

DUPLICATE

WAI 814 # D2
WAI 856 # C2

TE ROOPU WHAKAMANA I TE TIRITI O WAITANGI
IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

WAI 856

IN THE MATTER OF

The Treaty of Waitangi Act
1975 (as amended)

AND

IN THE MATTER OF

a claim by **PUKA MOEAU** for
and on behalf of **NGA URI O
TE KOOTI RIKIRANGI**

**BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF ELIZABETH MOEAU
ON BEHALF OF NGA URI O TE KOOTI RIKIRANGI: WAI 856**

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Background

1. **MY** full name is Elizabeth Kataraina Katorangi Moeau. My date of birth is 15th September 1939 and at the moment I am living at 75 Knighton Road, Hillcrest, Hamilton.

Whakapapa

2. **I'LL** start from Te Kooti. His son was Wetini, he married Nhipora. They begot Rangi and Putiputi and Titihuia. My grandmother is Putiputi. Putiputi and Piki Smith had Hei Ariki, Kuini Arekahana, Erina, Robert Frederick, and Hana Katorangi. My mother is Hei Ariki.

Childhood and upbringing

3. **WHEN** I was little, we didn't know about Te Kooti - and my first awareness of him was when I was at Manutuke School. We had a history lesson which

mentioned Te Kooti and I got into a bit of an argument with some of the kids and they called me “*white maggot*” because I was very fair. One of the seniors – it was Hinga Nepia - said to these kids that I wasn’t a white maggot, I was just very fair, and that I was related to Te Kooti – at school we called him “*Tee Koo-tee*” - and that he was known to be a murderer. It was a bit of a shock. But nobody could explain why there was such a cloak – or cloud – in the whanau where nobody talked about him – and didn’t want to. Most of the relations didn’t really acknowledge being related to him – except the immediate whanau.

4. **GROWING** up in Manutuke, Gisborne, there were people who read the histories and - because it was written – they took the written word as being “the thing” – it was accepted. That all the reports about Te Kooti were true, and we had no one really to question.
5. **NANNY** Putiputi – we called her nanny “Mits” – would give some information, but not much and you didn’t feel inclined to press her. She would say that she didn’t really think that he was such a bad man. So what nanny says was good enough for me. I just had this image of him myself, that he wasn’t bad. It was just Pakeha labelling him - and it’s quite easy to be labelled. As for the deeds of murdering people, well, that is very very hard to accept. It hurt to think and hear that people are talking about your ancestor as being a murderer.
6. **HOWEVER** some say the injustices he faced being deported, turned him into performing these things. But I believe that he wasn’t there - somewhere along the line, I got the idea that he wasn’t there, and that he was in Te Reinga instead. This is what I was told. His wife, Irihapeti – my namesake – was from Te Reinga. But of course, it can’t be proved now that that’s where he was and that he wasn’t at the head of the attack on Matawhero.

7. **I** remember reading - during one celebration - in the paper, in the local (Gisborne) Herald, reports from people who were affected by the Matawhero attack. There was one particular report from a Pakeha woman – I can't remember her name – but she wrote that she was a child at the time of the attack, and she and her sister had been told to run and hide. So they ran and hid under a bridge, and according to her, she went and peeped out and saw Te Kooti riding at the front of these Hauhau, and she knew it was Te Kooti by his eyes and his beard.

8. **NOW**, to me, that's really hard to accept. How can a child, who's supposed to be frightened - and who had gone to hide under a bridge with her sister - how can they come out and see the person riding at the front and know that it was Te Kooti? I mean, she did not say that she had met him before and been introduced formally before. But that was her story which was published in the Herald as a "true" account, and I thought well, to me that was all rubbish - and if I could, I would've told her, but I don't know who she is.

9. **SO** a lot of people have said and written a lot of horrible things about Te Kooti and what he was supposed to have done. And yet he was pardoned. I think if our tipuna had really done all those wicked things, then why was he pardoned? If you're pardoned, it was because you didn't do anything wrong. So I don't believe he did all the wicked things that people say he did. In fact, from the little I have come to know of his kupu whakaari, they show what he tried to do and what he believed in. I believe he tried to steer Maori people away from selling their lands, he tried to make them aware of what was happening, and so I don't believe at all that he was responsible for Matawhero and I will argue that with anybody, because it's just what others read and believe in, against what I believe in, what I feel and what I believe in. So I would like to see history re-written, and the record put right.

Photos of Te Kooti

10. **OUR** whanau do not have any photos of Te Kooti. There are no true photos that we in the whanau know about. So we don't really know much about what or who he looked like. My mother told me that there weren't any photos of him, and her recollection (from what nanny had told her) was that uncle Rangī – her brother - was the nearest to looking like Te Kooti. That's the impression I have in my mind – that uncle Rangī was the one who looked like him, and many of the other so-called pictures and descriptions that you get, have been made up by people who want to get into the news. Most of them don't look anything like uncle Rangī.

