

IN THE MATTER

of the Treaty of
Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER

of Remehio TE
MAUNGA
MANGAKAHIA of
Whangapoua and on
behalf of descendants
and whanau members of
HAMIORA
MANGAKAHIA

Brief of Evidence of Robert Ray Christian

1. My name is Robert Ray Christian of 45 Scott Street, Papakura. I am married to Marilyn and we have four healthy children. I was born on the 30th of June 1936 in a room in the old family home at Whangapoua.
2. That home belonged to my Grandmother, Tangiora (nee Mangakahia) who was the daughter of Hamiora Mangakahia. My grandmother was a wonderful woman and as I was the oldest mokopuna I was her pet, which explains why in most of my earlier photo's you will see of me sitting on her knee, or pretty close around her, somewhere.
3. My mother was Pano Eno, but preferred to be called Emma. She was the third eldest of the eleven surviving children of my Grandfather Terei Browne and Grandmother Tangiora. My mother passed away in February 1999.
4. My father was Robert Edward William Christian, born in India and the son of an English army Artillery corporal, who came from England. Dad has a story of his own as to why he came to New Zealand. He was English, born in India, went to a public school. His parents died, he was an orphan and his family didn't want him. So they put him in a boat, and they sent him out to New Zealand, he went to a church school in Wanganui He was schooled in England and later sent to New Zealand as an orphan. My father met and married my mother after a period of Gold Mining in the Coromandel hills. My father loved Whangapoua and before he died he asked for his ashes to be spread on Raukawa Hill and this is what we did.

5. I was born a year after Mum and Dad married. Hanz came along seven years later, and Thelma my sister, arrived 21 years later. Even though we were raised as individuals we are very close now.
6. I grew up with my Aunties, Uncles and cousins at Whangapoua. Most of the time I was looked after by my Auntie Mabel who was a very strict disciplinarian, and dished all of us up some strong punishment. She too was a wonderful woman and was backed by my Grandmother My Grandmother Tangiora who had the same regime, and that was "if you don't listen up, you got it".
7. My earliest memory of the house was when I was about five or six. It was a big home with great big rooms. It was a nice house and I remember we would put polish on the floors. We would put the polish on the floor and then drag each other around on a cloth or sacking until the floor shone. You had to go up and down the whole house. The house had several bedrooms, two large living areas, a kitchen, a dining area, and a washhouse come bathroom with a cooper and a bathtub. The house was flanked on three sides by a veranda, and from the front there was a great view of the sea, the sandhills and the farm. I am not sure who built the house, I think it was Hamiora, and that it was renovated around 1940 or thereabout. I never met Hamiora he died about 18 years before I was born.
8. Even though we only had a three-bedroom house we probably had 20 -30 people living there at times. This would have been about 1941-42. I can remember Auntie Mabel, Uncle Bunts, Betty and Dumpty, my parents, Aunt Mohi, Lillian, Uncle Hanz, Aunt Lucy, Hine, Tangi, Maria, myself and Grandmother. I have to say that I got hen picked for quite a while until I got big enough to be a bit cheeky, and then I got a whack. Uncle Bunts was there from time to time. Sleeping arrangements were organised by the use of extra mattresses being put around the large living room like a marae. Uncle Bunts married Betty Lief from up north, and because there was insufficient work available on the farm he had to go out shearing, or go on the mussel boats in Coromandel so he left his family constantly coming or going until the family moved and left the Browne side of the farm.
9. Visitors were something we didn't really see much - mainly because they had to arrive by horse or boat. The nearest town was Coromandel 14 miles away. At that time you could get a car over there with great difficulty. The main mode of transport was the horse and gig by road to Coromandel, or walking horse to Kennedy's Bay. My Dad brought an old Model T car and my Uncle Bill Hart brought an old steam car. He used to load up with timber, pine cones, etc. get up a good head of steam, and then head

off, stopping along the way at creeks to top up with water and wood. When I had a ride on it I was the stoker.

