ORAL HISTORY IN NEW ZEALAND

Volume One 1988

NATIONAL ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND

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CONTENTS

Foreword	Claudia Orange	3
Oral History in the Universities: dilemma for academic historians	Margaret Avery	5
Experience, lived and perceived	Tony Simpson	11
Copyright in Oral History	Chris Finlayson	17
The Visiting Teacher Service in Otago: an oral history	Rosemary Goodyear	21
Language and Oral History	Elizabeth Gordon	31
Listening to Teachers	Charlotte Macdonald	37
Two oral history assignments: A Woman at Home; A Man at War	Gillian Werry	43
Notes on contributors		52

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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FOREWORD

In April 1986 the first national oral history seminar, attended by over 200 people, was held at Victoria University of Wellington. The final session recommended that a national association be established and nominated a steering committee to set this in motion. The result was the National Oral History Association of New Zealand, formally constituted in October 1986 at an inaugural meeting in Wellington.

The broad aims of NOHANZ are to encourage the practice of oral history, to raise standards, to act as a clearing-house of information, and to provide for discussion of content and methodology through meetings, quarterly newsletters and an annual journal.

This first issue of the journal is a mélange. Two of the articles - by Tony Simpson and Chris Finlayson - are revisions of papers given at the first national oral history seminar. Those by Margaret Avery and Elizabeth Gordon were presented to the second national seminar held at Waikato University in July 1987. Rosemary Goodyear and Gillian Werry became involved in oral history and initially presented their articles as part of academic courses. By contrast, Charlotte Macdonald discusses a recent publication based on a major oral history project. All the writers are concerned with the issues that oral history raises, and sometimes solves, as well as with its methodology. Not surprisingly, many of them are engaged in history work at various levels, but those worlds where the spoken word is paramount also feature - the media, the law, and the study of English language.

Margaret Avery, admitting that oral history is not new, questions the role of the academic historian in dealing with the "recent explosion" of interest. Some of the points she raises - such as who "owns" history - are taken up by Tony Simpson who, having survived academic rigours, found through experience in the media "that the recounting of history was a political act". The issue of ownership and rights to oral history material is more complex than it appears at first sight. Chris Finlayson reveals this in an informative analysis on copyright. Rosemary Goodyear and Charlotte Macdonald deal with women's experience related to teaching, each demonstrating that oral evidence in women's history can give sharp expression to areas of human experience that are often "shrouded" or "hidden" in the documentary record. It is the immediacy of personal experience that emerges from Gillian Werry's gender-balanced view of war; and finally, preserving the oral record is crucial, as Elizabeth Gordon reminds us, because it is not in *what* we say but in *how* we say it that the history of our changing patterns of speech will be traced.

CLAUDIA ORANGE

ORAL HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITIES: DILEMMA FOR ACADEMIC HISTORIANS

Margaret Avery

Although oral history is as old as history itself - indeed, in some senses, the oldest form of history - the upsurge of the "new" oral history in the last 20 years or so has caused some violent flutterings in academic dovecots. While many academic historians have embraced the new mistress with an enthusiasm bordering on indecency, others have recoiled with self-righteous horror from this wanton whore. Some have seen in use of oral evidence the prospect of traversing vast areas of hitherto uncharted territory; others have regarded the oral record as worthless, mere maunderings of forgetful old men. The use of oral evidence certainly raises difficult professional questions which have to be addressed but I would suggest, too, that the suspicion and opposition towards oral history amongst the academic establishment is in part personal and political as well. The growth of the practice of oral history raises important questions about the relationship of the academic historian to the community and to the people about whose history he or she writes and whose history it really is.

Professional questions

Most New Zealand universities are now involved, to a greater or lesser extent, in the practice of oral history in three major ways - research and writing, teaching, and resource development. Most of us have found that a number of interrelated problems arise in each of these areas, most importantly and fundamentally in the area of research.

1. *Research and writing:* There is, of course, nothing new in the use of oral evidence by professional historians. For example, one of the finest 19th century exponents of the art of history, Jules Michelet, placed a great deal of weight upon oral tradition in his massive *History of the French Revolution* (1847-1853), believing that oral evidence was necessary to counterbalance the bias of official records. Even after the establishment of the supremacy of the document in the practice of history, oral evidence continued to be employed by some historians, although, admittedly, largely as a supplement to the written record.

The recent explosion of interest in oral history, however, does, I think, have some new and special characteristics. First, the practice of oral history has been particularly applied to areas of human experience previously "hidden from history" - working-class history, black history, women's history, and so on, history-from-below rather than history-from-above - and hence has tended to have strongly political implications. Second, the practice of oral history has tended to become somewhat detached from that based upon more traditional sources and has sometimes been used almost as an end-in-itself. This is particularly true of the life history kind of approach where

we are simply presented with the new material without very much by way of interpretation. Some caution on the part of academic historians in approaching this new enthusiasm is therefore justified.

The advantages of the use of oral evidence are certainly many. It is a living source, directly and organically connected to past experience and, as such, can be immensely stimulating to the historical imagination. Clearly, the exploration of the memories of still living people enables the historian to discover much about the experience of people whose lives are almost entirely unrecorded in written record and to supplement their knowledge about better known individuals and events. Oral evidence is particularly valuable as evidence about attitudes, feelings and prejudices which often the written document does not reveal.

Enthusiasm for the practice of oral history, however, should not blind us to its limitations and disadvantages. One obvious weakness of oral evidence as a source is the chronological limitations which it imposes. The researcher cannot go back, at first hand, beyond the memories of living people, although beyond that, of course, does lie a rich resource of tradition - less well developed, perhaps, in European culture than in some others, but still discernible nonetheless.

A contrary problem also arises: although the volume of oral evidence is restricted in terms of time, it is almost limitless, for practical purposes, in terms of the amount of evidence available at any one time; for my own subject, for example, the history of British women during the Second World War, the potential sources comprise all British women who lived through the war who are still alive - a daunting prospect! This potentially vast volume of oral evidence poses immense problems of selection, organisation and analysis.

The classic objection of opponents of oral evidence amongst the academic establishment is that it is unreliable and cannot be subjected to the same rigorous standards of historical criticism as written evidence. There are, of course, massive problems in evaluating the "reliability" of oral evidence - weakness of memory, mythologising or the deliberate or unconscious reconstruction of past experience in the light of the present, the influence of the interviewer, and so on. Many "traditional" historians are deeply concerned by these problems. Is this kind of evidence "true"? Can its "accuracy" be "checked" against a "reliable" documentary source? Is oral evidence so "subjective" as to be worthless? All these are serious considerations.

Looking at it from another point of view, however, I believe that these problems can be greatly exaggerated and that the contrast between "oral" and "written" evidence can be over-emphasised. One of the most significant and radical influences which the development of the oral approach has had upon the practice of history is to raise all sorts of uncomfortable questions about the "reliability" of written sources. Professional historians, of course, have long been trained to approach written sources in a critical spirit but there still exists a strong prejudice in favour of the belief that the written word is *intrinsically* more reliable than oral evidence. Is this really true? To take an obvious case, medievalists have long been accustomed to constructing elaborate historical edifices from the most scanty and fragmentary written evidence and to rely upon sources whose date and provenance was hard to establish. Historians of the Anglo-Saxon period, for example, faced a terrible dilemma some years ago when Asser's *Life of Alfred* - the major source for the reign - was shown to be not - as had always been thought - a contemporary work - but a much later reconstruction. In more recent times, some sources, newspaper reports for example, are notoriously "unreliable" reflections of "what really happened". Oral evidence, even given the

problems of faulty memory and deliberate mythologising, may often provide the historian with more "accurate" information. One might at least suspect, therefore, that some of the doubts about the value of oral evidence simply reflects "the tyranny of the document" over historians trained in the pre-oral history era.

A more serious criticism of the practice of oral history is its tendency to simply pile up facts and opinions, to degenerate into trivia or to "reinvent the wheel" by "discovering" facts or more general "truths" already well known to more conventional historians. The practice of history has come a long way since the 6th century self-styled historian Gildas "made a great heap of all he had found". History is not simply the collection of facts, attitudes and opinions, however fascinating in themselves. The task of the historian is to *interpret* the evidence of the past, to tell a meaningful story, to draw out generalisation from a mass of discrete facts, to make connections, to find patterns which help us to make sense of our own past.

At this present juncture, it seems to me that the most important function of the academic historian researching and writing in the university, is to break down the separation and rivalry between oral history and the more traditional kinds of history. Oral evidence and written evidence must both be subjected to rigorous critical analysis, bearing in mind the different problems associated with different kinds of evidence. Oral and written evidence should be regarded as complementary, not as alternatives or rivals, and the historian should apply all his interpretive skills to both in order to reconstruct a meaningful picture of the past.

2. *Teaching:* The academic historian's responsibilities in teaching oral history grow naturally out of these considerations. The university teacher must, of course, make sure that his or her students understand the technical problems of interviewing, recording and so on, skills which are obviously being very effectively taught in the schools. The special responsibility of the academic historian, however, seems to me to concentrate on developing the more sophisticated critical, analytical and interpretive skills, which most students will have already begun to learn in the schools and ultimately, at the higher levels, to guide students in the writing of history which employs both oral and written evidence.

3. *Resource development:* The universities are not at the moment primarily concerned with the collection and permanent preservation of oral history archives, although there could be exciting possibilities in this area. As the practice of oral history develops, however, more and more evidence will be accumulated in the course of research projects. While it is important that this should not be lost, difficult questions do arise about the value of evidence collected for a particular project to future researchers. Since the possible volume of oral evidence is so vast, it seems important to establish some guidelines for the selection of evidence to be preserved.

Personal Considerations and Political Implications

The current enthusiasm for oral history has raised some profound, and sometimes uncomfortable, questions about the role of the professional historian, the nature of history and the place of the study of history in the broader social context.

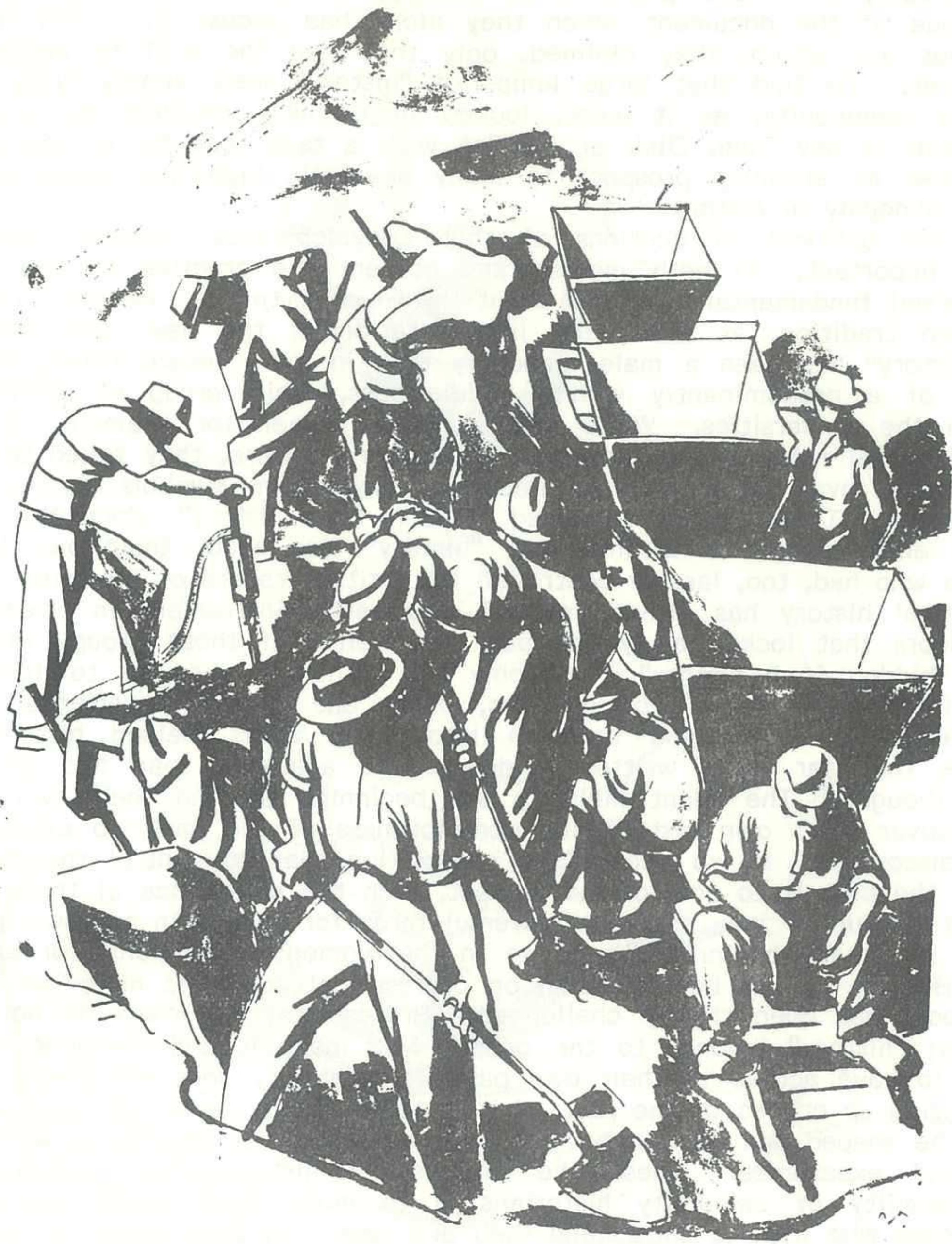
First, it is hard to avoid the suspicion that at least some of the opposition to oral history amongst more traditional academic historians has a somewhat subjective and personal basis. To some, perhaps, a rather threatening aspect of the development of oral history over the last 20 years or

so has been the extent to which it has been practised by "amateurs", outside the charmed circles of academia. Academic historians have long exercised a monopoly over the practice of history, founded particularly upon the mystique of the document which they alone had access to in libraries and archives and which, they claimed, only they had the skill to analyse and interpret. To find that large lumps of "history" were simply lying around in the community, as it were, locked in ordinary people's memories but available to any Tom, Dick or Harriet with a tape recorder to recover and use, was an alarming prospect to many academic historians accustomed to their monopoly of history.