Haahi Ringatu

11. **I** remember a time when my sister and I were in hospital together – I was about 6 years old. We'd gone into hospital with some terrible disease – it may have been trench mouth - and there was really no explanation for it. The Superintendent was Dr Hall, and he suggested to my mother that she take us to a tohunga, and he asked if she knew that there was a church that was meeting at Whatatutu somewhere. She acknowledged that she knew this church, and it happened to be the Ringatu and the meeting was the monthly "Twelfth".
12. **I** can remember her picking us up in a taxi from the hospital, going to Ormond Rd and waiting there for the green Whatatutu bus. When we travelled, my mother had to stand holding onto my sister and I. There were men sitting and drinking on the bus, and they sat all the way to Pūha. None of them offered my mother a seat and this has stayed clear in my mind.
13. **WELL**, I went into the Twelfth half dead, and they had the prayers that night. The next morning, they couldn't believe it – I was running around like a noisy normal kid. From that moment, the Ringatu church became a church of healing for me. I was actually brought up in the Anglican faith but, whenever I had a crisis in my life, I somehow managed to be taken or go to a Twelfth. So that was (and is) my church of healing.

14. **AS** an adult, I made a decision that I was going to go to the Ringatu church for my own sake, to see if I could find out anything about my tipuna, Te Kooti. By this time, there were lots and lots of books flying around, and people wanting to do research about him. The beauty of the Ringatu church, was that they spoke about him quite often. At almost every Twelfth, they had something to say about him – but they usually spoke in Maori. Sorry to say, I am not fluent in te reo. I wasn't then and I'm not fluent now. So I missed a lot. And if I asked "*What did they say? What did they say?*" – everybody would go "*Shhhh!*", because they wanted to hear what was being said.

15. **ONE** of the tohunga at that particular time was Hongi and he was a particular favourite for me because he didn't mind me asking questions. He was totally blind, but always seemed to feel my presence if I went to the Twelfths. Without having to be told who was coming, he knew it was me. He would just give me little tit-bits of information like, I was lucky to have Te Kooti as a tipuna, he was a good man, etc, and this was good to hear, especially after all the other negative things that have been said and written about him.

Wetini and Nihipora

16. **ANOTHER** important tohunga to me was Bill Hook. He was from Mahia, and he was another one who would encourage me to go along to the Ringatu Twelfths.

17. **BILL** Hook was the one who told me about Te Kooti cursing his son Wetini. At the time he told me he said that that's just one thing that Te Kooti did, and it was because his son had run away with this beautiful young woman, Nihipora Oriwia. She had been sent by the Te Reinga people to Te Kooti as a "gift" to be his second wife – because he was already married to Irihapeti. Wetini had been sent to Te Reinga to get Nihipora but, instead of bringing her back to his dad, he fell in love with her because she was so beautiful, and I was

told, they ran away together up the East Coast somewhere for a while. For that Te Kooti cursed him and said that any mana that Wetini had would then go to the eldest female and that it would run for six generations and also, that in that time, the surname Rikirangi would die out. I think this is why a lot of contacts were made to my mother, because she was the oldest female to my grandmother, who was the daughter of Wetini and that it just passed along from first female to first female and supposedly come to me and then to my daughter and her daughter, but it was to run its course after the sixth or seventh generation.

18. **IN** those days I suppose, cursing his son would have been an accepted or common thing because Wetini had absconded with that “gift” from the Te Reinga people and Te Kooti had to show that he was displeased. But another thing that Bill Hook told me was that later when Te Kooti was travelling with his group, Wetini and Nihipora sometimes went along with them. And although they did not go and push themselves to the front, Te Kooti always made sure that food and water was left so that they didn’t go without - but that was just on some of their trips.

Impact of negative experiences

19. **BECAUSE** history was written and it was actually in written form that the many many negative feelings about Te Kooti have been published for such a long time, that it made me very reluctant about speaking out about him. I was always very careful who I spoke to about him. So I wasn’t really very forward in talking to anybody about him, as a young person as well as when I got older, and I preferred to go to the Ringatu church to hear them talk about him. I felt comfortable there because it was safe and it was a place of healing. It always gave me a horrible feeling to think well I’ve got a tipuna, who’s dead, and who I don’t know where he’s buried and, although Nan and them said that he wasn’t poor before he was deported to the Chathams, what has he got? He’s been made infamous by some deeds, misdeeds, and I can’t go and visit

him at the gravesite - like at the time of the anniversary of his death. We have grown up knowing so little about him, and this is a hard thing to grow up with. He must've liked singing though, because he composed a lot of lovely waiata, although they were composed for a purpose. There have always been lots of things that I would wonder about – like what our tipuna did, what he liked, if he liked making gardens. The kinds of things you wonder about your grandparents and your great-grandparents. But we can only go as far as Nanny Mitts and then there's a big blank space, because we also don't know a lot of what happened with Wetini for many years (like when he was captured as a young boy and sent to Ngati Porou).

