



*Hori Pokai*



Lot 23 Framed

Hori Pokai lived beside the Kauaeranga Stream in the Thames district. His father, Tauri Netana, escaped from Hongi Hika's attack on Te Totara Pa in 1821. He was later captured by a Ngapuhi raiding party and taken to the Bay of Islands, where Pokai was born, instead of his native Arawa.

Although Hori Pokai's tattoo was incomplete, he was considered to be the last tattooed Maori in the Thames district. When Mr W. Hammond came to photograph the chief, he painted Pokai's tattoo with Indian ink to ensure that the finer lines would show up more clearly. Pokai was so pleased with Hammond's artwork that he paraded daily down the main street of Thames until the ink finally wore off. Pokai was an avid story teller and would relate how on several occasions his love affairs brought him close to death. He told of the time he paid too much attention to another man's wife and the aggrieved husband challenged him to a dual. The whole tribe assembled to watch Pokai's punishment. Pokai, as the offender, had to rest on one knee, with a sharp stick in his hand, and defend himself against his opponent, who was armed with a long spear. The offended husband was allowed to make two thrusts at Pokai, in an attempt to impale him. Pokai parried the first attack and deftly brushed aside the second. He fought this uneven dual twice and survived both times. He was a man of great pride, with a keen sense of humour. His great physical strength is clearly mirrored in his face, particularly the set of his jaw. He was an able warrior and leader, but few stories of his battles have survived.

Goldie first painted Hori in 1905, after a visit to Thames. He took a series of photographs at the time, and these were used for portraits in 1917 and 1919 and for several in the 1930's. The 1936 portrait Pokai *Perturbed or Suspicion* was submitted to the Royal Academy, and the 1937 study *A Midsummer's Day, Maoriland* was exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1938. Goldie also had access to the photographs of Hori taken by Hammond.

*C F Goldie His Life & Painting*, Alister Taylor & Jan Glen, 1977