

IN THE MATTER OF The Treaty of
Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF Claims by
HUHURERE
TUKUKINO and
OTHERS known
as the HAURAKI
CLAIMS

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF MYRA HEMARA
ON BEHALF OF THE CLAIMANTS**

My name is Myra Hemara. My tribal connections are primarily through Ngati Hako, Ngati Tara, Ngati Koi and Ngati Tamatera. I was born and grew in up Waitoki, Paeroa. I have grown up within the Paeahi, Ngahutoitoi, Kotahitanga, Pai o Hauraki and Iti o Hauraki Tumutumu whanau.

I grew up on this side of the Waihou River. Others of our whanau were on the other side of the river. It was still a close knit whanau. We used to cross over the river all the time; the only transport to the other side of the river was by canoe. Before my time our whanau had a large canoe, but while I was

growing up we only had a small canoe. I attach a copy of photographs of the canoe in my time.

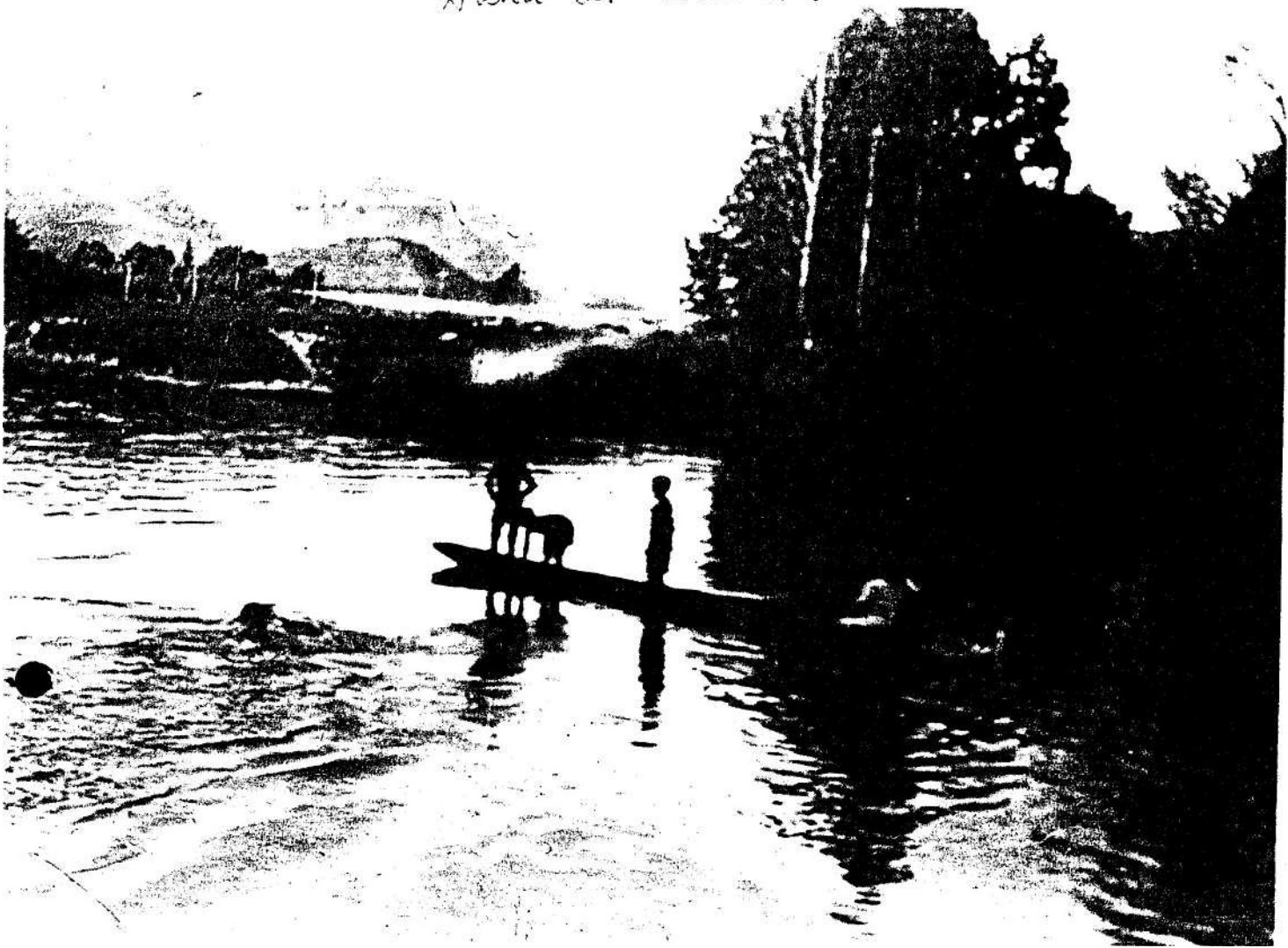
3. Everyone had gardens and we shared a draught horse for ploughing. Every bit of space in the garden was used, everyone had orchards to supply our fruits. Some of the whanau had cows and many had ducks free ranging on their lands.
4. A lot of us had wells. One of the wells we had, we put corn in and made Kangawai or fermented corn. Whenever I needed something small to eat I could always find something like huhu bugs from rotten logs. Roasted on the fire they were like peanuts. Also gum from the pine tree for chewing gum. Watercress, puha and whaneke were also plentiful.
5. But we didn't just live from the gardens and the land, we got heaps of fish from our rivers as well. We caught koura, whitebait, catfish, tuna and kaeo (which was like a fresh water pipi).
6. Overall, I remember most of us lived off the land and the rivers, we got some money by selling cream and some of the whanau worked on local farms and public works.
7. In our community we cared for ourselves. In our health problems - if someone was sick and we didn't know how to deal with it, we would always send them to another marae. There was nearly always one specialist for certain problems in our close knit community.
8. So each whanau had a specialist for different sicknesses. At Waitoki my mother was known for delivering babies, she went out at all times of the night, it didn't matter what time. She delivered many of the babies in Waitoki. These whanau health specialists were really doctors in their own right in my eyes.

