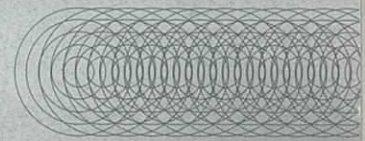


Oral HISTORY

in New Zealand

National Oral History Association of New Zealand



volume TWELVE

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THIRTEEN

2000/01

Contents

Foreward LINDA EVANS	
Oral History Awards JUDITH BINNEY AND MEGAN HUTCHING	1
TEN YEARS ON: THE AUSTRALIAN SESSQUICENTENNIAL GIFT TRUST AWARDS IN ORAL HISTORY	
Still Being Punished RACHAEL SELBY	5
Our Place AN INTERVIEW WITH HELEN FRIZZELL	9
Manufacturing Silences: ALISON J. LAURIE	14
Interpreting Oral History JENNIE GALLAGHER	18
Aroha Trust Oral History Project PIP DESMOND	23
Rangahau mo Te Iwi WHETŪRANGI WALSH-TAPIATA	29
The Past from the Paepae DANNY KEENAN	33
Book Reviews	40
Julie Liebrich (ed), <i>A Gift of Stories: Discovering how to deal with mental illness</i> Reviewed by Helen Gilbert	
Rachael Selby, <i>Still Being Punished</i> Reviewed by Kelly Bevan	39
Suzanne P MacAulay, <i>Stitching Rites: Colcha Embroidery Along the Northern Rio Grande</i> Reviewed by Penelope A. Dunkley	40
Dianne Bardsley, <i>The Land Girls: In a Man's World, 1939-46</i> Reviewed by Megan Hutching	41
Anna Green, <i>British Capital, Antipodean Labour: Working the New Zealand Waterfront, 1915-1951</i> Reviewed by Lesley Hall	42
NOHANZ origins	44
Code of ethical and technical practice	45

Oral History in New Zealand is an annual publication of the National Oral History Association of New Zealand, Te Kete Kōrero-a-Waha o Te Motu (NOHANZ).

NOHANZ also publishes a quarterly newsletter. Its editors welcome news, letters, notes on sources, articles or reviews relevant to the principles and practice of oral history.

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NOHANZ

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Foreword

This double issue of Oral history in New Zealand, the journal of the National Oral History Association of New Zealand, marks NOHANZ's 15th anniversary.

The association was set up in October 1986 "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."¹ The first volume of the journal was published in 1988 and from the beginning contributions were sought from practitioners using oral history in a wide range of settings and those working in related areas. Successive editors have encouraged contributors to consider the methodology of oral history as well as the content of specific projects and also to look at the relationship between the two. As Tony Dreaver wrote in the second volume of the journal, "NOHANZ exists so that all New Zealanders with an interest in oral history can share each other's experiences, insights and works."²

Contributions to this double issue continue to draw on that wide range of contributors and on the varied uses of oral history that have developed in this country. Articles by Danny Keenan,

Wheturangi Walsh and Pip Desmond are based on presentations at the 2001 NOHANZ conference *Communities and oral history: Te Whare Kōrero Hāpori* and explore traditional and contemporary aspects of that theme. In an interview by Judith Byrne, Helen Frizzell describes her involvement in an innovative use of different kinds of oral history for a community theatre project. Jennie Gallagher explores the contradictions in recording the lives of women who were mountaineers from 1920-1950. Alison Laurie discusses the issues that can arise from the differing approaches of oral history ethical codes and university human ethics committees when oral history methodology is used for academic research.

Judith Binney and Megan Hutching reflect on 10 years of the Awards in Oral History - grants distributed annually from a fund gifted by the Australian government in 1990. The projects discussed by both Pip Desmond and Jennie Gallagher were funded in this way and aptly illustrate the rich body of work resulting from the awards and available to future researchers at the Alexander Turnbull Library, subject to any conditions placed on them.

Building on the work of the last fifteen years, NOHANZ looks

forward to future developments in oral history and invites you to participate in the following activities:

- The NOHANZ web site www.oralhistory.org.nz launched as part of the anniversary celebrations and providing another forum for information and discussion about oral history.
- The next issue of this journal - contact the association if you would like to submit an article, review or response.
- The 2003 national conference - contact the association for further details.

LINDA EVANS

Endnotes

¹ Claudia Orange, 'Foreword', *Oral history in New Zealand*, vol 1, 1988, p.3

² Tony Dreaver, 'Foreword', *Oral history in New Zealand*, vol 2, 1989, [p.iii]

Oral History Awards

JUDITH BINNEY AND MEGAN HUTCHING

Australian Sesquicentennial Gift Trust for Awards in Oral History. On 2 February 1990 the Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, announced at a press conference in Auckland that his country would gift \$1 million to the people of New Zealand to mark the sesquicentennial of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. This gift would be used to record the oral history of New Zealand and its close connections with the South Pacific. Geoffrey Palmer, then New Zealand Prime Minister, greeted the news of what he termed 'a most generous and far-sighted gift' with delight, adding that it would help to 'make a major and continuing contribution to uncovering the many histories of this part of the world.'

A trust was set up, the Australian Sesquicentennial Gift Trust for Awards in Oral History, and the money was invested. There is a committee of seven people, the Sesquicentennial Gift Trust Board, who are drawn from a range of 'communities'—for example, archives and museums, Māori and Pacific Island peoples, community oral historians and academics. Each year since 1991 the board has given out some of the interest as Awards in Oral History. The amount of money given has varied from year to year: a reflection of the amount that is available

(thanks to interest rates), and of the number and calibre of the applications.

The decisions are made by the board with reference to a number of criteria. These include whether or not the project will be in a new area of research or whether it offers a different perspective on a topic that has already been studied. The concept behind the project is also important, for example, such things as whether the benefits are likely to be larger than the act of recording the interviews. Another aspect which the board members consider is whether the project will be given back to the community in any way and what intellectual benefit the project might produce. Two practical considerations are whether it will be possible to complete the project in the time estimated, and whether or not oral history seems to be the best research technique for the particular topic.

1991 - \$88,073	(20 Awards)
1992 - \$80,635	(15 Awards)
1993 - \$91,950	(22 Awards)
1994 - \$75,673	(20 Awards)
1995 - \$69,300	(22 Awards)
1996 - \$79,388	(17 Awards)
1997 - \$82,858	(16 Awards)
1998 - \$84,544	(18 Awards)
1999 - \$83,840	(20 Awards)

To date (May 2000), 169 projects have received assistance amounting to approximately

\$730,000.

The 169 projects can be broken down into broad subject areas:

- topics in Māori history—42
- local history—30
- cultural history—13
- immigration/migrant groups—12
- Pacific Island topics—7
- women's history—21
- conservation—1
- aspects of labour history—6
- aspects of medical or welfare history—11
- military history—7
- economic/business history—2
- aspects of religious history—5
- general NZ history—2

The interviews have been recorded for a variety of reasons, including providing material for museum exhibitions, local history, recording ways of life which are no longer lived, and uncovering the experiences of immigrants to this country. Particularly important have been those which reflect the life experiences of groups in society which have been overlooked in the written record, for

JUDITH BINNEY, University of Auckland, is chair of the Sesquicentennial Gift Trust committee.

MEGAN HUTCHING administers the Awards in Oral History at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage

example, lesbians, gay men, women parenting alone and single parent families.

Māori projects, which have usually come from iwi or hapu groups, have included recording elders about traditional information regarding particular marae, whakapapa, waiata and taonga. An example is a project with Ngati Koata elders which was to collect this sort of information, but also to identify and tell stories about people in photographs. There have also been some biographical projects and others which are more generally to do with Māori, for example, one on contemporary Māori theatre.

There have been a few bicultural projects. One dealt with Māori and Pakeha of the East Cape and their relationship to the land. It is almost a cliché that Māori and Pakeha have different attitudes towards the land and that this is a major cultural difference between us. This project set out to explore whether and how people's attitudes differed. Another has pursued issues of identity for people who are of mixed Māori and Pakeha descent.

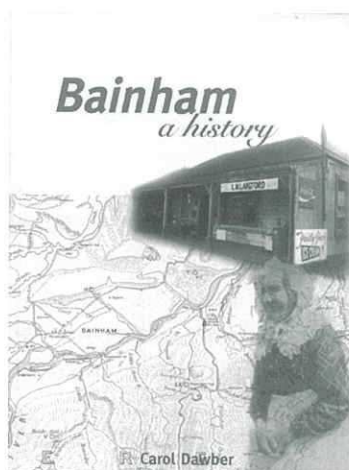
Local histories in areas such as Rawene, Hiruharama and Ngahinepouri have been funded. The Rawene interviews were with descendants of early European settlers in the area; the Hiruharama project was centred on a school centennial and the mostly Māori, elderly residents were interviewed, and the Ngahinepouri interviews were with older residents about their memories of the area, which is a small rural Waikato settlement settled reasonably early by Pakeha immigrants.

Those projects which are to do with business or economic history cover a wide range of industries

and professions such as, the petrochemical industry in Taranaki, the lives of stock and station agents, the Huntly coal-fields, shearers and commercial fishers.