Travelling

20. **AS** an adult, when travelling around (New Zealand) for different things, I have often looked at the kinds of areas that he was pursued in, and I just can't help but think how lonely and cold the world must have seemed for him then. When you go from one place to the next and you don't know if you're welcome and all you can do is just keep running and keep running because the government made it their business to just keep chasing him and - even after he was pardoned - for them to actually have the cheek to not let him come back home. That's really hard to accept.

His name

21. **AND** growing up, I learnt his name as "Tee Kootee", "Tee Kootee Rikirangi" and some of the stories that have gone on about him. I heard that his name wasn't really "Tee Kootee", but that was just a nickname given to him, one that was acquired because he was interested in the church and had a bit of teaching from one of the ministers, and also that at one time he took his uncle's name just so people would stop chasing him for awhile. So even the truth about his name has been blurred. So it's hard to still carry on and accept things as they are.

Value of whakapapa

22. **SO** I really value my whakapapa and being a descendant of Te Kooti Rikirangi. The fact that I am connected to a man who I think was a highly spiritual man, fun-loving, and who must have loved music. I think he was a very astute man and leader – very clever.
23. I also like the fact that he founded the Ringatu because that's something that's very dear to me I think because I grew up with the influence of the importance of your faith and even though in my first formative years that was through Church of England, in my later adult life it's been more and more with Ringatu.
24. **SO** I'm glad I have a whakapapa connection to Te Kooti because I can enjoy his church and – through the Ringatu church especially - I have been able to enjoy the waiata, his predictions and enjoy what he did and know from the church that in all the areas that he went to (apart from Gisborne), there are people who speak well of him, and he had a very positive impact on. And I have loved learning some of his prayers because they're simple and to the point and that's valuable to me. So because of the Ringatu, there isn't such a big black space there. And although we do not know where he's buried - so there's no real place we can go to mourn or remember him - I'm glad that I can go and attend the twelfths and know that within the twelfths and the Ringatu services (especially those where they most closely follow the format as he put it down and there haven't been changes), he is remembered and his teachings are followed.

Stigma

25. **WITH** regard to anything else I think because for years and years – and in my generation especially - we have been conscious of there not being much

knowledge amongst us about him, and of feeling unable to acknowledge anything to do with Te Kooti. So we have become more suppressed than anything. Stigmatisation is a good word to describe it, because that's a really strong word and one you can't help but agree with. But within that stigmatisation I still feel really proud that I am one of his descendants.

26. A result of all of that stigmatisation is not being outwardly trusting because we have had to suppress our connection. It has been hard to trust people and I think this has come from Te Kooti's experiences of being betrayed in his time, as well as my whanau's experiences living in Gisborne (where he has been most disliked – even hated - by many for the longest time), from my nanny to us, and our children and mokos. This has rolled over a bit into our family, but that's something I'm sure can be overcome.

Future generations

27. **FOR** our whanau especially, I would like the story of Te Kooti to be re-written, I would like all the history books that malign his name burned, just dumped somewhere, gotten rid of. I would like to broadcast his story how I see it, the fact that he's not as bad as what they say he was. I would like the fact that he was pardoned to be publicly broadcast and then we can all hold our heads up and know that you don't get a pardon if you've done something wrong. I would like our future generations to know that what's important is bringing up our kids to know their tipuna, to know he's somewhere, to be educated about him and to be able to know and participate in his church.
28. **I** even have very deep hopes that one or some of my children (or mokos) might become tohunga in the Ringatu faith. That would really be lovely.
29. **WHEN** I start to think back, there's so much despair and all these dark shadows, so I'd really like for our future generations to be able to lift

themselves up out of those depths out of that darkness that has covered our whanau for a long time.

30. I would like to add that it would be lovely if the Waitangi Tribunal would hear what our representatives and witnesses are saying and know that they're coming out and speaking up for our tipuna, and we're praying that things are put right and that it doesn't take too long. Whatever comes out of it, I hope it's a strong recommendation that the government listens to us, and what we have said, because that's where it goes to from here, doesn't it? There are many things that the government now can do to help put things right regarding our tipuna, but this needs the Tribunal to really hear what we are saying.

Elizabeth Moeau