

Wai 686#S13
Wai 705 #A6

Wai 705

**IN THE MATTER
OF**

the Treaty of
Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF

Barbara Francis,
of Whitianga on
behalf of the whanau
of **Peneamene Tanui**

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF BARBARA FRANCIS

My name is Barbara Huia Francis, I am the claimant in whose name this claim has been made. I am a descendant of Hei who arrived in Aotearoa on the Te Arawa waka. At the time of Cook's visit to Whitianga the Ngati Hei chief was Toawa or Toiawa.

Toawa (Toiawa)

Hamahona Hinganoa

Ngawhira Huihana

myself

I am also of Ngati Paoa through my great grand father Peneamene.

Taramawhiti Te

Ngarahu

Peneamene

Ngawhira

myself

I am also of Ngati Huarere, Ngati Karaua and Ngati Whanaunga. I was born at Whitianga Hospital in 1931 to Huihana and Bevan Johnston. I am the second in a family of six siblings three girls and three boys. The three girls were born at the Whitianga Hospital on the Te Weiti Block.

My father had been posted to teach at the one teacher school at Kaimarama which was on the main road 10 kilometres south of Whitianga. He boarded at Whitianga where met the Davis family and married my mother Huihana Davis.

We lived in Owen Street in Whitianga in one of the little kauri cottages that were built in the kauri milling days to house the mill workers. My uncle Pereki Davis and his wife Josephine also lived in one of these houses in Cobhill Street. The house came complete with candles or kerosene lamps for lighting, a wood burning stove and an outside toilet sheltered by a lovely lemon tree.

My mother was taken as a baby to live and be raised at Ounuroa by her maternal grandmother Raheka Tanui. Nine years before my mother's birth Tanui had died leaving Raheka widowed. My mother Huihana learned tikanga from Raheka Tanui, the old stories, crop growing, fishing preparation and cooking traditional kai such as titi, kuku and kanga pirau and te reo. She lived with Raheka until she was in early teens, when she moved back to her family at Wharekaho. This must have been quite a traumatic transmission for her because her father Charles Davis forbade te reo spoken in the home. She went to school for the first time and there too Maori was forbidden to be spoken. My mother's only language until she made the move back to Wharekaho was te reo. The only time we heard te reo was when we returned to Whitianga when she spoke with her mother and her uncle Raunui, her sister Maraea, and her husband Toha Winiata. My mother was loth to teach her children to speak Maori because of her bad experience at school and at home. I remember her saying to me "if you want to learn Maori go and live with the Maori". That wasn't a consideration at 10 years old. Most of my whanau have tried to learn but it is difficult when you have no one to korero with.

My mother's schooling only lasted a couple of years but I believe she learned English . After leaving school she joined her sister Ellen in the bush cooking for men clearing land at AhuAhu Island. She then became assistant to the dentist Reg Bell who travelled to service the dental needs of the Coromandel Peninsular.

My father taught only for a couple of years at Kaimarama but then became disillusioned with trying to teach tired little children who had worked for a couple of hours in the cowshed prior to coming to school each day. My father gave up teaching and took up commercial fishing with Curly Steadman and Dick Hovell. They hand lined and longlined from Cuvier Island at the top of the Coromandel Peninsular. With competition from commercial fishing boats from Auckland it became increasingly difficult for small operators to make a living. With the coming of the depression my father found himself doing relief work on the roads between Whitianga and Kuaotunu.

My childhood memories are of walks at the weekend out to Wharekaho to visit our grandparents Charles and Ngawhira (daughter of Peneamene and Rahira). Also swimming lessons were carried out beside the wharf from our father and frost fish and John dory were taken home from Buffalo Beach. Visits to the Undenominational Church were made, not to save my soul but for the Scripture cards prettily decorated that were handed out to the Sunday School pupils. In earlier times one of Peneamene and Rahera's sons Reupena Tahura used to conduct services in this church.

My father fished in the estuary for snapper and trevally and netted mullet and flounder to put food on the table. There were oysters too among the mangroves. There used to be a long wharf out in to the estuary where the Whitianga Marina's northern reclamation is now. Next to that there used to be extensive tuangi beds which we harvested. Sadly they are no more. A pipi bed on the seaward side of the present wharf also fed us. The sea was a major provider for us.