10. When we did have visitors, they quite often came over from Kennedy's Bay or Kuoatunu bringing with them some wild pork or other food. Everyone would have a big feed and talk and they would head off usually with something from us.
11. I can remember having church, most of the family became Mormons and we used to have some of the elders out there from time to time. As we got older we used to go to Thames for church. We would also have church in our house, and the elders would come.
12. The Browne side of the whanau became Mormons, and as a child I remember the Mormon elders conducting services at the Homestead and in later years at Kirikiri in Thames. Grace was said at meal times and prayers were said when going to bed.
13. There were only four houses on the whanau land when I was there during the forties and they were, the Old Homestead on the hill where the Brownes lived, the house up where the Quarry is situated where the Whites (Waitis) lived up at the "Punga" and in between along the road was a smaller house where the Bright's lived. Just down the hill from the old homestead and still standing today is the house where the Mangakahias lived and this is still occupied by Reg Mangakahia, the named claimant in this claim. Uncle Waipapa, Auntie Lucy and their four children all lived there and another person by the name of Les Piraka. Uncle Waipapa was the person who I always recognised as the Rangatira within our branch of the family.
14. At Auntie Pare and Uncle Bert Bright's Place they had their four children plus Uncle Ruka, Uncle Hami and someone else lived in the old shed out the back in the orchard; I think it was Uncle Hamiora Whakakoro Mangakahia, he was very sick and old. When they moved away my Mum, Dad and myself moved in. This had to be in 1943 because my brother Hanz was born while we were there. About 15 years ago I went back and was really surprised that the place was so small.
15. All the families got on really well especially the children. On a clear night it was possible to yell from the Bright's place to the Browne's.
16. Looking back in retrospect my family must have been extremely poor, but we didn't know it. I had one pair of pants with a blue patch on the seat of them, so I ended up being called "the man with the blue patch pants and the gummy gum boots." But I don't remember thinking we were poor even though we quite often went to school with one piece of bread for school -

usually with treacle on it - we just accepted it. I do not remember being hungry you had to be silly if you were hungry because you only had to walk down to the sea and it was all there. We were living a subsistence life, but I never thought of it like that.

17. From 1940 through to about 1950 the only other families living in Whangapoua were those living on the Denize's Farm, which once used to be all our land and they were the Denize's themselves, some people who assisted them on the farm, and some families that had a mother as a teacher. There is a little shed near the lagoon that was used as our schoolroom and the teachers that I can remember were Mrs MacFarlane and Mrs Dobbin. I do not know who organised the school but I am glad it was there for the 9 or 10 of us that attended.

Mahi Kai (Food Gathering and Preparation)

18. My Uncle Hanz and cousin taught me to swim. We used to have a swimming hole in the Pungapunga stream, and our favourite place on that stream for swimming was the Samoist - don't ask me why we called it that - Reg saved me there from drowning there and luckily I became quite a good swimmer which helped me later when we had to gather sea food. A lot of our food came from the sea and streams.
19. We used the Pungapunga stream for eeling. Freshwater koura were not in that particular stream but in other ones running into it. In these other creeks and streams we would get koura and lots of watercress. Lots of watercress. We would catch the koura by hand, they are not very big - about two or three inches. We would just take a bucket and throw them on the fire. They live under rocks, they move quite fast. We could get eels there as well. I could never get eel from the streams used for forestry, but at other streams and drains around the farms. We would crawl up the drains with a hook and a bit of string. We would feel through the mud in the banks for the eels and then get the hook, put it over the middle of the eel, haul it up to someone waiting on the bank and they would whack it on the head. Then we would put it in the old pikau, sugar sack, and take it home. We did this with adults - Uncle Hanz used to go eeling with us. He died in 1998. Reg Mangakahia who farms the land now would come out with us. They showed us how to fish for eels. Reg is our cousin, Hanz Browne was my Uncle. We would also catch sea conger eels from a rock off shore.
20. If we smoked them we would leave the skin on the eels. But if we boiled them we would take the skin off to get rid of the slime. We would skin all the eels, both the sea and fresh water eels. One person would cut the skin, another would hold on to the top end and take the whole skin off.

