

IN THE MATTER

of the Treaty of
Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER

of Remehio TE
MAUNGA
MANGAKAHIA of
Whangapoua and on
behalf of descendants
and whanau members
of HAMIORA
MANGAKAHIA

Brief of Evidence of Maureen Edith Browne

1. My name is Maureen Edith (Iti) Browne. I was born in Tangiora Mangakahia Browne's homestead in Whangapoua. She was my grandmother. I was born on the 20th of the December 1950. I am now 49 years of age. At the time of my birth, my grandmother and aunties were not living at the house. I lived in that house until I was about 10 or 11. I was, therefore, brought up at Whangapoua. I had five older brothers, and five younger brothers. I think a few of my brothers and I were born in our house. My mother did not like it at Whangapoua. I think it was too isolated for her. My father, between working on the farm and working away from home was in and out and away for long periods. He was back and forwards all the time. Our grandmother had moved into town before I was born. She never lived in the house when I was a child. She would speak in Maori and English. Alternatively, we would see her when we went to Coromandel. We would come into town once a month and visit our grandmother, do our big shopping and then come home.

2. The house was huge. It had a number of bedrooms, one big lounge in the front, plus a big hall room, an open fire place, and the kitchen was huge - it had a big heavy kauri table that could sit about 10 people around it. Our house was the biggest house next to the Denize's homestead. There were the odd one or two paintings hanging in the house. We had candles - no power. The toilet was outside - it was a long drop and it was like that the whole time we were there. The water supply would be from the roof into a tank, but the tank had a hole in it. Now and again we would have to go down to the river and cart water up, or go to a spring. There is a river beside the Bright's house, and we would

walk all the way up there and carry it back in a bucket, or we would have to go down the side of the hill and get water out of a natural spring. There was always water there as long as someone kept the spring clean. The water from the spring was also used for drinking water.

3. By the time I attended school there was a little bus that used to come and pick us up. The older ones had to ride on horse back to school at Te Rerenga. When I was down there, we didn't have much to do with the other families - only when we were at school, or playing together on the weekends. We would play on the sand hills and at the creek - that was our swimming spot. At that time there were no people living on the beach front - there was only one bach down on the Raukawa end.

The Mangakahia/Browne Farm

4. My earliest memory of Whangapoua were the cows - Te Rei, Dad, was running the farm then. Dad's full name was Te Rei Frances Mangakahia or Browne. Everyone used to call Dad by his nickname Bunts or Bunty. I would have been about seven or eight. The farms in the area were run by my dad, Reg Mangakahia and the Denizes. I can not remember whether or not the Brights were farming. Reg farmed on his section. There was a salt water swamp behind my grandmother's house - by Uncle Reg's place. The tide would come right up - and now and again I think it still does. The ground was all damp. Rushes grew in the swamp and there were pukeko living there.

5. Our farm took in the southern end and the other side of the road where the baches are now. The Mangakahias were on the other side, and the Brights were by the lagoon.

6. Dad was away he was shearing for other farmers around the region. I can not remember Dad having sheep, but he had milking cows which he milked. My brothers started milking when Dad was not at home. There about a seven year age gap between myself and my eldest brother Andrew. The boys were still going to primary school when they started milking. I was not allowed near the cow shed - I was allowed to stand on the rails and watch. The boys did all the work - they rounded the cows in by calling out to them - they would open the gate and they would all walk down the road.

7. The cows would be milked six at a time and it would take a couple of hours. They had machines to do the milking. By the time I got ready to go to school, all the boys were finished and they were ready to go to school too. Then they would come home after school and milk the cows again - twice a day. After the milking, we would put the milk in big vats for the truck to come and pick it up. The milk would last that long if the rats did not fall in and taint it. We would put it in cream cans and put out by the gate and that was done once a week. I think there would be one part milk and one part cream.

8. The farm has now declined - it's all dry and barren, but there is still dry stock there. The land is now in Lill and Ivan's ownership.