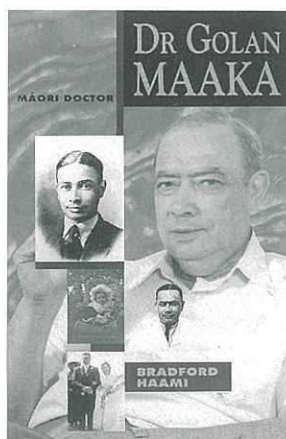
Some of the oral histories produced as a result of the Awards, have been used in subsequent publications. Amongst the books which have been produced are:

- James Allan, *Growing up Gay: New Zealand Men Tell Their Stories*, Auckland, Godwit, 1996
- Peggy Crawford, *Only an Orphan: First-hand Accounts of Life in Children's Institutions in*



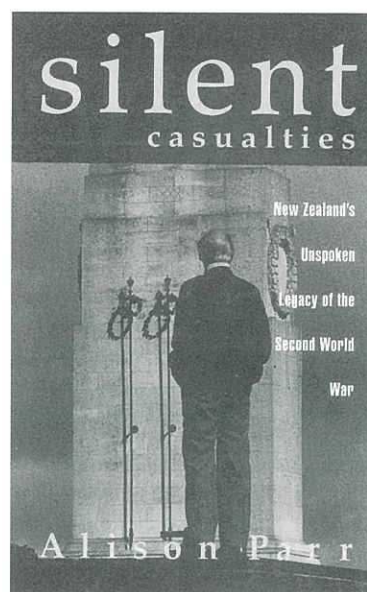
New Zealand, Lower Hutt, MJC Pub, 1995

- Carol Dawber, *Bainham: A History*, Picton, River Press, 1997
- Alison Gray, *Genes & Generations: Living with Huntington's Disease*, Wellington Hunting-

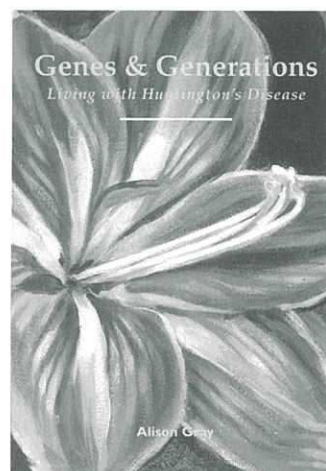


ton's Disease Association, 1995

- Alison Gray, *Mothers and Daughters*, Wellington, Bridget Williams Books, 1993



- Bradford Haami, *Dr Golan Maaka: Māori Doctor*, North Shore City, Tandem Press, 1995



- Bruce Maguire, *Gisborne Catholic Education, 1894-1994*, Gisborne, Bruce Maguire, 1994
- Alison Parr, *Silent Casualties: New Zealand's Unspoken Legacy of the Second World War*, North Shore City, Tandem Press, 1995
- Jane Tolerton, *Convent Girls: NZ Women Talk to Jane Tolerton*, Auckland, Penguin, 1994

The Awards are administered by the Oral Historian at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. My job

is to publicise the Awards, receive the applications each year and ensure that all the required information is included, and to liaise with the people and institutions which have received Awards. I am also responsible for ensuring that progress is being made on each project.

One of the terms of the Awards is that the original recordings must be deposited at the Alexander Turnbull Library's Oral History

Centre where they are available to researchers, subject to any restrictions placed on them by interviewers or interviewees.

As a result of the vision of the Australian government, of the many decisions made by the Sesquicentennial Gift Trust Board over the years and, of course, of the efforts of the interviewers and people interviewed, a large number of projects have been added to the collection of the Oral History

Centre. And so, as Judith Binney, the current chair of the board, has said, 'unwritten' history has been recorded in the spoken 'dialects' of the divergent experiences which have shaped this country, and which will continue to do so.

Megan Hutching

TEN YEARS ON: THE AUSTRALIAN SESQUICENTENNIAL GIFT TRUST AWARDS IN ORAL HISTORY

It was ten years ago that the Trust was set up by an imaginative and generous gift of the Australian government to mark the occasion of New Zealand's sesquicentenary as a nation of two peoples living under the British Crown.

During those ten years I have met many people involved in the practice of recording history orally and it has often been observed that there is no fund quite like this one. Alessandro Portelli, who visited New Zealand from the University of Rome in 1999 and is well known for his work on popular culture and working-class lives, knew of no parallel. Although the amount of money available to spend each year is not huge (\$80-90,000), the fund has generated a remarkable number of diverse projects.

Over the ten years, an extraordinary archive of master tapes has been built up in the Alexander Turnbull Library's Oral History Centre - and, of course, copies of

the tapes in various other repositories connected to individual projects. The policies that the Trust Board adopted (and which seem to have proven well) were to support communities as well as individuals: thus, there have been marae projects, immigrants' stories, regional stories, war stories, peace stories, union stories, unemployed stories, actors, musicians, dancers and museums' projects. We have funded insiders' stories and outsiders' stories: the interviewers may be members of the group or they may be outsiders to the experiences that they are wanting to record. As each bring different skills and ideas to their projects, the outcomes will be different. But neither are excluded as viable ways of proceeding.

The Board has funded small projects and some big projects; usually we fund about 12-18 projects each year. Thus, a project is never full-time work, but we have supported the costs involved

and an element of the time. We have shut out academics, that is those who, in theory, have access to University research funds (although I have always felt a bit uncomfortable about that, knowing how difficult it is in reality to obtain University research grants). Thus, there has always been an element of risk built into these grants because no-one is funded as a 'professional'. Many applicants (indeed most in recent times) have attended an oral history course or class; some applicants we have required to do so. Almost every project has been completed. Some are a bit late, as oral history is a time-consuming form of research and almost everyone underestimates their project! But because it is an act of direct involvement with people and a commitment to a project that is, by definition, shared, they almost always get done. This high rate of completion of projects has undoubtedly been greatly helped

by the creation, in 1991, of the position of Oral Historian attached to the Historical Branch. The need for a practical advisor and liaison person was early recognized and Megan Hutching has fulfilled the task admirably since that time.

Thus the tapes exist, and also some publications resulting from them. Voices, dialects, accents, slang, personal quirks of expression are unexpected benefits beyond the 'story' and the shared knowledge. All these components

in narration are extremely difficult to convey through written words; hearing them, they transport us into the many private and local worlds that exist within the national community. Oral history is no more or less reliable than the private diaries and personal letters which all the major research libraries hold. But what oral history does convey are the unexpected lodes of human wisdom, and humour, and insight, and bravery, and compassion, and modesty, as well as the partial

memories and the selective memories that every form of personal record possesses. Above all, oral history restores humanity to the centre of history.

The Trust Board has always enjoyed its work: making it possible for all sorts of people to talk to all sorts of other people, for posterity. I know of no other quite so enjoyable a task.

Judith Binney
Foundation Chairperson of the Trust

Still Being Punished

Corporal punishment's lifelong effects

RACHAEL SELBY
NGÄTI RAUKAWA,
NGÄTI PARERAUKAWA

For most of the twentieth century, the practice of corporal punishment by parents and teachers and even other authority figures was acceptable in our society. It was, in many ways, regarded as a parent's duty to inflict physical punishment on a wayward child, a teacher's duty to strap or cane a disobedient child or one who had disregarded the rules of the establishment. Our kiwi language is peppered with phrases such as — "a good clip behind the ears" "a kick up the bum" "a good slap" "wait till your father gets home" (which had particular meaning in particular families), "wait till I get my hands on you" "a good hiding never hurt anyone" "bring the wooden spoon" and many more. Those of us who were children of the twentieth century know about physical punishment, if not personally, then via neighbours, friends, our schools, the law, and the media. We might even say that the twentieth century was a period of considerable violence in homes and schools, though we might also argue that its acceptance and use, reduced in the last two decades of the century, to the extent that at the turn of the century, we have a generation of young children who have never been physically punished at home with old fashioned ear pulling, hair pulling, wooden spoon or hand hitting on limbs and behinds. That is not to say that

violence is absent from our society.

I can confirm that when I graduated from Teachers' College in 1969, many of my fellow graduates (mostly the young men) went out to buy a leather strap to take with their chalk, duster and pencils to their new jobs in New Zealand's primary schools. Some talked with some enthusiasm about getting into the job and wondered who their first victim would be, as they asserted their authority in the new profession.

Twenty years later when my eldest son began his secondary school career as a form one student at Otaki College, I added a note to his enrolment form that he was not to be caned under any circumstances. I was a member of the Board of Governors after having been a teacher at the school and I could not accept the continuing corporal punishment of children in our schools. I had also become aware of the ongoing trauma experienced by people my own age and older, who had attended New Zealand's Native Schools until 1969 when the schools changed their status and became Education Board Schools alongside the many State schools in New Zealand.

I also became aware that my own children and children of their generation expressed doubt about the tales they sometimes heard

that our kuia or koroua were strapped at school for speaking in te reo Māori. My children were growing up in Otaki, in the world of Whakatupuranga Rua Mano, Generation 2000, which actively promoted and encouraged the revival of te reo Māori. Throughout the 1980s, at our marae in Levin, we hosted a Māori language immersion week each year in January, and at the end of the week, as participants made their farewell speeches, we listened to people who tearfully confessed to having "lost" their language. They had been fluent speakers of te reo Māori when they went to school, but then had been strapped and punished so severely that they shut out their language and dared not utter a word of it for fear of being strapped, caned, hit, chastised, and threatened by the teacher. Now they were trying to retrieve their language from deep within, or to re-learn it, as the ability to speak in te reo Māori began to be

RACHAEL SELBY from Ngāti Raukawa is a kaiāwhina at Te Wananga o Raukawa and a lecturer in Social Policy and Social Work at Massey University in Palmerston North. She has been involved in several oral history projects, all involving working with Māori, and is passionate about recording stories of Māori women.

celebrated and revived on a wider basis in Aotearoa/New Zealand by a new generation of Māori who had no experience of corporal punishment and little knowledge of our education history.

