



Tupuna (grandfather)  
Whare Hetaraka

Mina was part of many cattle droves to the Tuakau saleyards along the winding gravel roads through the back country, until stock trucks took over the job. He recalls droving as fun, enjoying the camaraderie of his fellow drovers, “they were all good horsemen, good fun too,” he says. He also worked for nine years for Raglan County Council.

The highlight of his life, Mina says, was the building of the marae at Pukerewa. “For months in the early 80s, before we even thought of building a marae, I used to come from my house down the road and sit out on the gravel road, thinking how wonderful it would be. There was no marae in all of Waikaretu.” A committee was set up and after much investigation to find the best design for a building and get the process underway, the Pukerewa Marae was opened on March 23, 1991 – on the site Mina had envisaged.

Mina and his wife Te Aroha raised seven children, six boys and one girl. For their generation, times had changed since Mina’s youth. “I think it’s hard for the mokopuna now,” says Mina. “They must get an education to get a job. They have to live where the work is and their way of life is different. Not many can live on the land, like me and those who came before us.” ■



Toko Whare (Mina’s father)

horses, catching them and hitching them to the hand plough – that was our tractor. It was fun, I really enjoyed that. The very best part was sowing grass seed. Dad and I sat on our horses to throw the seed over 30-40 acres. It took time, but it was very satisfying, gauging the wind and watching it spreading out and landing just where you wanted it. It was a heavy job though, with 12 ton of grass seed to a bag – you knew about it at the end of the day! Then there was haymaking... I was helped in my work because I had a very clever horse. I used to break in horses and sometimes a horse will stand out from the others as special. He just knew what I wanted and would do anything I wanted him to.”

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