Out tupuna had placed great reliance on the sea for food resources. They travelled to Ohinau Island each year to grow their kumara crops. Some of their old rock retaining walls still remain on the island. They also went there to collect mutton birds. One such trip almost ended in disaster, so my mother told me.

When Wharetaewa Pa [see fig 2 of Ellis' report for the position] was under attack one of our tupuna drowned her self rather than be killed or taken as a slave by Ngati Tamatera. No more of the whanau would die by drowning, she said. She threw herself into the water below the pa. The spirit of Te Kahu Aute returned in the form of a whale, our taniwha, with a wide band of tattoo encircling her body.

Once one of the descendant daughters of Te Kahu Aute, with her husband and a friend, rowed to Ohinau Island to collect titi (mutton birds). The woman told the men they should not take the harakeke from the waahi tapu to tie up the birds. The young friend did not heed her warning. Soon Te Kahu Aute appeared and cruised up and down the little beach. Then men asked what it was and what it had come for. "To matau tupuna" (it is my ancestor) was her reply and that they would find out why it had come. The whale swam off

When they were rowing back they saw a great school of porpoise and black fish headed by Te Kahu Aute. They soon overtook the boat and surrounded it making rowing impossible. The fish were leaping and thrashing in the water. Then the whale wrapped herself around the boat to protect it from the other fish. The woman in the boat told the men the whale had come to avenge the wrong done. She severely reprimanded the young man who was so sure he was going to be killed that he fainted. The woman spoke to the whale who sent the dolphins and black fish away.

Our tupuna also went to the Ruamahua for titi.

We lived in Whitianga until I was close to school age. My older sister Patricia began her schooling at the Mercury Bay school which was on Te Whakau. We moved to Auckland for better job prospects for Dad and better schooling opportunities for his children. Our people had been leaving Whitianga to find work for as long as I can remember. Now our family was part of the exodus. We at first lived with our paternal grandparents in Cheltenham then we went to live in Devonport. We had what was then seen as a progressive head master at our primary school (Belmont Primary) who persuaded our mother to instruct some of his pupils in Maori culture. She taught poi, tititorea (stick games), knucklebones and whai (string games). From watching her work I learned to plait, weave and taniko.

During the years between our leaving Whitianga and our mother's death (after my graduation from Auckland Teachers' College), we always returned at Christmas time to spend the school holidays in Whitianga, staying with our grandmother or our mother's sister Maraea. Often too in the May or August holidays my mother would send one or two of her children to Whitianga to be with whanau.

I taught school in and around Auckland for four years. I married and moved to Hamilton and we had four children. Dave's work took us to

Brisbane where we raised our children over the next 18 years. It is our wish that our children will one day return to Aotearoa with their children, but there is nothing for them here. It has been the history of our people that they leave Whitianga to find work. Similarly my brother Bevan, who became a farm cadet, would have given anything to farm at Whitianga, but there was none of our land left to farm. He went to live and work in Australia.

Initially I put this claim in because I remember my grandmother Ngawhira being certain that small parcels of land were still owned by her family Lands such as the sale yards on Wharetangata, a landing place where the waka used to be pulled up by the flax growing on the foreshore, also on Wharetangata and Lyons Park too. I also felt some of the frustration she must have felt over Ohinau Island when I was dealing with the Mercury Bay Primary School Site.

In 1992 when the old school site was notified as up for sale, I along with Mrs Lichwork began negotiating with the Education Board on behalf of the Whenuakite Kohanga Reo who were looking for a home. While we were negotiating the designation was changed from education to housing thus frustrating our endeavours. It would appear that the minister had withheld his answer to me until the day after the designation was changed.

Harbour frontage has always been highly valued - by Maori for access to fishing which was our primary food source, by timber workers for the transport of their logs and timber and latterly by the developers for the sea views and boat access to the water. Log and timber transportation has ceased now. In its place we have developers, not content with the natural sea views, but creating on the land their own artificial waterways and canals on the very land that was meant as a Maori reserve, the Waitotara Reserve.

I hope this Tribunal can make a recommendation that will in some way compensate for the many losses our people have suffered - language, mana, rangatiratanga, resources, our kaitiakitanga over our harbour and fish, and most importantly the whenua.

B Francis