

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

**WAI 949
WAI 686**

IN THE MATTER of the Treaty of Waitangi Act
1975

AND

IN THE MATTER of the Hauraki Inquiry Claims
District

AND

IN THE MATTER OF a claim by Taka o Te Rangi Taka
for himself and on behalf the Wi
Taka whanau of Ngati Koheriki
and such others of Ngati Koheriki
who may elect to join in this
claim

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF PATERIKI JOSEPH (JOE) JOHNSON

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I, PATERIKI JOSEPH (JOE) JOHNSON, of Wellington, Railway Worker, state:

THANK YOU

1. I would like to start by offering my sincere thanks to the Waitangi Tribunal for giving Ngati Koheriki the opportunity to be heard. This is a matter that is very dear to my whanau and I thank you.

INTRODUCTION

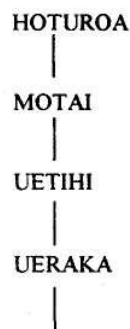
2. I am the son of Ira Taka and Mark Johnson. I have been appointed by my whanau as the claims coordinator for this Treaty claim.

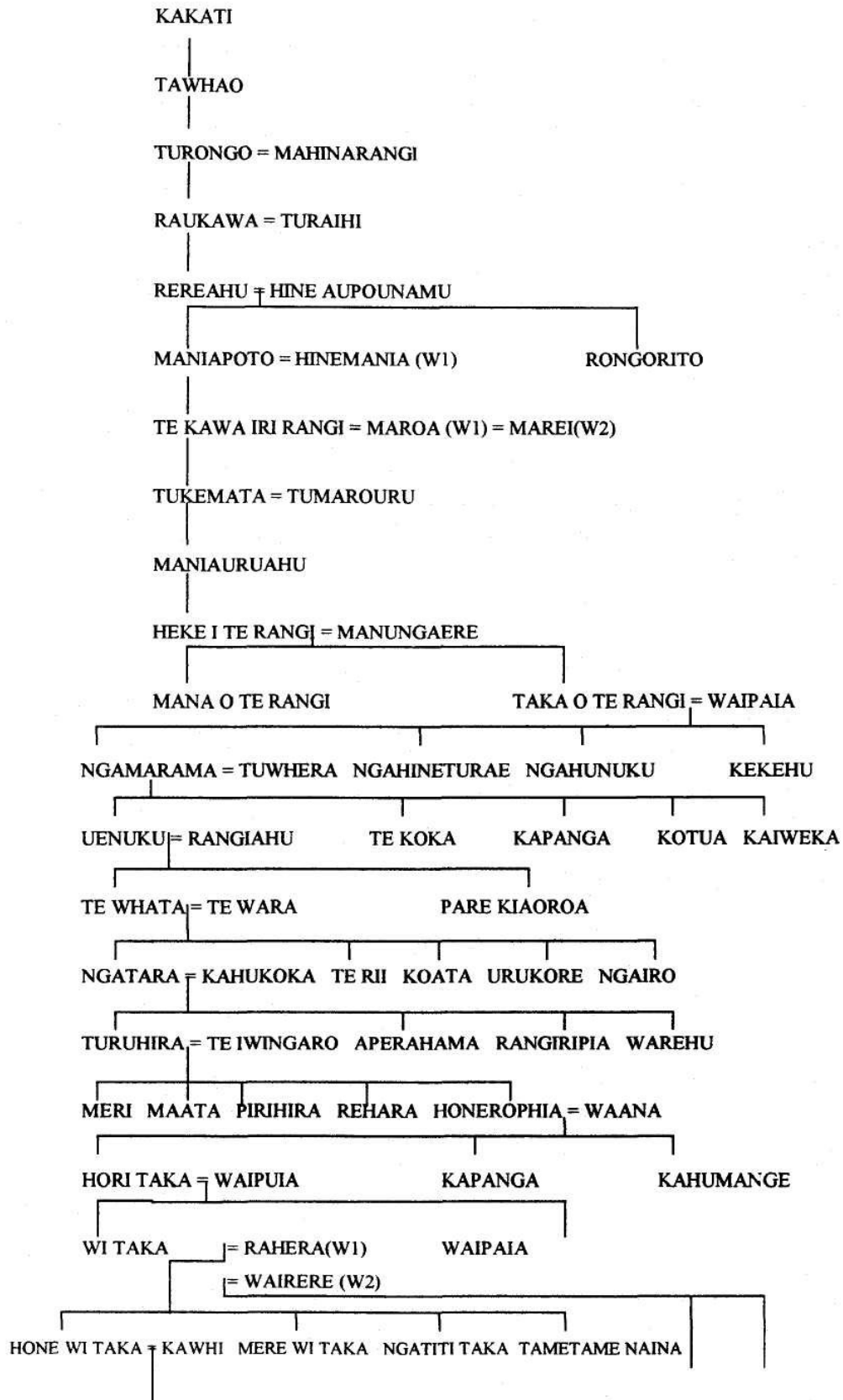
3. I am a great grandson of Wi Taka of the Ngati Koheriki tribe. Wi Taka is the tipuna named in the Statement of Claim.