The irony was that te reo Māori was also being taught in our schools, learned by Pakeha children from Pakeha teachers who were now regarded as special if they had learned Māori at Teacher's College or at a university. Our kuia and koroua who had been through the trauma of shutting out their language in case they uttered it at school, were now being questioned by their mokopuna as to why they had let their language die, as if they had somehow willed this to happen and supported its extinction. They had been punished at school for speaking te reo Māori, now their children asked why they had failed to teach them their own language and their grandchildren were learning it from Pakeha teachers, the grandchildren of the teachers who had beaten them two generations earlier. While they felt enormous relief that there had been a change in government policies and attitudes to te reo Māori, the loss was only greater and the pain deeper.

In early 1994, an academic in education told me that there were no official records of children having been punished at school for speaking te reo Māori and many teachers doubted it had ever happened. I had a principal of a Wellington school who trained at the same time as me (in the late 1960s), tell me that there were stories like that around, but that is all they were — stories. There was no substance and no real evidence that it ever happened. Attitudes such as this have contributed to a very effective silencing of several

generations of Māori fearful of discussing the effects of being silenced at school many years ago.

I knew that I had to record some of those stories so that they could be printed on the pages of a book. Books, it is often said, are more likely to record the 'truth'. Many people are still suspect of the oral stories of our elders and oral history, particularly that of Māori whose stories have been disbelieved as less 'authentic' and less 'reliable' than 'official' records which do not record these events. I hoped that the pain of those who have suffered for so long, might be eased, their stories might be validated, and their children might understand something about the history of corporal punishment in New Zealand, the education policies which promoted such practices, the beliefs about the roles of parents and teachers at the time and the attitudes to Māori and te reo Māori. I also hoped that those who could not speak Māori because of the punishments inflicted at school might find some relief from the pain and guilt when the research interviews were published and 'authenticated' through a research project.

The interviews and issues

I began by interviewing two men, one who had been to school in the far north and one who had been educated at Omahu in Hawkes Bay. Don was born in 1934 and attended Otangaroa Native School. I arrived at his home one October evening around five o'clock. We had arranged to have dinner, and then record the interview. I spent the entire evening with Don, leaving his home around 11 p.m. I had enough material for an entire book and Don had educated me about life in the far north in the '30s and '40s, about teaching in

New Zealand through the '50s, '60s and '70s, life in Auckland in the last two decades of the twentieth century, about a lifetime of pain and suffering because he wanted to avoid being punished for speaking his own language, the gift of his parents and his grandparents, and theirs before them. He feared the severe punishments and described them in detail to me. 'Our little bums were stretched over the keys of the piano, we were stretched over the piano, hugging the back of the piano and we were whacked on the backside with our supplejack that we had to go up into the forest to cut with blunt knives... they were hung to the left of the blackboard... when we were finished being whacked, we had to put our own supplejacks back.' Don has been circumspect about telling his story as he says so many have not believed him.

In the classroom, they were taught in English, but in the playground, they were supposed to speak English, but often forgot. He says, 'we were so frightened, we were so afraid, we were so good' for the teacher.

The long-term impact on him is severe, perhaps heightened because so many have not believed his story. He has worked to overcome the fears which rush from within him when anyone asks him to welcome a group in Māori, or when someone speaks to him in Māori assuming that a man of his age from rural Northland will be fluent. He described the embarrassment, the accusations by people who disbelieve him when he says, 'I can't'. He says elders have 'told him off' for not welcoming them in Māori' when he was Director of an Art Gallery in Auckland. On occasions when he is asked to welcome a group he says,

'My head falls off. I break out in a sweat. I see myself being whacked on the backside over the piano with a supplejack'.

I felt so clearly that the punishment had not stopped when he left Standard 6 and went on to secondary school. All his life, he has sought strategies to overcome the fear of being put into the embarrassing situation of being asked to either speak Māori on behalf of a group, or responding to someone speaking Māori. He is relieved that his wife and family came to understand his 'predicament' as he called it, but with the revitalisation of te reo Māori, he is very aware of his own loss.

When I had turned the recorder on after dinner, I merely recorded a part of an evening during which this wonderful man had shared his six decades of life with me. We now had a relationship which would never be solely one of relatives by marriage, but one of having shared the pain and grief he had experienced. The warnings I had heard from Māori researchers that interviewing Māori participants means creating lifelong relationships began to ring in my ears. I realised that one doesn't share some of the deepest pains of life without there being an ongoing relationship created between researcher and the researched. And dredging up memories for a researcher who then returns to daily life and routines is a great contribution, which needs ongoing acknowledgement. The following day I was filled with thoughts of Don's stories and of the evening I had spent with him. As researchers we need also be aware that the day after the interview, the thoughts and memories continue to float to the top for the participant as well, and that we may have opened

wounds which take time to heal over again.

The oral historian has many responsibilities amongst which are to record accurately and expertly, respecting the storyteller and his/her story and to ensure that no greater pain is brought about as a result of an interview. If the researcher intends to publish the results, the relationship continues, as the story becomes public and the consequence of making one's story public is felt by the storyteller.

A multilingual interviewee

The second interviewee was Pat, born in 1946, monolingual as a child in te reo Māori, multilingual as an adult in Mandarin, Russian, Dutch, Malay, Indonesian and English, not Māori. I had met Pat on several occasions and was fascinated that he was a linguist, but could not speak in his first language. I interviewed Pat in Wellington in 1997 and again came away very aware that I had touched many of the bruises which lay deep inside him. The long-term impact of the very severe punishment on his life; his ability to re-learn his language seemed almost lost. His children had also lost out and were learning te reo Māori from others rather than from their father.

Pat had been severely punished as a small child in the first months of his life at school in the early 1950s when he was in the first year of school. He describes the teacher playing the piano and asking the children not to make a noise. When Pat told the boy next to him to stop making a noise, he was sent outside and then to the headmaster where he was strapped '... on the hand. I wanted

to know why I was getting the strap. When I asked, no answer was given, except that I got another strap, one for asking and one for saying something'.

He had spent most of his life shutting out the pain inflicted from the punishment. He says he never knew why he felt as he did and it is only after returning to study as an adult student in his late forties that he came to understand that many of his fears and his rejection of things Māori came from those early beatings. 'One day I had to go in there and I had to put my head under the desk and I got the cane on the backside... it was always the headmaster I had to go to... it was only in my first year'. Pat describes the end to the caning and strapping when his parents came home one day, 'they asked where I was and my grandmother didn't know. They looked for me ... and eventually my Dad found me and I was asleep in the wood-shed... I ran away from school because I was sent to get the strap, and she (Mum) said it was from then on, (I) never spoke again for about six months ... I never spoke at all for about six months, and then I just spoke English, and all my life I have never ever wanted to speak Māori...'

He described going to a tangi of a close friend in 1997, and standing at the gate waiting for someone to come and take them on to the marae formally and appropriately. Eventually he led the group on and as he said he 'was forced into it'. He had to speak for the group. 'I need my reo,' Pat told me.

With both men, they are often in situations where they 'need' their reo. Many of our young people have had the opportunity to learn te reo Māori and when

they attend hui, they stand back and prepare to support their kaumatua. Sadly for the men in Pat and Don's situations, they are again reminded of their loss. The loss, the pain and the punishment continue.

Lost and found

Two of the women interviewed for this project both describe being strapped at schools in Tikitiki and Tāwera. However, unlike the men, they retained their language and today feel proud that they have that part of them intact. Mehira works at a kōhanga reo and has been able to take her granddaughter with her to kōhanga. However, neither of her boys, nor her daughter was able to learn te reo Māori from their mother and have expressed that loss to her. So for her, there has been a generation skipped. She expressed her sorrow that she didn't push her sons into learning as children, but realises that they were raised during an era when English language was paramount and Māori had not found its place and wide acceptance in New Zealand society.

Lia was born in 1951 and strapped for speaking Māori at school. In the 1980s, her sons rejected Lia's suggestions that they might learn Māori. For her though, she says, 'I'm glad I know my reo, I'm glad I speak it'. She notes the irony that when she was at primary school, 'we weren't allowed to speak Māori and now we're trying to get the kids to learn their reo'. She says, 'What I think of it today, is that they're pushing it down to everybody and it's hypocrisy. Why didn't they do that years ago?' Views such as this abound amongst those who were punished and they often find it difficult to respond to teachers

practicing their Māori on Māori parents who visit the school.

Monolingual in English

My fifth participant was a woman who never learnt te reo as a child and has spent most of her adult life grappling with the many different methods of learning te reo Māori, from books to classes to tapes.

While she was not punished for speaking te reo at school, she has suffered from disparaging remarks being made by young people in her work situation because she doesn't speak te reo Māori. Janice had worked in the health sector all her life and in her community where she is a respected elder. The absence of te reo Māori in her life is keenly felt and she expresses those feelings in the interview I had with her in 1997. She asked to be interviewed, as she wanted her voice and story to be heard.

Conclusion

These five interviews paint a part of a story. Since recording the stories and publishing them, I have had numerous other kaumatua contact me with their stories and seeking help with their 'disability' — a term used by one of the interviewees. They relate stories of being embarrassed, feeling inadequate, of asking how others have overcome their fears. Throughout the country these stories can be multiplied.

