

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 HARATA WILLIAMS ON
BEHALF OF THE CLAIMANTS**

1. My name is Harata Williams. I was born in Paeroa. I am of Ngati Paoa and Ngati Whanaunga.

2. I was named after my grandmother Harata MacCaskill. For most of my life I have been known as Charlotte. That is the Pakeha translation of Harata. My name changed to Charlotte when I went to school and the Pakeha teacher couldn't pronounce Harata, so I became Charlotte. Now I am called Harata again and that is the name that

Hauraki people use for me. I like Harata much better. A Maori name fits me better.

3. I want to tell you some of the stories of my life so that you can understand what it was like growing up as a Maori girl, young woman, and then mother, and now kuia here in Hauraki. My young life took me from Paeroa, to Tui Pa, to Hikutaia then to Maramarua when I started school. I was truly a Hauraki girl. Hauraki is in my blood and in those early days it was the only home I knew.

4. I remember having to milk 250 cows before I went to school in Maramarua. My grandfather was a Church of England Minister and he made me look for those cows every morning. In those days we had no shoes or gumboots. Every time you spotted a cow having a mimi you would rush over and put your feet under it to warm your feet and over to the next one till all the cows were in the shed. My grandfather Wi Taka would say to me "where is the water to wash the tits" (in Maori). That is one thing in those days - they were very clean.

5. When my grandfather died, the farm passed to the eldest son Hone Wi Taka and I moved to Mangatangi where my grandmother and other whanau lived. More cows to milk. Only this time, there was two of us. The other being a cousin her name was Kui Adlam. Her father used to live at Kerepehi.

6. I had to walk five to seven miles to school with my brother. He was really small, so I carried him quite a lot of the way. We would run lamp posts. It meant the journey was quicker, but when we got to school my brother wanted to have a sleep. The school was Mangatawhiri. There was the Paki's, Hautaunga's, Te Whare's, Pohipi's, Katipa's, Tuiri's.

7. I remember that later on there was a call at the school for workers and they wanted Maori girls for it. I went to an old kuia's whare near Maungatawhiri for that. I liked going there, because she made rawene bread. This kuia was Princess Te Puea. You had to korero Maori to her all the time. If you don't you got a wack across the leg. There was a few of us who felt that stick.
8. All washing was done by hand down at the creek. We would sit on a rock - the biggest rock we could find - and then we would 'mukumuku' the clothes and hit them with a stick until they were clean. The soap we used was 'taniwha' soap. I remember that because when we did the washing down at the creek we used to say we had the 'taniwha blues'. Luckily that was the only taniwha I saw down at the creek because the whanau all knew that there were real taniwha down there to punish us if we did anything wrong. The taniwha stayed under this island in the middle of the creek.
9. My job for Te Puea was to tramp the harakeke (flax). I had to tramp round and round the harakeke in the black mud to preserve the harakeke. It stunk! At around 3:00 pm, one of my cousins would take the harakeke and wash it. Another cousin would hang it along the fence line. Once I had finished, I would go to a creek. The kuia would wash me and say a karakia. I would then go to a hut. I was not allowed to leave the hut until the work was completed. There was no playing for me.
10. The harakeke was sent to Te Puea at Turangawaewae.
11. I remember that Te Puea wanted a marae built at Mangatangi. There was no funding. The men built the wharenuī. The kids had to bring stones from the creek. These were used to make cement. Sugar sacks were soaked in the creek to cover the walls. Punga went on the outside of the walls. In those days, the whole kainga just pitched in

young, old, men, women, everybody. Not just the Mangatangi people either. All of the surrounding kainga came and helped too. That was the way things were then. You don't see it so much today.

12. When I was 15, I went to work at St. Stephen's College, but was called back. Me and two of my cousins went to live with our kuia. One day they took us into the bush to gather kiekie and tawhara. I was with one of my kuia talking to her with my back turned. When I looked around, she had vanished. I thought I was lost. But, I spied a fantail on a branch. I thought I would catch that fantail. But every time I got close to it, it would fly to another branch. I kept trying to catch it, until it had led me out of the bush.