The political implications of these developments, however, are even more important. In both method and content the practice of oral history has raised fundamental questions about the *"ownership"* of history. In the Western tradition, at least, the interpretation of the past, the production of "history" has been a male monopoly and, in more recent times, the preserve of a predominantly white, middle-class, male group of professionals within the universities. While other groups, women for example, continued to play vital roles in the formation of Western culture, they failed to secure any control over one of its most important legitimising symbols - the practice of history. These groups remained "hidden from history", since the professional elite tended to assume that "history" was about their own kind of people who had, too, largely controlled the written record of the past.

Oral history has already proved a powerful instrument in prising open the doors that locked away the past experience of those groups who have been "hidden from history". Not only has it directly brought to light much new information about working-class, black and female experience, but it has also, by encouraging research into these areas, helped historians to realise that far more written evidence was available than had previously been thought. The silent majority are beginning to find their own voices, to recover their own history and consciousness of the past, to create their own discourses. If we accept the proposition that to control the discourse about the past is to control the present, then the emergence of these "alternative discourses" may act as a powerful force for change in our own society, as it is already beginning to do so in the women's movement, for example.

But let us not be too harsh on professional academic historians. Their monopoly has been rightly challenged. Professional historians do not "own" history; "history" belongs to the people who make it and everyone has the right to have access to their own past. But history does not simply consist of digging up chunks of the past; if it is to make any sense the raw material must be shaped and crafted by the kinds of skills that only come with training and experience. These the professional historian can provide. The responsibility of university historians is to make these skills available to *all* those who wish to understand their *own* past - by their research activities, the results of which should be made as widely available as possible, by training students in the use of evidence and the writing of history and, through continuing education and the media, reaching out as far as they can into the community. In conclusion, an analogy - that of the doctor who attends a woman in childbirth - may be apposite. It is the doctor's duty to ensure as far as possible that she has an easy birth and a healthy child, but it is, after all, *her* body and *her* baby, not the doctor's.



EXPERIENCE, LIVED AND PERCEIVED

Tony Simpson

Perhaps the best place to begin is with a disclaimer. This is not going to be an attempt to produce anything definitive in any sense. It is intended, and it has transpired, as a rather surprised piece of thinking out loud about my own introduction to and growing appreciation of the significance and value of oral history. It came as a surprise to myself in its initial formulation because it emerged as an examination of two sorts of failure, one personal and the other rather more structural. I should make it clear, of course, that the surprise in question was refreshing rather than depressing. Writing, in one of its dimensions, is about the process of thought rather than its results. Travelling hopefully, rather than arriving, if I may be allowed to borrow a notion from R L Stevenson. The discovery thereby of unexpected or surprising insights means that the exercise has been a success. What I would like to dwell upon is the relationship between those two failures for the insights which that might entail.

The first failure concerns my first published book, *The Sugarbag Years*. I should take a moment to sketch some background for you. The book was published in 1974. It is simply an oral history of the depression of the 1930s. It presents human experience of that period without mediation except for a brief narrative introduction. In 1974 that made it something of a curiosity in New Zealand writing because, although the use of oral material in published histories was becoming a relatively commonplace technique in Europe and the United States, that had not yet penetrated to the Antipodes (although it has since, of course). I had in fact been directly influenced by its American counterpart, Studs Terkel's *Hard Times* which I had been reading and which in a way I was trying to emulate. But I don't want to present myself as some sort of unique pioneer. Oral techniques for the presentation of historical experience have been used in our society for a long time. I'm talking about pakeha culture, not about Maori. If you go back to James Cowan's *The New Zealand Wars* you will find that much of its narrative is based upon the recollections of participants in the events which are being described. It's actually a very old technique; Thucydides uses it in his *Peloponnesian Wars*.

Those of you who are assiduous radio listeners will also know that for many years we have been presenting our own popular culture on a regular basis through what has been more recently the Spectrum documentary series. It may surprise you to learn that in New Zealand we are the international leaders in doing that and that many of the techniques and skills we have developed are both the model for and the envy of most English language broadcasters. We have not sufficiently, at least until very recently, recognised the remarkable pool of talent we have developed in the field of oral history as a result of that. It was my good luck as a result entirely of happenstance to have found myself between 1969 and 1972 being trained by and working with the people involved. By 1972 I was looking for some way to present oral material in published rather than broadcast form. *The Sugarbag Years*

was a first attempt to do that. It was a bold first throw but I regard it overall as a failure. In saying that, I'm not speaking in a public sense. From that point of view it has been anything but a failure; on the contrary, it has been reprinted several times and at the last count had sold in excess of 12,000 copies. It is about to be reprinted again. It has penetrated to a group of readers who don't usually exist at all as far as the history book market is concerned. My publisher told me an anecdote which makes that clear. He's been in the publishing business for over a decade and in that time he must have given his father, who is not by and large a reader, several hundred books; the *only* one he has ever commented on is *The Sugarbag Years*.

The failure I'm talking about is at the much more personal level. The sort of thing that Orwell was trying to convey in his 1946 essay, "Why I Write", when he said, apropos *1984*, which he was then starting work on: "I have not written a novel for seven years, but I hope to write another fairly soon. It is bound to be a failure, but I know with some clarity what kind of book I want to write." I think that all writers will know what Orwell meant.

When I wrote *The Sugarbag Years* I knew what sort of book I wanted to write but the book I wrote was not it. I have been trying to write it ever since, a task also recognisable to any writer because in one sense all writers are writing only one book throughout their lives and it never gets written. All they produce in their published scribblings are what John Mulgan called "reports on experience".

So what was I trying to do in writing *The Sugarbag Years*? Well, I was trying to write a history book. That may seem self-evident but it isn't quite as evident as you might think. I was trying to do it for two reasons, one negative, the other positive. The negative reason was that most of the history books I'd read seemed to be failures and I wanted to try and do something about that. I'll come back to that because that's to be the theme of the second part of my argument.

The positive reason was to try out an approach I was starting to develop to what I thought history might be. I'd spent the three previous years working for Radio New Zealand, as I have remarked, and I'd also spent a fair part of that time producing and writing radio documentaries, some historical, some not. That had been a very interesting experience for me because I'd come straight to that job from university with an honours degree in politics and history and the first thing I had to do was to unlearn almost everything I'd learned over the preceding six years about the presentation of material I'd been taught to think of as history.

To explain what I mean by that, I again have to deviate into personal background. I came to the study of history by a rather eccentric route. Most of my secondary school studies had been in the physical sciences. It was only when I got to university that I began to study history in any real sense. That got me into some trouble because as with anyone new to a discipline, I asked taboo questions which my fellow students, most of whom had been studying history for some years and who had consequently had that sort of thing beaten out of them, looked at askance. Not nearly as askance, I might say, as the academic staff. In the event and also rather eccentrically I ended up studying history in two separate departments because the scholar with whom I wanted to work, John Pocock, was actually head of the Politics Department.

But I had to learn and did learn very quickly the highly formalised styles and methods of presentation of historical discourse because it was the only way to survive the particular obstacle course in which I found myself. What fascinated me (and still does) is that the styles and methods were entirely taken for granted as a series of givens. They *were* history and there

was an end to it. It strikes me now as a curiosity that in the total of six years I spent studying history no one ever asked the questions: what is history and what is it for? By the end of my stint in radio, I had been forced to begin to grapple with the problems inherent in those questions simply because the presentation of history through radio (which has its own styles, methods and limitations, its own culture, if you like) had forced me to do so. Having my mind concentrated on those problems was a very useful experience.

I had concluded that history is about meaning and I am still of that view. But that doesn't get us very far because so is all writing. In fact, so is all creative activity, I guess. History is about a particular sort of meaning; the meaning of the public acts of the community at large. And its purpose as a result is primarily political. It's the way the community, or more usually, sections of the community, justify their public actions to themselves and to anybody else who happens to be listening to or reading them. "History," says Michel Foucault, "is not the study of the past but the study of the present illuminated by the past." That raises another question: whose past? And that, I think, is where the work I was doing for radio came in. Because I kept interviewing people whose narrative and views had little resemblance to what I had been taught was history in an academic setting. But it clearly *was* history in terms of the definition I was developing. They didn't just recount facts. In truth, a lot of what they said had almost no facts in it at all. That's what threw me initially because I couldn't see how that could possibly be "proper" history. But nevertheless it was full of patterns of meaning concerning the public acts of the community seen through the lives of my interlocutors as I interviewed them. Some of those patterns of meaning were very sophisticated indeed, which also threw me because in the academic sense these people had no credentials to make such utterance. But in many cases the sense of what they were saying couldn't be denied. And there was no doubt at all that through their oral recollections of events they were engaging very often in a highly political activity. You can't, for example, give an account of the gun battle on the marae at Maungapohatu in 1916 which led to the arrest of Rua Kenana without engaging in political statements. That's true whether you are giving an eye witness account from the point of view of a policeman or Rua's daughter-in-law, and I had both in the resultant programme.

There was another way, of course, in which I discovered that the recounting of history was a political act. Sometimes my editorial masters made me take bits out of programmes I was preparing because they were unacceptable. For example, I was not allowed to have the union leader Big Jim Roberts describing William Ferguson Massey as "a terrible North of Ireland man and a very solid Tory".

The reason why I was not allowed to say that was entirely political. It was simply that the government then in power was the political heir of the government over which Massey had presided. To be explicitly critical of that particular political stream as Roberts went on to be was not allowed. Since its inception public broadcasting had been (and remains) extremely sensitive to the dangers of offending whoever was in power for the moment. That lesson had been learned very hard in the early forties in some bruising battles between the Head of Commercial Broadcasting, Colin Scrimgeour, and the Prime Minister, Peter Fraser, and often enough reinforced since in similar if more low key battles with succeeding administrations. Bear in mind, too, that it was then less than a decade since broadcasting had been a public service department and the same administrators were still minding the shop. Old habits of deference to political masters die hard.

But what I am saying should not be misunderstood. This was not a process of crude censorship. No one said you *can't* put that insert into the programme. They said: it's not right for professional reasons. The difference between those two things is very hard to explain to someone who hasn't been there, but anyone who has worked in any of the media will recognise what I refer to. The effect of professional codes upon the freedom of action of those who practise the profession in question is in any event a very large subject, although it's one of which historians should be very conscious. Suffice to say that I rather grudgingly accepted the advice at the time of those whose opinions I had been trained to accept unswervingly in such matters and left the offending bits out in the interests of "balance". It was only a good few years later that I came to appreciate that the interests served by "balance" are not necessarily balanced and that the media are rather more of an important element in the ruling version of events in any community than most people imagine.

So anyway, there I was, presenting these unorthodox historical voices and at the same time reading a bit of Studs Terkel and one or two others (although I hadn't heard, and didn't know, the expression "oral history") and it occurred to me that what made this sort of historical presentation different was its statement of raw experience. So I thought I might write a book presenting history as a raw lived experience and see how it came out. And because, as I said, I'd been reading Terkel's book *Hard Times*, I chose the depression of the thirties, which my father and his generation were always talking about anyway. It seemed a useful thing to try and come to terms with.

But of course, I discovered the truth of what Orwell had to say because it failed as a book. It wasn't the book I'd wanted to write. And thinking it through since, and also working it through by writing other books, I think I know the reason why.

Meaning doesn't simply emerge from the presentation of raw lived experience, although it can partially. It needs something else. I didn't think this up myself. I got the notion from Edward Thompson, whose history books I've always enjoyed. Meaning is to be found at the conjunction of lived and *perceived* experience. By which I mean that the material of experience in the raw cannot stand alone, partly because form determines content, and partly because it constitutes in its presentation a systematic selection which always entails human intervention. *The Sugarbag Years* presents lived experience, but also the perceived experience not only of the participants but of the writer, and it's from these things that any meaning it has emerges. But it fails because it pretends to be lived experience only. I'd become so fascinated by lived experience, which I'd thought was not present in academic history, that I'd tried to jettison perception entirely, which you can't do. But not only that; in thinking there was no lived experience in the sort of history that was and is written in our universities, I was mistaken as well. Which brings me to the second species of failure which I want to talk about. I've told you about mine and now I'm going to show you theirs: the failure of orthodox pakeha history to come to terms with oral history and to suggest why that might be so.

It wasn't in my view for nothing that Allessandro Portelli in a recent *History Workshop Journal* began an article on "The Peculiarities of Oral History" with the words: "A spectre is haunting the halls of the Academy: the spectre of oral history." That ironic parody of Marx's and Engel's famous words suggests not only that many academics are afraid of oral history but also suggests the reasons why. But like the censoring of Big Jim Roberts saying rude things about William Massey, the academic aversion to oral history is usually stated in entirely other terms. Many historians would agree that

oral material is very useful to an understanding of other cultures and societies, usually denominated and significantly in my view "preliterate". It is not, they would say, a suitable instrument for the understanding of pakeha or European society because ours is a society based on the *written* word.

If you reflect for only a moment you will at once realise that that division into literate and preliterate societies is not only arbitrary but it cannot in fact be sustained. We do not live in a society in which the written word is primary. On the contrary, almost all of our significant public as well as private activities are verbal and derive their significance from the nexus of social and individual relationships in which formal verbal utterance is made. They partake of the very essence of the orality (if one may coin such a word) which we like to believe most clearly characterises preliterate societies. Those mysteries most central to our public community life, the courts, industrial relations, company meetings, Parliament itself, are preeminently oral. They are as formal and structured as, and indistinguishable from, the activities on any marae. I know this simply because I spend a great deal of my time in those sorts of places.

The orthodox professional reasons usually advanced for excluding oral material from the presentation of history being therefore unsustainable, what other reason might there be? If I am right and history is in its very essence a political statement, then we are entitled to ask the question of academic history: whose political statement is this? And the answer must inevitably be, I think, the statement of those who rule. Academic history is a vehicle for the expression of what might be perceived in Gramsci's terms as the dominant consciousness of our society. It is a vocabulary for the expression of ruling class ideologies; a form of discourse specific to the powerful, and its practitioners are trained accordingly to rigorously exclude from their consideration any narrative or statement of experience which disturbs that discourse.