The women have retained their language and are proud that they have done so. The severity of the punishment inflicted on the boys has left men who have not overcome the pain, the fear and the embarrassment. All the respondents reported a disappointment that their children had not been able to learn the language from them, given that for their grand-children it is now

an option and sought after. It is ironic that the very system, the education system, which set about erasing the language in one period in our history, has come full circle and in the new millennium governments play with the idea of making Māori language 'compulsory' in our schools. Our kaumatua have every right to feel confused, cynical and annoyed.

My intention in publishing the stories was to place them on record, to enable a group to tell their stories, in the hope that we would learn from them. I hope that schools and teachers might understand why some Māori parents are so unenthusiastic towards Pakeha teachers attempts to converse in Māori, why some Māori parents are less than enthusiastic about schools generally, why some Māori parents believe pushing Māori language is 'hypocrisy', why some Māori parents with long memories and deep scars avoid schools and teachers. Behind each face there is a story and often we cannot guess how our parents and grandparents have been punished and have deep and painful scars to show for it. Pushing Māori language at makes them feel as if they are still being punished!

NB: These interviews are currently held by the author.

Our Place

AN INTERVIEW WITH HELEN FRIZZELL

The following interview, recorded by Judith Byrne with Helen Frizzell (and transcribed by Megan Hutching) describes the way in which an oral history project was converted into a stage play. Helen Frizzell, Oral History Co-ordinator at Presbyterian Support Otago, explains how her research project for the International Year of the Older Person which Support funded grew into something larger that encouraged wider community participation.

JB. How did you get involved with this project?

HF. I work for Presbyterian Support Otago, I'm the oral historian there, and do other things as well as oral history. The largest area of the organisation is aged care. Because we run so many homes and hospitals and provide services for older people living in the community, the organisation was interested in how older people were being affected by changes occurring in society, changes in government policy. So I was asked to undertake a qualitative research project and work with a small group of older people, talking to them about issues of ageing and wellbeing. The agency was interested to see if we could use that information to improve current services, or develop new services. I worked with a group of

five older people and I recorded life history interviews. They're all two-and-a-half to three hours long and primarily focused on the usual - family background, childhood, education, etc. Throughout the interview, we talked also about their experiences of and thoughts about age - when they were young kids, their parents' and grandparents' experience of ageing and who cared for them when they required some sort of assistance, and then we went through their lives and talked maybe about people they'd cared for, that sort of thing, and what was happening in their day-to-day lives now, who were they getting services from, etc. All the people I talked to were currently receiving home support services from the organisation, that's anything from help with domestic work to personal care.

I did those interviews in 1999. At the same time, the organisation wanted to do something to celebrate International Year of Older Persons, which was also 1999. It seemed that everyone wanted to try and do something that was innovative. They wanted to hear from older people about their experiences, they wanted to celebrate older people's lives and the contribution they make to society, and they wanted to do something that would reach a

wider audience. I knew that the interviews I was doing had such interesting material in them. Also, for years I have been involved in doing a course at the university, for students who do community theatre, about using oral history as a way of recording information that they could maybe then turn into some sort of theatre work. Because of that and because of what I've seen overseas, I thought that theatre was a really powerful way of reaching a lot of people, and also a way people could talk about their concerns. And they could be presented without the people being identified. It's a way of getting issues across without pointing the finger.

I suggested that maybe we could use the transcripts of the interviews and work with the community theatre company that I'd done quite a bit of work with and bring the two together. So I was Support's representative in working with Talking House, which is a Dunedin-based community theatre company, in developing a play.

What happened then was quite an interesting process. And I think that the process is as important as the final result. I went back to all the people interviewed and said to them, "Could we have permission to use this material for a play?" They all signed release forms, and

the agreement was that they would be consulted every step of the way. The transcripts were then given to the Talking House members and that was part of the material the play was based on. But they also wanted to involve older people in the actual writing of the play. All the people I'd worked with were pretty well housebound and really couldn't leave their homes for reasons of health and frailty. It wasn't going to be easy to get them together as a group. So, in July of '99, we put an article in the community rag and invited older people to come along to an afternoon workshop. It was called a 'tell-your-story' event, and the Dunedin Playback Theatre, which is associated with Talking House, were invited to come along and play back people's stories to them. About 40 people turned up, which was pretty amazing considering that we didn't do a lot of publicity and it was a very cold Dunedin Saturday.

Basically the Playback Theatre Company and Talking House worked with the audience to get them to tell a story, and it was amazing. Because it started off with everyone thinking, What is this all about? But we went for an hour and it was just fascinating. The audience got really into it. They could see their stories being acted out and interpreted in different ways and it ended up with everyone just firing and talking and getting to meet one another and all that. They talked about things like work, the Depression, family, perception of life then and now, that sort of thing. At the end we had the cup of tea and biscuits, and somebody from Talking House said, "Look, what this is aimed at is getting a group of older people together to meet for six weeks, once a week, and help us write a

play." And so afterwards people signed up and we started with a group of twelve people. I think the youngest would have been about 70, and the eldest, I think, was in his 90s. We'd meet on a Monday afternoon for about three hours.

Each week we'd have a different character and basically we'd all decide there was going to be, say, a male character, born in such and such a date. Then the group would start off talking about something like their childhoods and, that day, they would develop James as a character through their own experiences. And we took copious notes. And then the next week we did another person, Doris, and the next week we did someone else. We had just screeds of material, and then we did a last summing up session. Really we co-devised detailed life histories for four fictional characters, so the lucky playwright went away with all this material and the transcripts as well. And she then put a script together.

About October, which was Age On The Go Week in Dunedin, we had a play reading and the team from Talking House came along and people were invited to come, and again we must have had about 40 or 50 people. Some well known Dunedin actors read the parts and Talking House got feedback from the audience and they went away and tidied up the script. And then it was a matter of casting and doing the production. One of the issues in casting was trying to find people who were professional actors who fitted the ages. That wasn't easy, but they managed to cast the four characters—there's two male and two female. And I think it might have been Janet de Wagt - she's involved a lot with Support doing art work - who suggested the idea of My Place,

and so that's the name of the play. It's based on contributions from many people but it doesn't represent one person's story. It's many stories interwoven.

Presbyterian Support financed the whole thing — it was Support Otago's major project for the International Year of Older Persons. They put a lot of money into the play - it would have been \$15,000 at least, plus all my time. So they funded it and Talking House produced it.

It was two quite different organisations coming together, but it worked. I think that what trips a lot of groups up is lack of support and funding. It's very hard to do this sort of stuff on the smell of an oily rag. In this situation you had a major organisation and a professional theatre company coming together who were committed to it and funding had been put into it, so we had to make it work. Not that we wouldn't have anyway, but there were those incentives. A date had been set so you had to work through things.

Talking House used all their contacts to have it put on at the Fortune, which is the main theatre in Dunedin. It is no mean feat to get community theatre in Fortune Theatre. We had the downstairs, which is a great facility and holds about 90 people. It went from 24-27 November. We kept the tickets really reasonable so people could afford to go and we made sure that there was good access and all that.

A couple of nights it was packed out and the feedback was really interesting. One thing was that it's not often you have older people centre stage. You could see people in the audience recognising things - things that trigger memories. It was basically a blank stage, in a sense. Four characters in chairs or whatever, and they didn't interact.

Four independent characters - the connection was that they were all on the stage and their stories were intercut. So you'd go from Doris to James to Fred and pick up their life story again. Behind each of them, around the sides, there were slides, black and white slides, then gradually into colour as we came to the present. Slides were used to evoke character. There was music in between, linking each character. People liked that - the minimal fuss, the simple stage, the use of slides. Somebody said it really allowed you to focus on each character. The different layers. Things like shedding parental control to dealing with poverty; dealing with modern bureaucracy. There were quite a few comments about WINZ. And also the charm of ordinary stories, people said. Like watching somebody's life unfold on stage.

JB. That's really interesting and it's something that touches my interest in community theatre as well. You were involved in those times when they came together on Monday afternoons, then that material and your transcripts went off to the scriptwriter. Can you remember the first time you saw or heard or read what the scriptwriter turned it into?

HF. It would have been at the play reading. I was involved all the way through until she took it away so I'd heard people's stories. But I had no idea how she would make sense of all that. It seemed like information overload to me and I couldn't work out - to me that was the fascinating bit - how someone welded that into a vital and interesting script. So when I heard it, I was just amazed and so excited because, having worked with the organisation and convinced them it was worth doing, I was pretty nervous. I thought, What say this doesn't work? I had

nightmares about it. We're talking a social service agency that has huge calls on its funds so it's not the usual thing that they'd go off and support a play. I mean it's pretty unusual to have an oral historian, but this is more left field. It was a leap of faith, really, for the organisation. They were just hoping that it was going to achieve what they wanted it to. I must admit when I saw the enjoyment on the chief executive's face and the board members, I was relieved.

