

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 Winifred Mareroa

1. My name is Winifred Mareroa (nee Mangakahia). I was named after one of my mother's relations. I was born in Waihau - it's just about four or five miles down the road from Panguru in Northland. My family was in the north because Dad's mother was Mere Te Tai and she had a bit of land up there. Dad was a supervisor with the Maori Affairs. I remember my mother, she was always ill. It was quite sad because my mother was always in and out of hospital. Dad was the main one who looked after mum.

Whangapoua

2. I was born in 1935. I came to Whangapoua in 1938 when I was three. My first memory of Whangapoua was when we had the house built. It was my Mum's dream home. Many people came to visit us. Some were our relations from the north. We also had visitors from Kennedy's Bay and Manaia.

3. I went to school in Te Rerenga. The school was little, there must have been about 12 or 13 children from the farms around the district. The school was about 500 yards away from where it is now. Te Rerenga is on the crossroads of Coromandel and Whitianga.

4. We lived as a whanau down at Whangapoua. When I was a girl, there was only Auntie Tangi's house there. Polly (Pare) would come

and go, and she used to tell me about when she was my mother's age. She would show me the different places where the houses used to be and the mill but they were not there when I was a girl. The mill was at Opera Point. They talked about the mill - they would talk about the dances they had at the hall. People would walk to Whangapoua. Alternatively they would swim the horses across the harbour. After the dances they would come home - the others would carry on back to Kennedy's Bay and Colville, stay the night at Whangapoua, and then walk back over the hill.

5. Auntie Tangiora and her children lived in the big house. The old homestead has been pulled down - it was deteriorating. There was no marae down at Whangapoua so her house was used for tangihanga and a resting spot for travelling Maori around the region. I remember a tangi being held at the house. Women were wailing and the "hupe" was falling. My aunt Mable did the karanga. They had greenery made into wreaths in their hair. The tangi was in the front room of the house. Tangiora's son Buntly lived there with his wife. We had paintings and old furniture, and one day she took ill and burnt some of them. I do have one photograph of my grandmother, Mere but there was one of Dad there. That I would have liked. I one of Pineamine - Peter Johnson's grandfather - I keep that photo in my room. Grandmother is on the wall of our lounge.

6. I remember staying in Tangiora's house - I would stay there with my cousins, some of whom were about my age. She and her older daughters would look after us while my mother was sick. They would look after Tim - there was quite a big age gap. There is quite a big age gap between my brother and I. I remember Ray Christian being there - he is just a bit younger than I. I remember we were scared of Tangiora for even though she was a lovely lady, she was very strict. She never hit us - I do not remember her hitting any of the children, but she did get really angry and growl, and that was enough for us. Dad had been gassed during World War 1 and he was shell shocked as well. He would talk about his experiences when we got older and they were really horrific. He would have arguments with Mum. That is when my aunt Tangiora came down to sort him out - because Mum was so sick and he would argue with her. I think that he expected her to get up and help him on his off days. I suppose we were getting a bit much for him - looking after the four of us - he had a baby too then. Tangiora would come down and sort it out.

7. We were all like brothers and sisters at Whangapoua. Everyone helped each other. New births were celebrated and the traditional practice of burying the after-birth of each baby was followed. The after-births were buried in the bush near the old homestead. In this way our link to the land was reinforced. We would play ghosts on the

veranda of Tangiora's big old house. When one of our cousins, Waiariki Mangakahia died, we heard that he visited the house before he went on. Someone was coughing - I went outside with my brothers to have a look and see who it was - we thought it was someone playing a joke - but there was no one there. Waiariki was Hamiora Whakakoro's son. I believe in spirituality - maybe it started with the ghost stories when we were children. When that spirit came to us when I was young that is when I started to believe. My mother was very spiritual - we would pray a lot when we were children. Dad always prayed at a certain times each night - in the late evening. I never saw him using the Bible - he just prayed for about 10-15 minutes.

8. He and the other adults talked about tapu sites around the area. For example, there was the story about one of the local farmers who asked for some wood of the tapu site on the beach. Dad said that the land was very tapu. The Pakeha fanner said it was just going to waste and he did not believe in tapu. He took the wood and put it on an open fire. While he had his back to the fire he felt as though someone had stabbed him in the back. He later developed TB in his back and he died of that. Later in life, you would never ever get him to take wood off that tapu piece of land - and any of the farmers around, they would never take any wood off that land. That land is now on my cousin Lillian's land and there are baches on it now. Auntie Tangi's family sub-divided the land. we have heard stories about marriage break-ups among those living in the baches or someone going broke - some big business guy shot himself during the share market crash in the-1980s. Every time we hear of these stories we think "Oh yeah". I have family buried down there. Now there are people living over the top of that area. They have just fenced off a little area and put a memorial there to the people that have passed on.

