

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL
OF NEW ZEALAND

IN THE MATTER OF: The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF: The Wairarapa ki Tararua Inquiry –
Wai 863

AND

IN THE MATTER OF: The claims of Rangitāne o Tamaki-
Nui-a-Rua - **Wai 166**

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF HEPA MEI TATERE

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Introduction

1. My full name is **HEPA MEI TATERE**. I was born in Dannevirke on 9 January 1932.
2. My father was Dick Te Taterere and my mother was Isobel Dunlop, a Pākehā lady raised by the Taterere family from nine years of age.
3. My father Dick Te Taterere had a brother, Hohepa Mei Taterere, who was known as “Doc”.
4. My father and Doc were raised by Pirihiira Nireaha who was the youngest daughter of Nireaha Tamaki and Rehipeti Hetariki. Pirihiira Nireaha married Haora Te Taterere who was from Waimarama in the Hawkes Bay. Once they realised they were unable to have children a whangai situation arose where Pirihiira took Doc from Rangirangi Paewai and Dick from his parents Tuahine Renata and Erina Karauria from Waimarama as whangai. Doc and my father were raised by Pirihiira Nireaha and Haora Te Taterere at Ngaawapurua.
5. Despite my father being a whangai of the Taterere family and raised in the Ngaawapurua area, I was raised in the Dannevirke area at Makirikiri. My Rangitāne whakapapa is set out at page 22 of the whakapapa booklet “He Ata Tatai Tupuna, He Tatai Hono Hoki.”
6. My evidence will focus on Ngaawapurua and Hāmua, their significance to Rangitāne and farming issues.

Ngaawapurua and Hamua

7. I am aware that the Ngaawapurua and Hāmua areas in southern Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua are very significant places in terms of our Rangitāne history.

8. Ngaawapurua is located north of current day Pahiatua. It was important because it was the location of significant Rangitāne kāinga. It was also the birth place of Nireaha Tāmaki. The area towards the mouth of the Tiraumea River which flows into the Manawatu River provided our ancestors with a great location to produce crops.

Significant Places at Ngaawapurua

The Ferry Business

9. The Ngaawapurua area is probably most famous for the ferry business that was established there by Nireaha Tāmaki and his relation, Huru Te Hiaro, in the late 19th century.
10. Given that the Manawatu River was the largest in the area, it was going to take the Crown officials some time to build a bridge across the river, therefore, it was a prime business opportunity for entrepreneurs, Nireaha and Huru.
11. The ferry business was established at the kāinga of Nireaha's father, Matiu. I believe the name of the kāinga was Uhiwai.
12. The Tribunal have already been made aware that the Ngaawapurua-Manawatu ferry business established by Nireaha and Huru was taken away from them by Crown officials. This occurred in spite of protest from both Nireaha and Huru who wanted to continue to run the ferry business. By all accounts, it had been quite successful prior to the contract being revoked.
13. The entrepreneur, Nireaha, although dejected by the cancellation of his contract to run the ferry business, soon bounced back and decided to use some of his 2,000 acres at Ngaawapurua and Hāmua to produce wheat as a commodity to exchange with settlers in the area. Not only did Nireaha use

his land to grow crops, he also used some of his land to rear cattle in the late 1800s

Urupā at Ngaawapurua

14. There is a traditional urupā at Ngaawapurua on the embankment of the Manawatu River. It is not a urupā that is used today. Many of the bodies buried there are buried in holes in a similar fashion to that which you would place a power pole in. The bodies are buried in the foetal position. I am not sure of the actual name of this particular burial site but when we came across it we fenced it off so that the dairy cows would not disturb the area.
15. There is another urupā at Ngaawapurua. Apart from local Rangitāne rangatira being buried there, there is also a Pākehā lady by the name of Frances Moore Carver who lived at Ngaawapurua during the mid to late 19th century. She and her whānau were leasing land from Nireaha's father, Matiu, in the late 19th century.
16. In the late 1800s Frances Carver's family decided to move to Auckland and expected the old lady to go with them. She refused to leave Ngaawapurua.
17. The local Rangitāne people had a lot of respect for this lady because she had learned the Māori language and the various forms of Māori medicines. Out of respect for her, the local Rangitāne people decided not only to bury her at their urupā but also to bury with her the first Māori child who died in the area.
18. In 1996, the descendants of Frances Carver came to this urupā to pay their respects to their ancestor. A service was conducted which I was involved in. The Frances Carver's family have erected a white picket fence around her grave site. Annexed and marked "A" are photographs and material relating to Frances Carver and the memorial service.