Another thing in doing a project is finding the right group to work with. Talking House were committed to community, they were committed to valuing people's stories, they were committed to ensuring that they followed sound ethical guidelines, they involved people. I should emphasise that not only did we have consent forms, but each person I'd interviewed for the oral histories got sent a copy of the script, and they all read it and gave comment and they asked for a few changes. Each person who formed part of the working group, that started as twelve and dropped to six later on, who stayed right the way through, saw the script, came along to the play reading. And they knew straight away it was their stories. Some were about painful things, and I must admit going to that play reading, we were quite nervous because I wasn't sure how some of the people would react. And you could see them, as soon as they recognised their bit. Of course, the rest of the audience wouldn't know it was theirs, but they knew. I wondered how people would deal with knowing this is my story but it's in a totally different context, and it's been interpreted - you know, it's their story of my story.

The other thing was, because we had limited funds, we could only

have it on for four days. We had two sessions some days, six sessions altogether. In Dunedin you can put in as many ads in as you like, but people are cautious if it's a bit different. We only had four days to get people in there. We had limited resources so the people rehearsing the play only had a few days in the theatre before it went on, so it was really doing things down to the line. But I think opening night was just fantastic. The second night Presbyterian Support just about booked out the theatre. They shouted all sorts of members. Both the board and the organisation, they just thought it was fantastic. And from the feedback they got - you know the review in the *Otago Daily Times* was very positive - I think it achieved what they hoped it would achieve and it was something totally different. It's like, you know, people in the pond, it has so many ripples.

I think for the actors themselves it meant so many different things too. The way they related to it, and what they got from it. For them it was quite a different piece of work and I think the whole process was pretty demanding. For some of them, I think they found the two sessions a day - it was an hour, a 55-minute play - pretty taxing as well. Some of them hadn't acted for years so it was coming back into it and gearing up, and all of that.

JB. And have you got any sense to what extent the oral history interviews contributed to the script? Like, did the scriptwriter talk about, say, the difference between them and, say, the stuff that was done in those Monday afternoon meetings?

HF. I actually haven't talked to the playwright about that, but my sense is one of the differences is that while we took notes at the

weekly sessions, I know in the script there's actual quotes from the transcripts. There's a wonderful line from one of the people interviewed that still stays in my mind. She is a woman who has one leg, has emphysema, has heart problems, leaves her house probably once a year. Imagine going out from your property once a year. She said to me, "I've got so many problems wrong with me, it's not funny." Yet she's having a ball, just loving life, living it to the max, and she said in her interview something like, "I just am really having a good time in old age. My husband's passed away and that's really sad, but for the first time, I've had time to stop and smell a flower, watch a bee go in and out." Something like that, and they actually used that. So I suppose from the oral history interviews you had people's words said in their own way. The notes we took at the Monday sessions didn't actually record the way they said it. I think the oral history interviews probably added much more context, added a depth.

JB. And did any of the five people that you did originally interviewed go to the actual show?

HF. No. That was really sad. They were all given tickets for themselves or their family to use, but one of the difficulties was that it was on at either 8 o'clock at night, or six, and for older people, that's quite late. I said I'll come and collect you and take you there and bundle you up, and keep you warm and some of them said, "Oh, I'll think about it." But, no, they didn't seem to want to go, and I don't know whether that was shyness, or feeling that it was too hard going out. The eldest person I interviewed was 93, and doesn't leave his house at all, and the youngest would have been 72, and

at the time was undergoing a major heart operation. One of the other people I interviewed is almost blind, and quite deaf. But a lot of the people in the working group went.

I think the whole process fascinated me because it wasn't just the playwright taking the transcripts I'd done away and interpreting them, it was the way Talking House were really committed to this collaborative process which involved older people in the devising of the whole play. I mean, OK, sure they shaped it, they fine tuned it, but all along the way people had a say. There were some things that weren't easy to deal with, but that's all part of it.

You've got so many things going on - on the one hand, you've got skills to do with encouraging people to share their stories with other people in a public setting; then you've got how groups interact—working with groups of people and how they feel about one another, and after a few weeks people start to be a bit more open and all that sort of stuff. And then there's the skill in writing a play, the whole organisational stuff and advertising and all that. I mean, it's just multi-layered really.

I can't think of any major difficulties. The changes that were made were minor, like changing names or slightly altering settings. I think in most part, people thought it was great. Sometimes I did wonder, with some of the obviously more painful stuff, how those people dealt with that, but they gave their permission for it to go ahead, and we checked up with them. One of them said, "Yeah, it was really painful," because it was something that happened when she lost her children, and obviously 50 years later, revisiting that, was

really painful but she wanted it to go ahead. It gets to a point where you can only do so much, you have to respect that these are adults and able to make their own decisions. Maybe they don't really say how they feel because of the culture that they've been brought up in, but you have to go with it, and hope that your processes are OK, and that people feel they can say, "Look, I want to make changes," or whatever. And the fact they did require a few suggests that they did feel they were able to do that.

After it finished, we got phone calls from people just hearing about it, asking us to put it on again. So that's why we're thinking of doing it again. I've just got to find the money. The funding we're going for is to tour it around the Otago region, to make a radio programme of it and maybe a video - the local students doing theatre and television will do a video.

There's also been interest from the schools and from the polytech who see it as useful in terms of educating younger people about older people, issues for older people, their lives, celebrating older people's lives. So there's a real educational component to it, particularly for people working in nursing and gerontology areas, occupational therapy, that sort of thing.

There's been quite a lot of interest from different parts of New Zealand as well. I gave a paper at a conference where all the Christian social services get together once every two years, and there was a lot of interest from various areas in doing something similar. And a woman rang me from the Royal Foundation for the Blind, and she said were we thinking of producing it

as a talking book or a radio programme. She said there's so little material for older people that's from New Zealand. There are a lot of talking books from overseas but there's little stuff from here.

And that reminds me of another thing that people said, "Hey, this is from our place. This is from our community. This is about us." They could recognise the places mentioned; they could recognise

events, so people really identified with it. When I was in Britain I had contact with the Milton Keynes Living Archive project, and their whole philosophy was 'Dig where you stand'. You don't need to go outside, the stories are right here. I think Talking House probably has that philosophy as well. The project's richness was building on local people's experiences, their stories. That's why

they related to it.

My Place

Presented by Talking House

Written by Lindsey Shields

Directed by Trish Wells

Dramaturgist: Simon O'Connor

Cast: David Corballis, John

Dawson, Annette Facer, Louise

Petherbridge

Manufacturing Silences:

Not every recorded interview is an oral history

ALISON J. LAURIE

Not every recorded interview is an oral history. This is self-evident to oral historians, but some academic researchers still believe that what they are doing is 'oral history', even though their tapes are destined for destruction and will never be archived or made available to anyone other than the researcher. In some cases, academic researchers are hazy about the significant differences between recorded secrets of confidential informants and oral histories recorded and collected to make interviewees' stories available to others.

University Ethics Committees are important. For too long researchers and academics abused human subjects: in New Zealand, for example, by carrying out research upon women unaware that they were part of an experiment at National Women's Hospital in Auckland on cervical cancer, many died.¹ In the past, researchers carried out research without permission or consent to publish their findings, or allowing subjects to withdraw from the project. The idea of informed consent has been strengthened as a result of debates following public inquiries such as the Cartwright Inquiry on the National Women's Hospital research.

Most oral historians follow codes of ethical practice. Oral

histories have not been obtained through deception and hidden microphones. Tapes have not been archived without the consent of the subject, and archives have followed clear procedures as to who may have access to tapes and what use may be made of them. Public archives have followed procedures developed for the deposit of manuscripts and used these for tape collections.

What is an oral history? I believe that it is a recorded interview made by agreement with an interviewee willing to tell a particular story or series of stories about themselves on tape, with the intention that this tape be archived under conditions agreed to by the interviewee. Oral history has been described by African-American oral historian, Alferdteen Brown Harrison, as 'a planned, organised method of eliciting information from selected narrators about their personal experiences for preservation and scholarly use'.² He suggested that oral history was an important technique for African Americans and other cultural minorities to use, and cited the African proverb "when an elder dies, a library burns to the ground", arguing that oral history could preserve that library as it is 'the pathway to the people's cultural memory'.³

Martha Ross, of the American

Oral History Association, has said that oral history is 'a technique for generating and preserving historically interesting information from people's personal recollections by means of tape recorded interviews'.⁴ The Baylor University Institute for Oral History explained oral history as 'a qualitative research process based on personal interviewing, suited to understanding meanings, interpretations, relationships, and subjective experience ... [O]ral history interviews investigate interactions, relationships, dynamics and contexts'.⁵

As New Zealand feminist historian, Caroline Daley, has expressed it, '[w]hat women remember and retell, tells us much about their individual experiences and their understanding of their cultural place within their community'.⁶

American oral historian and

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former director of the Columbia University Oral History Research Office, Ron J Grele, analysed the tapes of working-class Jewish men and commented on the way in which ordinary people often thoughtfully construct and create their oral accounts for the interviewer. He found that;

*people do create their own history, and they do so within their own conceptions of its value and use in the culture ... the existence of such complex structures of historical memory is also an indication of the enormous amount of work we must do as ... oral historians if we are to create the documents upon which ... comprehension [of working-class culture] will be based.*⁷

Grele cites Staughton Lynd who had suggested that oral history is 'history itself, in the form of an articulating consciousness, offering new opportunities for obtaining history from the inarticulate'.⁸ However, the oral history interview is not simply information obtained from an interviewee to be used as a source for historians. Unlike 'traditional sources' such as letters, records, archival materials or other manuscript sources, oral history interviews are 'constructed by ... active intervention' and are 'created after the fact'.⁹ Grele argued that '[t]he recorded conversations of oral history ... are joint activities, organized and informed by the historical perspectives of both participants' and he suggested that within the relationship created by the interaction between interviewer and interviewee, are 'aspects of the interview which can be classified as performance'. Narratives, he claimed, 'may be constructed as chronological tales of personal remembrances of events' but they are not 'autobiographies, biographies or memories'. An interview, he maintained, is not 'a literary

product ... created, alone and as a result of reflective action, it cannot be divorced from the circumstances of its creation, which of necessity is one of audience participation and face-to-face confrontation'.¹⁰

