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He Kākano i Ruia Mai i Hea?
Kāwera: Rekindling the Home Fires

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ABSTRACT

Kāwera (Ōmāhu IB4B2) is tūrangawaewae to the Nuku whānau (*family*). It is a relatively small block along the winding Taihape Road, that looks no different from any of the other neighbouring farm lands apart from our whānau urupā (*family cemetery*) and a stone waharoa (*gateway*) standing, as it might appear, randomly in the middle of the front paddock.

Our tīpuna (*ancestors*) lived and worked on this land until the 1940s. They have all long since gone now, sadly taking with them, most of our oral narratives, our waiata (*songs*) and our pūrākau (*ancient legends*) that pertain specifically to Kāwera. Therefore this journey of uncovering our history, our whakapapa (*genealogy*), our stories, has in the main, depended on Māori Land Court records and fragments of memories held by only a few of my elders.

The significance of the block was solely based around our loved ones at rest in the urupā (*cemetery*) and our own experiences - camping and eeling at Kāwera over the years. However, this research has revealed that Kāwera has a rich and extensive history. This land has been fought for, both in combat and through the spoken word, and I strongly believe that we are extremely fortunate that this block is still retained by our whānau.

A great deal of the data has been collected from evidence provided to the Native Land Court in the late 1880s by my tipuna (*ancestor*), Wiramina Ngāhuka. Wiramina was an expert witness in terms of whakapapa and land sites, and well-known for her skills as a historian, as the holder of whakapapa that spans back to pre Ngāti Kahungunu. She deserves to at least be acknowledged by her own descendants.

The research also looks at Kāwera's contemporary history, and whakapapa narratives pertaining to the hapū (*sub-tribe*) affiliations of Wiramina and her husband, Nuku II. The hope is that in some way, this research will sow a seed that rejuvenates a bond between us and Kāwera, and with each other.

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Ka huri te arotahi ki ngā kanohi ora, arā, ki a Joseph TeRito, nāna nei au i kipakipa haere kia whāia ngā mahi rangahau ki tōna mutunga. Ki a Materoa Haenga, taku toka tūmoana, taku kōtuku noho awa. E kui e, mei kore ake koe! Kāti ake.

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Nau mai e tama ki te taiao nei

Kia whakangungua koe ki te kahikatoa



Figure 1. My mokopuna, Conner, Cairo, Isaiah holding Māreikura and Connie-Rae, taken in November, 2010.

I share a waiata written by my mentor, close friend, workmate and kuia, Materoa Haenga, for our whānau and our whenua, Kāwera:

He taurere aha taku tangi?	<i>This weeping of mine is for what?</i>
Ka tangi rā, he whakaahuru kore	<i>Tears flow because there is no sanctuary</i>
Kua marae kore hoki	<i>For there is no marae</i>
Taku papatipu, taku papakāinga	<i>On my ancestral lands, my ancestral home</i>
I Kāwera turua	<i>At beautiful Kāwera</i>
E whakaraupeka nei i ahau	<i>That weighs heavily on my mind</i>
Pō noa te ao, ao noa te pō	<i>Constantly day and night</i>
Auē taukuri e! He rā kai tua?	<i>Woe is me! Will it never end?</i>
Kāti ake	<i>So be it</i>
Ko te pungarehu ki te pungarehu	<i>Ashes to ashes</i>
Te whenua ki te whenua	<i>Dust to dust</i>
Aroaroā kau ana	<i>Desolate and lonely</i>
Te haupū a ngā uri	<i>Lie the descendants</i>
O Tuawhakarere	<i>Of the far distant past</i>
Kei te mūnga o te tini mano	<i>Amidst the silent multitude</i>
Te aroha i a au e! Kāwera e ...	<i>Kāwera e ... you are my very soul!</i>

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