Mahi Kai (Food Gathering and Preparation)

9. Our main kai was Maori bread, cream, porridge and kaimoana. I can remember watching the others collect kaimoana but I was not allowed to do it. I used to go to the bush when Dad went. When Dad and the boys got kaimoana, I would just sit and watch them.

10. The boys were allowed to fish and they went with Dad to get mussels and other kaimoana. They would catch schnapper, flounder, mullet etc. We had a safe built into the side of the house, and the fish and butter were kept in there. Sometimes they dried the fish on the clothes line or on the fence.

11. The sea food you can get at Whangapoua are kinas, mussels, pauas, pipis - there are three types (the tuatuas, the long pipis, and the round cockles). When we were kids Dad would collect a lot of sea anemones - we used to eat those a lot in a stew - I still get it today, it tastes peppery and is like chewing on meat. We had parengo but I am not that keen on it. We also ate eels when the boys went eeling. They would sometimes dry the eels - salt them and hang them up.

12. I now fish and gather kaimoana. I do not know how I know where the kaimoana is today - I usually look for kelp because there will be kinas, mussels, and paua. Paua can be found down the Denizes end - we walk around the beach on the waters edge. The Denizes have always let us walk around there. We also drive down there, everybody else has to walk. They know who we are. As long as we close the gates we are okay. We get paua near Dummy's Island. You can also get kina from Raukawa end.

13. I remember eating wild pig on real special occasion. We had bread most days but hinu (fat) was our butter. We were not well off. When Mum was in control we had enough to eat, but when she got sick we just helped ourselves - we would make Maori porridge made of dough.

14. We would look after ourselves a lot. The elder boys took care of us and they would also cook when mum was sick. This happened when Dad was away. When he was home he would cook. One of our aunties would come and help once a week and she would clean the house. I remember sometimes being hungry - we would pick blackberries.

Tikanga Maori me Te Taha Wairua (Maori Customs and Spirituality)

15. As children we were not allowed in the cemetery. The cemetery is across from Reg's driveway and there is also a site on Raukawa where we could not go.

16. I remember visitors drowning down at the beach. Dad would tell us that we all had to stay home because somebody had drowned.

17. Some of the customs we tell the kids not to do are: do not to eat on the beach; leave the little ones; do not take more than what you can eat. Girls don't gather food from the garden or sea during their monthly cycle.

18. I think I was about 17 when my grandmother died. She was buried in the family cemetery in Whangapoua. We had the tangi in Coromandel where she used to live, and the tangi was not that big. My father's funeral was also quite small. When my Dad died about 16 years ago - we buried him at cemetery in Whangapoua beach - only the family are buried there.

Importance of the Whanau Lands

19. It was 1960 when I left Whangapoua. The house was closed down not long after that. One of my aunties did come back and try to live in the house but she could not because she reckoned it was too barren, no water, no power.

20. I married at 18 and I was married for 15 years. We lived in Hamilton and the oldest daughter was bom the 10th of November 1968. I now live at Te Rerenga. I would take my children back to Whangapoua if I was visiting Mum and Dad for holidays. If my parents were not at home they would be at the Mangakahia farm - because nobody was living

in the house, and he used to help the Denizes on their farm. Dad was also on the forestry for a while, he was on fishing boats and was doing the odd shearing job. But then Dad got sick with cancer and died. My mother died not long after that.

21. I would bring my children back and stay at the Mangakahia home. It has since been pulled down. When the new baches were getting built in Whangapoua, people would go up to the old house and pinch the kauri wood from the house and the iron off the roof. It became unsafe.

22. Now we live in the Whangapoua area at Te Rerenga. I always wanted to come back - I knew I would come back in the end. I met my current partner and I brought him back for a holiday. He loved it and we have now been here for five years.

23. My involvement in the claim is for my grandchildren's interests - I have 13 grandchildren and they all come back for occasions like Christmas. They know this place is Nanny's beach, the place where Nanny was brought up. This is the place where I will belong.