

Wai 686 #S 12

Wai705#A5

IN THE MATTER OF **the Treaty of**
Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF **Barbara Francis,**
of Whitianga on behalf
of the whanau of
Peneamene Tanui

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF PATRICIA NGAERE MACDONALD

My name is Patricia Ngaere Macdonald I was bora in Whitianga in 1929. My mother's name was Huihana Aoreiata Davis until she married and took the name Johnston. My father's name is Ronald Alexander Beven Johnston. I ani the eldest of six children followed by Barbara Huia Francis, Moyra Aoreiata Alexandra Johnston, Beven Hei Johnston, Peter Tiki Johnston, and Wayne Tanui Johnston. We are of Ngati Hei and whakapapa directly back to our ancestor Hei through Hamahona Hinganoa, Hohepa Hinganoa, Rahere Tanui, Ngawhira Davis, Huihana Johnston, to ourselves.

My parents and I with my two younger sisters lived in a very small kauri cottage in Owen Street Whitianga. We lived there until I was 7 years old when we moved to Auckland. I believe this cottage had been built during the 1800s for the mill workers of the Kauri Timber Co. It had a black wood burning stove, kerosene lamps, tank water and an outside toilet In mid - August of this year 2001, the cottage was demolished, probably to be replaced with something more modem but it stood for more than 100 years. Behind our house stood the Catholic Church, its access being from the adjoining street and I being inquisitive used to slip through our back fence to visit the church. I am not sure what drew me there, perhaps it was the organ music. Across the main road in Albert Street stood the Undenominational Church which I also visited frequently.

I recall accompanying my mother down through the town towards the Whitianga estuary to where the old wharf was situated. It was here we gathered tuangi. I remember my mother telling me to look for little tufts of green looking moss which protruded above the silty sand for it was there I would find the tuangi. How I loved going on those trips. It was

in this area but a little north to the present wharf where I learned to swim, apparently at an early age. My father would dive from the lower part of the wharf with me clinging to his back like a limpet and we would swim a short distance to shore. I remember doing a great deal of spluttering.

I remember my uncle, Ned Davis and my father taking me to a foot ball match which was played at Robinson Road. This football field was part of a farm, possibly part of Wharetangata or Toumuia block. However, my father was probably playing for Mercury Bay and my uncle for Kuaotunu as there was much fun and rivalry between all the outlying communities. It seemed the whole township turned out for such occasions.

During these days my sister Barbara and I would set off walking from Whitianga to Wharekaho, our parents catching up with us on the way. We would spend weekends with our grandparents and others of the Davis Whanau. Often on these walks we collected kahitua found along Buffalo Beach north of the old Mercury Bay hospital. Sometimes during the winter months we would pick up frost fish that had been stranded.

I can recall feeling sad at leaving Whitianga, our friends and whanau, to move to Auckland. In Auckland we came to our paternal grandparents home at Cheltenham, not far from the beach - I'm glad to say. Our school holidays however were always spent back at Wharekaho, with our dear Aunty Tiki and Uncle Nye Winiata. How we looked forward to those times. When I look back now, they were really magical days -none of us wanting to return to Auckland.

While on holiday and during the summer when there were long spells without rain, we would travel south of Whitianga to the Mahakirau River where we swam, washed, and did our washing. It was fun doing those things as well.

It was some years later, perhaps in the late 1970s early 1980s that I went with my cousin Benny Davis in search of Kauri knots. This required us to seek permission from Atry Till to cross his farm. This farm was about halfway between Whitianga Airport and Te Wehi River. Having permission we set off and headed for the estuary. When we arrived I was taken by the quiet solitude of the place and could only wonder what the whole area must have looked like in earlier times, both prior to Kauri logging and later when the harbour was choked with logs. There were still large pieces of kauri lying about. There were huge stumps, one of which had a straggly pohutukawa growing from it and a black backed gull had made its nest there. It didn't take us long to find our kauri knots.

As the years passed by and with my own children, I continued to bring them back home as my mother had done with us. That tie to the whenua no matter how diminished, is still strong. I recall my mother always insisting we stand straight and walk tall. Changes were beginning to happen in Whitianga Holiday makers who once came camping with families and friends were now becoming bach owners and pressure was being placed on coastal beaches and areas for subdivisions. No longer was Whitianga a sleepy hollow. Gone were the days when our people rode horses to town for shopping. No longer does the town depend on a generator for electricity. The roads began to be tar sealed. There is now piped water and reticulated sewerage, a marina and now a canal housing development. I suppose this is progress. Perhaps it is my age. Still we cling to those wonderful memories, places and times with our old people. I am pleased to say that our 95 year old father is now resident at the Continuing Care Hospital where he can still enjoy the view down the harbour towards Wharekaho, Maungatawhiri and the offshore islands he once fished around.

P Macdonald