9. Over the years, some big epidemics hit our communities. Epidemics that we were not used to dealing with. I am thinking in particular of tuberculosis, typhoid and the flu epidemics.
10. Before my time, there was a great flu epidemic in 1918. My grandmother and grandfather died as a result of this epidemic. I was told by my mother that whanau were dying in each others arms and she showed me the grave at Waitoki where a lot at that time were buried in one hole. She also showed me some Urupas around the area. Sadly today I am not able to locate them as the land has changed so much and there are no markings. In the year 1944 there was a typhoid scare which claimed the life of my father and put my aunt and myself in Thames Hospital. I also remember TB in the 1950's. Five members of my whanau were stricken with it. In the year 1952 I left Waitoki for Mangakino. In 1956 I was in Waikato hospital for 7 months with TB.
11. Waitoki Wharenui Paeahi was a great meeting place for the whanau, we had church, dances, meetings, birthdays, tangis etc., I came back from Mangakino and had my engagement party at the Wharenui; I also christened my children there.
12. I married and returned to Waitoki to live in 1958. Most of the family had moved and there was no whanau living on the other side of the Waihou River. Five whanau still remain on this side. I lived at Waitoki until 1964. Due to road flooding at the time, between Paeroa and Tirohia, we decided to move into Paeroa. We got a loan from the Department of Maori Affairs for a house at Paeroa and found that the instalments in those times were easy to meet. I have two daughters who have got home loans from other sources and they find it hard to manage. One daughter has sold her home and paid the loan back and moved to Australia. Twenty-five years ago there was a grant from Maori Affairs given to students to go to university and polytech and also they found a

hostel where your children could live. Today, many of our children have to get student loans as well as find their own accommodation.

13. I am now a trustee of some of the land at Waitoki, in my childhood it was subdivided and each whanau knew their own blocks. As a trustee I have found that these lands are now all amalgamated. Whanau that are wanting to go home to live, have found it difficult because of the bylaws of local Council. You have to own 10 acres or have a papakainga on one of the blocks, which my whanau and myself find unacceptable, as we would like to build our houses on the blocks on which our tupunas' houses stood.
14. I have always taken my children to the maraes in Hauraki to help whenever needed. By doing this, I hope it would give them a sense of belonging as I felt in my childhood. If I could turn back the clock to my childhood years and bring up my children the way I was brought up, I would do so.

Waka at Waitoki



HWC 213-H20
Ka kawe I nga tupuna ka hikoi ki mua

2ND -6TH August 1999
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