Mahi Kai (Food Gathering and Preparation)

9. I remember Tangiora and her eldest daughter, Mabel could weave. They tried to teach us to make little kits for food. I also remember the older ones would bake for Sunday picnics. We would all go to watch the men and women gathering seafood, and then have a picnic — that was lovely. They would get kinas, pauas, mussels, karehu - they are like little periwinkles. There were plenty of pupus - it was our job to collect those - it was not until we got a bit older that we would get pipis and mussels. Women would get pipis, mussels, kinas, crayfish as well as the men. We were not allowed to eat our shellfish on the rocks so we always had the picnic well away from the waters edge. This was because the shell-fish would move. From the harbour our parents caught curlew as well when we were children though I don't know how they were caught.\

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10. Kennedy Bay people came over on Sunday every now and then - a whole mob of them and they would camp at the farm. Then they would all go fishing and netting. They would bring the fish in and clean them, dry them, cut them in strips. I remember them hanging them on the clotheslines to dry. There were paua - they used to put them in hinu to preserve them in barrels. When you took them out they would be soft. We ate them straight out of the drum dripping with fat. Otherwise they were cooked up - usually fried or creamed. We would get the pipis and cockles from the inner harbour, the kina and paua were taken near New Chums (by the Denize's place). There was also koura there and around Dummy's Island -at the end of the Denize's peninsula. The collection of kaimoana, was and remains fundamentally something we all did/do. We still know where to go, and the family still can get some mussel and kina. The paua are very small now. There are many paua but they are too little. Koura is hard to come by for there are commercial fishermen to compete with now.

11. On Sunday after the picnics, we would have lots of hymns for it was church day. We were the only members of the whanau that were Catholics, all the rest were Mormons. The elders would come and lead service - to the Catholic priest. One American Elder fell for one of the girls but Tangiora would not let her be with him. Tangiora dictated to all of us. We all respected her wishes. My father listened to her - she was the boss of the family - but she was a lovely. No one worked on Sundays or lit fires.

12. We used to go into the bush when we were children. We would wander around the bush, up into the hills, and eat the different berries. They were off the nikau trees or different bushes. We were not allowed to cut the trees down but being kids we would cut down the nikau and eat the centre of the nikau bulb. It was lovely. We would rub the top of the stump with dirt - I do not really know why - I think in our minds it looked like the tree had been cut down a long while. We also looked for fresh water koura in the streams and ate them raw.

13. We would get huhus out of the bush. Dad would use the ti tree berries for constipation - they were chewed as a laxative. Kumara hou which is horrible, was abundant and used for cleansing the blood. Mingimingi is like a ti tree but it's has very hard prickly leaves. When it was boiled the water turned a very dark brown colour and it was for bathing. Tutu was for ulcers or big sores. The adults would scrape the inside of the tutu. Now my daughter is a naturopath - she knows all the rongoa - Maori medicines. My daughter uses all those things now.

Mangakahia Farm

14. My Dad was sick - it was hard for him to breathe - he was gassed during the war so it affected his lungs. Farming was difficult for him. I remember we used to go out on the sledge and pick up boulders and stack them in piles around the land to peg the land. I can remember him cutting down trees for posts, and sewing manure with sacks he turned into pouches. He would fill the pouch with grass seed or manure and then sprinkle it by hand around the farm. Dad was very slight - not a big strong man but he did his best. Maori Affairs sent materials and farm supplies for the farm that we did not need and then they took the money from the cream cheques.

15. It was a really hard life on the farm - but it was different for me because I was sent away when I was about 14 to Auckland Girls' College. I went nursing when I left school. When Dad got really ill I gave it up and went home to look after him. I was nursing in Thames. I was later a nurse in Coromandel where I looked after my baby son and my father. They let me take them both to the hospital - I was very grateful. Reg, came back to look after the farm - but it was not doing any good. They divided the farm in two and when my husband and I married, we took it over as well. I met my husband in Coromandel while I was nursing. He came from Kennedy's Bay. He was one of the Ngati Porou living there - Mareroa Ngapo. We spent time on their farm, but I could not settle there so we moved back to Whangapoua where we lived for about six years, before moving on to Auckland. That was between 1956 until 1965.