13. When I came out of the bush, my old kuia were sitting around talking to each other. I started cursing at them for leaving me in the bush. Then, one of my other cousins came out of the bush cursing as well. My other cousin didn't come out of the bush. One of the kuia went in and found her at the spot that she had been left. We were then taken to a creek where we washed before we went back to the marae. The cousin who had been lost in the bush ran back to play with the others. Me and my other cousin had to stay with the kuia.

14. I now realise that this was a learning point and I learned lots of things from these old kuia.

15. I also remember very vividly the spiritual dimension that was always present in my childhood. Our people were always aware of the importance of taha wairua. It was second nature to us. It still is. One night my kuia were down at the marae. I was left in the house with my brother. An old kaumatua suddenly appeared. I was scared, but my brother didn't see him. I said a karakia and scattered water all around us. He went away.

16. When my kuia came back they found me in a state of shock. They asked me what had happened and I told them about the old kaumatua and what I had done. They told me I had done the right thing, because they had been down at the marae for his tangi.

17. When people got sick, I had to go and get a tohunga. She lived in a whare away from the marae. It was on the other side of our cemetery. I remember that I would often have to go and get her at night. I would be really scared at having to go through the cemetery. So, I would run through it and scratch myself on the gorse and blackberry that grew in it. By the time I got to the tohunga's place, I would need her as well. She would tend to my injuries and then calmly go with me back to the marae. I would be holding on to her skirt the whole way back.

18. And of course there was also karakia as a constant companion. Church was a central part of our lives. I still remember karakia with the great ministers of the time. Mutu Kapa, Wi Taka, Bishop Augustus Bennett and Ngaweke all ministered to us in my childhood.

19. Looking back I can say that we grew up in extremely poor and harsh circumstances. Not just my family but all of the Maori families here in Hauraki. Being poor was normal for us and we knew nothing different. Except I suppose that we knew that most of the Pakehas weren't poor like us. I also remember that there was a lot of sickness among us. Again it was just normal. We coped. We had no choice.

20. All of that is true and I sometimes feel aroha for the old ones as I remember how hard their lives were. But I also remember the good things. The homes full of aroha and wairua. The fact that everyone supported each other. The strength of our language and culture. The

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fact that we knew who we were and we were fiercely proud of our heritage.

21. As a girl I didn't know we were poor. I thought we were rich. I thought that we were better than everyone else.
22. When I grew up things changed. Then I saw the real world outside the warmth and aroha of my whanau.
23. My kuias tried to tomo me twice. That is to arrange marriages for me. The first time was when I was nursing at Middlemore. I got called back to Mangatangi to a hui. It turned out that I was the kaupapa of the hui! The manuhiri had just come in and Mutu Kapa had just completed the karakia. I asked my kuikuia what the hui was for and she pointed across to a young and very scared looking man on the other side of the whare. She said "you're marrying him." This came as a bit of a shock. It would have been alright if he was handsome, but he was ugly as! I said to my kuia, "I have to go to the wharepaku". I walked out of the whare very quietly and that was the last they saw of me. I left him at the altar.
24. Two years later the kuia tried again. But I was wiser this time. The same procedure was followed, but I looked across and this one was a bit better looking. We were engaged but I think you would say that we had a little disagreement one night and that was the end of that.
25. After a few years doing work in Auckland and elsewhere I met two very handsome brothers Joe and Victor Williams who were from Manaia. It took a while to pick between them, but eventually I picked Joe. His whanau came to tono for me. My whanau agreed and that was that. Third time lucky. We married on 2 June 1961. We moved down to Hawkes Bay for work and raised a family there. We came back to Hauraki in 1975 to look after Joe's mother who was very ill.

My darling passed away on 29 August 1995 at the age of 63 - well before his time.

26. When I look back on my life, there was plenty of hardship and a few hard knocks. But that was no different to any of the kuia you see here today. We made the best of what we had which probably wasn't much. But through all of that, we have held strong to the things that make us Maori - our whanau; our mokos; our marae; our reo and our tikanga; our whakapono and taha wairua; and above all else our ability to laugh at ourselves.

27. No reira ka tangihaere tonu ki a ratou nga kuikuia kua wehe atu ki te po. Na koutou e tu maia ai matou i te aohurihuri nei.

Tena koutou katoa.