



Robert Graham built his home on land purchased from Māori, that would eventually be known as Wenderholm. Today, thanks to chance and the intervention of the Auckland Council, all can enjoy this regional park that looks similar to how it must have been hundreds of years ago.

I was thrilled that Governor Hobson, who represented the Crown, had agreed that parts of the Mahurangi Purchase had been unfair to local Māori. The Crown title agreement saw the creation of ten blocks of land, totalling some seven thousand acres, returned to the rightful Māori owners. Te Hemara, chief of Ngāti Rongo received the 70 acre block that was most special to me, Maungatauhoro, which included all the land between the Puhoi and Waiwera rivers. My joy in this victory was short-lived. The influential and wealthy Robert Graham purchased Te Hemara's parcel of land legally for fifty pounds. The chief of our tribe had sold Ngāti Rongo's heritage, sold my home, just to gain position and wealth in the Pākehā world.

Robert Graham built a large homestead overlooking the Puhoi River and began an extensive planting programme of exotic trees, mostly from Europe. One of his Swedish guests called the place 'Wenderholm' meaning winter home in his language, and the name stuck. During the economic depression of the 1880's Graham sold the property to a land agent named Greenwood, who looked to establish a wealthy suburb. Thankfully his plans to cut the land up into little pieces for sale did not succeed. The land remained as a large block for almost a century, passing through the hands of wealthy pākehā families, the most recent being the Couldry family whose name is still used to describe Graham's original homestead. Over time nearly all memory of Māori ownership and occupation had been lost.

Lifetimes would pass before I would set foot on the soil of my people again. In 1965 Auckland Council, realising the beauty and historical value of the Wenderholm area, made a compulsory purchase of the block, creating the first of Auckland's regional parks. When the park was opened to all, I joined others on weekends to plant native trees, returning the land to how it was. In the years since birdsong has returned to Maungatauhoro, Māori history has begun to be remembered and the sounds of children and families playing are ever-present. Now I regularly return to climb the path to Kakaha Pā, dipping myself into the magic waters of the past, brushing away the memories that are so thick it feels I am back with those that I loved. They are all there now, all bar one - I, Wikitoria Eliza - last of the Ngāti Rongo.

- 1) How much land was returned to Te Hemara?
 - a) 10 blocks of land
 - b) 70 acres
 - c) 7000 acres
- 2) What motivated Te Hemara to sell the land?
 - a) To gain money.
 - b) To gain influence in the pākehā world
 - c) Both of the above
- 3) Why was Wikitoria's joy **short-lived**?
- 4) Which pākehā owner looked to cut the land up into small parcels to create a suburb?
 - a) Graham
 - b) Greenwood
 - c) Couldry
- 5) Who were the last private owners of Wenderholm before it became a regional park?
 - a) Wikitoria Eliza
 - b) Greenwood
 - c) Couldry
- 6) What motivated the Auckland Council to create Auckland's first regional park at Wenderholm?
 - a) To stop the land being sold into small pieces.
 - b) To return the land to Māori.
 - c) To make the land available to all.
- 7) Where do many of the exotic trees planted at Wenderholm come from?
- 8) List three things from Wenderholm Regional park that remind Wikitoria of her childhood spent at Kakaha Pā.
- 9) Where do you think Wikitoria means when she states that **'They are all there now?'**
- 10) Do you have a place that is full of memories? A place where you go to that makes you think of the past? If you do, briefly describe this place and the memories it brings.

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) rightful
 - b) influential
 - c) heritage
 - d) exotic
 - e) compulsory
- 2) Use each of the five words/phrases in five separate sentences using your own words.

Parts of Speech: Adverbs

Adverbs are used to describe action/doing words. Identify each adverb in the following sentences:

- a) Greenwood's quick actions were not well thought through.
- b) I tirelessly dug many small holes to plant trees.
- c) Wikitoria argued forcefully that the land should be returned.

Did You Know?

Robert Graham's original homestead, named Wenderholm, has remained mostly unchanged up until modern times. It is now called Couldry House, with the Couldry family expanding on the original Graham home. You can walk in the footsteps of Graham and all the other pākehā owners as it is now a museum. For all the details check out <https://couldryhouse.org.nz/historic/>