It should not surprise us, I think, that this is so. It is a commonplace that societies develop esoteric vocabularies for the rulers to converse among themselves and have as a matter of course attempted to suppress any incipient development of alternative vocabularies among the ruled, usually although not always by cooption or absorption. The history of the concept of patriotism in the 18th century is a fascinating case study of this sort of activity. More rarely, the suppression takes a brutal and ruthless form, as in the putting down of the Cathar heresy in late medieval Languedoc, so brilliantly depicted in Leroy Ladurie's *Montaillou*. Sometimes these vocabularies are entire languages, as in the case of, say, Mandarin Chinese or Latin in the Middle Ages, and indeed until quite recently.

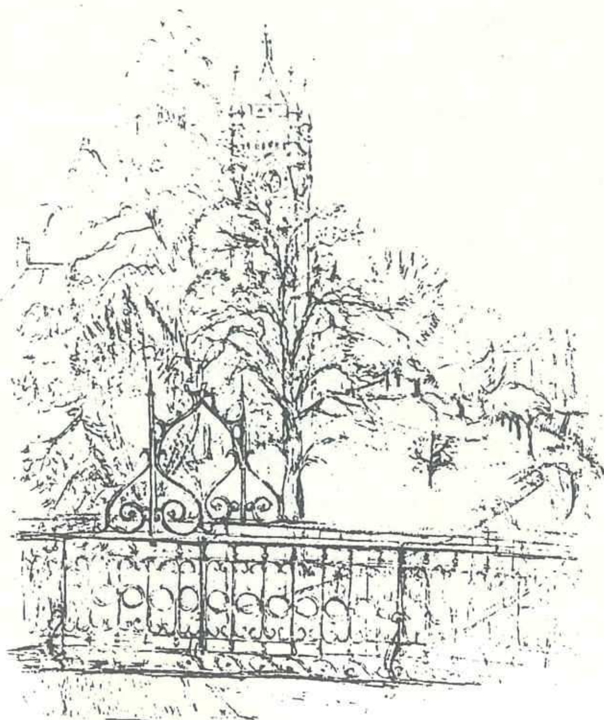
Let me tell you of a fascinating minor instance of this. For various reasons I have an interest in classical Chinese literature. I don't have any Mandarin and therefore I have to read these works in translation. In addition to that, of course, they're often out of print or hard to get for other reasons. So I was particularly delighted on one occasion to come across a copy of the Ming Dynasty novel, *The Golden Lotus*. Now, like a lot of those novels, this is a work of political and social satire extremely critical of the imperial government. But because that government maintained a ruthless censorship rigorously enforced, much of the satire is indirect. And partly for the same reasons and partly because the Chinese don't have the same inhibitions as we do, there's a great deal of explicit eroticism in these books. It greatly entertained me, therefore, to discover that this translation, done towards the end of the last century, although generally in English, had the erotic passages translated into Latin. I suppose the theory was that only a gentleman would have a sufficient knowledge of Latin to read these passages, and being a gentleman, would not be corrupted by them, whereas other males and all women would be.

These days we aren't usually so esoteric about our ruling class vocabularies. But they are still there. If you want some instances, I recommend that you should attend upon conclaves of, say, computer programmers, or personnel managers. You will find that they communicate in an impenetrable jargon which is actually a form of shorthand accessible only to those who can decode the meanings of what they are saying. Academic history, although more subtle, is an instance of the same.

Its intention is to state by reinforcement the ruling myths of the society (myths, of course, being facts with their truths rationalised) and at the same time to deny legitimacy to any process or experience which might create alternative and challenging mythologies, such as drawing the wrong illuminations for the present from a study of the past. Academic history is almost entirely perceived experience; this is why it relies almost exclusively on written sources. We may not be a literate society, but those who produce and store written material are almost exclusively associated with the authorities. It goes without saying, of course, that there is nothing inherently objective about a written source, particularly in matters of public community activity. Always someone wrote it. An historian I was reading recently, Martin Bernal, who has written a book entitled *Black Athena* exploring the reasons why we perceive the classical Greeks as a blond and fairskinned people when most of the evidence points in another direction, entirely sums this dilemma up rather neatly in a phrase which has lodged in my mind. Just because historical evidence is contained in an object (in this case a piece of paper with writing on it) this does not, he says, make that evidence any more objective. Most of our difficulty in accepting the validity of orality as historical evidence stems from that conflation of object and objectivity.

Let me conclude with two thoughts. The first is from the historian Walter Ong, who has remarked: "Writing fosters abstractions that disengage knowledge from the arena where human beings struggle with one another. It separates the knower from the known. By keeping knowledge embedded in the human lifeworld, orality situates knowledge within a context of struggle."

The second thought is my own. I've talked about two sorts of failure. I suspect and indeed believe, that the failure of the academic historians is much the more sinister of the two.



COPYRIGHT IN ORAL HISTORY

Chris Finlayson

Introduction and Background

The purpose of this article is to set out the basic principles of copyright law insofar as it affects the recording and storage of oral history material.

In the last two decades, copyright has become one of the most contentious legal issues. Broadcasting, cable television, music, film and book publishing, and computers are increasingly becoming areas of vigorous policy debate. In particular, two major changes have occurred. First, the profits to be derived from at least some copyright works have become very great; in consequence, there has been a greater tendency to copy without permission and, in turn, strong pressures have arisen to more effectively protect the interests of copyright holders. Secondly, the international dimension of both copyright abuse and protection has become greater. This is partly because of general factors affecting everything else in society - rapidity of communications, greater ease of movement; it is also because many of the new ways in which copyright material may be created have immediate international applicability. A computer software programme may be used as effectively in Paris as in Wellington.

Copying has always been the scourge of the creative. Common law recognised a very limited copyright, but it was only in the early years of the 18th century when Jonathon Swift was raging against "the hawkers of the inferior class" who sold copies of his books at half price, that the English Parliament enacted the first copyright legislation.[1] It went no further than to provide protection for books. Following that Act, numerous other pieces of legislation relating to copyright were passed. Each species of copyright was the subject of a special Act, and the law developed in a very arbitrary and chaotic way. In 1911 England passed the Copyright Act. This consolidated the whole of the copyright law in a single Act of 37 sections, and attempted to simplify and extend the law. The New Zealand equivalent was the Copyright Act of 1913 which was virtually identical to its English counterpart.

In the last century, there has been ever increasing technological change. First the development of photography, then films, then radio and television broadcasting, and more recently, computer technology. All of these have required both national and international protection. A committee set up in England some 10 years ago to examine the law of copyright described the 1709 legislation as a modest Queen Anne House "to which there have been Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian and finally Elizabethan editions, each adding embellishments in the style of the times".[2]

The result is very complex law. The current New Zealand legislation is the Copyright Act of 1962, which is very similar to the English Copyright Act of 1956. It is a very fine feat of draftsmanship, but has proved to be a nightmare for those who have to try to understand it, whether as laypersons for their own purposes or as lawyers seeking to advise their clients. For that reason, in 1985 the Minister of Justice published a discussion paper

on the reform of copyright law.[3] His object was to frame a statute which is as readable and intelligible as the nature of the subject allows and which not only provides solutions to existing problems but also caters for new technological development which may occur in the future.

However, while technological change is causing many problems for those who seek protection under existing legislation, the existing law is adequate to protect the interests of most organisations involved in the oral history process.

What is There to Protect?

For oral historians, the answer to this question is the sound recording, which is protected by the Copyright Act.[4]

A sound recording includes discs, tapes or any other type of device in which sounds are embodied so as to be capable of being automatically reproduced.[5]

Copyright can be obtained for every sound recording of which the maker was a New Zealand citizen or was domiciled or resident in New Zealand at the time the recording was made. Protection continues until the end of 50 years from the end of the calendar year in which the recording was made.[6] So if a sound recording was made in 1987, copyright will last until the end of 2037.

Copyright protection prevents unauthorised users from making a record which includes the recording, broadcasting the recording, or causing the recording to be heard in public on a machine, such as a coin-operated machine.[7] Thus, unless there has been some agreement entered into with the person who owns the copyright in the sound recording, it will not be possible for a radio station, for example, to broadcast the recording. The reason for the restriction is obvious. Copyright exists to protect the fruits of intellectual endeavour. Restrictions protect the individual against plagiarism and ensure a reward for intellectual efforts. Copyright law provides a framework which permits the commercial exploitation of copyright material.

The right to copyright protection belongs to the person or corporation who has made the necessary financial investment to produce the record. If an oral historian interviews an elderly person, the interviewer owns the copyright in the sound recording. He or she has gone to the trouble of interviewing and doing the other associated work. Therefore, it seems only fair that he or she should be entitled to have the copyright. But there is a proviso to the basic rule. If a person commissions and pays for the making of a sound recording, the copyright belongs to that person unless there is an agreement to the contrary.[8] And so if the elderly person hires someone to record his reminiscences, the interviewer can make no use of the material, in a book or a radio programme, for example, without formal permission. There is a limited exception to that proviso dealing with crown copyright.[9]

In some circumstances, notably in the case of literary archives, there is the responsibility of dual copyright - in the story or poem itself, and in the recording of it. Ordinarily, the creator of the literary work or his publisher will hold the copyright in the printed version, but the maker of the recording will hold the copyright for the sound version on disc or tape, perhaps subject to restrictions on its use imposed as a condition in obtaining permission to record. Here the analogy with a musical composition is a useful way of thinking about the legal rights: the score and the recorded performance of it attract separate copyright protection.

Ordinarily, the oral historian will not have to deal with questions of dual copyright because it is unlikely that what is to be preserved on disc

or tape will already exist in written copyrighted form. After all, what would be the point of having the creator read the printed version into a microphone unless it were to record his or her voice for such things as phrasing, emphasis or accent? In the overwhelming majority of cases, a person who is simply reminiscing about some aspect of New Zealand history will not be entitled to claim that the substance of what is recorded is deserving of copyright and so ownership lies with the person who makes or commissions the recording.

The law treats copyright as personal property. Thus it may be transferred by written assignment or testamentary disposition.[10] That means that in his or her lifetime an oral historian may transfer ownership in the copyright on a recording to another individual or to an archive or library. It means as well that if a person who owns the copyright dies, the property ultimately belongs to the beneficiaries of the estate. That can cause problems, some of which are discussed later.

The Copyright Process

A formal copyright agreement should be made prior to recording an interview. This will avoid future disagreement over ownership and use. As we have seen, there are two potential owners: the historian who records the interview, and the person who commissions the recording.

Where the historian obtains the copyright by investing time and money in making the recording, it is nevertheless essential that the interviewee fully understands what is involved. The historian should explain the process of oral history to the person to be interviewed, who owns the copyright, and the uses which may be made of the recording once it is completed. Both the Australian War Memorial and the New Zealand Oral History Archive send potential interviewees a brochure setting out the necessary details. They also give the interviewee the opportunity to impose restrictions on the reproduction, broadcast or other use of the tape. These limitations may be of several kinds, such as use only by qualified researchers, use only after the lapse of a specified period - say, 10 years - or use only after the interviewee's death. Manuscript librarians are familiar with such arrangements imposed by donors of letters, diaries and other written records. Most people will not choose to restrict use, but there will be times when an interviewee has something very controversial to say and may not want that information to be broadcast or used in other ways except in certain circumstances. Reaching prior agreement on these matters is especially important where the interviewee is elderly or infirm.

Quite different considerations apply where the interviewee commissions the recording and therefore owns the copyright. In most instances the recording will be made solely for family use with no intention of the material reaching a larger audience. However, from time to time the oral historian will record information of such significance as to merit it being made available for public use. That is best handled by seeking formal permission for specified access and reproduction arrangements, the practice followed by both the Australian War Memorial and the New Zealand Oral History Archive. Essentially, the interviewee is asked to allow copies and transcripts to be made of the sound recording and their use for educational and research purposes. The interviewee is also asked to assign his or her copyright in the sound recordings and transcripts of them. This enables such matters as publication, film production or broadcasting to be dealt with without having to go back to the interviewee for permission.[11]

Where the interviewee chooses to retain the copyright, the oral historian should seek an assignment of ownership at death or, failing that,

the name and address of an heir or executor who could be approached in the long term. Such steps may be time consuming, but in the absence of the assignment of the copyright in the sound recording, there is nothing else that can be done.

Once the question of copyright ownership has been settled, the oral historian or interviewee, as the case may be, should protect title by a label on the recording (or transcript) declaring that the material is copyright and who the owner is. Registration forms are not required and copies do not have to be deposited in the National Library.

Space does not permit a discussion of the complex legal issues involved in recording Maori oral history. Tribal ownership of copyright material and protection of folklore are examples of issues which are important to the Maori people and for which there are, as yet, no clear legal guidelines. With the growth of oral history, these are matters which will have to be resolved. One can only hope that any copyright law reform will recognise these issues and provide satisfactory answers.

NOTES

1 Statute of Anne (8 Anne c 19).

2 Copyright and Designs Law (Report of the committee to consider the law on copyright and designs chaired by the Hon Sir Justice Whitford Cmnd 6732), at para 14.

3 "Reform of the Copyright Act 1962", a discussion paper, April 1985.

4 S 13 of the Copyright Act 1962.

5 S 2.

6 S 13(1), (3).

7 S 13(5)

8 S 13(4).

9 S 52.

10 S 56.

11 Australian War Memorial, Report and Recommendations, prepared by David Lance.

THE VISITING TEACHER SERVICE IN OTAGO: AN ORAL HISTORY

Rosemary Goodyear

In October 1943 the Director of Education, Dr C E Beeby, established the Visiting Teachers Service. It was envisaged as a liaison between home and school for children who were experiencing educational or behavioural problems at school. The teachers were to be attached to a school or group of schools, without "responsibility for class teaching, but with the special function under the headmaster of maintaining contact between the school and home".[1] They were, in effect, school social workers responsible for ensuring that the child's education proceeded "smoothly, uninterrupted by social or emotional problems".[2] This was the chief guideline for the service, with the mechanics of the service to be worked out by the individual regions.

