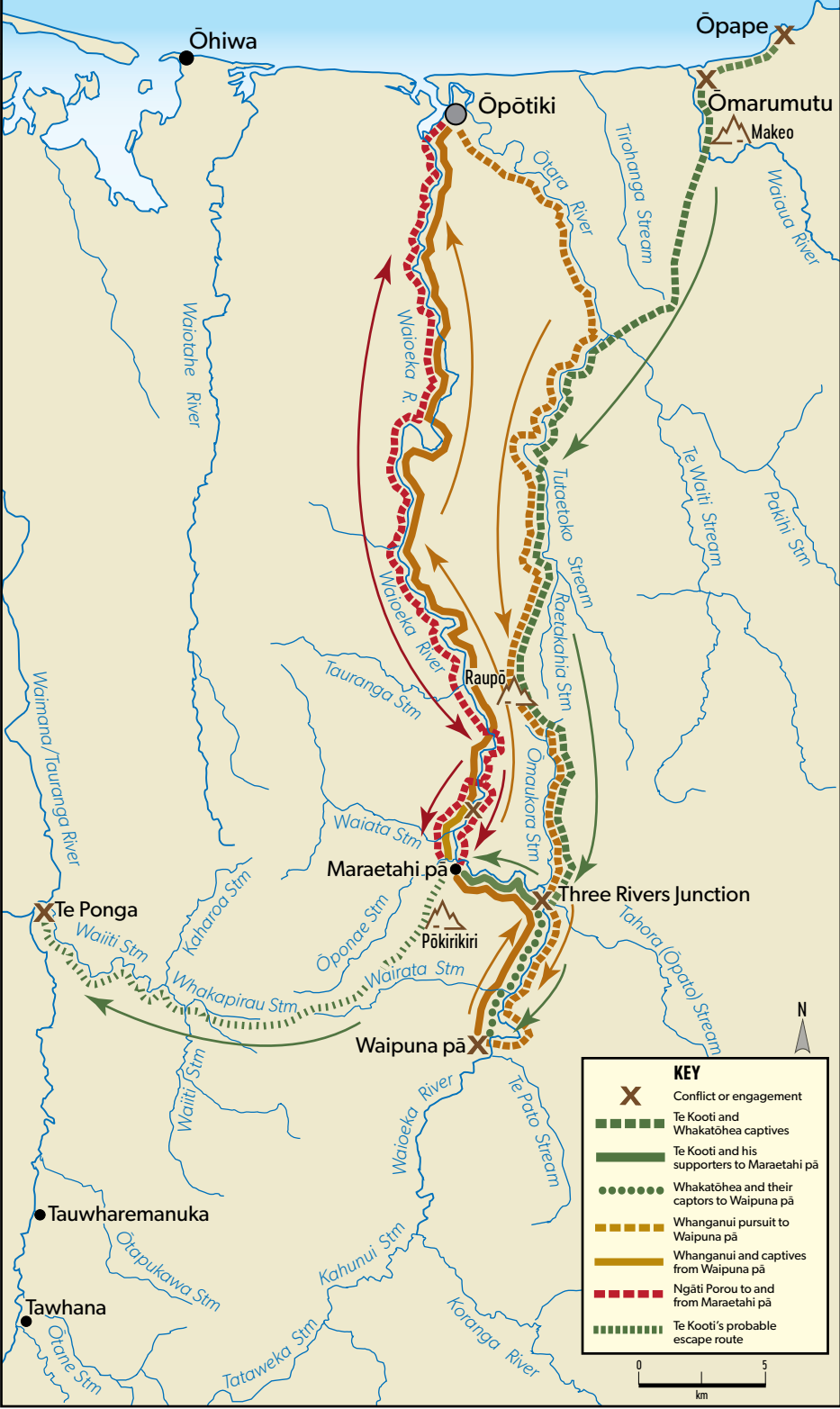
**OUTLINE** in your diary how you escaped after the fall of Maraetahi pā and where you went that winter. Information to assist you in those considerations is found at page 55 and in Appendix 2 Te Kooti's Te Urewera routes in February and March 1870 on pages 225–30.



Write a letter to  
Ron Crosby,  
c/- Oratia Books,  
783 West Coast Road,  
Oratia, Auckland 0604,  
telling him what aspects of Te Kooti's  
Last Foray you found most interesting.  
Ron will be delighted to read your letters.

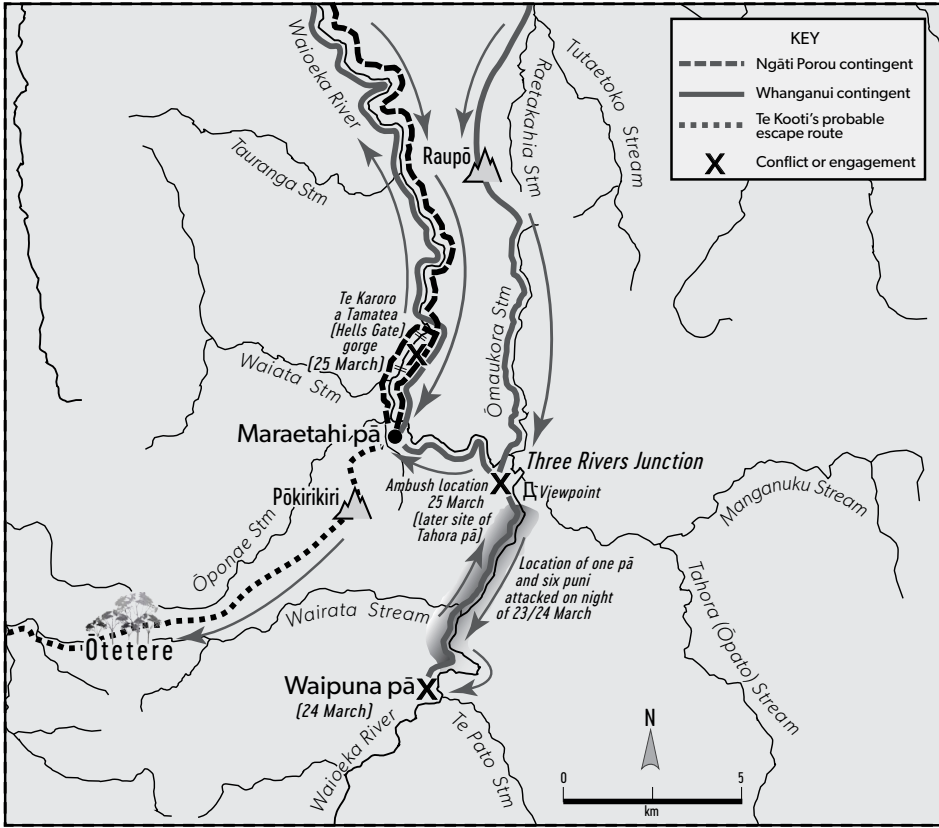
# REFERENCE MAPS

## MAP A



Map showing routes followed by Te Kooti and his pursuers after the abduction of the Whakatōhea communities at Ōmarumutu and Ōpape in March 1870.

# MAP B



# MAP C