- 21 I used to watch the smoking process. First the eels were gutted then sliced open from top to bottom washed salted and left for a while. A fire was started in the smokehouse using only Ti-tree or manuka, the eels were then hung up in the shed using a bit of No. 8 wire bent in a w shape.
22. Quite often after a storm large numbers of fish would get washed up on the beach. We would gather these at the break of dawn, using a horse with split sacks or a horse and sledge, or konaki (this was a trailer drawn by a horse). We would load the fish and bring them back home to salt them. All sorts of fish. These were distributed amongst the families and the remainder was salted down and left in containers or hung along the fence.
23. The family would row for miles and miles because they knew where particular types offish were. We had dingys - boats with inboard motors. I was fairly old before I went out on the boat - the adults would only take the older boys. I went with Dad and Uncle Bunts in the harbour a few times and I helped with the netting. I would have been about 10. Then Dad actually ended up getting a fishing boat himself and I went with him quite a few times. We caught many different species, schnapper, kahawai, shark. We caught moki in the harbour by using spears. If you stand up on Raukawa you'll quite often see schools of sharks swimming, they come right into the breakers. Scary - it's quite often you'll see a shark - you can see one just about every day in the summer.
24. The whanau were good at fishing and there were favourite places like "Morepork Gully" or the Horse Shoe" or "Out at the Point". A wide variety of fish were gathered at these places but the most common ones were parore, kahawai, or schnapper.
25. The Whangapoua Harbour was probably the best provider of kaimoana and we had many excursions around the mudflats collecting pipis, cockles. Mussels, oysters, and titicaus. All the older members of the family knew what fish could be caught in the different places around the harbour. We would often take a boat out to fish with a sink and line in the harbour. There used to be lots of kahawai/parore. Kingfish would come into the harbour chasing after kahawai and other species. We did not use special hooks - I am not a great fisherman. We used nets and hinaki up the Schnapper channel. There is another channel running out towards the far end of Matarangi peak (Bonkovitches Channel) and we used to net out there for mullet - lots of mullet. We would take that home and smoke it too. We would get scallops, they were quite often washed up onto the beach and there beds in the Harbour and out at Matarangi Beach. We would go out on a boat and dive quite deep. My brother was a capable free diver. I can not remember who told us where the scallops were, we were shown and grew up with this knowledge. At no time were we

allowed to use shovels or spades or allowed to eat them where we collected them.

26. We quite often got paua - we used to get them from the northern end and in around Raukawa. Our favourite spot for collecting kina, paua and pupus was on the Dummies Island end of the beach in a little rock lagoon called "Haupua". They were in great abundance all along the rocky foreshore, but the Haupua allowed you to gather them in knee deep water. Along this rocky foreshore were plenty of koura, these were caught in koura pots or by diving. On the shore side of these same rocks are plenty of flax and these were gathered also to make kites. Auntie Mable was the person who instructed everyone on making all types of kits and food baskets from the flax. If you continued over the saddle from the Haupua you ended up on New Chums Beach. There was good fishing from the rocks at either end of the beach and kina, paua, and koura were also plentiful there.
27. It seems that we spent most of our time gathering food because we used to gather blackberries, karaka berries, triere berries, and along the sand hills there used to be some little prickly plants with little orange berries that were great eaten with cream. With the karaka tree berries we used to eat the outside skin when it was a yellow colour and then we would throw the seeds in a pot and cook them, and later open the seed and eat the kernel.
28. One of my favourite things to collect were Huhus, especially the ones from the rotting pine trees. We would collect about 50-60 take them home and put them on the old stove top or cast iron frying pan. They used to sizzle and then pop out straight, they would be a nice brown colour, at this stage you would pick them up by the nippers, dip them in salt and eat them (beautiful) even when they were turning into beetles with wings they tasted nice just a bit crunchy.
29. We had our own hens and ducks but we still managed to gather wild duck eggs that at one time in season were all along the edge of the Pungapunga stream at the Samoist. Wild pigs used to come down to our pigsty, and one day Uncle Waipapa killed one with his 303 in the paddock outside his house. The older ones also hunted for pigs. Tim, Waipapa's youngest son, and I used to go hunting when we were about 13. I do not know who taught him. There were many pigs. Quite abundant.
30. My Uncle Ruka (he was actually a cousin) was a person who I really liked. He had big muscles and was very strong and would pick two of us up in each hand and hold us up in the air. Uncle Ruka gathered some of us boys together and said come on kids come with me and took us up into the native bush near the Bright's home and showed us what trees and berries were edible in the bush. He also pointed out the Kauri, Totara, Rimu,

Tafairu (1)

Miro and Trairie, he showed us how to strip the Nikau and eat the centre, and how to harvest a fruit similar to a banana. I can't remember its name, but you peel it and eat it like a banana.

31. My grandmother, Tangiora (I called her nama) was an expert in the use of herbs, roots and plants for medicinal purposes. I was one of the ones who used to collect the various requirements for her. I can't remember all the plants but I can remember collecting kumara hou, flax roots, plantain, tutu shoots. What I also remember is that everything tasted really horrible.