New Zealand historian, Toni McWhinnie, pointed out that oral research 'cannot easily be replicated'. Although later researchers might listen to tapes, these 'can never convey the wealth of non-verbal information that is available to the interviewer'.¹¹ She reminds us that not only facial expressions and body language are important, but that the interviewing environment provides a 'context of meaning for the spoken word'. She acknowledged the interview as a 'unique performance between two social actors' with 'the nature of that performance [dependent] ... on the relationship between them at the time'.¹²

Clustered sequences of events can produce a multiplicity of versions and multilayered accounts. Interviewees produce their accounts with the intention of making sense of their own lives, and the various ways in which these have evolved — or how they want to describe this in the present interview. Indeed, as Elizabeth Tonkin has remarked, 'It is hardly surprising that so much history is an assertion of social identity, when we consider the ways in which it is formative of personal identity'. Tonkin adds that 'if one considers that "I" is a complex construction, then it may not be false of oral tellers to use "I" for events they could not have witnessed',¹³ and concludes 'that one's self is both variable and vulnerable may be disconcerting to consider, but it does not follow that selves are non-existent'.¹⁴

British feminist interviewer, Ann

Oakley, has discussed the empathetic relationship often arising between two women in the interview situation.¹⁵ However, in a jointly written article American feminists Kathryn Anderson, an oral historian, and Dana C. Jack, a psychologist and therapist, warn that the interviewer must always 'remain attentive to the moral dimension of interviewing and ... follow the narrator's lead ... [and] honor her integrity and privacy, not to intrude into areas that the narrator has chosen to hold back'.¹⁶

This approach has been criticised by Australian oral historian, Shurlee Swain, who pointed out that 'all interviews involve ... a personal interchange, the therapeutic potential of which is beyond the control of the interviewer'.¹⁷ Interviewers cannot know the potential force of uncomfortable or painful recollections. Australian oral historian, Alistair Thomson, who interviewed elderly First World War veterans wrote that, '[a]t times I had to stop a line of questioning in an interview ... because it was too painful. Unlike the therapist, oral historians may not be around to put together the pieces of memories that have been deconstructed and are no longer safe'.¹⁸

Swain also reminds us that 'however stringent the process through which the interview is negotiated, narrators can never be sure of how we will use their information'.¹⁹ Narratives may have been produced as joint endeavours, but what control do the interviewees really have? American feminist oral historian, Katherine Borland, has discussed the effects of placing a feminist interpretation upon an incident in her grandmother's life, when writing up the interview as part of

her research. Her grandmother objected strongly to this interpretation and wrote to her that '[t]he story is no longer MY story at all. The skeleton remains, but it has become your story'.²⁰ This case is thought-provoking for oral historians. How can academic interviewers ensure that they do not tear pieces from their interviewees' narratives and fuse them into stories of their own making with which their subjects have limited sympathy or interest? What is an ethical way to treat stories gathered from interviewees?

Using direct quotations from interviewees as fully as possible, and refraining from imposing external meanings or interpretations upon the stories which are objectionable to the interviewees are possibilities. Another is to describe the conflict and difference of interpretation. Where this is clear before the interview takes place, the differences of view should be discussed fully beforehand. For example, a lesbian or gay interviewer on homosexual law reform should make their own position clear if seeking to interview opponents of this reform. When Katherine Blee interviewed former members of the Ku Klux Klan she advertised for informants and did challenge their beliefs. However, she found that many interviewees disregarded her views and may have, like the Nazi leaders interviewed by Claudia Koonz, wanted to reach 'a new audience'.²¹ The conflict is part of the project and may be appreciated by both interviewer and interviewee.

Some conflicts may not be clear prior to the interview. Although the reading of the story remains that of the academic, however, she/he can refrain from artificially

forcing the story into a framework she/he has designed, and can allow the contradictions and multiple versions to stand without prescriptive alterations. She/he can aim to allow narrators to speak for themselves as much as possible.

To regard recorded stories only as raw material which is the property of the interviewer to use for their own projects, and is then destroyed, often fails, in my view, to comprehend the complex ways in which interviews are created and the many reasons why interviewees tell their stories and have them recorded. Recording stories involves a responsibility toward interviewees, to ensure that tapes are archived and protected from destruction, unless interviewees have specifically requested they be erased or returned to them after the interview has been recorded. People who are being interviewed may well assume that their tape is to be archived. They may have spent the time being interviewed in order to place their memories, ideas and versions of events on tape, and become part of a permanent record. Requiring interviewees to agree to either destruction or to archiving of the tape before the interview has taken place is to deny the changes and development that may occur for them as part of the process of recording the interview.

I have heard stories of people interviewed for research projects who believed that their tapes were to be archived but who were upset to either receive them back or be informed that their tape had now been destroyed. Ordinary people are unaware that some ethics committees believe that confidentiality must be preserved at all costs. One woman interviewed for a project said sadly, 'I was inter-

viewed once, but my interview wasn't any good so they didn't want it and sent it back to me'. This was a reasonable conclusion to draw even when an accompanying letter gave other explanations.

There is a further important concern. When interviewers use interviews, selecting quotes for written work, and then destroy the tapes, there is no opportunity for others to verify quotations as accurate representations of what was said — or that the interview occurred in the way, time and place claimed by the interviewer.

Spoken words translated into written form are unreliable. The complex features of spoken language make it impossible to reflect accurately in writing the tones, emphasis, pause and inflections of the human voice which all convey meanings intended or unintended. Transcripts are second-level accounts, selectively rendered into a written language which is never a substitute for the tapes themselves.

Where oral histories have been gathered in order to write a book about a particular event, these should be deposited in archives so that future historians and researchers may hear the original material, assess the decisions made by earlier writers, and re-use the tapes making different decisions as is presently done with written manuscripts.

Doing otherwise is like quoting from letters and then removing them from archives so that later researchers cannot check for accuracy or use them differently. The same controls should apply to recorded interviews, even though the interviewees have been part of the creation of the recording, unlike archival letters. The recordings should not permanently become the private property of

interviewers who do not make the material available to others, or give interviewees an informed choice about the archiving options. Some interviewees are not presented with these options, and some university ethics forms, in my view, do not present this choice clearly enough, as they appear to be focused on assumptions about confidentiality and secrecy.

Some students who may initially have wanted to record oral histories have completed ethics application forms agreeing to destroy the tapes regardless of the subsequent wishes of the interviewees. I believe that, instead of assuming that interviews are confidential and produced for destruction, the assumption from the beginning should be that the recording is valuable and could be archived. Providing conditions of archival access are met, interviewees are being treated in the most ethical and courteous way possible when the basic assumption is made by the interviewer that their words are valuable and should be

preserved if they consent.

To destroy tapes unless this has been specifically requested, is to silence many unheard populations. It is to control their words, inserting them into books and articles where the final shape and meaning is controlled by the writer who has determined the direction of the written project. When situations occur such as that described by Borland, later researchers need to be able to hear the original recording. Why, if the material is made public in written form, do readers have no access to the originals?

I also believe it important that interviewers themselves are recorded, and their stories captured and placed into archives. Only when the biographer's tale has also been told, can the biography be understood. If recordings are joint productions made by two people, the more listeners understand about the interviewer, the fuller interpretation will they be able to make of the interview.

Not every recorded interview is an oral history. Some people do agree to be interviewed solely to provide information for a book or project. However, every recorded interview can be archived if every interviewee is given the opportunity to decide this after the interview. No-one needs to agree to conditions ahead of time. Researchers must always consider the importance of allowing silenced voices to be heard and preserved. The hundreds of tapes which are erased by academic researchers each year are a resource which may be able to be saved. The voices of the interviewees should be paramount, not just the voices of the academics, whose selection processes are imperfectly understood without original tapes to compare with the published work.

Endnotes

¹ For a full account of this research see Sandra Coney *The Unfortunate Experiment: the full story of the Inquiry into Cervical Cancer Treatment*, Auckland, 1988, and the original article which exposed the project by Phillida Bunkle and Sandra Coney, 'The Unfortunate Experiment at National Women's Hospital', *Metro*, June 1987, pp 46-65.

² Alferdteen Brown Harrison, 'Oral History: The Pathway To a People's Cultural Memory', in *Oral History in New Zealand*, Vol. 2, 1989, p. 1

³ *Ibid.* p. 3

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Interpreting Oral History

JENNIE GALLAGHER

Oral testimony can be a particularly powerful way for people to assert their own reality, and to show up how partial the views of outsiders are.¹

I will begin by giving a brief run down of the project: why I was interested in women mountaineers, how the project developed, why I used oral history and what issues arose from this. I will then look at the problems I had interpreting the oral histories for my research essay and later presentations, before giving a brief explanation of how postmodernism addresses these problems of interpretation, in particular the issue of 'difference' and the inconsistencies and contradictions of oral history.

