

Hūria Mātenga

Hero of Whakatū

by Lindy Kelly

On 4 September 1863, Hūria Mātenga (Ngāti Tama, Te Āti Awa, and Ngāti Toa) woke to the sound of wind whistling the door of her at Whakapuaka, just out of Nelson. A barked nearby. Hūria sat up, listening. Outside were the noises of a great Rain was down on the roof, the wind, and in the distance, Hūria could hear the pounding of waves on the rocks.

Little did she know it, but this of chief Wiremu Katene Te Puoho and granddaughter of the famous Ngāti Tama Te Puoho-ki-te-rangi was soon to be involved in a rescue that would see her name become throughout New Zealand.

Just off the from Whakapuaka, a....., the *Delaware*, was in trouble. All night, her sailors had battled the storm to get the ship to Fearing that the vessel would hit, the captain ordered the anchors thrown One of them was torn off the ship, and the other dragged. The *Delaware* was by the wind and sea closer and to the rocky cliffs nearby. Suddenly, with a terrible, the ship struck underwater about 100 metres from the

At the pā, Hūria and her, Hēmi, saw the ship hit the rocks and heard the sailors' Quickly, they their friend Hohapata and started to the shore.



The last man to leave the was the captain. He took one last look at Squirrel and, deciding that he was, left him lying on his Then he set out to climb along the to shore. Just as Hūria reached him, the rope, and the man would surely have been away if it hadn't been for her

Later, as they stood on the by the fire, the and their rescuers were to see Henry Squirrel on the ship to them for help. He had after all, but now that the rope was, there was no way of him, and he was soon swept and drowned. A short time later, the ship was to pieces on the rocks, and the beach was strewn with its – cases, blankets, candles, saddlery, and clothing.

The settlers of Nelson were very to Hūria and her companions for the lives of the captain and of the *Delaware*. Each rescuer was given a gold or watch to commemorate their deeds, and Hūria's portrait was and hung in the Nelson Art Gallery. In recent years, a Nelson tugboat was after Hūria Mātenga, one of New Zealand's early

illustrations by Spike Wademan



Again, she and her companions plunged into the , wading and until they could reach the sailor. They grabbed him and him to the beach. One by one, the sailors made the journey from the sinking As each one became and ready to give up the struggle, Hūria and her friends their own lives in the seas to support them and them to safety.

On the , more people from the pā had lit a large fire to warm the as they came ashore. They wrapped the men in , gave them food, and dried their