Tikanga Maori me te Taha Wairua (Maori Customs and Spirituality)

32. I can not understand why we were not taught Maori language. I know Uncle Waipapa was sent to Te Aute. My grandmother went somewhere pretty good because she was a clever woman. My grandmother spoke beautiful fluent Maori - but they never taught us. The full impact of not being able to speak Maori has emerged in recent years. At my age there is an expectation that I take my place on the paepae or at other functions, to be able to say my piece in Maori. For all that, we grew up in a very Maori way and learned how to live off the land and sea but we were never taught our whanau history. I do not understand it, especially since we know the older ones were prominent in their history and absolutely fluent in Maori.
33. I remember Nana making piupius - my mother and them would have a kapa haka group, they used to do action songs and we learned some Maori songs. Uncle taught me a haka, at which I was hopeless. I remember Nana weaving, and one of my aunties taught us how to make little baskets. I do not remember how to do it now, but they taught all of us. Most of the women were weaving. We were taught how to prepare the flax. They didn't teach me how to make piupius, but I saw Nana dying one. There was a swamp behind her house and she would dip the flax in different parts and get different colours. It has an oil base, that swamp. It's still there - it's part of the farm. There is a drain there now which the family put in. I used to go and get the flax - from the northern end by the Denizes, and the southern end where all the best flax was.
34. Moreporks and fantails were signs to the old ones. If a fantail flew into the house the old ones would say that it had to fly out the same way it came in otherwise someone would die in the house. Everyone was scared of the moreporks as well because if you heard them at night you knew some one was going to die.
35. We had some whanau taonga, in particular a mere of greenstone and other effects of Hamiora. Aunt Lillian has these.

Tangiōra, my grandmother loved my Dad. It was normal for most Maori to pass on things to the elder son but she passed things on to Dad who was a son-in-law, and a Pakeha one to boot, from England. That was something that Waipapa could not get his mind set around. I think he actually despised my Dad because my Dad was a Pakeha and the Pakeha had taken the land away from him. So you can understand his thinking like that.

The Whanau Farms 1940-1950

37. Both the Bright's farm and the Mangakahia farms have declined since the 1950s. Raukawa was pretty clear like it is in this picture, but you can not walk on it now - it's covered in gorse and all sorts of things. The farm is like that too, it's gone backwards something terrible. So has most of those hills - they are not like that now - they are mostly covered in scrub. There is a pine forest now - covering most of the hill range now known as the Denize's farm.

38. As children we all had jobs on the farm. My jobs were to cut wood and milk cows. Dad and I used to cut the ti tree. He and Uncle Bunts were contracted to cut ti tree for the Denize's. We would do this work and then come back and do ours. There were fences to mark out the paddocks. Other stock we had were pigs (about 40 or 50) for eating purposes, sheep - the farm used to be a sheep farm before it become a dairy farm. I do not know why - it was before my time. We were milking by hand and then in later years by machines. They ended up having two cow sheds - one cow shed was on the other side where we milked. Later on when I was 17 and building houses for Maori Affairs, we built another cow shed. I think it is still there.

*Swaging
was actually
sheep on
another farm*

39. I do not know what happened to the pigs, we ate a few of them. I do remember the one that bit my leg. Every so often we had to put rings in their noses to stop them rooting in the ground, and it was my job to chase the pigs around the farm to tire them out. After about two hours the pigs would start to fall to the ground and we would put the wire through the noses. We also had chickens for eggs. We had about 10 horses, they were good horses, we had draft horses. We shod the horses ourselves. We had saddles, but I never used them out of preference.

40. Ti tree was cleared for stock and then burnt. It wasn't really economical to cart and sell. When I was about 12 there was a cream truck that used to go between the farm and Coromandel. It was also our way of transport into Coromandel - the cream cart. I'd always remember going up the Whangapoua hill and that was pretty horrendous, and the truck would be smoking - how we survived the carbon monoxide fumes beats me.