My interest in recording the history of women mountaineers, who were climbing from 1920 to 1953, arose because of the lack of published information about them. I was interested in what they had done in the mountains, and also who they are as individuals and what they revealed about divisions in society based on gender. (Regrettably, I did not consider divisions based on race or class.) In particular, I wanted to know if they were challenging the divisions between femininity and masculinity or maintaining them. This conclusion would determine how one could approach the

interpretation and writing of a history about mountaineering.

I was especially interested in recording these women mountaineers because they were part of the new breed of climbers known as 'amateurs' who emerged after the First World War. These were the climbers who went out into the mountains without guides or packers. Women, like men, from the 1920s onwards, were joining the new phenomenon of tramping clubs to meet fellow climbing partners, and research and plan trips together. They got involved in committees to build huts and cut tracks, they organised access into remote peaks and got involved in the New Zealand Alpine Club training camps for climbing. Some had the opportunity to guide clients in the high mountains. I finished in the 1950s because that was when three women mountaineers climbed Mount Cook. They appeared very radical, challenging the boundaries between femininity and masculinity.

Initially I recorded four women and interviewed two others for a research essay for a university history course. They were selected on the basis that they were the only women known to me at the time, through articles published in the mountaineering journals, who were available. I conducted single-issue interviews at their homes. I

focused on their lives as mountaineers and limited myself to four to five hour recordings. The way in which they told their stories meant I had a lot of trouble interpreting them. I concluded in my research essay that, 'they supported a complementary equality with men'² but the implication of this, that there existed innate female and male behaviours, did not equate with what these women were doing in the mountains.

Because these women did not seem to fit any theory, I decided to "step out" of academia and secured an Award in Oral History from the Australian Sesquicentennial Gift Trust For Oral History and a grant from the Lottery Grants Board Environment and Heritage committee to record more women mountaineers. Not having a fully developed framework of analysis, however, gave rise to some issues

JENNIE GALLAGHER started recording oral histories of a group of women mountaineers in 1993, as part of her Diploma of Arts in History at Victoria University. She then received an Award in Oral History and Lottery Environment & Heritage committee funding in 1996 to continue this project. Her focus on oral history arises from her interest in gender and historiography. Jennie climbed in New Zealand and overseas in the 1980s and early 1990s.

which I discuss later. In this second set of recordings, I recorded nine women and one man. I conducted in-depth research of published mountaineering journals and prepared detailed questions about their mountaineering experience. I also drew up detailed time lines for each person, and a time line of general mountaineering history to take with me. In the latter, I was subconsciously spurred on by another historian's comment that he, 'would not use oral history because it is not correct'. While I was able to dismiss his comment at the time, I was none the less unsure how to deal with conflicting accounts, or 'bad' memory of dates and facts in an interview. So I was careful to verify dates in an interview, which at times interrupted the flow of conversation, an issue I will discuss later under issues in interviewing style.

I was interested in including male climbers because I was looking to reveal the "definitive truth" on women mountaineers by getting a number of perspectives. I realise now their contribution had a different purpose in relation to how memory works and the postmodernist framework. The man who did agree to be interviewed had climbed with many women and also turned out to have been instrumental in stopping women joining the Canterbury Mountaineering Club (CMC). Like the women's stories, his was full of rich anecdotes and contradictions, factors that have been instrumental in my adopting a postmodernist framework to interpret these oral histories.

I chose to record the women's stories as oral histories because I was interested in how they defined their lives as mountaineers, their views, attitudes, philosophy and

beliefs. I had a theory, based on what I had read, but I wanted to see how they told their stories. Oral history would enable me to capture the 'how': their explanations, contradictions and silences.

Equally as important, oral history enables the interviewee to retain ownership of their story. This feeling of ownership is crucial because it gives permission to the interviewee to tell their truths of events, and define how they want to be remembered. In comparison, when an interview is recorded by taking detailed notes, it is the researcher who becomes the main focus for telling the story.

A number of issues arose in recording stories orally. One was dealing with variable memory of facts, which is part of an individual's subjectivity. As I mentioned earlier, I sought to counteract this as much as possible by compiling detailed personal and general mountaineering timelines. I could then verify facts such as dates, for example, during the interview. This kind of verification, I now realise, is one of the mistakes you can make in recording oral history. This is because it causes an interruption to the interviewee's flow of thoughts by questioning both the interviewee's ability to record their story and the relevance of the subjective experience of the interviewee, and imposes instead the interviewer's 'more correct' version of an event.

After reading Alessandro Portelli's book, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*,⁵ I came to see the importance of the subjective experience in understanding individual identity. Subjectivity, Portelli states, is 'the cultural forms and processes by which individuals express their sense of themselves in history'.⁵ It reflects

how individuals have memorised an event or what significance an incident has been given according to the individual's relation to power in that group or society.⁵ Therefore the inconsistencies and contradictions of oral history can be interpreted not as bad memory, but as indicative of how one has made sense of events according to one's relation to power. Subjectivity is therefore a valuable source of information, making it important to respect what an interviewee chooses to tell you.

Another issue that arose in recording oral history was the style of interview. I found people responded to questions differently. For some a specific question raised an incident they could relate to and so brought forward a flood of conversation, while for others it was not a part of their experience and so the conversation became stilted and often monosyllabic. I found, therefore, it was important to get people talking generally and ask questions around this, instead of keeping them to a specific list of questions. In this way people felt able to record what was true to them and not what others might value, for example, the importance of taking make-up kits with them, or their interest in writing a cook book on desserts. Sometimes this led to great meandering conversations, elaborate stories that I felt were in danger of losing the point of the original question, but this rarely happened. What was more important was to, as Virginia Woolf states, 'give her a room of her own ... let her speak her mind'.⁶

When I first started recording the oral histories I also had to deal with the issue of my preconceptions about who these women mountaineers were. I had formed a theory about them based on what I had read about their accomplish-

ments in the mountaineering journals and in a publication on the history of earlier women climbers. The latter had portrayed them as 'determined not to let social attitudes become a distraction'.⁷ Thus I had fashioned a set of questions that centred around exploring the amazonian qualities I believed these women possessed, not their perceptions of their femininity. The two-way nature of oral history meant I had to be prepared to change my theory and add questions which explored all the dimensions of their femininity. For example, Ngaira Cox was active as a photographer, contributing to a photographic collection on mountaineering, and often climbed with just two on a rope. She explained that, if there was a woman in the party, nine times out of ten they would have three on a rope. But she also maintained traditional female roles in the mountains such as cooking the meals in the huts while the men went out to 'kick steps'.⁸

Listening to the oral histories, the rich and varied lives of the women proved problematic in interpreting who they were. They appeared a disparate group. Each one, in varying degrees, challenged the stereotypes of femininity and upheld them as well. Anne Hall climbed extensively in the mountains in the 1950s, making the first winter ascent of Mount McKerrow. She would also cook and repair the men's clothing in the hut, and felt role division was perfectly sensible.⁹ Katie Leggoe climbed on a rope of two, climbing Mount Cook and Mount Tasman on one trip. However when her ex-husband, guide Harry Ayres, mentioned going on a climb, it never happened because she felt she 'didn't have the right to pursue things'.¹⁰ Dorothy Smith and Una

Holloway took an active part in the administration of the Wellington Section of the New Zealand Alpine Club, setting up and editing the section's newsletter, *Wellington Warberlings*. Dorothy took her make-up with her and used lipstick. She explained, 'Why shouldn't I look pretty if I want to.'¹¹

Listening to the women's stories it seemed to me as though each person needed a separate history. This form of interpretation, however, would only result in a collection of fragmented truths. I therefore attempted to interpret the women's stories using a traditional historical model which sought an objective truth. The contradictions and inconsistencies in their individual stories I interpreted as an indication that they were not radicals challenging the status quo, but were maintaining the divisions between men and women. This approach to interpretation gave rise to a number of problems. Focusing on defining an "objective truth" meant "difference" became subjugated to this one truth, excluding some of the women's stories and allowing no provision for inconsistencies. Furthermore, defining women as separate to men and governed by innate behaviour meant it was possible either sex could be easily dismissed from the research if they stepped over this "natural" boundary.

These problems became evident when I summed up my findings in a speech I gave at the official handing over of the interviews to the Alexander Turnbull Library. Three of the women I interviewed were present and so was the media. When I referred to women taking make-up into the mountains, a heated discussion developed between two of the women

interviewees. Each believed her attitude towards this activity was equally valid if not indicative of a real women mountaineer. Some women did not fit the unified, homogeneous picture I was drawing of women mountaineers.

When a local newspaper reported on the event it headed the article 'Fifty years on - lipstick argument continues'.¹² The reporter, by implying an inherent womanliness—concerned about her looks above everything else—in his interpretation, was able to trivialise them. His interpretation had effectively marginalised them and in doing so maintained the belief that the power relations of the status quo, the divisions between the sexes, are natural.

There were also a number of incidents recounted that showed women's achievements in mountaineering did not progress on a continuum. A number of women faced opposition from some club members to their joining trips and becoming part of the organisational structures of the club. Mavis Davidson and two other women were refused admission to a club trip by the male leaders. Mavis decided to lead her own climbing trips from then on. She also faced opposition to her election, as the first woman, to the New Zealand Alpine Club national committee despite wide support from the club's members. After one heated discussion she took steps to form a New Zealand Women's Alpine Club with support from many other women. She was also the recipient of a comment from a New Zealand Alpine Club member, when she and two other women climbed Mount Cook in 1953 that effectively wrote it off as a stunt.¹³

Sheila Natusch, who was fit and fast on her feet and liked to go ahead to do some botanising,

received this male contemporary's sharp rebuke, 'There's something frisking along behind me, it's not quite a man and it's not quite a dog'. She states, 'I wasn't going to lower my sights and drop back a pace or two'. She pointed out that for every one person like that there were dozens and dozens who knew exactly what she was.¹⁴ Most of the men in the clubs were supportive towards women but there were a few who believed the mountains belonged to them.

