

3. History of the Turakirae coast



Barney's Whare. Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.

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Until a good road and railway was built over the Rimutakas, the only way to get stock to the Wairarapa was to walk them around the coast. When the way was blocked by high tides the stockmen spent time burning driftwood against narrowest part of the cliff. When the rock was hot they threw sea water on it and made it shatter. You can still see the smoke-blackened rocks in the narrow pass around the coast.

- Look at the second beach level and imagine the tide up to here. This is where it would have been when Maori had settlements on the coast. How would this impact on their life?

- The first raised beach was where the tide would have come up to in 1855 when early settlers were still taking cattle and sheep around the coast to farms in the Wairarapa. When the beach was raised it had a positive impact on travel. How would this make the journey easier for them?

- There were little huts along the way where stockmen spent the night. One of the old huts, Barney's Whare, has been rebuilt. Think about how this environment would have met the needs of the people using it. Consider food, shelter, income.
- A Visitors' Book kept at Barney's Whare tells of over 45 shipwrecks in the Palliser Bay area where all lives were lost. Describe the possible dangers of the sea today.

Before 1855 some parts of the coastal track were blocked during high tide.