Retaining land at Ngaawapurua and Hamua

19. The majority of the land owned by Nireaha Tāmaki at Ngaawapurua and Hāmua was inherited by his eldest daughter, Mere Watchman-Ngawhiro. Unfortunately that land was sold.
20. The only pieces of land formerly owned by Nireaha which remain in Māori ownership were awarded to other members of his family. They are two papakainga reserves that were set aside in the late 19th century.
21. One of these reserves was at Ngaawapurua which was about 210 acres, and the other one was at Hāmua and was about 180 acres. Doc Tatere inherited the 210 acres at Ngaawapurua when Pirihira (Nireaha’s youngest daughter) passed away.
22. When Doc inherited the land at Ngaawapurua, there was a total of about 800 acres of land in Māori ownership at that time. My whānau retained the 210 acres of land at Ngaawapurua that we inherited from Doc and it is held in trust for the Tatere whānau.
23. It is my policy and the policy of the Trust, not to part with any of our land which we inherited from Nireaha Tāmaki.
24. All of the land we own at Ngaawapurua and Hāmua has the status of Māori freehold land. We have increased our land base at both Hāmua and Ngaawapurua. We purchased pieces of general land in 1978 and in 1993, but changed the status of those blocks to Māori freehold land.
25. Apart from the fact that there is little land left in Māori ownership in the Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua area, one of other reasons that I will never allow our lands, particularly at Hāmua, to be sold is that there is an important urupā on our land where important tupuna like Nireaha Tāmaki, Rehipeti, Pirihira, and Haora Te Tatere are buried.

Developing our Land

26. In total we retain 490 acres of land at Ngaawapurua and Hāmua. Just like other Māori farmers in the area, we have experienced difficulties in developing our land and using existing land as security to purchase other land.
27. Although 490 acres may seem a lot of land, if you compare it to the amount of land the Rangitāne people have lost in southern Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua, it is very little.
28. Given that the land has the status of Māori freehold land, I have personally experienced difficulties as a trustee in obtaining funding to develop our land and obtaining capital to purchase further land. The banks would simply not allow full mortgaging of the property we already owned to develop existing land or purchase further pieces of land.
29. The further two pieces of land that we purchased, already mentioned, provide interesting examples of the funding issue.
30. The first piece of land that we purchased in Hāmua was about 64 acres and was funded by the Māori Affairs Department. Our initial application to the Department was rejected. However, I was not going to end it there, and I reapplied for funding. They reluctantly agreed on the condition that I employed Māori to run the milking operation that I was looking to set up on this new piece of land. We did eventually employ a Māori sharemilker on the land.
31. The second block we purchased of about 55 acres was funded through a standard bank. This was only because the first piece of land we had purchased was kept for a period of time in general title. That was the only reason the bank allowed us to use it as security to purchase the further piece of land. I am adamant we would have not got funding from the bank if it was still held in Māori freehold title.

32. As previously mentioned, I changed the status of the land to Māori freehold land once we had secured the funding.

Skills to farm the land

33. My experience with farming our lands at Ngaawapurua and Hāmua was one of trial and error.
34. I had no formal training and was not funded to attend any courses to learn how to farm the land which we had retained. It was a different situation for Doc who had been taken under the wing of Sir Apirana Ngata in the 1920s when Ngata was setting up farming schemes in the Rotorua area.
35. After Doc's experiences with Ngata in Rotorua, he returned to his lands in Ngaawapurua and Hāmua and the skills he had learned whilst in Rotorua held him in good stead to manage and develop his lands, not only at Ngaawapurua and Hāmua but also other Paewai family lands at Tahoraiti.
36. Doc was one of the lucky ones in terms of having the farming skills required. In my experience, amongst Māori in Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua he was a rarity. Most of our people did not have the expertise to successfully develop and farm what little land remained in their ownership.
37. What I can say today though is that after almost 60 years of farming the lands that we have retained at Ngaawapurua and Hāmua, we have a rather successful farming enterprise. That is not to say we did not make numerous mistakes, but I can say that we did it on our own and we have retained a majority of the land and have in fact added to our land base.

The Future

38. My goal for the future for Rangitāne relates to land retention and development. I would like to encourage our Rangitāne people to hold on

to all of our land that we own today, for the Crown to return as much land as they are able to return by way of Treaty settlement or to provide the funds to enable us to purchase back our land ourselves.

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