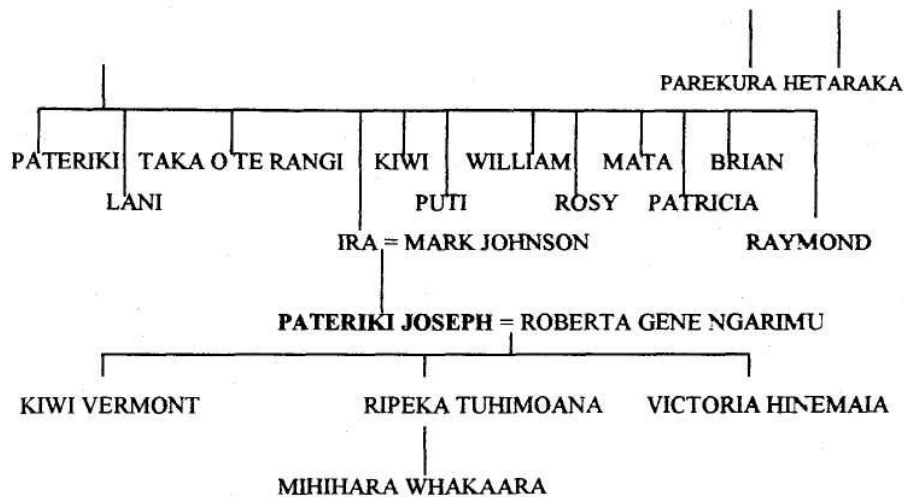
4. WI Taka was the son of Hori Taka. My whanau can trace its whakapapa to Hoturoa from the Tainui waka. A copy of my whakapapa is set out below. The whakapapa was prepared from information contained in a personal diary belonging to my great grandfather Wi Taka.

5. I was raised by my grandparents and extended whanau. My education was limited and I left school part way through the fourth form. I have worked the last 29 years for the railways, mainly as a shunter.

Whakapapa







*W = wife

WHO ARE NGATI KOHERIKI?

6. THE oral history of Ngati Koheriki has mostly been lost.
7. IT is with great sadness that I am unable to tell the Tribunal about Ngati Koheriki wahi tapu, pa, papakainga and other special places at East Wairoa.
8. IT was only by chance that my whanau discovered the interests of Ngati Koheriki at East Wairoa Last year I was approached by a Waitangi Tribunal historian named Dr Barry Rigby. Dr Rigby advised me of his research, and the fact of the Ngati Koheriki interest in the East Wairoa Block.
9. IT saddens me however to think that Ngati Koheriki has to rely on historians such as Dr Barry Rigby and especially Dr Bryan Gilling to tell the Tribunal about Ngati Koheriki traditional history at East Wairoa.
10. IT saddens me to know that those of us Ngati Koheriki who are alive today are not able to contribute to the Ngati Koheriki traditional history at East Wairoa. We leave the sacred task to the historians and especially Dr Bryan Gilling.
11. I would like to say to the Tribunal that although much of our traditional history has been lost that Ngati Koheriki have and still today exist.