Set up originally for a trial period of six months with one appointment in each education board district,[3] the service began in the urban areas because it was felt that the needs were greatest there. Auckland made the first appointment on 18 October 1943. Other boards acted more slowly and the trial period dragged on for 18 months.

The service was a response to wartime disruption, which was particularly evident in the schools. Of particular concern and the official reason for the service was the rising level of absenteeism where parents connived at their children's truancy.[4] Mothers whose husbands were absent because of the war clearly needed increased community support, but the form it took reflected the changing climate of educational philosophy, which put greater emphasis than earlier on the needs of individual children. This meant a non-punitive approach and the appointment of school social workers rather than more truant officers.

The real need for the service was shown by the success of the visiting teachers after they had solved the initial problems. The demand for the visiting teachers meant that in 1945 the service became permanent in spite of the change from the wartime conditions which had prompted its introduction. This success was due entirely to the calibre of the women (all the original visiting teachers were women) appointed. This was very important since no courses were available to train them, and they did not receive formal training until after the service was made permanent.[5]

Vera Hayward pioneered the scheme in Otago. She had trained as a primary teacher and had taught for a number of years, including some time with the special class at Caversham. Appointed visiting teacher for Dunedin North in November 1943, she continued in the service until 1959, when she transferred to the Crippled Children Society. During these years she was active in a number of Dunedin organisations and committees and served as president of the Dunedin Association of Kindergarten Teachers. Elected to the National Executive of Teachers in 1945, Vera Hayward became its president in 1952, worked actively for changes in education, and was a member of a number of deputations to the Minister of Education.[6]

Dunedin had two visiting teacher districts, Dunedin North and Dunedin

South. Based at Dunedin North Intermediate, Vera Hayward had jurisdiction over all the primary schools which contributed to the Intermediate. This included an extensive area north of High Street and ranging 10 kilometres on the land side of the harbour beyond Port Chalmers. Occasionally she also called on schools as far north as Waitati.[7]

Hester Young became Dunedin's second visiting teacher in 1945. Formerly a kindergarten teacher, she found the work challenging and enjoyed the variety of cases. Assigned to South Dunedin and based at Macandrew Intermediate School, her territory stretched from the Peninsula to Mosgiel and sometimes included schools as far away as Milton, though she, like Vera Hayward, found her case load concentrated within a group of six or seven schools. Both women were called occasionally to kindergartens and secondary schools. As well, both had to rely on public transport and received a paltry allowance of only a shilling a day for fares.

Apart from two weeks on the rounds with child welfare officers, these pioneers received no formal training. Beyond "checking up on difficult children", Vera Hayward had no specific instructions.[8] Left to her own discretion, she had to draw on common sense and her experience as a classroom teacher. The task was made all the more difficult because she was expected to provide a service quite unlike any other in the education system and she had no more authority than her own powers of persuasion. Previously, truant officers had been the only contact between home and school. Since they were concerned only with attendance, they had dealt with errant children in a narrow, punitive way. Difficult children had been referred to the Child Welfare Branch of the Department of Education or, in places like Dunedin, to the University of Otago. The Child Welfare Branch dealt especially with delinquents and could even remove children from unsuitable homes.[9] By contrast, the visiting teachers were cast in an entirely different role. Advisors, mediators and supporters, they had neither legal nor coercive powers.

This meant that the first visiting teachers had to establish a separate identity for their services so as to enlist the cooperation of parents and children.[10] At the same time they had to avoid jurisdictional disputes with existing agencies. For example, Vera Hayward found that the Child Welfare Branch wanted to be involved with all cases and that the public health nurse resisted any encroachment on what she saw as her sphere of interest. But some overlap was unavoidable; the public health nurse was required to examine all school children and to visit the homes of those suffering from health or emotional problems.[11] These sorts of conflicts had to be resolved at the same time that the mechanics of the visiting teacher service were being established. By 1945, 10 visiting teachers had been appointed and the experiment had achieved such success that the service became permanent.

The need for formal training had then become both obvious and urgent. Accordingly, Dr Ralph Winterbourn, senior lecturer in education at Canterbury University College and the psychologist at the Christchurch Vocational Centre, organised a three week course at Lopdell House in February 1946. The intensive programme included lectures on such problems as backwardness, the study of case histories, and explanations of the roles of social workers and district nurses. The teachers also learned such basic skills as techniques for interviewing parents and children at home and they visited special classes at Woolston and the Merivale Occupation Centre as well as the School for the Deaf at Sumner. In addition, the course included a conference at which delegates from various welfare organisations described their purposes and methods. The conference expressed its support for the work of visiting teachers.[12]

On the final day of the course the visiting teachers discussed issues

of policy and organisation. When they compared notes they discovered that they had developed almost identical strategies and techniques,[13] though each had also cultivated particular interests. All noted the close links which had grown up with other government departments, especially the Health Department and the Psychological Service, and all emphasised the growing importance of their liaison roles between different support services.[14]

Out of this common experience and shared perception came the decision to form the National Association of Visiting Teachers. Defined as "part teacher and part social worker", the visiting teacher was to investigate any problem which interfered with a child's wellbeing.[15] This could involve assistance to the family as well as the child. The new association stressed particularly the importance of the absence of coercive powers conferred on visiting teachers, arguing that this gave them the basis for friendly and informal associations with classroom teachers and headmasters,[16] and that parents did not feel threatened by the advice offered. For example, visiting teachers always sought home invitations and were almost never refused. At counselling sessions they first asked the parents for their suggestions on how best to deal with a child's problems. This encouraged cooperation and involvement and gave parents the sense that they, rather than the visiting teacher, had devised the solution. Hilary Muir, who became visiting teacher for Dunedin North, for example, said that advice could flower some months after a home visit, even though at the time the intervention had seemed unsuccessful.[17]

The association remained quite small for some years - even by the late 1950s there were only 18 visiting teachers in all New Zealand - but it continued to meet annually to discuss problems of mutual concern and to keep in touch with developments within the service and in education more generally. These meetings also served as a forum for the expression of the organisation's views[18] and gave members the opportunity to think about how best to adapt the service to changing needs and opportunities, particularly those brought about by the proliferation of public and private social service agencies in the 1960s.

Routine and Methods

Both Vera Hayward and Hester Young immediately realised the necessity to establish contacts between all the relevant departments and agencies. This task was made easier by the fact that Dunedin is a relatively small and compact community. The most important contacts were with the schools themselves, both with the principals and the teachers. It was vital to make a good impression, since any hostility would mean that the teachers would not use the service. The visiting teachers referred children to a variety of professional and non-professional groups. These included the Health Department, the Child Welfare Branch, doctors, the Medical School, and later the Psychological Service, as well as church welfare organisations, the Red Cross, Sunday schools, and youth groups such as cubs and guides. Another important organisation was Birthright, an organisation run by a group of professional people which allocated funds to single parents.[19]

Though there was no one approach to the job, the women soon evolved similar routines which enabled them to go around the schools and meet both teacher and pupil. They kept the routine flexible to allow for emergencies. Often they would go to schools when morning or afternoon tea was being served so as to meet teachers informally. Typically, Hester Young arranged to be at a different school each morning - Macandrew, Forbury, Kensington, Corstorphine or Caversham. These personal contacts allowed action to be taken on an informal and therefore much faster basis. Still, certain forms

had to be observed, especially the requirement that the visiting teacher had to have the principal's permission to see a child. Usually, a teacher identified a child with a problem, consulted with the principal, then invited the visiting teacher's help.[20]

Hester Young would arrive after morning classes had started to meet with the principal. Then she would go round the classes to meet any child who was experiencing difficulties. Her technique was to take children to the library to choose a book. This prevented the child from seeming to be singled out from its classmates, and often the child would "open up and reveal what was troubling them".

Sometimes a problem could be resolved in a single interview but often the visiting teacher would have to visit the home. This often involved a lot of night work and required a great deal of tact since the visiting teacher represented an often distrusted authority. Commonly parents were on the defensive socially about their children, and all parents are very vulnerable to criticism of a child.[21] Yet the visiting teacher also gave parents the opportunity to discuss problems with a sympathetic outsider. In many cases she would become like a substitute aunt or grandmother.[22]

Visiting teachers realised the importance of treating parents with respect, and tried to imagine themselves in the parent's position. Often they dealt with parents whose own school days were fairly recent, and if these parents had experienced problems at school themselves they often felt too intimidated to approach the school. The visiting teacher usually began by stressing the child's good qualities before broaching the problem. Often the initial contact was the mother, and they felt more ready to talk to another woman, especially since most principals were men.

Since children could be removed from the home only in extreme cases, the visiting teachers stressed and built on the positive aspects of a family relationship in an attempt to improve the situation. This involved observing parent-child interaction and required perceptive observational skills. Few parents are not interested in their children.[23]

Visiting teachers dealt with a wide variety of referrals; treatment was no less diverse. Some cases could be solved by a single discussion between teacher and child; others could take weeks or even months. Cases emanated for a variety of reasons from both home or school. Identifying children needing help could be very difficult. Some children drew attention to themselves by truanting or fainting in class, but others were harder to detect, especially when classes in some urban schools had 50 or more pupils. As a result, detecting the problem often depended on the alertness of an individual teacher.[24]

Problems varied from year to year and often seemed to come in cycles. Gangs and gang thefts became common after the war. Vera Hayward attributed the problem to wartime aimlessness, and some children reacted to the reassertion of the father's authority. Difficulties manifested themselves most commonly in some form of truancy - lateness, refusing to go to school, or outright truancy.

The 1944 Act raising the school leaving age to 15 exacerbated the truancy problem.[25] Many children found that the academic orientation of the high school did not meet their needs and some parents proved willing to overlook their children's truancy. Some parents resented the law because they needed their children's earnings to augment the family budget. One solution - a third year at intermediate school for children who would not normally have continued at high school - worked well enough in some instances but many children continued at school only under protest.[26]

The great variety of problems and their causes required visiting teachers to search carefully for the root causes of a child's behaviour. Vera Hayward argued that there was "always a logical reason" for difficulties and cited the case of a large family of girls who played truant every Friday. She discovered that the father always came home drunk on Thursdays, his payday. This so disrupted the household that the girls were late for school next morning. The teacher's caustic remarks had so embarrassed the girls that it had become habitual for them to play truant on Fridays. In this case the best solution was to persuade the teacher to show the children more consideration.[27]

Truancy could have a variety of causes aside from the obvious boredom with school. Hester Young talked with a boy who played truant on Monday afternoons because he had taken the wrong option and did not realise it was possible to change. This case had a simple cause and solution but other cases could be very complex and might require considerable effort to resolve. Vera Hayward dealt with a child who refused to attend school. Her method of curing his phobia involved a month of taking the child round places where school groups visited, places like the railway station and the museum so he would become accustomed to and interested in other children. She also tried to interest him in his school work by bringing him library books, and by the end of the month he was willing to attend school.[28]

Much of the visiting teachers' time involved mundane but essential activities like driving children to school and to remedial classes, and bringing them library books. Other common activities included enrolling children who found socialisation difficult in such extracurricular activities as music classes, gym classes, clubs and youth groups, and even helping needy families to obtain food and clothing. After the war, visiting teachers also helped refugees adjust to very different lives in New Zealand.

Serious behavioural problems were rare. Petty offences, such as bullying and stealing, were more common. In cases of bullying, visiting teachers usually sought the help of the principal. When stealing was detected (often through the alertness of the teacher) a common approach was to persuade the child to return the stolen items. Vera Hayward took the children to the shop where the shopkeeper wrote their names in a large book. That usually shocked the delinquents into more acceptable behaviour. "It became a joke," she reported, "that I used to wander down town with hordes of children crying bitterly."[29]

Unsatisfactory school progress often manifested itself in misbehaviour until the causes were diagnosed, commonly hearing or seeing disabilities. Until the introduction of routine testing in primary schools, visiting teachers often arranged for individual tests as a strategy in their search for causes of school problems.[30]

More serious problems, such as physical abuse, were immediately referred to the Child Welfare Branch. However, few cases came to light. It is impossible to determine whether the low incidence, especially of sexual abuse, reflected the true situation. Such cases are very difficult to detect and strong social taboos make the exposure of sexual abuse unlikely.

