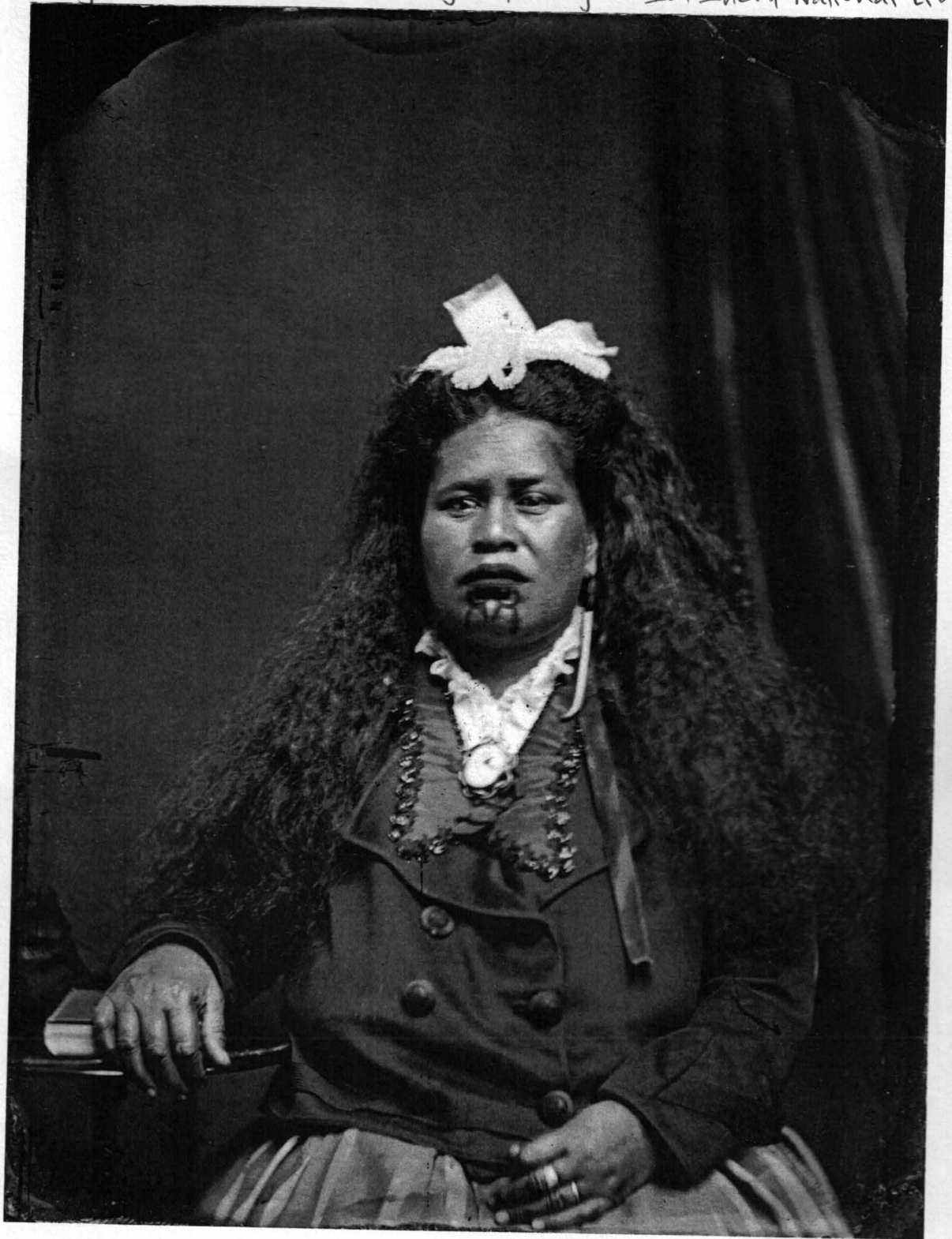


From: Simpson, Miria (ed.) (2003) *Ngā Taumata - A Portrait of Ngāti Kahungunu/He Whakaahua o Ngāti Kahungunu 1870-1906*. Wellington: Huia Publishers with Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Inc. & National Library.