WHY AM I HERE?

12. I have come to the Tribunal with a heavy heart. Words cannot describe the pain I feel for what has occurred to my tipuna and tribe Ngati Koheriki.
13. I am here because I am Ngati Koheriki and I want to ensure that the Ngati Koheriki story is told.
14. I am also here to seek answers from the Waitangi Tribunal and the Crown as to why my tipuna and Ngati Koheriki tribe were put to so much suffering at the hands of the Crown.
15. I want to know why the Crown military invaded Ngati Koheriki lands in 1863.
16. I want to know why the Crown forces killed and wounded so many of my Ngati Koheriki tipuna at East Wairoa and elsewhere.
17. I want to know why my Ngati Koheriki tipuna were labelled as rebels when they were fighting to defend their own lands.
18. I want to know why the Crown confiscated Ngati Koheriki lands at East Wairoa.
19. I want to know why the Compensation Court and Native Land Courts failed to carry out a complete and proper investigation of the ownership of Ngati Koheriki lands.
20. I want to know why Ngati Koheriki did not receive any compensation for the confiscation of their lands at East Wairoa
21. I want to know why Ngati Koheriki lands, outside of the East Wairoa confiscation area were given to non Ngati Koheriki Maori by the Native Land Court.

22. I want to know why my great great grandfather Hori Taka was arrested and charged on 29 May 1865 for the murder of Job Hamlin when it was clear that he had no direct involvement in the killing. I believe that none of this would have occurred if the Crown had not invaded Ngati Koheriki lands.
23. I want to know why the Crown awarded Ngati Koheriki 1,360 acres of land at Waikarakia when they had been earlier promised 5,200 acres of land.
24. I want to know why almost all knowledge of our lands at East Wairoa and who we are as a people was lost from our oral history?
25. I want to know why we had to rely on pakeha historians to tell us our history?
26. I want to know the truth about Ngati Koheriki and where wrongs were done I want them put right.
27. I also however wish to ensure that all that my tipuna fought for and died to defend was not in vain and despite Crown efforts to destroy us, Ngati Koheriki remain and will live on forever.

LOSS OF NGATI KOHERIKI LANDS

28. I feel that it is my obligation to the whenua (to whom I and all Ngati Koheriki belong) and to my tipuna to ensure that Ngati Koheriki are reunited with our whenua in order that we may once again love, nurture and care for our whenua and therefore ourselves.
29. TO me whenua is the most precious thing. The whenua to me is life. Without whenua we are nothing.
30. THE whenua connects us with those who have gone, the living and those who are to come.

31. THE whenua is our mother. The whenua provides for our needs and when we die the whenua is our last blanket.
32. BECAUSE I belong to the whenua I have obligations to protect it, to nurture it and to love it.
33. WHENUA provides us with a place to stand. Without it we have no rights. When the Crown took Ngati Koheriki lands, Ngati Koheriki were left with no place to stand.
34. THE invasion and confiscation by the Crown of Ngati Koheriki whenua at East Wairoa and elsewhere was terrible.
35. I can only imagine what my tipuna were going through when they fought to defend their whenua from the Crown invasion. I can only imagine the whakama and hurt which they must have experienced when they were forced from their whenua.
36. I feel for my tipuna who were not able to hold the whenua in their hands, to protect it, to nurture it and to love it.
37. I feel for my tipuna who were killed in the war with the Crown.
38. I feel for my tipuna who were unable to pass on the knowledge and history to their uri.
39. I feel for my tipuna who were unable to walk among their sacred places and papakainga.

HOW CAN A PEOPLE'S IDENTITY BE LOST?

40. SINCE becoming involved in this claim I have wondered how can a people's identity nearly be lost in the space of two generations.

