

# Tarawera Te Maunga Tapu

## Survivor Experiences Activity (suitable for Years 5 - 10)



ROTORUA  
museum

*Te Whare Taonga o Te Arawa*  
ART | CULTURE | HERITAGE

### Instructions:

Your task is to read about the experiences of four people who lived through the Tarawera Eruption of 1886. A very important event that changed the course of history not only for Rotorua but also New Zealand. It destroyed the famous Pink and White Terraces and tragically killed over 120 people

In this activity you will read each account and then answer the questions that follow.

### Terina

An account written about events at Te Wairoa Village near the mountain.

“ All was in darkness, and nothing could be heard but the fire from Mr Hazard’s house and heard other Maoris calling to each other at the foot of the hills. We went into McRae’s Hotel. The storm was already making great havoc with this hotel, so we and the other Maoris left there, and went round to the wharepuni, but being unable to reach there, I and my other companions got into another whare, which was yet intact, close to the old mill.

Here the old chief Kepa Rangipuawhe joined her, and took charge of the small party. Finding that this whare was feeling the weight of the storm, Kepa advised them to go out on to the road , for if they were going to die, it would be better outside.

They all took his advice, and after some difficulty reached the road, and made their way through all the storm onto Ohinemutu. It was pitch dark all the way to Whakarewarewa. “

### Questions:

1. Research who the Mr Hazard is that’s mentioned in this account. What was his job in the village of Te Wairoa? Is there anything else you discovered about him?
2. How do you think Terina was feeling as these events were occurring? Why would she be feeling this way?
3. Place yourself into the events of this story. Write your own brief account of what it may have been like having to walk from the Tarawera area to Ohinemutu in Rotorua



# Jean Julia Irwin

An account written about events near Whakatāne in the Bay of Plenty.



“About 3 o’clock I was awakened by a lot of stones thrown on our roof. In about half an hour it commenced to thunder and the lightning was something dreadful. Then came a fearful shock of an earthquake. The thunder was so bad I thought it would make us deaf. The lightning was so bad the room was in a blaze. I felt sure the house would catch fire.

At four o’clock I could stand it no longer I got up lit the candle. Ashes came through the roof. I put my hand outside. Ashes and sand were falling as fast as heavy rain. The hour from four till five o’clock I shall never forget. After every peal of thunder came a terrible shock of earthquake. The house shook and rolled. Every moment I was sure it would fall.

I was afraid to light the lamp till after five. When we did light the lamp it was so dark it looked quite a dismal light. It was so dark when the lamp was alight we could not see the rafters. I knew then what the darkness of Egypt was.

Ashes on the table, ashes on the floor, ashes in the beds. The wind blowing every direction and ashes and sand falling on the house all the time. At 6 o’clock the thunder lightning was less and seemed farther away. The earthquakes were lighter. The ground seemed to tremble for minutes altogether. “

## Questions:

1. Find out more about Jean Julia Irwin by researching online. Write a few sentences on what you found interesting about her life
2. If you could interview her today. Prepare five questions you would ask her
3. What do you know about volcanic eruptions that you would share with her that might have helped her on this night
4. Research and find out how volcanic ash is made from volcanoes. Show step by step how it is made.





# A Māori On The Deaths At Rotomahana

*A native belonging to the Arawa tribe (Rangori te Ao)\* writing to Mr. C.O Davis about the catastrophe at Rotomahana.*

\*Most likely Ngāti Te Rangiteaorere a hapu on the eastern side of Lake Rotorua



Rescue party at Lake Tarawera with whale boat after Tarawera eruption

“On the survey party, Awapaheke (Slippery Creek),” says:

“Your affectionate epistle has been received in relation to the deaths of the children, women and the men of both Maoris and Europeans who were overwhelmed, the people of both the Queen and of the Maori King residing at New Zealand. This is an inevitable calamity similar to that experienced by Te Heuheu, whose body was concealed in the great bowels of Tongariro (referring to Te Heuheu and a number of his people being overwhelmed by a landslip). O Mokonuiarangi! Sleep on in the bowels of the earth at Tarawera. (This refers to the section of the Ngatirangitihī who were overwhelmed at the Moura settlement.)

Farewell ! O fathers, O mothers, O sons, O daughters ! It is well that you should have died thus and lie beneath your own mountain, which has been rent asunder, disturbing and scattering the bones of your ancestors. (The mountain Tarawera was an ancient burying ground.) Your deaths were inevitable ; the deities of darkness brought about your destruction. It will now be understood by the English people residing in New Zealand that we have a marvellous Power that has brought about the deaths of you all, buried under your ancestral soil, the mountain of Ruawahia, extending to the mountain ranges of Titiokura and Wharekauanga in the south.

disappeared from our view, O fathers, O mothers, O sons and daughters, and with you the plumes that adorn the Arawa canoe ! You are moving down to the depths to be gazed upon by your ancestors, whither you go in a body to present yourselves, your sudden deaths having been caused by this catastrophe. The women of the Ngatirangitihī tribe will be greeted by those who have gone before, by your ancestors Rongomai and Hue.”