When the Visiting Teachers Service was established its activities necessarily ranged widely. Until 1943 few agencies dealt specifically with children's problems. For example, there were no educational psychologists in the country and the only psychologist to deal specifically with children was Alice Sheat, who travelled from North Cape to Bluff testing candidates for admission to special classes. The appointment of a second testing psychologist, Shirley Sutch, with responsibility for the South Island, did not come until later.[31]

This glaring deficiency in the provision of child services prompted the visiting teachers to agitate for the establishment of a Psychological

Service and the appointment of a psychologist in Otago. Although initially unsuccessful, the campaign publicised the need for such a programme and the modest expansion of services, once under way, quickly had a "snow-balling" effect, the establishment of each new agency revealing the need for additional supportive services.[32]

From the beginning in Dunedin the Visiting Teachers and Psychological Services worked closely together. Bill Armstrong became the educational psychologist for Dunedin in 1959 following three years of experience there as an assistant and he began meeting weekly with the visiting teachers to discuss cases and coordinate their efforts. Among other things, these meetings confirmed that the visiting teachers needed a central office, preferably close to the Psychological Service. The problem was that the intermediate schools were so overcrowded that the principal's office or the teachers' room was the only space available. Moreover, the schools found it more and more difficult to handle the increased volume of phone calls received by visiting teachers. With Armstrong's assistance, they obtained the use of the children's playroom at the Psychological Service in the old Hannah and Bells building in Moray Place, then acquired space of their own, and in 1967 moved to offices in the Moray Place Post Office along with the Psychological Service.[33]

Changing community attitudes towards intellectually and physically handicapped children presented the visiting teachers with important challenges in the early years of the service. The Dunedin visiting teachers helped to identify children who might benefit from special classes, arranging for them to be interviewed by Alice Sheat and assessed by the educational psychologist. Although the few places in special classes were eagerly sought after in the forties, some parents resisted, being deeply ashamed of having an intellectually handicapped child. Hester Young, for example, dealt with one such family who kept their child at home all day so that the mother was never able to leave the house until her husband returned in the evening.[34]

Visiting teachers also gave much voluntary time to the care of the disabled after they had left school. They sought out jobs for them, usually in factories, and with Bill Armstrong they helped to organise an After Care Club.[35]

Above all, visiting teachers helped transform relationships between school and home. Many older teachers had believed it unnecessary to know about a child's home life and many parents had hesitated to involve themselves in their children's education. Thus, interaction between home and school commonly took place only in times of crisis.[36] Visiting teachers, by contrast, emphasised the importance of their liaison role between home and school, encouraged parent-teacher organisations, and supported the playcentre movement as a way of involving parents more directly in their children's education. These efforts gave parents greater awareness of their children's needs and a better understanding of the difficulties teachers faced while at the same time making teachers more aware of the needs of children and their families.[37]

In all these ways, visiting teachers have made a significant contribution to education in New Zealand by helping to transform schools into more community-based institutions. They have also enhanced the wellbeing of many children whose educational progress might otherwise have been hindered. Harriet Morgan, a visiting teacher for Dunedin South since 1979, believes this role to be as important now as it was in the 1940s.[38]

Inevitably, over the four decades and more since the appointment of the first visiting teacher in 1943 the service has had to adapt to changing circumstances. By the 1980s the identification of a child's problems and referrals to appropriate agencies remain the central task, though the case

load has been eased by the training scheme for educational psychologists at Otago University with its school internship programme and by the appointment of guidance counsellors in the secondary schools. To some extent this has enabled visiting teachers to devote more time to remedial work, particularly new forms of family counselling.[39] For example, Harriet Morgan has been active in the Living Skills Programme at the Mosgiel Family Counselling Centre, where trainee psychologists work with children in behaviour modification in a live-in facility. With the trend toward mainstreaming handicapped children, it seems likely that visiting teachers will assume additional responsibilities the better to support both teachers and children.[40]

What also seems likely is that the demand for specialised skills will increase the need for a more formal training programme for visiting teachers so that they can continue the work of helping the education of children to proceed smoothly, uninterrupted by social or emotional problems.[41]

NOTES

1 *Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1943, E-1, page 4 (hereafter *AJHR*)

2 National Association of Visiting Teachers, *Circular*, page 1

3 Vera Hayward, interview 19 August 1986

4 *AJHR*, 1943, E-1, page 4

5 Vera Hayward

6 Ibid

7 Ibid

8 Ibid

9 Ibid

10 Ibid

11 Ibid

12 *Education Gazette*, April 1946, No 4, page 98

13 Shirley McLachlan, interview 20 August 1986

14 Ibid

15 Ibid

16 Ibid

17 Hilary Muir, interview 23 August 1986

18 Shirley McLachlan

19 Ibid

20 Vera Hayward

21 Hilary Muir

22 Ibid

23 Ibid

24 Vera Hayward

25 *AJHR*, 1943, E-1, page 2

Notes continued

26 Vera Hayward

27 Ibid

28 Ibid

29 Ibid

30 Ibid

31 Bill Armstrong, interview 14 July 1987

32 Shirley McLachlan

33 Ibid

34 Hester Young

35 Ibid

36 Hilary Muir

37 Ibid

38 Harriet Morgan, interview 25 August 1986

39 Ibid

40 Ibid

41 NAVT *Circular*, page 1

APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY

This project was suggested by two visiting teachers, Harriet Morgan and Hilary Muir, as part of an annual project on women's history. They drew up a list of what they considered to be relevant questions and I used these as the starting point for my oral history essay. I also drew up some questions myself and used these to structure the interviews. These questions included:

Why was the service introduced? Was it due to a change in educational policy or was it a response to the wartime situation?

What sort of training did you receive?

What were the main types of problems which you dealt with as a visiting teacher? (a) Emotional problems, for example, caused by abuse in the home (b) Behavioural problems, such as lying, bullying or stealing.

How were children's problems identified?

What techniques did you develop to deal with these problems?

How has the role of the visiting teacher changed, and what future do you think the service has?

When I conducted the interviews I used the questions to start discussion and then let the subjects talk, asking questions only when they digressed. They usually covered most of the topics anyway and this made the interviews more relaxed and friendly. Instead of using a tape recorder, I took notes and this system seemed to work well. In fact, one of my interviewees made the comment that she felt much more relaxed than if I had used a tape recorder.

There have been only six visiting teachers appointed in Otago since the service was first introduced in 1943. Of these six, five were still available for interview and the other teacher had been in the service for only two years. This meant I was able to obtain a continuous picture of the service from its introduction to the present day. Recall of routine and events was fairly good and was aided by the fact that all the teachers had found the job fascinating. Though their recall was good, I found it a problem trying to discover specific dates such as when the National Association of Visiting Teachers was formed. Recall of dates was more accurate when it coincided with a significant personal event, like the death of a relative.

There was a problem in trying to cross-check some of the information since all the visiting teachers had disposed of the material relating to their jobs when they retired. Written information from other sources is not extensive due to the peculiar nature of the job, which meant that they were not really accountable to any authority. Though under the jurisdiction of the regional education boards, they were required to keep only the briefest records. For example, they did not keep casebooks detailing the number and types of cases dealt with each year. This made the use of oral records invaluable in this project since the most important details of the service remain within the minds of the visiting teachers themselves.

Since five visiting teachers were available for interview, and the periods they were in the service overlapped, I was able to cross-check their information against each other. This enabled me to obtain a clear and balanced picture of the service as a whole, as well as an understanding of the individual experiences of these five rather remarkable women. I also discussed the service with a person in a similar field in order to gain an outside view of the service.[1]

I used a variety of written sources to cross-check and fill out the information I received. These included unpublished sources like a National Association of Visiting Teachers circular, and some letters from a National Archives file. I also used the *Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives* and the *Education Gazette*.

The use of oral sources was vital in this topic. This was largely due to the peculiarity of the service, which had been very flexible and non-specific. The job was left almost entirely to the discretion of the people involved and it was the visiting teachers themselves who shaped and developed the service.

NOTE

1 Merus Cochrane, educational psychologist, interview 29 August 1986

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LANGUAGE AND ORAL HISTORY

Elizabeth Gordon

At the beginning of last year a group of people set out to write a book on New Zealand culture and identity. Chapters were being written on education in New Zealand, on the law, the economy, the church, art, literature, women, Maoris, and so on. At the end of the year it was suggested to the editors of this book that a topic they had overlooked was that of New Zealand speech.

I suppose New Zealand speech is such an obvious indicator of a New Zealander's origins that it is frequently overlooked. Yet it is a permanent and obvious characteristic of New Zealanders, even if for many New Zealanders they only become aware of it when they leave the country: when they are not always understood; when they are mistaken for Australians; when they are offered pins when they asked for pens; and when they come back to New Zealand the vowel sounds uttered by Customs officials in walk shorts and long socks are the certain assurance that once more they are back home. Even those New Zealanders who deliberately try to modify their speech so that they think they are speaking with a BBC accent (or Received Pronunciation - RP as we call it), will still usually leave some trace of their origins in Kaiapoi or Karori. From an outsider's point of view, it is our accent that tells the world that we are New Zealanders, and male and female, Maori and pakeha, we are unified in a similar system of vowel sounds.

Yet while the New Zealand accent can be seen as a bond between New Zealanders, it is also the source of more subtle distinctions within New Zealand. Within this country it is one way we have of distinguishing New Zealanders according to their social class. There is a Maorified version of the New Zealand accent. And as with other countries, the accent associated with those from lower socio-economic groups is frequently stigmatised as being unpleasant, lazy and degenerate.

It seems to me that New Zealand English, and the New Zealand accent in particular, is an excellent subject for study. It is a clear indicator of our identity as New Zealanders. And it is also a variety which has evolved comparatively recently - in the last 100 years - and it is therefore of great interest to anyone who wants to know about how new varieties of English arise and develop. And this is especially exciting because here in New Zealand we have a variety which has developed and is developing at a time when it is actually possible to get recorded materials of speakers. It is for this reason that I think the collection of oral histories will be of immense value in the study of the New Zealand accent. When I heard of the setting up of an oral history archive I was overjoyed for my own selfish reasons.

I think there are two aspects which are of special interest in the study of New Zealand speech. One involves the historical questions. When did our accent appear and why is it the way it is? The second involves the present situation. What is happening to New Zealand speech at the present time? For the first question about the first appearance of our accent and

reasons for its characteristics, the standard answer to curious students has always been, "We just don't know". George Turner, who introduced me to New Zealand English in a stage one class at the University of Canterbury, wrote in 1960 about the study of the origin of Australian vowels. He claimed that it was more difficult to study these than to study Gothic, Old English and Old Norse. This was because of the absence of written examples of the language which would reveal how they were pronounced. This is one of the consequences of a standardised spelling system. I think George Turner's view was unduly pessimistic and for the past few years I have been trying to find written evidence for the appearance of the New Zealand accent. And although the early settlers did not obligingly write phonetically, there were those among them who were interested in language and wrote about what they were hearing - just as people continue to write letters to the editor today about language matters.

From the evidence of written reports, it seems that the English language first spoken in New Zealand was rich in its regional variety. The one thing the school inspectors regularly complained about was "h-dropping" - "the sad neglect of the aspirate". We would expect this from speakers from a number of areas of Britain where h-dropping was common. They also complained about the use of an *-in* ending for *-ing*, something which I still hear from some New Zealand speakers. But in general, the early commentators were surprisingly complimentary. Mr Samuel McBurney, for example, who was a self-trained phonetician, went about Australia and New Zealand in 1887 promoting the tonic solfa singing method and making notes on the pronunciations of certain words as he heard them in the towns and cities he visited. He wrote an article for the *Press* when he was in Christchurch in which he claimed he did notice some differences in New Zealand speech, but in general he felt that the pronunciation of the colonies as a whole is "purer than can be found in any given district at home". The leader writer in the *Press* responded three days later with delight and self-congratulation: "The astonishment of untravelled Britishers at the purity of the New Zealand accent is proverbial, and if there is merit in correct pronunciation, to a large extent we have it."

By the turn of the century the tone had changed. School inspectors were beginning to comment on "certain defects in pronunciation". The Nelson inspectors in 1902 mentioned a "twangy pronunciation" and the Otago inspectors of the same year said they thought what had erroneously been styled "Austral English" was insidiously gaining ground. Others referred to faults in pronunciation, mispronunciations or "vowel functions unpleasing to the ear".

By 1912, the Cohen Commission on Education was asking teachers specific questions about the New Zealand accent, and the teachers questioned invariably said they had been observing it for the past 10 years. Mr Augustus Heine, for example, acting headmaster of Wellington College, when asked about "this objectionable colonial dialect", replied that it was getting worse: "Much worse in the last 10 years. I have noticed it particularly in the last 10 years." When he was asked on what he based this statement, Heine replied, "Simply on my experience in the English class. The boys of 10 or 12 years ago did not have the careless way of pronouncing vowels that they have nowadays. I think it is getting worse every year. If you take a class of 30 at the beginning of the year I do not think you will find three or four who can say 'house' correctly."

So the written records that I have found all suggest that the New Zealand accent was emerging at the turn of the century, or at least this was when people began to notice it, which is not quite the same thing. But I think it is important that the kind of information we can pick up

from the written records should also be checked against recordings of spoken material if this is possible. Evidence of h-dropping, so often condemned by the school inspectors, I heard myself when I was listening to a radio documentary in which New Zealand veterans of the Boer War were discussing their experiences. There was no doubt about it - I was hearing *'orses* for *horses*. Written records can be helpful but they also need to be treated with some caution. At the time of the 1984 Olympic Games, Bruce Scott, a retired journalist who has a column in the *Christchurch Star* called "Take my Word", wrote about an expression he had heard for the first time, where someone on television referred to a situation as "the pits". But for me that was no new expression - my children had been using it for years. Samuel McBurney in 1887 noticed that in New Zealand the expression *I die* in New Zealand sounded like oi doi. He also noticed the long final /i/ on words like *city* and *simplicity*. This is still a characteristic of Australian and New Zealand pronunciation. Some Englishmen had pointed out this pronunciation to McBurney when he was in Brisbane, and after that he noticed plenty of examples of it in every other city and town he visited in Australia and New Zealand. But presumably it was also common in the towns and cities he visited before he got to Brisbane - it was just that he wasn't aware of it then, so he hadn't commented on it. But one might deduce from his reports that it didn't occur in these places.

An interesting linguistic problem is raised by the fact that the sounds always cited in relation to our so-called colonial twang are almost always the four closing diphthongs /ai/, /ei/, /ou/ and /au/ (*I say go now*). Does this mean that these were the first sounds to change, or are they the sounds we are most likely to notice? I know with present day speakers of New Zealand English, those who speak a variety we call "modified New Zealand English" - that is, modified in the direction of RP - speak with a general New Zealand accent, but with RP diphthongs. The school teachers certainly concentrated on the diphthongs. And these are sounds which can readily be reproduced in spelling in their so-called colonial twang form - so *fine* is written *foin*, *town* is written *teown*, *Day's Bay* is *Dy's By*. Other characteristics of New Zealand speech are much harder to describe in spelling forms - the centralised /u/, for example, in *thank you*, or the close rounded /er/ in *the early bird catches the worm*. So these sounds could have been there early on but just not described.

The one sound which distinguishes Australians from New Zealanders is the /I/ sound in *fish*. Australians claim that New Zealanders eat "fush and chups", while New Zealanders think that Australians eat "feesh and cheeps". Professor John Bernard of Macquarie University, in a letter to me, wrote that he had frequently met older New Zealanders who could pass as cultivated speakers of Australian English with no trouble at all. And he suggested that the New Zealand pronunciation of *fish* as *fush* is the basis for the reorganisation of the New Zealand vowel net. We could take from this that the change to /I/ is a more recent development in New Zealand. Yet I have found references to this pronunciation as early as 1908 when the Wellington inspectors complained about what they described as a more recent development - "ut" for *it* and "plasus" for *places*. So who changed? The Australians or us? We need spoken material to investigate this.

