

## Horeke or Kohukohu? Charles Heaphy's *View of the Kahu-Kahu Hokianga River 1839*

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In 1916 Alexander Turnbull purchased a watercolour by Charles Heaphy from the New Zealand Company. Despite Heaphy's unequivocal caption *View of the Kahu-Kahu Hokianga River 1839* some researchers have maintained that the scene depicted is Horeke, a settlement a few miles upriver from Kohukohu. The most recent description of the painting, which accompanied its exhibition in Auckland in 1985, stated it is 'Thomas McDonnell's ship-building establishment at Horeke'.<sup>1</sup> This article examines and questions the information given by historians about the painting over a number of years.

In 1955 Ruth Ross wrote *Early Traders*, a booklet for the School Publications Branch. In it she included reproductions of Heaphy's watercolour, and of an 1828 work by Augustus Earle, *The E.O. Racky or Deptford Dockyard, on the E.O. Keangha River, N. Zealand, 1828*. Their presentation on facing pages and the accompanying captions, which both give the location as Te Horeke, demonstrate that Ross assumed the paintings show the same place.

In 1968, she outlined a theory that Heaphy's watercolour was a composite representation of both Horeke and Kohukohu.<sup>2</sup> She initially quotes Jerningham Wakefield who, with Heaphy, travelled to the Hokianga on board the *Tory*.

It would appear from E. J. Wakefield's brief description that at the time of the *Tory's* visit . . . [G. F.] Russell was already doing a thriving business; 'Two or three miles above the Narrows, and twenty-six miles from the river's mouth, we anchored close to two other barques which were loading kauri timber for New South Wales. On the bank to our left was the house and store of a timber-dealer and general store-keeper.' Timber loading was also in progress at Horeke—'About two miles above Mangungu, we found the establishment of Lieutenant Macdonnell. . . . A brig was loading kauri spars at the river-side. A nice wooden house, belonging to Lieutenant Macdonnell, stood on a terrace about fifty yards back from the river. Mr Mariner had a comfortable cottage on the bank below, buried in the midst of flourishing gardens.'<sup>3</sup>

Ross then states her composite theory:

Thus Wakefield provides the identification key to one of Charles Heaphy's most celebrated watercolours. . . . His *View of the Hahu-Hahu* [sic], *Hokianga River, December 1839* has been identified both as Kohukohu and Horeke, but the painting, like the name (though the latter was perhaps accidental), is a composite of the two.