

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

WAI
693

IN THE MATTER OF The Treaty of Waitangi Act

AND

IN THE MATTER OF a claim by WHAITIRI
 MIKAERE and others
 relating to the
 MATAMATAHARAKEKE
 Blocks

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF
PONGARAUHINE RENATA (nee BROWN)
ON BEHALF OF THE CLAIMANTS**

Dated June 2000

1. My full name is Pongarauhine Renata (nee Brown). I am the youngest daughter of Wiremu Paraone and Whaitiri Taamati. My mother was also known as Tiri. My mother was the second daughter of Pera Taamati and Rena Punehu. Rena Punehu was Pera Taamati's second wife together they had four children they were Kaata or Hiromena, Whaitiri, Ripia and Jack Whitiwhiti. Pera Taamati's first wife was Atareta I and together they had three daughters they were Aneta, Pare and Atareta II.
2. I was born in 1935 at Ahimia, Manaia. I grew up in Manaia and have spent virtually all my life there apart from a two year period when my husband, Toko Tenata and I moved away from home for a short time because of employment opportunities.
3. My life growing up in Manaia with my old people and whanau was very special, it was a life full of love, safety, fun and good times and sad times as well. Like the time of the TB epidemic during the 1920's it lasted into the 1940's and many people of Manaia were taken or died as a result of it, my mother eventually became sick with it and passed away in 194?. Our baby at the time was my younger brother Teppy.
4. I was told Manaia was designated as a quarantined area by the health authorities of the day. No strangers or people living outside of our valley could pass through Manaia. We could not leave Manaia as well because of the quarantine. All of our supplies and mail from town would be dropped off at the top of the Manaia/Coromandel Hill, Ngaruna Mikaere and others were the ones who would collect and distribute the supplies to everyone in the village.
5. I was taken as a baby and brought up with Kaata and her husband, Haeata. Haeata was my father's brother. I have no recollections of being taken away from my mother because I was very young. I used to think when I was little that Kaata and Haeata were my real parents, but when my mother Tiri was dying of tuberculosis my old people told me who my real mother and father were. My life with Kaata and Haeata was warm and full of love.
6. I spent the first seven years of my life with Kaata and Haeata, learning heaps of things from both of them. Catching fish, gathering kaimoana and distributing our catch around the village these things were just a normal part of our lives. I loved my life and the work we did. My first language was maori because it was spoken in our home on our Marae and in every other home in the village. There was a primary school at Manaia it was called the Manaia native primary school. Eventually I was told that I had to go to it, I did not want to go to school. So my old people ordered my cousins Eddie and Maiti to carry me to school. Two of them had to carry me there physically. I think they resented me for it because they had to do it every morning and afternoon for every school day of the week.
7. When I started school my reo was prohibited as children were punished if we spoke Maori at school. I remember one time at school when I had to go to the

toilet. The teacher had a way of classifying toilet use if we had to go. A number one was what we had to say if we needed to pass water or in Maori we used the word 'mimi'. A number two was what we had to say if we needed to pass solids or in Maori we would say 'tiko'. I needed to go to the toilet urgently and because I was only young and new at school I forgot which number was for what motion, instead of using the teachers numbering system to go to the toilet, I used my reo instead I said to the teacher "please Miss I need a tiko". For this response I was punished by the teacher and put on detention. There were different levels of punishment for different Maori words that were used by us. Children were physically and psychologically abused for speaking Maori at school. I was told to write out 100 sentences in english that "I must not swear". But in my view the Maori word I used was not a swear word. When old Haeata found out what had happened to me at school he stopped me from going back there. For two weeks I enjoyed myself going fishing, distributing the food around the village, going down to the Marae for the various hui that was happening for two whole weeks. The school reported my absences to the police and eventually they came to take me back to school.

8. Paterson was the cop. When he arrived in his car at our front gate, Haeata told me to hide under the couch in our sitting room. When Paterson said he was there to take me back to school, Haeata told him "get out that gate now I'll go get my gun". Nothing more happened after that but my cousins Emily and Maiti told me to get back to school.
9. By taking our language away when we were children was a way of taking our mana, it was a way of taking our oral history and therefore our identify.
10. I knew of Matamataharakeke when I was a child, I knew this place and other things because Maremare Whitiwhiti educated us on the history of Manaia and our old people. We had a club that was based on our Marae the club was called the 'Moehau Club'. Some members of Ngati Pare of the Mangakaahia whanau were also members of our club as well. Maremare was our teacher she was a renowned weaver, she made feather cloaks, piupiu, whariki and kete. I remember an amazing Kiwi feather cloak that she made for the whanau, there was a photograph of my sister Bella wearing it when she was in a beauty pageant. Bella was also pictured in that photograph holding a greenstone mere its name is 'patu pounamu'. Maremare was the custodian of these toanga. Maremare taught us everything we needed to know about harvesting and weaving flax eg, how to treat the flax, when to pick it and when not to pick it etc. The flax for our weaving was harvested from Matamataharakeke. Maremare would go to Matamataharakeke and stay there for a few days to harvest the flax. At that time that place was still covered in flax. She picked her leaves from a special place at Matamataharakeke near the creek that runs through the property. She would also bring seedlings back from there to grow in Manaia. All of the piupiu and other flax woven objects were woven from the flax she harvested from Matamataharakeke.

11. Maremare and my eldest brother Tat came to visit me twice about Matamataharakeke between 1962 and 1966. I told both of them that Matamataharakeke should be given back to all of the descendants belonging to my mother's whanau. I was never consulted by the Maori Trustee about the sale of Matamataharakeke. I never new that the whole 70 acres of Matamataharakeke was going to be sold.