16. We had tried to manage both farms but it was impossible without significant financial support. We were milking cows when we were living in Whangapoua. We had leased Auntie Tangiora's land off her. My husband also had to work on the forestry, and he did a bit of driving for the cattle trucks - just to make ends meet. The rates were not that high - I think we were able to make enough to pay those, but when the children started coming, we did not have enough to look after things, so we decided that it was better to go and find work in Auckland, and to educate the children - so that is what we did. We had eight children - they were born in Coromandel except the last one who was born in Auckland.

17. When my husband and I were farming, my brother wanted to sub-divide the farm. That's another reason why we left. When my father died my brother wanted to cut the farm up. He was living in Auckland and had friends who gave him all these big ideas. I remember my Dad saying

that my brother offered a brand new car for the beach - and he told him to go and jump in the lake. When my brother came back with all these ideas we were a bit sceptical about them. However, he sub-divided all the sections on the beach that belonged to us. It all got passed through the Maori Land Court. We gave him full right to do what he thought was right. I know now that it was wrong but our family just agreed because we were very poor. I suppose it was around 1964 when he decided to sub-divide the beach area. We got paid - we bought a house in Auckland with our money for the children. We were all given an equal share - it was about 700 pounds. We got enough to get a mortgage.

18. After 20 years in Auckland we came home - we bought the shop in Whangapoua. My brother Reg is still on our farm. We came back to Whangapoua because we love it. We always bought the children home every Christmas. All the time we were in Auckland we would come back every year. And now the children all love it and they all come back every year. I have 17 moko (grandchildren) and they all bring their children back. At Christmas time, we might have one or two away, but the majority come home. We've only got two bedrooms, but there is plenty of lawn for them to put up tents.

19. The changes that have taken place concern me. I often think to myself- I wish I could have said no - you are not doing this or that. But when I was younger I could not stand up for myself - the boys had all the say - you never answered back to brothers in those days. I see with my daughters now that they will not put up with any nonsense - they are very strong. My brother who sub-divided the land has passed on. During his sickness he said that our Grandfather had come to him and thrown him down to the floor- he used to just flake out. Apparently he had a tumor in his brain, and when that happened to him he would always see an old man - and he thought it was Hamiora. He saw this old Maori man walk in the door, he came behind him and put his around him and-threw him down.

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20. We were all so poor - we really needed the money but we did not want the land to go. When this started to happen to Bill, we all started to think perhaps he was being punished for bringing those people down to sell our land. That is what he thought too. Towards the end he said that he should not have done it. But it was too late. He was 38 when he died, only young. He died after Dad at the end of 1969.

21. When we were kids we were the only Maori family there - there were no other Maori. We never had much to do with Maori. There

are about 300 houses now at the beach. Only 35 would be permanent residents. We have since sold the shop to our children but we still live in Whangapoua, about a kilometre or so away from the shop. The people who are living there are mostly European - we are still the only Maori family around.

Importance of the Whanau Lands

22. Whangapoua is important to my family because it is the place where we feel we belong. Even though there are all those people there, it belongs to us. When we have been away it is always good to get back there - just a feeling of belonging. But the land is starting to shrink and we must stop that. I've been bought up with people telling us that the land was taken from our grandparents - and at first all I wanted was recognition for my grandparents - that this was their home. My granddad worked hard for our people, and he got nothing out of it.

23. There was a lady that I took down to Whangapoua one time when Reg was very ill, and I was really worried about him. I thought only awful things are happening to our Whangapoua people - they can not seem to keep the land, it's been taken off them - and all these sicknesses, all these hard luck stories that we have had in our families - so I thought it must have been cursed. I talked to a tohunga from Waikato and I bought her down to the beach. She read from the Bible in Maori. While we were sitting in Reg's home, her nephew started to cough as though he was retching. She kept going. When she finished she told me not to worry about Reg, it was meant to be and from the ashes our family will rise again. She said it was written that we will rise from the ashes - and that we would get some of our land back. This was years before this claim happened - it would have been in the 1970s. She then asked her nephew what happened. He said that he felt that someone had slapped a piece of rotten meat on his face. She told us that the spirits do that to try and stop her from doing blessings. It was late when we left the farm - I had to start the car and it wouldn't go. There were only a couple of people living at the beach then. I was going to ask them to see if they would help me and she told me to wait a minute. Evidently she had forgotten to say a prayer which she says at a certain time each day - and as soon as she said her prayer, she told me I could start the car and it started. She boiled up this medicine when we got home, told me to take it to Reg. He took a teaspoon - it was the first thing he had taken and after that he came right. She said that the doctors let her into the hospital to administer medicines and things - they knew her. I never saw her again after that - she told me not to worry, all these things are meant to be. She said that this place is a loving place, it's very sad. And that is how I feel too, it doesn't matter