It seems to me that there are some very interesting questions here that need to be studied through recorded spoken material. The written records give us some clues - they suggest the things we should look for, - but on their own I do not think they are totally reliable.

There are other aspects of New Zealand speech which need to be investigated, and I don't have time to describe them all. But one would be the constantly heard statements from people claiming to be able to

distinguish speakers from different regions of New Zealand from their speech. The Southland /r/ is an obvious example, and to my knowledge no one so far has pursued it. We did a study once of school children from Reefton and Westport and found that their speech was the same as children from the same socio-economic group in Christchurch. However, it is my own hunch that if we had recorded the children's grandparents we would have found some differences. This could still be done, though I fear time is running out.

From my point of view the study of the present day speech of New Zealanders is of great interest and, I think, importance. We are in the middle of a vowel shift and for once there is the possibility of recording it. Margaret Maclagan from the Christchurch Teachers' College and I have been interested for a long time in what is happening to the sounds in *ear* and *air*. When I began teaching at Canterbury 20 years ago I was puzzled by students who came up to me and saying, "Why do you have two different symbols for *ear* and *air* when they are the same sounds?" This change in New Zealand speech has more recently been receiving recognition. A letter writer to the *Listener* in 1983 complained that "our 10 year old came home from school one day almost in tears. Her teacher had told her class that they had to be careful of four English words which were all pronounced the same way but had four different spellings, each with a different meaning. The four words? *Hare, here, hair* and *hear.*" The letter writer concluded, "Communication?"

In the Australian edition of our stage one text book, *An Introduction to Language*, by Fromkin, Rodman, Collins and Blair, the authors write this: "New Zealand offers a variety of surprises to its visitors, not the least of which is linguistic. If you visit Wellington in July, you'll no doubt hear references to the cold winter 'ear' and to the 'beer' branches on the trees . . . Remarkably enough, the New Zealanders who speak this dialect pronounce *all* words like *air, bare, mayor, stair, share* as 'ear', 'beer', 'mere', 'steer' and 'sheer' . . . Wherever an Australian pronounces [air] at the end of a word, speakers of this New Zealand dialect pronounce [ear]."

It seems so simple as they described it, but our own observation suggested the matter was more complex than this. At my own dinner table one night, my son told a story which involved a knight going back to his castle to collect his spare spear, which my son pronounced *spear spear*. My niece, who is a little older than him, corrected him and said it should be *spare spare*.

This change is not mentioned by Arnold Wall who had an acute ear for New Zealand vowels even if he did list them under prevalent errors in New Zealand speech. Nor was it mentioned by George Turner in his book *The English Language in Australia and New Zealand* which was published in 1966. So we concluded that it was a more recent sound change.

We decided that for some people the two sounds have merged on *ear* and for some on *air*, and we thought this might have something to do with sex and perhaps social class. We thought that the change might not be across the board as Fromkin and Rodman had suggested but that some pairs might be more likely to merge than others. We thought this was a change that is moving through the vocabulary. And we thought the phonetic context might be relevant.

To investigate these sounds, a research assistant made recordings of 120 Christchurch fourth formers, getting them to read passages, word lists, word pairs, and briefly engaging them in conversation on certain topics. The original plan had been to use pupils from a private girls' school, a private boys' school and two co-educational schools, one from a more affluent area of Christchurch than the other. Unfortunately all sorts of things went wrong, with the result that we lost Christ's College, so our research is not as useful

as it might have been. We also took recordings of 20 elderly New Zealanders in Christchurch old people's homes, and here we encountered a different set of problems - failing eyesight, one informant fell asleep, and another refused outright to read a sentence which she said was silly: "The big brown bear was drinking beer." I can't say I blame her.

The results of all of this are tentative, but I think interesting. From the schools there was clear evidence that more pupils merged the two sounds than kept them distinct. And contrary to Fromkin and Rodman's contention that they all became *ear*, we found more of the merged sounds were on *air* than on *ear*.

The phonetic context was relevant. One of our sentences was: "Can I have a word in your ear? I have fears that Air New Zealand is going to put up fares. Do you think it's fair? The result will be that we can't travel by air." In this sentence *Air* in an unstressed position became [er]. Of our 120 pupils, only seven gave the *air* in *Air New Zealand* as a diphthong.

We also found that for many speakers the merging occurred only on some of the word pairs. The four most likely to remain distinct were *hear/hair*, *tearful/careful/ fear/fare* and *fear/fair*. The ones most frequently ending up the same were: *beer/bear*, *cheer/chair*, *ear/air*, *spear/ spare* and *sheer/share*.

The male/female distinctions we can only give tentatively because our data had fewer boys, but it looks as if there is some evidence that boys prefer *ear* and girls prefer *air*. And with social class we also tentatively suggest that people in a higher social class used *air* - "He sat on a chair and gave a loud chair", while those from a lower socio-economic class said, "He sat on a cheer and gave a loud cheer."

But perhaps the most exciting thing from our point of view came from the older speakers. We were using them purely as a control for our hypothesis that this is a fairly recent change. But we found to our complete surprise that of the 11 speakers whose recordings we finally used, five merged some of the word pairs, and in particular the pairs *cheer* and *chair*, and *sheer* and *share*. And these were the two pairs most frequently merged by the younger speakers.

So all of this suggests that the progress of a sound change is a very complicated matter, involving a number of factors, social as well as phonetic. But it also suggests that this change has been going on for much longer than we ever suspected. The earlier commentators must have missed it. And it shows clearly how we cannot rely on written records alone. It is most important that recordings be made, because surprising and unexpected things can turn up.

For research into speech it is possible in some cases to use general recordings of people speaking on any topic, though we need to have information about the background of the speakers. You could study the diphthongs /ai/, /ei/, /ou/, /au/ in this way because they occur frequently in speech. But *ear* and *air* would be more difficult. They are very low on the vowel frequency table, and together constitute 0.55 percent of the total phonemes occurring. The statistical possibility of someone spontaneously putting *cheer* and *chair*, or *shear* and *share* together in the same sentence must be pretty remote. Therefore it is necessary to have structured interviews which do require the reading aloud of passages and word lists and word pairs.

I think this sort of work is urgent. We have a wonderful opportunity here in New Zealand to study a variety of English as it is evolving. And the results are not just interesting to us in New Zealand, but within the whole field of socio-linguistics. Unfortunately little work is being done on this at the moment. The number of university lecturers engaged in research in New Zealand speech is very small, and in my own department

I do not think it is seen as having a high priority. But I think the work is urgent, relevant and exciting. It's a matter of convincing other people of this too.

LISTENING TO TEACHERS

Charlotte Macdonald

Several days before NOHANZ was formed in October 1986, a special gathering of people took place in Palmerston North. The occasion was the launching of *Listen to the teacher: an oral history of women who taught in New Zealand, c 1925-1945*, a book which tells the stories of 30 women interviewed about their careers as school teachers. It is the work of a study group within the Palmerston North branch of the Society for Research on Women (SROW), with a contracted writer, Anne Else.

The project began in the last years of the Muldoon government. Women in Palmerston North were direct casualties of cuts in education spending inflicted by the then Minister of Education, Merv Wellington - the student intake to the training college was severely reduced, the college staff was pruned, and women students had difficulty supporting themselves through their training. Maureen Williams, the founding member of the study group, was one of eight part-time training college lecturers to lose her job (seven of the eight were women). With others who were concerned about what was happening, and who had an interest in oral history, Maureen brought together a group with the idea of taking a longer look at the problem.[1] It was clear that what was happening in the 1980s was not entirely new; similar difficulties had been faced before.

Education and the teaching profession was hard-hit in the great depression of the 1930s: training colleges were closed, five-year-olds kept back from school, teachers' salaries reduced, work rostered, and a marriage "bar" imposed whereby married women were precluded from holding positions in favour of men and single women.[2] While no such formal obstruction was introduced in the 1980s, married women were disadvantaged in competition for jobs by regulations over mobility provisions. There was also powerful moral pressure exerted upon women who "insisted" on holding jobs from "those who really needed them".

The decision to examine what had happened in the past grew out of a determination not to accept what was happening simply as a personal crisis or an isolated event. Precedents existed for resisting and challenging specific instances of discrimination and larger issues of inequality. Women of an earlier generation had not all accepted their position meekly. Through the Women Teachers' Association (established in 1901),[3] concerted campaigns were fought for equal pay, better promotion prospects and a general improvement in conditions for women and girls in the education system. We wanted to know more about what women did in the 1930s to cope in a situation of recession; what had changed and what had stayed the same between the 1930s and the 1980s. Above all, we wanted to place what was happening and what had happened within a longer perspective. In doing this, we hoped to understand our own predicament more fully, as well as gaining recognition for those women who had fought 50 years earlier.

In the time it took to get the project fully under way the aim of the investigation expanded. While our immediate question concerned the impact of retrenchment measures on a particular group of teachers during the depression, we were also interested in exploring the more general question of what their lives as working professional women were like. For this purpose - the documentation of women's lives - oral history is very well suited. The loosely structured interview schedules we drew up started with the women's family background and early life, their own schooling and interest in teaching, then moved on to cover training, first jobs, promotion, obstacles and interruptions in their careers, attitudes to pay and opportunities available to men and women teachers, involvement in the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) and Women Teachers' Association and, finally, retirement.

There was no difficulty in finding 30 women who were prepared to be interviewed. The first, Thelma Thorburn, was a neighbour of one of the members of the study group. The rest we met as a result of an advertisement in the local newspaper. Some replied direct and were quick to ask if we knew, or had already spoken to, so-and-so, Miss X or Mrs Y. Names were passed on to us; it was clear we had tapped into an existing network of ex-teachers. This was an interesting discovery in itself.

Within the scope of 30 interviews, which was the limit we set on the size of the project, we hoped to get people with a fairly broad range of experience. For a number of reasons it was not possible to adopt a highly systematic approach in selecting people to interview. We relied on people who were prepared to talk to us, on those who lived in or close to Palmerston North; we had no way of knowing how representative our 30 were of the total population of ex-1930s teachers who lived in the Manawatu. There was another consideration too, one which others who have embarked on oral history must have encountered before us, and that is having made a public request for interviewees, it was awkward to turn away any who offered. Other researchers who plan to contact prospective interviewees through a public appeal would do well to think of this in advance.

Our brief for who we wanted to talk to was fairly open, perhaps a little too open: essentially it amounted to any woman who was teaching in New Zealand around the time of the depression. We were mainly interested in primary school teachers, as this is where the majority of pupils and teachers were at this time, though we did want to talk to a few secondary teachers both for the purpose of comparison and so as to at least touch upon that smaller, but still significant section of the teaching profession. Three of the 30 women interviewed were secondary teachers - Julia Wallace, Noeline Tomlinson and Ismay Paterson; all three held senior positions at Palmerston North Girls' High School (the youngest retired in 1974).

Most of the women we spoke to grew up in the Manawatu, Rangitikei, Wanganui or Wellington districts. Their teaching careers took them all over New Zealand, and some overseas. Many came from farming families - not all of them wealthy. Some went straight into teaching from school, without any formal training or with only a brief stint as a pupil-teacher; others took the more conventional path via training college in Wellington or Auckland. Either way, their working lives from there on were extremely varied.

Most worked in small country schools in their first few years, more often than not in temporary positions. After training as a pupil-teacher at Eastern Hutt School, Doris Harrison went on to training college in Wellington (1926-27). She taught at Tablelands, Featherston, Pahiatua and Mangatainoka schools before getting her first permanent position at Rakaunui in Dannevirke County (1929). Boarding with local families in country districts was not always easy, or safe. At one place Doris had to ward off the advances of the man of the house by brandishing an iron.

Margaret Carde left the Napier Convent School without her "Matric" but was persuaded to take up teaching rather than office work by one of her teachers. Her first position was at a Grade O, household, school at Waihau (Hawkes Bay). She studied for her Teachers' "D" Certificate while she was there and went on to do her "C" Certificate while working as a governess at Matahiwi on the Wanganui River. After a time without a job, Margaret was employed again but lost her job when she married in 1933. With a family of four she returned to teaching 15 years later, first on a relieving basis, then permanently. She taught at most schools in Wanganui, including the Sanitorium school, and after retiring, took on relieving work again, in Sydney and back in Wanganui.

Some women always knew they wanted to be teachers. As a girl, Peg McConnon played schools with the fowls at the bottom of the garden; Naomi and Rachel Murdoch were brought up in a teaching family and did their pupil-teaching in their father's classroom at Linton. Others took up teaching as a second option: Alma McIlroy after a trying year doing a Dental Intermediate, and Grace White after her hopes of studying medicine were dashed by her parents' prohibition of the idea. Grace first enrolled at university in Wellington but had to leave because of illness. In 1919, she enrolled at training college; three years later she was teaching infants at Glen Oroua.

Several women achieved prominence in the course of their careers. Some did so as long-serving and respected teachers within their local communities; others did so within the wider context of the teaching profession - as regional advisors like Elizabeth Barrie (Infant Advisor to the Wanganui Education Board, 1959-70); senior teachers (several became STJCs, two deputy principals); or within teacher organisations - Thelma Thorburn served as National Secretary for the Women Teachers' Association and later as President of the Manawatu branch of NZEI. The influence of a previous generation of women educationalists came through clearly in recollections of Jessie Hetherington, Fanny Irvine-Smith and Elsie Andrews. The career of one woman, Julia Wallace, was quite outstanding, extending far beyond the bounds of the teaching profession. As well as being Headmistress of Palmerston North Girls' High School from 1948 to 1970 and President of NZEI (1960), Miss Wallace was also a city councillor (1962-68), and closely involved in a number of national organisations, including the Royal Lifesaving Society, National Council of Women, YWCA and Crippled Children Society. She was the only woman member of the Dalgleish Commission set up to oversee the implementation of the 1972 Equal Pay Act.