41. Stores would be transported in. Maori Affairs would bring in fertiliser. There were disgruntled views about the fertiliser, whether we should have it or not or whether we could pay for it or not. It just arrived without warning. We would hear Uncle Waipapa talking about it, they were the ones looking after the farm. Uncle Waipapa was very vocal. Uncle Waipapa, Uncle Ruka, Uncle Bunts used to complain about Maori Affairs - they would get things they did not want, but they still had to pay for them. I can not remember what was said, but the general feeling was unfavourable. Uncle Waipapa used to get really heated on all these subjects.
42. I can remember boats coming into the harbour. Trucks came in as well. We always had bread and flour - I know we had flour because we used to wear the flour bags as clothes. Just about everyone had some sort of flour bag on them.
43. We used to call the beach at the northern end of the picture New Chums. It was called that because back in the day when they used to cut kauri tree down there, they used to bring people down from Auckland in boats, dropped them off. Everyone that arrived there were new chums - new people. They would get the logs down to the beach with bullocks. There are actually bullock trails running right through that area. They go all the way to Kennedy's Bay and over to Coromandel. I believe these trails are still there today.
44. Coming from Coromandel to Whangapoua there is a big range of mountains and a number of streams start there and run into the harbour. The whole area was once native forest. The foresters used the streams to get logs down to the harbour by damming the stream. That is part of the claim - I believe the dams caused some flooding to the lands around that area.

Schooling

45. When I was about 9 my mother and father took me to Coromandel because there was nothing at the farm keeping them - the farm could not support us. I went to school and got stuck back in the primers. Virtually lost a couple of years along the way, through to form 5. Dad wanted me to carry on and go to St Stephens, but I said no. Unfortunately, he took notice of me.
46. After school, fifth form, I went with my Dad to work, he would do all sorts of things. He started up a carpentry outfit, he had a master builder. Dad was the one that found work, and I learned from the master builder. We ended up building houses in Whitianga, and Coromandel, schools, swimming pools and that sort of thing. It was a good learning experience

for me. From there I went to State Hydro. I was employed in Thames, Hauraki Plains area putting up towers across the river, and running wires from Kerepehi through to Thames. And then I did a stint in the army, and that was a good experience. After the army they would not take me back at the Hydro because it was closing down in the area. So I joined the railways, and spent 22 years on the railways. I became area manager in Taihape and my area covered from Marton through to Ohakune. I later went to Australia where we lived and worked for a number of years.

The Importance of the Whanau Lands

47. Even though I left the Whangapoua area at an early age, I would return every weekend - ride a horse over there or walk. It would take about four hours from Coromandel. I just belonged to the place.
48. In later years as my children grew up I always took them there for holidays to Whangapoua. When we were in Australia, we would return maybe every two years. My children still take my grandchildren back to Whangapoua. It is home, even if I have nothing there now, it is still home. I am still going to end up on top of Raukawa hill with my son who drowned.
49. My father's and my son's ashes are at Raukawa. My mother died recently and we will scatter her ashes on Raukawa as well. There is a cave at the far end of Raukawa. I understand that there are taonga from our ancestors there but every one are too scared to go and look. Uncle Ivan Adams knows where it is.
50. I still have cousins at Whangapoua so our ahi kaa still remains. They own the shop, the camping ground and Reg and other members of the whanau, including my son Graham, have houses there. Our wahi tapu are there. Riria's pa site, for example, is there and the place where we believe she was buried near Karaka Tree Hill. Whangapoua is covered with urupa. Castle Rock or Motutere was always considered our mountain.

The Mangakahia Claim

51. When I was about 12 - my Dad was the assistant county clerk in Coromandel and he got all the relevant papers for the farm. He took them back to Tangiora and said this is what they should do to get their land back and to get their money that was supposed to have been put aside for kauri trees - they never got one cent from the kauri trees that were cut up from that area. Dad kept on trying, he said, "You've been wronged", he was completely on the whanau's side. He said that for every paper that he had, there was a copy in the Turnbull Library in Wellington, and that we could do something about it if everyone was prepared to put in a bit of money.

Later when I was old enough to be working, he asked if I would be prepared to put up money, and I said, "Sure, but I'm a long way down the ladder - before I put something in I'd like to see the rest put something in too." He could never get the rest to help, I now realise because they were not well off. So it all slipped into the never-never land until Bill, Waipapa's son tried to get it going again.

52. Cousin Bill was responsible for getting the land sub-divided in the late 1950s early 1960s. Bill must have partitioned the land to service the debt on the land. The Brights sold their farm in the 1970's, I think it was. Prior to that they had it was leased out to the Denizes. And Reg had his leased out to the Denizes for a while for some ridiculously low sum - I can not remember what it was, but it was low.
53. The other farm has slowly run down and it alone can not sustain the family anymore.
54. I see this claim as important to revalidating the mana of our whanau and their rangatiratanga over the land.