

## A TSUNAMI OF THEFT – by Anahera Herbert-Graves

After 1856 the Government was no longer able to get away with simply writing ‘[Crown grant](#)’ and ‘[scrip](#)’ lies on pieces of paper to steal Ngati Kahu lands for its favoured citizens. Nor was it able to maintain the practice of merely declaring our lands to be ‘[surplus](#)’ in order to steal them for later disposal. So it came up with a new theft mechanism euphemistically called ‘Crown purchases’.



we, and not the Crown, owned our lands.

In reality ‘[Crown purchases](#)’ were only a variation on the ‘scrip’ and ‘surplus land’ theft techniques in that, for the first time, the Government actually paid token amounts of money to try and disguise its crimes as ‘sales’. As such, Ngati Kahu refer to this money as guilt money, even though often as not it was paid to the wrong people, or never paid at all. Either way it confirmed the mana whenua of our hapu and recognised that

The sheer scale of ‘Crown purchase’ thefts from Ngati Kahu cannot be covered in one column, so we will consider only one such series which took place between 1862 to 1865 when the Government went after the fertile [Mangataiore/Victoria Valley and adjacent area](#); lands that belong to Ngati Taranga, Te Paatu, Pikaahu and Matakairiri.

It began in 1862 with the [Mangatete south](#) block of 11,125 acres. The guilt money was just £509. Only four reserves were set aside for Ngati Kahu: Ōtarapoko (206 acres), Whiwhero (178 acres), Hauturu (144 acres) and Te Rangirangina (176 acres). Apart from tiny remnants, all four had also been stolen by 1947.

[Maungataniwha East](#), an area of 8,649 acres, was also stolen in 1862 with guilt money of £388. Four small blocks, Ahitahi, Ōtaharua, Haumapu and Te Awapuku, were acknowledged as exclusively for the hapū but were not formally reserved, and all of them were later stolen between 1867 and 1885.

[Maungataniwha West No 1](#), an area of 12,940 acres, was stolen in 1863. The guilt money was £647. An area of 1,130 acres was cut out as the Pēria block, and 566 acres of that was also later stolen.

[Maungataniwha West No 2](#), an area of 11,002 acres, was also stolen in 1863. The guilt money was £560. There were two reserves: Tāheke (79 acres), which was later stolen in 1877, and Mangataiore (381 acres), 191 acres of which were also later stolen.

[Taunoke](#), an area of 44 acres, was stolen in 1864. The guilt money was £5.

[Kaiaka](#), an area of 7,367 acres was stolen in 1865. The guilt money was £1,114. The four reserves, Tāheke, Te Hororoa, Whakapapa and Waimamaku, were all stolen by 1941.

By 1865, for guilt money totalling £7,204 2s 6d, the Government had used ‘Crown purchases’ to steal almost 230,000 additional acres from Ngati Kahu’s hapu. Indeed, what had begun after 1840 as a series of Crown-led crime waves had, by 1865, truly transformed into a tsunami of theft.