Stories of innovative and unusual teaching experience abound: Janet Willis taught with the Somersets at the Feilding Community Centre and Dora Skews experimented with music therapy for disabled and intellectually handicapped children in the 1930s. Margaret Fowlds spent six months teaching Maori children at the Anglican mission station at Koroniti on the Wanganui River in 1935. She lived with the mission sister, Elsie Smith (an "excruciating" cook), played the organ on Sundays (though brought up a Catholic), and served as the local registrar of births, deaths and marriages - all of this at the age of 23. Veronica Tunnicliff married a man who was interned as a pacifist during the Second World War. She moved to a two-roomed bach (without conveniences) near the camp with another woman; for three years the two women taught during the week and travelled to the camp to visit their husbands at the weekend.

The interviews told us a great deal more about teaching, about working women's lives and about New Zealand between the 1920s and 1950s than we had ever expected. Moreover, there were no simple patterns to be discovered in the impact of retrenchment measures on women teachers, or

on the relationship between marriage and the development of a career. The picture was more complex and larger than this.

The task of shaping a book from the interviews was a difficult one. For each of us the lives of the women we had talked to impressed us greatly. Each story had a coherence, its own patterns of trials, achievements and interest. But what did they mean altogether? How could we select from the wealth of what we had collected enough to satisfy our initial questions as well as to convey, fairly, something of the rest of what we had been told. The "raw" material of oral history - in this case, sets of tapes and typed transcriptions - presented a formidable body of historical evidence.

There were several tensions in what we were trying to do; tensions which are certainly not confined to oral history but which loom more conspicuously than in conventional documentary research. The first arose from our attempt to balance the necessity of selecting useful excerpts from the tapes and placing them in a new context (of our own devising) without distorting or changing the meaning of the passage in the original interview. Stories, descriptions and comments which flowed vividly in a spoken account did not always have the same impact in written form. The process of discarding material, given the shape of the interviews, meant discarding large sections of people's life stories. This is part of the second difficulty we confronted in trying to achieve a balance between preserving the integrity and unique quality of each woman's story while at the same time using parts of each story to build a group profile. We wanted to convey both the particular experience of these 30 women and to use their testimony to depict a broader outline of what it was like to be a teacher in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. In a third way we were also trying to integrate events taking place on two very different historical levels: the level of national political and economic activity, and the level of individual lives. We set out with questions about the impact of governmental decisions prompted by an economic crisis. What we talked about with our women teachers was their young adulthood: leaving home, meeting new friends, life at training college, first jobs, places and people where they worked, and getting on with colleagues, families and partners. Obviously, the opportunities available and the decisions made by each woman were defined by the wider background of social, political, economic and cultural forces, but the life story, as it was recounted, was almost exclusively told with reference to specific personal and family circumstances.

Perhaps if we had set out with a narrower line of inquiry, and been more rigorous in selecting people to interview, we would have had less difficulty in finding a unifying thread and structure for the book. Our research objectives were probably a little too broad and our chronological spread rather too long. The age range of the women we spoke to - the oldest born in 1900, the youngest in 1918 - meant that some were well established in their careers by the 1930s while others were only beginning their training when the depression struck.

We settled, finally, on a series of thematic chapters arranged to follow the progression from early life and schooling to retirement. One chapter deals specifically with salaries, the Women Teachers' Association, NZEI, and campaigns to improve conditions; discussion of the depression retrenchment measures occurs throughout the middle chapters. In addition, pen portraits of all 30 women appear at the back of the book. This comprises a photograph together with a summary of each woman's career, in and out of teaching.

We had lots of fun doing this project. It was, for all involved, an extremely sociable process. This is certainly one of the most satisfying aspects of oral history, for the relationship between researcher and "subject" is a personal one. As a group of researchers we discussed our plans, divided the work, shared our discoveries, and made joint decisions. Each of us formed links with the women we talked to. After we had completed all 30 interviews and as we approached the task of shaping the book, we organised an afternoon where all the members of the study group and all the women teachers met together. This was important for both groups - the teachers were able to see the whole of the study group and find out more about the project they were now part of; we were able to meet our whole interview group. We talked to the teachers about using their real names in the book - we did not want to use pseudonyms or publish excerpts without attribution. They agreed to this. We kept in touch after this with visits, phone calls and Christmas cards.

A number of teachers found their families becoming interested in aspects of their lives which they had not known or thought about before. Being identified as teachers, and shown to be interesting because of the work they had done, was both rewarding and revealing. This extended beyond the families too - by the end of the project several women had moved from their own homes into a rest home. After *Listen to the teacher* was launched it was read to all the residents at the home as part of the recreational programme.

The launching of the book, around two years from the time most of the interviews were recorded, was a special occasion for everyone associated with the project. Two of the 30 teachers died before this time, all the remaining 28 were present, each with a friend or member of their family. After a morning tea of sandwiches and scones, Joan Paske, President of NZEI, spoke and copies of the book were presented to the women. They were the first to whom it was distributed. It was an exciting and satisfying culmination to several years' work. Nevertheless, we waited in some suspense over the following days for their reactions after they had read the book. They were happy with it.

A depository for the tapes has yet to be chosen. It is intended that they will be available for use by other researchers and by readers of *Listen to the teacher* who want to find out more about this group of women.

Listen to the teacher: an oral history of women who taught in New Zealand, c 1925-1945, Society for Research on Women in New Zealand, is available from some bookshops, or from SROW, PO Box 12-270, Wellington North, for $13.75 (including GST).

NOTES

1 Enduring members of the study group were Judy Brown, Fiona Fordham, Charlotte Macdonald, Jo Springett and Margaret Tate; seven others were involved in the early stages.

2 A similar marriage "bar" was imposed by many local education authorities in England in the 1920s and early 1930s. In response, women teachers organised separately in the National Union of Women Teachers.

3 Records of the Women Teachers' Association are held by the NZEI Library; see Margot Roth, "Association of Women Teachers in 1901-04", *Women's Studies Journal*, 1(2): 93-108, (1985).

TWO ORAL HISTORY ASSIGNMENTS

Gillian Werry

A Woman at War

> "To me, it was a wonderful time. I don't think I would of in peacetime had half as much fun or opportunities. I mean, you didn't have time to worry about things."

Before the outbreak of war, Pam aged 19 was working in an accountant's office and boarding in Masterton. A sense of war being inevitable pervaded but this did not prevent the horror of the declaration of war on 3 September 1939.

"It was a terrible thing when it did come because we were all of an age where we knew it would affect our lives in many ways. I was in a crowd of young girls who knew all their boyfriends would go away. I don't think we feared for ourselves in New Zealand but it was the fact that all the boys we were friendly with would possibly go away and get killed."

As she expected, most of Pam's friends enlisted immediately after the declaration of war. Her boyfriend, Jack, enlisted the following day, joining the Machine Gun Battalion. Pam describes it as a reaction against the constraints of the depression.

"We were all brought up in the depression. Nobody could go overseas or really do what they wanted . . . You all had great ambitions but there didn't seem any way of achieving them. This was, for the boys, a way out, a let-out. Some felt they should go because Hitler had to be stopped but I don't think anybody went for King and country."

The next few months were a mixture of excitement and sadness. There was the glamour of being a girlfriend of a member of the first echelon; the farewell parties; and the soldier image of heroism and gallantry. This image changed when the men returned on final leave.

"They had these shocking 1918 uniforms. They were faded where the previous soldier had had stripes; far too long; and the lemon squeezers went right down over their eyes. They looked like Charlie Chaplin's army! It was very hard to feel highly romantic about someone who went off to war looking like that."

The old, ill-fitting uniforms reflected the wider inadequacies of training. Pam describes the Burnham training camp as a "complete shambles" and tells the story of men attempting to have marksmen practice without guns! There was also the sadness of saying goodbye to men going to a European war which remained distant and remote. However, the ship farewell at Wellington harbour was dominated by a carnival atmosphere.

"I remember an Englishman standing there being absolutely shocked

at the behaviour and attitude of the people. He said we would never do any good in the war if we behaved like that."

At first, life in Masterton was "deadly dull" as the young men continued to leave. However, this dullness was offset by the expansion of job opportunities for women.

"As the boys in the office went away, I got into doing their particular line of work and I was allowed to branch out and use my own initiative. I enjoyed it very much because I would go out to big stations and it was far more personal than an ordinary office job . . . most girls had a similar experience. It was a wonderful opportunity and I don't suppose I would of had the chance to do that had it not been for the war. Other girls in the banks were promoted to positions they would never have had the opportunity to do. Because in those days men had all the top jobs and women were not allowed to move up . . ." [So the war did accelerate change for women?] "Yes. Very definitely."

Masterton was a major troop town - the Americans established a base at Solway showgrounds; the New Zealand Air Force trained at Hood aerodrome; and army training camps were scattered around the district. Pam became involved in a group who entertained the troops, acted as hostesses and raised money for Patriotic Funds.

"Once the troops came to Masterton, three 'ladies of position' were asked to form concert parties, and also form parties of girls who would be able to help them with entertainment etc. I had learnt dancing and Mrs Rich asked me if I would train ballet and get the appropriate girls . . . It was hilarious fun, we were all young . . . I will never forget the time we decided to do something funny for a change. So we got men's singlets and dyed them black, we made masks and we did a back-to-front ballet. It was definitely . . . um . . . ridiculous! But it made everybody laugh. It was anything for entertainment."

Life was very full as entertaining the troops involved continual practices and large amounts of time. But Pam and the others involved were motivated by a genuine concern for the men about to enter the war and the men who had survived it.

"There were so many troops who knew they were going off within the next few weeks. You had to join in with them. They were living on borrowed time as far as they were concerned. It was one of those electric atmospheres."

Pam's most vivid memories about the troops centre on the American soldiers' stay in Masterton.

"When they said the Americans were coming, the rumours that went around amongst everybody. 'Watch them, they've all got VD.' This was all the rumour everywhere . . . so the first night that the Americans arrived in the Wairarapa, we were asked to go to the YMCA and welcome these people. Well, we were all in a state of trepidation of what they would be like . . . They [the Americans] thought the Wairarapa was something out in the sticks. Some of the men came from New York and places like that. We asked: 'What did you expect of New Zealand!' They answered: 'Oh, well, we were told that all the girls wore grass skirts and had no teeth' . . . When it came to 10 o'clock, we all went out to wave them goodbye. One boy said to me, 'You and I should step behind this tin fence'. I said, 'why?' knowing very well I wouldn't be allowed to, and he said, 'I haven't kissed a girl in months' . . . There were so many Yanks . . . Any girl, it didn't matter if you were nearly 40. They were hungering for female companionship and I don't really mean sex. I just mean they wanted to go to someone's home . . . It was the first time I had ever seen a very black Negro . . . We thought they were so nice as they were so polite, so grateful

for anything . . . Well, the boys from the deep south, they were at us the whole time: 'Don't fraternise with these people' . . . That made us mad . . . All you were doing was just being nice to them . . . Absolutely no expense was spared . . . They would have a Hawaiian night . . . they would fly in all these exotic fruit and leis from Hawaii, if you please, in the middle of the war. We thought this was wonderful. We had these 15-piece bands and were they dreamy! . . . I used to think it was fabulous especially being able to jitterbug like that at the dances."

The extravagance and charm of the American which attracted New Zealand women caused resentment amongst New Zealand servicemen "because I suppose they got the girls".

Amongst these memories of new opportunities, the entertaining and Americans, touches of sadness intervened. The war remained distant and remote to Pam even after the entry of Japan into the war. However, the death of people you knew meant you were unable to escape the horror.

"Young boys we had grown up with, had been to college with, had played sport with, one after another went away and many of those who went away early were killed. It seemed like a procession of death. You kept dreading you'd hear about someone else the next day. But you went on because everyone had to go on. In my case, I knew a man, a very fine man, who was a client with the firm I worked with and he had three sons. One after the other he lost the lot. And I saw him go from a tall upstanding man to a bent old man within the war years. These were the things that really got to you."

Perhaps the hardest part of war was the period of adjustment after the fighting ended. Jack returned on the second Furlough Draft.

"I had visions of him coming back looking healthy and tanned . . . When he came back he was about seven stone, yellow and he'd lost his hair. That was a real eye-opener to us. I don't think we envisaged the rough time they had, because they didn't even talk about it until they came back. The girls, like me, that married the boys they were friendly with before the war really went through a bit of a rough time afterwards because they just couldn't settle down as they had been through too many awful experiences. Jack couldn't sleep in a bed for a long time, he had to get out and sleep on the floor, he couldn't stand anything soft, he couldn't drink [alcohol] . . . He was quite sick. Also, we had to relate to someone who had been totally different before the war. He would say, 'But you've changed as well'. In no way would we ever have walked out on them. You just didn't. You were prepared to put up with it because they had fought for you."

Assessment

A sense of the favourable aspects of war dominated this interview. Men leaving the area widened work opportunities and the arrival of troops in Masterton provided continual excitement and entertainment. Obviously, this is not representative of all women's experience or even another individual's experience. Her feelings and memories are unique to her. However, I think the interview accurately reflects Pam's situation during wartime. She was a young single woman in secure employment. The restrictions such as rationing, blackouts and censorship were annoying but did not undermine the feeling the war created social and job opportunities which had not previously existed. Pam's experience can be contrasted with that of a soldier's wife. To such women, the war was a struggle to support their families and cope with the additional work created by men leaving.

However, some of Pam's responses would have been common to most

women who remained at home. First, the horror of war, although it may have been more intense for other women, was clearly expressed by Pam. She described the "procession of death" and the effect on relatives in New Zealand. She also described the continual fear that someone you loved would be next. Secondly, the sense of war being remote. To women, despite the men fighting, a war thousands of miles away in Europe seemed almost unreal. But Pam's response to the Japanese entry into the war may not be typical. Other accounts describe the very real fear that pervaded as the Japanese moved into the Pacific. Perhaps it was the result of living in an inland town or Pam's own explanation that she was "simply too busy to worry". Thirdly, the difficulties of adjustment as the troops returned. For Pam, the return of her boyfriend emphasised the harsh reality of war. It was a dramatic transition from the excitement and opportunities of war to coping with the sick and changed man that war had produced.