**Ākenihi Pātoka Rātima**  
**Rerepukapuka Tōmoana**

Ko Ngāi Te Rangi-itā, ko Ngāti Papa-tua-mārō,  
ko Ngāti Ngarengare, ko Ngāi Tūrahi ngā hapū

Photographer: Samuel Carnell  
Alexander Turnbull Library  
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# ĀKENEHI PĀTOKA RĀTIMA REREPUKAPUKA<sup>1</sup> TŌMOANA

(?-1908)

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Political secretary	Ko Ngāi Te Rangitā, ko Ngāti Tūrahi
Chief's wife	Ko Ngāti Papa-tua-mārō
Chief's daughter	Ko Ngāti Ngarengare ōna hapū
Land advocate	Ko Ngāti Kahungunu
Women's suffrage advocate	Ko Ngāti Te Whatu-i-Āpiti Ko Ngāti Tūwharetoa ōna iwi

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In 1852 Ākenehi Pātoka, a chieftainess in her own right, married Hēnare Tōmoana, a chief of Heretaunga. This was a second marriage for both of them.

Her ancestry to Ngāti Tūwharetoa comes through Ngāi Te Rangitā of the Ōkahukura lands known previously as Te Tāhuna. Her ancestral land rights also extend to Te Kena, Kōparekore, Wai-o-ngā-kōhanga, Parakore, Te Awa-pokahou, Whenua-hou, Ōmāhu, Aorangi, Ōwhāoko, Ōtāwhao and Heretaunga Tara-kaihae. Her iwi and hapū links include Ngāi Te Whatu-i-Āpiti, Ngāti Papa-tua-mārō, Ngāti Rangi-koianake, and Ngāti Ngarengare.

With the establishment of the Native Land Court in 1865, Ākenehi, as with many other female landowners of those times, represented her land interests.

'... Through the courage of my wife Ākenehi ... the lands have been retained ...' said Hēnare Tōmoana at the Native Land Court hearings of the Whenuakura land block (1883).<sup>2</sup>

The 1860s to 1900 were turbulent years for Māori with loss of their lands, the decline in their health, and the high infant mortality rate. Women were affected with pre-natal complications and subsequent infant deaths, leaving many couples childless. In 1875 after suffering many years of infant deaths, Ākenehi sought spiritual guidance from a tohunga at Waipatu for her unborn child. In due course her son Paraire was born, and he became a sportsman of renown, despite having a club foot. His childhood years were spent with Te Rangitā of Ngāti Tūwharetoa, where he learnt cosmogony, astrology and astronomy.<sup>3</sup> Paraire was 13 when he was sent to Pōrangahau to undertake strict military training under his great-uncle Īhāia Hūtana.<sup>4</sup>

In 1895, the 'First Wives of Heretaunga' set up the 'Komiti Wāhine Māori' and organised Te Hui Wāhine at Te Haukē Marae as a forum for Māori women to discuss the cessation of land sales, women's suffrage, equal rights, prohibition, and temperance.<sup>5</sup> Ākenehi inspired the women with her inaugural address, 'For many years the men, the chiefs, the Members of Parliament, the Kingitanga, have been searching for answers to our issues regarding land and the betterment of our people ... they even went to England. ... All of this was

done without us; the women ... and no benefit has come back to our people. ... We women have not yet tried!<sup>6</sup>

Ākenehi worked politically alongside her husband, as the secretary of Te Kotahitanga. These activities extended to women's suffrage as secretary of Ngā Komiti Wāhine, until she became increasingly ill around 1899.

Through the early 1900s, 'black sickness'<sup>7</sup> was responsible for taking many Māori lives. In 1904, Ākenehi and Hēnare lost their son, Pāneta Terehunga, when he was 12 years old. Their daughter Māhina-a-rangi died in 1907 aged 6 years.<sup>8</sup> When Ākenehi died in 1908, she was initially buried at Pakipaki, but was later moved<sup>9</sup> next to her husband Hēnare Tōmoana at Waipatu.<sup>10</sup>

In the Native Land Court Hearing of the Aorangi reserve, Hēnare acknowledged his wife, '... Ākenehi gave me mana, she gave me a son! ...' (1893).<sup>11</sup>