## Questions:

1. What is an epistle and why would one be written about Tarawera?
2. Describe what happened with the landslip near Tongariro that is referred to in the article.
3. According to the person who wrote the account what caused Tarawera to erupt?
4. What did the author think would happen to the Ngati Rangitihī woman who perished as a result of the eruption?
5. Do you agree or disagree that this account is a traditional Māori view of the 1886 eruption. Explain your answer.





# Harry Lundius

An account written about events at Te Wairoa Village near the mountain.

"We did not know at first what was going on outside, except continuous earthquakes and a terrific noise. Then came a fall of some solid matter (scoria I afterwards found it was) on the roof. One extra-large lump penetrated the iron on the roof and went through a picture hanging on the wall. It was then that Mr. Haszard thought it wisest for his wife and the young children to sit in the middle of the room right under the ridge. I was standing at the window all the time trying to see what was going on outside, but I could see nothing. The darkness was so great that one could feel it. Miss Haszard was sitting at the harmonium playing and singing hymns. I saw her get up and stoop to look at the bottom of the door, when a cracking noise was heard and I found that the roof had collapsed.

I soon discovered Miss Haszard and Mr. Blythe near me. It then occurred to me that the present situation was a good one to get out of, so I set to work to break the windows. The glass I could break with my hands (later on I found that I had cut my hand rather badly in doing this). The wooden part of the window was not so easily broken, so I set to work and completed the job with my foot, and eventually got both my companions out.

We then made for the old residence close by. Mr. Blythe wanted to go inside, but one experience of a collapsed roof was enough for me. I found that the ground was covered with mud to the depth of some 4 feet. That would be a fairly good test for a roof to stand, so I insisted on our standing under the verandah, so that if the roof should collapse we had a chance to escape the consequences.

I went out in front of the building we had just left and called out, trying to ascertain if anyone else had escaped or were alive, but the noise was so terrific that I could not hear anything. After a short while (it seemed ages to me) we found that the house was on fire. What caused it I do not know. Probably it was some hot stones. Occasionally we experienced a hot suffocating wind and possibly the house was struck by lightning."



This picture shows the Hazard Family outside their house. The school house is on the right hand side of the picture.

## Questions:

1. What was happening at the time this person was writing this account? Describe some of the things that happened to them.
2. Why do you think the creator of this account wrote this down?
3. Do some research on Harry Lundius. Who was he? What was his reason for being in that place at that particular time?
4. Would people be more prepared if Mt Tarawera erupted today? What makes you say this?



Harry Lundius (left) and John Blythe, survived the eruption by sheltering in a hen-house after escaping from the nearby Te Wairoa schoolhouse when the roof fell in.

## References:

[Terina Account](#)  
Christchurch Press 16 June 1886 p.3 col 2  
[Jean Julia Irwin Account](#)  
Julia Irwin to Alexandrina Tinling, letter dated June 20 1886  
[A Māori On The Deaths At Rotomahana Account](#)  
Auckland Weekly News. 10 July 1887.  
[Harry Lundius Account](#)  
H Lundius. NZ Railways Magazine Vol.10, Is 4 (July 1, 1935.) p.31-32

## Image Credits:

[Page 1 - Te Rina](#)  
1. Ruins of McRae's Hotel, Te Wairoa, destroyed during the 1886 Tarawera eruption. Ref: PAColl-7232-3. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.  
2. Rotorua Museum Graphic  
[Page 2 - Jean Julia Irwin](#)  
1. Photo of Jean Irwin - Family collection Linnette Horne  
2. Charles Blomfield, Mt Tarawera in Eruption June 10 1886. Collection of Rotorua Museum Te Whare Taonga o Te Arawa  
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1. George Wilson, Rescue party at Lake Tarawera with whale boat after Tarawera eruption. Collection of Rotorua Museum Te Whare Taonga o Te Arawa  
2. Unknown, Houses under mud. Collection of Rotorua Museum Te Whare Taonga o Te Arawa  
3. Charles Spencer, Settlement after eruption and Dr Hector's rescue party. Collection of Rotorua Museum Te Whare Taonga o Te Arawa  
4. Burton Brothers, Hinemihi - post eruption. Collection of Rotorua Museum  
[Page 4 - Harry Lundius](#)  
1. Charles Spencer. Mr & Mrs Hazard and family at Te Wairoa in garden of house and school. OP-2782. Collection of Rotorua Museum Te Whare Taonga o Te Arawa  
2. James Richardson. Fowlhouse with John Blythe & Harry Lundius after Tarawera eruption, June 1886. Auckland Libraries 4-3691-3.