Comparison with Secondary Sources

The two main sources which relate directly to women's wartime experience are *When the Boys were Away* (Eve Ebbet) and *Women in Wartime* (ed Lauris Edmond). The approach of the two books differed. *When the Boys were Away* is divided into sections dealing with specific aspects of the war such as rationing, widening of women's role and the arrival of the Americans. Within each section Ebbet draws together the many different views of women. It is a very wide and detailed focus covering single and married, old and young, and rich and poor. In contrast, *Women in Wartime* is similar to the oral history project as individual women tell their story. However, the focus is again wide as the experiences of the women vary markedly.

Due to this wide focus, Pam's experiences as a young single woman could be closely related to those described in the books. Interestingly, Pam wrote one of the extracts from *Women in Wartime* entitled "A Wairarapa War". An example of the close correlation in *When the Boys were Away* is the section "When Kilroy was Here" which details the response of New Zealand women to the American troops. It was essentially a three-fold response. First, an attraction to the romantic and friendly nature of the troops. Secondly, a sense of cautiousness due to their wealth and reputation of sexual permissiveness. Thirdly, sympathy for men who had suffered and remained isolated from family and friends. Ebbet also outlines the resentment of New Zealand servicemen to the Americans and racist attitudes of the soldiers from the southern states.

Thus the interview was largely consistent with the secondary sources.

A Man at War

> "Most of us wanted to forget. For four years your life just stopped really. It was just written-off years."

Prior to the war Doug, aged 21, was at teachers' college in Wellington and attending university part-time. Like Pam, a sense of the war being inevitable dominated. However, his response to the declaration differed slightly. Doug felt that everyone knew the war was going to come - the declaration was simply confirmation of this.

He did not enlist. Similar to many young men, the war seemed distant and there was no aspiration to defend King and country. He described the desire of many of the First Echelon to escape from domestic and criminal situations. "They reckoned half the guys in the First Echelon who walked

down the streets of Wellington were wanted by the police. A good few jokers disappeared from their wives and children as well."

The belief that young single men should enlist was very strong. Doug was conscripted in 1940 so he was never subjected to the intense community pressure. However, he remembers with some bitterness the treatment of his brother who was forced to remain in New Zealand.

"My brother, who was in the broadcasting business, they wouldn't let him go for quite a long time. He got white feathers and all sorts of things through the mail . . . It happened to quite a few guys, they got reserved. He got out in the end. He was very unhappy. He had a bad time."

But Doug felt no resentment at the need for conscription. He perceived it as part of his duty to defend New Zealand and defeat Nazism. This sense of duty was reflected in his attitude to conscientious objectors. He was unable to agree with their beliefs but he was sympathetic.

"I had a couple of friends who were conscientious objectors. They went to a camp at Ngaruawahia. They had their opinions, they were entitled to them." [You didn't agree with them?] "No, I didn't. I wasn't anti-war then." [Did they tell you what it was like in those camps?] "Terrible. Also they got hell after the war. That was a sad time for those jokers."

Doug applied to join the air force but was rejected because of his poor eyesight. Instead he was to serve in the meterological service in the Pacific. Doug was very disappointed about a posting in the Pacific - Europe and the Middle East possessed the glamour, the gloss and the adventure.

"Most of us would rather have gone further afield. For one thing, there was nothing to see in the Pacific, you couldn't go anywhere . . . Also all the big stuff was in Crete, Egypt and Italy."

Doug's time in the Pacific began with a one-month posting in Fiji. His expectations of war as he left New Zealand were uncertain.

"We thought we might be bombed. They got close to Fiji but it didn't seem it would happen to you, it might happen to other jokers but not to you. That feeling is strong when you go to war."

Two memories of his short stay in Fiji stand out. The first was the terrible mosquitoes and consequential fear of malaria. Even in mid-winter they slept with full mosquito nets over the beds. Secondly, the antagonism that existed between native Fijians and Fiji Indians even then.

"They used to have them working in the cookhouse but they couldn't work them together . . . Very strong bad feelings . . . The Indians in those days were very poor. They lived in hovels."

Doug's second posting was at Tonga where he and another New Zealander set up a meterological station. He warmly remembers the lovely Tongan people and teaching at the local school. But he was overwhelmed by a feeling of isolation both from New Zealand and the war.

"I got so remote for a while I didn't even read my letters. It seemed a long, long way away."

Despite this, letters and parcels were very important. They maintained links with home and a sense of continuity of life. It was in Tonga that Doug experienced the first excitement of war.

"One night, I was on the phones, and the lines went dead completely. That night an American ship was sunk just off Tonga. We helped to get survivors ashore. It was a bit of a plot. They cut the lines deliberately so the ship couldn't radio to us. That was a bit exciting. The other exciting night was the hurricane. I saw the eye of a hurricane. It blew for about 12 hours. It broke our wind meter at about 100 miles per hour. About one o'clock, everything stopped, the moon was out, the sky was clear. Completely calm and no clouds. About an hour later the winds came back in the other direction."

After eight months in Tonga, Doug was posted in the New Hebrides continuing his role in the meterological service. It was here that he had his first contact with Americans.

"We didn't like them a bit. They were very unpopular with us. They were loud, brassy and self-opinionated." [Was there resentment about the Americans in New Zealand?] "Oh yes, definitely . . . I never met anyone who liked them . . . The black Americans were far nicer jokers, they really were. But they wouldn't let them fight, they only let them be in the Labour Battalion. There was a riot one night. They had a camp further down the road, there was a Negro riot. Quite a few got shot by the white Americans."

Doug's final post was on the Solomon Islands.

As Doug described these four different postings in the Pacific, persistent memories emerged. One was the constant feeling of illness. It was a combination of the tropical climate and fevers like malaria and "dingy".

"We caught a thing called dingy which was very common in the southern Pacific. It was awful, bit like malaria. You got a fever, you sweated and shook, you were sick. Most of us caught that at some stage. And it did come back after the war. Quite a few times when I got a cold I'd get the same symptoms back again . . . It was not so much the sun's heat, it was the humidity, it hardly ever dropped below 90. And that's what makes you tired, upset and irritable. You'd go out and have a shower and then within five minutes you'd be covered all over with sweat again . . . The nights were tough. Prickly heat was awful and everyone seemed to catch it. Your skin dried out and you just itched."

Another memory was the low morale the the poor discipline of the troops.

"Every night when the lights went out at half past ten, the whole camp started shouting 'Home's the caper' at the top of their voices. It went on for hours sometimes. They were so fed up . . . The discipline was poor. They tried to stop us, they'd rush to a hut and say 'Stop' and the other half would start next door . . . In the end, it was an offence to say 'Home is the caper' anywhere within the compound . . ."

This was the result of many factors. The food was terrible - Doug, slightly built, lost over two stone. There were the breakups of relationships.

"One of the sad things was all these engagement rings coming back. It happened a hellava lot. There was a stall on Sunday selling sparklers."

There was again the intense feeling of isolation.

"We blocked it out. Didn't think too much about being home."

Another memory was the image of those men who had experienced combat.

"They were often shattered completely. Some were sent home. They couldn't take it any more. You know Bruce, he did 196 missions, some of them in the Pacific, he never recovered from that."

Even without involvement in combat, the fear remained.

"I was scared in the aeroplane, no parachutes, nothing like that. If you went up, you just had to hope like hell that you'd get back."

A feature of the Pacific was boredom. Little open fighting occurred so the troops had a great deal of free time and little to do with it. They deeply resented the focus of attention being on the troops in the northern hemisphere.

Although the morale of the troops was low, the men were united together as "we were all in the same boat together". Another unifying force was the universal hatred of the Japanese enemy.

"They were feared and hated. They really were." [More so than the ordinary German soldier?] "Definitely . . . the ordinary German soldier

was fighting like anyone else." [What about the ordinary Japanese soldier?] "They just seemed cruel and uncivilised . . . some Americans got into a POW camp and killed two Japanese prisoners, that's how bad it was."

There were good features of the war - the odd party; the good friends; and the entertainment provided by the concert parties. "We had Bob Hope and a few people like that. He was really funny." However, for Doug the dominant image of war is one of "fear, boredom and sickness".

Doug's war ended in December 1944. He described coming home and the difficulties of adjusting to civilian life.

"It was very hard, harder than I expected. Most of the people you came home to hadn't been . . . You just didn't seem to belong . . . What I did was go back to varsity and work at the Met Office in Kelburn . . . Shirley and I got married in 1945. We hadn't had much time together, she was very young when I left, and she was just a girl I knew. But she wrote a few times and sent me some shortbread. I went to her because others didn't seem to understand . . . I think it was hard for the women but I knew men who didn't go and they didn't seem to suffer any particular hardship. Except for they probably felt ashamed for not fighting . . . once you were back people didn't want to hear about you any more - they felt bad if you talked about the war . . . People weren't grateful. The initial welcome back didn't last. The next day you had to find a place to live, had to go buy some clothes and start to get things together - that's hard." [However, the pictures of Nazi concentration camps in a way changed his perception of the war.]

"They were terrible. It made you feel better that you'd helped to defeat Hitler."

But nothing could erase the tragedy of death.

"Bill, a chap I knew very well, he was flying where I was. Well, one day he didn't come back. Last thing they saw he dived to attack a Japanese ship but he didn't come out of it. They weren't quite sure what had happened. I had a weird experience two nights later. I saw Bill. I was sleeping in the end of a hut with the moon shining in at the end. I saw him clearly outlined in the door exactly as he had been in his uniform."

Assesment

This interview, in contrast to the previous, was dominated by bitterness and resentment. This did not derive from the actual conscription but the situation conscription placed him in. The Pacific service was marked by isolation. It was isolation both from friends and families at home and the war itself resulting in intense boredom. The centre of attention focused on the Middle East and Europe. This was also the centre of the major campaigns and victories. New Zealand troops were involved in little direct fighting in the Pacific, and Doug himself experienced no combat. The relative safety of this did not compensate for the lack of public recognition and excitement. Doug also found the conditions of the Pacific particularly unpleasant, especially the humidity and sickness. Fear was also present despite being isolated from combat. It was a constant feeling of anticipation of death and mutilation. This, combined with a hatred of both the American allies and the Japanese enemy.

Like Pam, Doug's experience is not typical of all servicemen's experience. Not many men enjoyed war but for some the feeling of unity and mateship overcame the hardship. For Doug this was simply not enough.

I found his description of the experience of coming home very interesting. The difficulties in fitting back into civilian life which most soldiers experienced were intensified by the lack of public recognition or gratitude.

This was difficult to reconcile with images of the hero's welcome received by soldiers. Perhaps Doug's obvious resentment created barriers for others to discuss the war with him. Or perhaps it was just that the wider community were, like Doug, trying to forget the war.

Comparison with Secondary Sources

My main source was John McLeod's book *Myth and Reality - The New Zealand Solider in World War II*. Other books such as *The War With Japan* (Bateson) and *Allies of a Kind* (Thorne) provide useful background material but their focus is the actual campaigns and troop involvement. In contrast, McLeod examines the legend of there being "no better soldiers or fighting men than the Kiwis". His examination of the New Zealand soldier is wide. He looks at the motivations of enlistment and those who refused to enlist; the mental stress; perception of the enemy; morale of the troops; the cost of death and observing the process of mutilation; the dreariness which typified soldiers' lives; the harshness of conditions; and the return home. Thus it is the study of the reality of war and its effect on the men who fought. In doing so, it provides the type of analysis that other more conventional books about the war lack.

The book relates closely with Doug's experience. For instance, it describes the willingness of New Zealand men to do their duty. He also details the oppressive heat and disease of the Pacific. McLeod also describes the monotony of an ordinary soldier's life further limited by basic living conditions and low morale.

One weakness of the book (from my perspective of interviewing a man who served in the Pacific) is much of the text centred on the experience of soldiers in the northern hemisphere, especially Crete and Italy. Perhaps this is an accurate reflection of the distribution of fighting but it results in the Pacific only being discussed in fairly general terms. Therefore, such specific and important topics such as the relationship between American and New Zealand soldiers are not discussed.

Thus Doug's experience is largely consistent with the areas cited in this main secondary source.

Conclusion

It is difficult to compare the two interviews as the roles they played in World War II were so different. The main contrast was simply the different perception of war. To Pam it was a "wonderful time" and to Doug they were "written-off years". This reflects the opportunities offered by the war. For Pam the war opened up new opportunities in social and employment areas. For Doug the war created bitterness and interrupted the pattern of his life. Other interesting comparisons can be made. One is the attitude to the Americans. Pam, in common with many New Zealand women, was very attracted to the extravagant and romantic Yanks. Doug and his fellow soldiers hated the Americans, considering them to be brash and arrogant. However, there were some shared feelings such as the sorrow of death, the hatred of the Japanese and the difficulties of returning to post-war life. But again the perception of these feelings differed as to Doug they were part of wider bitterness and to Pam they represented sad reminders of an otherwise happy time.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

MARGARET AVERY, head of Waikato University History Department, has become involved in oral history through her current project concerning women in the Second World War. She is about to commence a course on the history of women, a first in the department.

CHRIS FINLAYSON is a barrister and solicitor in private practice in Wellington. He is honorary solicitor for the New Zealand Oral History Archive, and has a particular interest in the laws concerning intellectual property.

ROSEMARY GOODYEAR was a 1987 honours graduate from the History Department, University of Otago. Her involvement in oral history came through participation in a History Methods course paper taken by third year honours students.

ELIZABETH GORDON is a senior lecturer in English Language and Literature at the University of Canterbury. Some of the material in her talk will appear in expanded form in *New Zealand Culture and Identity* (ed D Novitz and W E Willmott) to be published by the New Zealand Government Printer late in 1988.

CHARLOTTE MacDONALD is actively involved in the New Zealand Women's Studies Association. She currently works at the Historical Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs in Wellington. She was co-editor of *Women in History: Essays on European Women in New Zealand* (Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1986).

CLAUDIA ORANGE, chairperson of NOHANZ, is deputy editor of the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. She is the author of *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1987) and a number of articles.

TONY SIMPSON, currently senior industrial officer with the Public Service Association, is a well known writer and broadcaster. A forthcoming publication will be a study of the intellectual context of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, provisionally entitled *Before Hobson*.

GILLIAN WERRY, who lives in Greytown, was a first year student at Victoria University in 1987. Her oral history project was selected to represent the assignments required as part of a New Zealand history course supervised by Malcolm McKinnon.