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

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

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Whakapapa

1. **MY** name is Rikirangi Claude Karauria Moeau, I was born the on 7 July 1960. I am the third child of Irihapeti (Elizabeth) and Lewis Moeau. Irihapeti is the oldest daughter of Tihei Ariki Algie and Jack Algie. Tihei, my grandmother, is the oldest daughter of Putiputi Miria Raukawa Smith and Piki Smith. Putiputi is the daughter of Wetini and Oriwia Rikirangi. Wetini is the child of my koroua, Te Kooti.

Knowledge of Te Kooti

2. **WHEN** we were growing up we were not told a lot about the koroua by my grandmother and her generation, although my mother did tell us of our whakapapa links to Te Kooti. She believed that he was a good man but she also spoke of the hurt and malice surrounding him. Our grandmother was the

kaitiaki of many taonga that Te Kooti owned and we were encouraged to see her, so that she could teach us about the significance of these taonga.

3. **MY** grandmother Tihei used to call the koroua "*Te Kuri*", and I recall her contradicting herself by saying he was, "*No good, manguru*", and then in her later years, she said that he was good man and that she was misunderstood. In my family, our whakapapa to Te Kooti was always kept a secret. This air of silence around the koroua did not help the unity of my whanau.

4. **MY** siblings and I understood quite clearly that the person that carried the mana of the koroua was my grandmother, this has come down to my great grandmother, Putiputi or Nanny Mitts. It is said that Wetini took one of Te Kooti's wives to be his own. To punish Wetini, Te Kooti said his mana shall not be carried by the male line, but by the female line of his descendants and, that the name Rikirangi as a surname would not continue. This is a form of makutu on our family, that has been passed down to his whakapapa and it is the reason why my grandmother is the kaitiaki of his taonga, and they shall pass to my mother being the oldest child, then to my sister being the oldest child of my family, and onto my niece being the eldest mokopuna. The story has been related on various occasions such as the twelfths of the Ringatu church, but it is not something that is widely publicised by my whanau. I blame this condition of secrecy on the stigmatisation that the koroua was subjected to.

Childhood Experiences

5. **I** always felt as a child growing up in our village at Manutuke that we (the descendants of Te Kooti) didn't quite fit in. Although I was heavily involved in the village Maori club, did a lot of work on my grandfather's farm and even played rugby for Manutuke School, I was never made to feel comfortable at home. I know this was due to the fact that I was a descendant of Te Kooti.

6. I was always called Riki in my village. My aunties and uncles and wider whanau new that it was the shortened version of Rikirangi, but refused to refer to me as such. I remember being called, "*Onion, just like your ancestor.*" The translation of Riki in Maori is onion. So they were using this crude translation of Riki and applying it to me, to ridicule both myself and the koroua. This hurt me, especially because they were my close relatives.
7. I recall an incident at primary school and a visit to the Gisborne Museum with my class. The guide was an elderly Pakeha woman who had a nice way about her. We were looking at a glass cabinet that had a number of weapons, maps and plaques inside with writing on them. I believe this display had something to do with the Matawhero incident. The guide referred to the koroua when speaking about the items in the cabinet and stated that he was responsible for the murder of many people. She also used the words, "*Rebel, murderer and fugitive.*" When we were invited to ask questions and make comments, I refused to say that I was a descendant of the koroua. I felt humiliation and anger at these remarks.

Other people celebrating Te Kooti

8. AS I was growing up, I witnessed how my grandmother was disrespected, despite the fact that she was the kaitiaki of the whakapapa and taonga of the koroua. Other people including members of the haahi Ringatu would celebrate the koroua but would not consult with my grandmother. We would often hear that there was some commemoration for the koroua, or a plaque being erected in his name. But my grandmother was never invited or asked to be involved.
9. A few years ago, an occasion was held at Rongopai to bring back the mate of the koroua to Turanga. That it happened at Waituhi deeply offended me and I chose not to attend. Again the family was not asked. The question begs, who made that decision? I have great respect for Tuhoe because they took care of

the koroua for so many years when he was refused permission by his own relatives to return to his home, and when I spent 16 years in Auckland, I fell amongst them and they became my close peers. However, because of their long association with him and as he called them the chosen people, they considered that the koroua was theirs and would say that he was Tuhoe.

Alienated from peers

10. I had to deal with a lot of emotions growing up, embarrassment, shame being alienated from my peers and my relatives of Manutuke, and all because of my whakapapa to the koroua. Despite growing up in my own rohe, there was always a strong and lasting feeling of loneliness and marginalisation. I have always had to be careful when dealing with people, not to reveal my whakapapa to the koroua with a fear that I may offend people.
11. I recall attending school with a particular family who lived close to us. Whilst at High School a girl of the same age from this family approached me and said, *"Your ancestor killed my ancestor and we lost a very important link that we can't regain, I don't want anything more to do with you."* That incident struck a blow to me and has had a lasting effect on my life. I found it hard to accept that the hurt he had suffered was still, in my lifetime, being visited on us, his descendants.
12. IN Gisborne we grew up with a lot of Ngati Porou people. One of the great leaders was Ropata Wahawaha who was celebrated as a great warrior, who had achieved a lot for the benefit of certain Maori. This is what we learnt, from what little New Zealand history we were taught at school. Once it became known to my Ngati Porou peers that I was a descendant of the koroua, I immediately gained the label of "underclass" and was subjected to constant jeers and taunts like, *"Sneaky like a rat"*, *"Can't trust you as far as I can kick you"*, *"Turn our backs and you'll slit our throats"* and, *"Our tipuna was chasing your tipuna around because he was a coward and was kicked out of*

town". I treated those remarks with humour as much as I could, but I certainly felt the malicious undertones and they too have had a profoundly negative effect on my upbringing, my sense of self and my esteem.

A proud descendant of Te Kooti

13. I do know however, that my whakapapa to the koroua is important and regardless of the falsehood that he was a rebel and a murderer, he is now a celebrated figure in Maoridom. I have learnt to hold on and to be proud of this whakapapa, particularly when growing up, we were told by our family, that it was valuable and despite all my experiences, it has made me resilient and hard skinned to the wider perception of him. I only hope that my own children and my nieces and nephews, don't have to put up with what we went through.

14. **IN** the last 10 to 15 years, a new appreciation of the koroua has surfaced, an appreciation that we as his descendants were brought up to know. The positive effect he had on people, the creation of the Ringatu church and its desire to unite and build Maori and Pakeha relationships and his contribution to the development of Maori art through various forms has been seen recently from a more enlightened point of view. We the descendants of Te Kooti have had to brave the many years of disrespect and stigmatisation and while we appreciate that Te Kooti is now a celebrated figure, we are still suffering in many ways. We have inherited the hardship and poverty that my grandmother's generation were left with. What would have happened had Te Kooti been treated like the Arthur Toys, the Watties and those long standing families such as the Reads? Through the recognition of what he was and what he did and through an open celebration, we can regain some of his lost mana. Only then will we be able to start on an even footing with our fellow human beings.

Relief

15. I would like to see history re-written so that the true stories about Te Kooti can be delivered in schools. This way, the descendants of Te Kooti and the wider public will no longer be misguided or ill-informed and they too, can be proud of his accomplishments.