



*Pākehā developer Robert Graham saw how Māori used the magic waters of Waiwera and looked to make his thermal spa the best in the world. He was able to do this after the controversial sale of Māori land called the Mahurangi Purchase.*

After the battle the Ngāti Rongo tribe was gone. Many lay dead and the survivors of this battle in the Musket Wars had fled the area. I buried my friends and elders on the headland **between our two rivers**, knowing that they lay with generations of tangata whenua buried in our sacred soil. I too left, not returning to Waiwera until news of the Mahurangi Purchase reached my ears in 1841.

The Hauraki tribes had claimed Ngāti Rongo's vacated land after our defeat, selling all the land between Takapuna and Mangawhai to the Pākehā. I was determined that the few Ngāti Rongo left, that now lived at Te Mara on the flat land on the far side of the Puhoi River, would not lose what was rightfully theirs. Fearful of being recognised as a daughter of the tribe, who all thought was long dead, I cut my hair and dressed as a **young man**. I arrived with Pākehā missionaries who were looking to bring Christianity to the tribe. They were very grateful to have the services of such a young and talented Māori Go-Between who could translate.

The chief of the tribe was Te Hemara, a man who I trusted to do the best for our tribe. When translating conversations, I made sure to convince Te Hemara of the importance of protesting the Mahurangi Purchase. We determined that a direct appeal to the Governor General of New Zealand, Captain William Hobson, should be made and that I should be the Go-Between. At our audience with Hobson, arranged by the missionaries, we argued that Ngāti Rongo had a long history of settlement in the Waiwera and Puhoi area, and sought that traditional lands should be protected from sale. Promises were made, our land appeared to be secure.

It would be 25 years before the deed of land title was officially signed at the newly established Waiwera Thermal Spa, a business run by a Pākehā politician, Robert Graham. He had witnessed Māori bathing in the warm waters as early as 1842 and saw the financial potential of charging wealthy Pākehā to use the magical springs, as a way to cure their aches and pains. Ngāti Rongo were granted the title to some of their lands, a small parcel of which Te Hemara had sold to Graham to begin his business, redirecting the waters into large pools for bathing. The spa at Waiwera became known throughout the world for the waters that made the sick feel better.

- 1) In what year was the Mahurangi Purchase signed?
  - a) 1841
  - b) 1842
  - c) 1866
- 2) Which Māori tribe sold the lands that Wikitoria claimed as home?
  - a) Ngāti Rongo
  - b) The Hauraki Tribes
  - c) Te Mara
- 3) Why did Wikitoria pass herself off as a young christian man?
- 4) What was Robert Graham's main reason for starting his Waiwera business?
  - a) His own financial gain.
  - b) To help Māori.
  - c) To cure the aches and pains of clients.
- 5) What was the main job of Wikitoria as a go-between for Māori and missionaries?
  - a) To stop the Mahurangi Purchase.
  - b) To spread the word of christianity.
  - c) To translate the two different languages.
- 6) What is the best reason to explain why the Ngāti Rongo land is empty?
  - a) The tribe had relocated to Te Mara.
  - b) They lost a Musket Wars battle.
  - c) They sold the land to Robert Graham.
- 7) List three people that we know were at the meeting to decide Ngāti Rongo's claim regarding the Mahurangi Purchase.
- 8) What was the main argument given by Ngāti Rongo about ownership of their land?
- 9) Wikitoria states she buried her people on a headland between two rivers. Using the rest of the story, identify the two rivers.
- 10) What are three facts we know about the Waiwera Thermal Spa?

### Word Salad

There are many unusual words and phrases in the story you have just read. Complete the following tasks to ensure your understanding:

- 1) Find the definitions of the following English words.
  - a) fled
  - b) vacated
  - c) grateful
  - d) appeal
  - e) 'small parcel'
- 2) Use each of the five words/phrases in five separate sentences using your own words.

### Parts of Speech: Verbs

Verbs are used to name action/doing words. Identify each verb in the following sentences:

- a) The grave I dug was quite deep.
- b) I convinced the chief with my words.
- c) Wikitoria cut her hair short.

### Did You Know?

The image below shows part of Wenderholm Regional Park, an upriver view of the Puhoi River and also the place that Te Hemara kept in Māori lands, Te Hema, on the right of the picture. It was from this site that Chief Te Hemara ferried all of the Bohemian settlers down the Puhoi River to the land they had purchased at Puhoi. In that first tough year, Te Hemara taught the new settlers what natural foods to eat from the forest and regularly bought them supplies of food.



Local Histories / Mātauranga Māori

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