41. Unfortunately I don't know the answer.
42. IT is clear from what I have read that my tipuna did not give their lands away voluntarily and that they were pursued and attacked by the Crown on numerous occasions, in around and within the East Wairoa Block and elsewhere.
43. FOLLOWING the Crown invasion, Ngati Koheriki were forced into exile like refugees and our ancestral lands were either confiscated or awarded to non Ngati Koheriki loyal Maori by the Native Land Court.
44. I believe the separation of Ngati Koheriki from their lands for a period of over 138 years played a significant part in the loss of our tribal knowledge and history about East Wairoa.
45. I believe that Ngati Koheriki paid the "ultimate price" as a result of acts and omissions of the Crown.
46. EXAMPLES of the "ultimate price" by Ngati Koheriki include:
- (a) the invasion of Ngati Koheriki lands by Crown forces;
 - (b) the loss of life
 - (c) the destruction of Ngati Koheriki lands and villages;
 - (d) the confiscation of Ngati Koheriki lands at East Wairoa;
 - (e) the failure of the Compensation Court to recognise Ngati Koheriki interests in the land at East Wairoa and/or to provide any compensation;
 - (f) the confiscations by the Native Land Court of Ngati Koheriki lands outside of the East Wairoa Block;

- (g) failure by the Crown to keep its promise to provide Ngati Koheriki with 5,200 acres of land at Waikarakia. Instead the Crown finally awarded 1,360 acres to Ngati Koheriki after nearly 40 years.

SCHOOLING AND CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

48. I came from a poor family. My memories of school are not happy ones. Attending school was a financial strain. My kuia found it difficult to pay for stationary, school trips and social events.
49. I had two uniforms to last the whole time I was at school. One for winter and one for summer. It was bought a few sizes larger so that it would last.
50. I recall attending my one and only social event, a school dance in my final year at school. At that time the dress required for school dances was a suit. My family couldn't afford a suit and I wore a tidy cardigan. On Monday morning when I arrived at school I was summoned to the headmasters office. The headmaster gave me a telling off for not wearing a suit. I told him that I couldn't afford one. He told me that rules were rules and that if I didn't have a suit then I could not go.
51. I can also recall being left out of the school 2nd XV as I could not afford to buy a rugby jersey.
52. EVEN though we were poor and didn't have much, we had each other and food on the table. Sometimes we would have up to 30 people staying at our home. During summer our water would run out and I have memories of collecting water from a creek that was about 2 kilometres away or from a hillside spring in cream cans. To get hot water we would heat "44 gallon" drums of water on an open fire outside.
53. WE were more fortunate than some of my cousins as our house had a wooden floor. Some of my cousins had dirt floors at home.

54. ALTHOUGH our house was connected to the power, there were many times when we went without, as my kuia could often not afford to pay the power bills. She would much rather that we had food on the table.

THE FUTURE

55. I believe that the outlook for Ngati Koheriki hangs in the balance.

56. NGATI Koheriki is attempting to pick up the pieces left as a result of the Crown's past acts and omissions.

57. AS a people we have survived against the odds and will continue to do so.

58. DESPITE the bleak situation that Ngati Koheriki find ourselves in, I believe that it is not too late for the Crown to extend its hand out to Ngati Koheriki and to assist Ngati Koheriki in our healing.

59. I believe that to assist Ngati Koheriki in our healing, that the Crown should first apologise for the suffering and pain which it caused our tipuna and us their descendants.

60. SECONDLY I believe that the lands of Ngati Koheriki at East Wairoa should be returned to Ngati Koheriki for the use and enjoyment of all Ngati Koheriki.

61. ALTHOUGH there is no amount of money that could compensate Ngati Koheriki for the pain and suffering which it has incurred, I believe that the Crown should pay compensation to a body (to be formed by Ngati Koheriki) to hold the compensation for and on behalf of all Ngati Koheriki.

62. FINALLY I support and indorse the Statement of Claim of my uncle Taka O Te Rangi Taka filed in the Waitangi Tribunal and dated 15 April 2002.

Thank you for listening.

" JJ "

Pateriki Joseph (Joe) Johnson

14 - 05 - 02

Date