The problems I was having interpreting the oral histories led me to turn to Michel Foucault's critique of the traditional historical method that focused on defining an objective truth which results in difference becoming subjugated to the one truth. I decided to change my focus from establishing the progressive and objective truth about women mountaineers to examining the 'systems of thought' of mountaineering, what the philosopher Michel Foucault has termed, 'discursive formations'.¹⁵ That is, how these 'discursive formations' in different periods produced and promulgated types, for example, types of femininity, as the norm or truth by which individuals came to be labelled and consequently came to know themselves.

The women mountaineers' individual truths about mountaineering, what Foucault termed their 'counter-discourse',¹⁶ could also be interpreted and understood in terms of these 'discursive formations' in society, in particular, how power relationships do not flow only one way, from the dominant

over the dominated, but are also reproduced by the subjects.¹⁷

I started by unpacking the texts of mountaineering clubs' journals, minutes, and other official publications to examine the types of femininity expressed as the norm in the culture of mountaineering during different periods.

In the mountaineering texts of the 1930s, women's femininity was

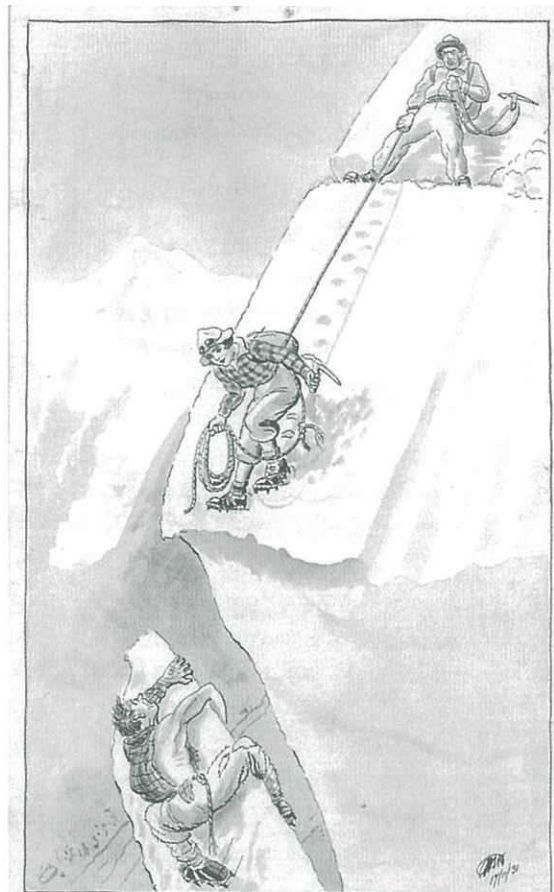
tion, // I found her the curse and the plague of my life.¹⁸

Women were also depicted as physically inferior to men and not serious mountaineers. For example, the easier expeditions to the Canterbury mountains were referred to as 'hencackles' by members of the Canterbury Mountaineering Club. In addition, the types of expeditions that

women often went on were referred to as 'pass trips' or as 'minor expeditions', and were considered only as, 'excellent training for more serious trans-Alpine crossings or high climbs.'¹⁹

The terminology used by climbers refers to the mountains as being conquered and dominated by men. Reaching the tops of unclimbed mountains was described as 'first-class virgin ascents'²⁰ and mountains were described as having been dominated and even invaded by the successful climber. 'Some day I mean to stand on its shapely summit and gaze at Aspiring'²¹ and 'The more inaccessible regions ... have been thoroughly invaded ... and there is no reason to doubt that they will continue to attract men till their last secrets have been gained.'²²

In the 1950s texts, women's femininity was again strongly defined as separate from men's masculinity. For example, women were depicted as not serious members of the climbing clubs; 'A strong base of qualified members allows the Club to be diluted without harm with the young and inexperienced, ... and even those ladies who ... are more interested in men than in the mountains.'²³



Betsy (after the avalanche): 'NOW how about that Insurance Policy?'

Drawn by Neil Macfarlane, Wellington, November 1931.

strongly differentiated from men's masculinity. Women, for example were depicted as interfering and controlling individuals. A popular song sung by members of the Canterbury Mountaineering Club on trips was *Aidal-O-Boy*. It included a verse that went, 'When first I married your innocent mother, // I thought, like a fool, I was blessed with a wife: // But to my misfortune, and sad lamenta-

Furthermore, women were depicted as interfering and meddlesome. A joke questionnaire published in the New Zealand Alpine Club bulletin includes these two questions, 'Do you climb with women on your rope? Answer: Well you might call it that.' 'If you had the last word would you invite an experienced woman climber to join your party? Answer: The woman always has the last word.'²²

I then began to look at the 'counter-discourse' of individual women mountaineers to provide a critical analysis of the types of femininity that had been projected as the norm. The contradictions and inconsistencies in women's stories also showed evidence of the way individuals reproduce the norms of the dominant discourse. For example, Betsy Anderson who guided at Mount Cook National Park and climbed in the high mountains in the 1920s and 1930s, states, 'I enjoyed leading but I also never attempted to take away the men's leadership because...of their

strength....Wasn't a feminist.'²⁵

Thus, a postmodernist interpretation of oral history can affirm difference and subjectivity by placing them in a wider context. It can also prevent the marginalisation of minority groups, and by recording a multiplicity of truths, enable the reader to gain an understanding of how power shapes and reproduces itself in a particular culture such as mountaineering.

By providing this critical analysis of the wider sphere of mountaineering culture, I was able to allow a more complex picture of women mountaineers to emerge, a process Foucault described as 'a kind of lamination: building up citation upon citation, juxtaposing official and marginal discourses ... arranging and collecting historical fragments so that the order and arrangement of them, the technique of their montage perhaps, speaks for itself.'²⁶

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Alison Laurie, Ann McCarthy and Justine Smith for their immensely helpful and succinct explanations of postmodernism to me, Justine also for her patient proof reading, and Linda Evans for her work on refining and honing this piece to make it what it is now. I would also like to thank my past lecturer, Jacqui Matthews whose words of encouragement – "have you published anything yet?" - initially got me going.

The interviews are in the Oral History Centre, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

Endnotes

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Aroha Trust Oral History Project

PIP DESMOND

*O*n a chilly August morning in 1977, five young women drove up to the Newtown Adventure Playground in a battered green bread van. Armed with picks and shovels - and rather more enthusiasm than skill - they began clearing rubble and landscaping the outside area.

A week later, to celebrate their first pay, the five young women headed to the pub for lunch. No one returned to work that day - except me - and for a few anxious hours, it looked as if Aroha Trust might be over almost before it had begun.

The trust survived this small hiccup - and quite a few bigger ones - to provide work, housing, support and a sense of identity for around 30 young women in Wellington over the next three years. Most were Māori and Pacific women, aged from 15 to their early 20s, unskilled and unemployed, with strong gang connections, particularly to Black Power.

As a young university graduate, I helped set up Aroha Trust, and for two-and-a-half years lived, worked and socialised with the trust women and in the wider gang scene. Twenty years later, I interviewed some of the women about that time, as well as their childhoods and adult lives.

Aroha Trust was born in a time

of heady social change. Overseas, Germaine Greer, Bob Marley and the Black Panthers were preaching their own particular styles of revolution. At home, Bastion Point, Ngā Tama Toa, James K Baxter and the United Women's Conventions were transforming the social and political landscape.

Support for young unemployed Māori came from high, and sometimes surprising, places. Prime Minister Rob Muldoon met with Black Power a number of times and drank at their pad once, wearing the gang patch while he did so. Wellington's mayor, Michael Fowler, was reported to have stood bail to the tune of \$7000 for seven Black Power members after a confrontation with the Mongrel Mob. Government work schemes, largely to accommodate the gangs, allowed groups to register and work collectively and supervise themselves.

In this environment a loose national network of work co-operatives emerged, including Wellington Black Power's Te Waka ē Manaaki, and its sister equivalent, Aroha Trust.

As far as I know, Aroha Trust is unique. Women associated with gangs in this country have never before or since formed their own independent organisation - no mean feat in a scene, which was

male, hierarchical, sexist and violent.

Work was the cornerstone of Aroha Trust. It gave the women money, skills and confidence, kept them out of trouble and helped them take control of their lives.

The trust ran two teams of workers - one employed by the Wellington Education Board, the other by the city council - doing scrub cutting, painting, carpentry, gardening and other manual work.

We also did a number of small private contracts. Most notably, perhaps, we glued 4000 white reflectors, known as cats-eyes, which mark out the lanes on



Amelia (left) and Nayda take a break from painting. Pip Desmond collection.

PIP DESMOND works at Parliament as Ruth Dyson's press secretary. She and her husband, Pat, live in Newtown and have three children aged 15-20.

Wellington roads. Rather haphazardly and with scant regard for peak hour traffic, I must confess.

Gini was 18 when she joined Aroha Trust, after years of living in the Miramar Girls Home and on the street. In the following excerpt, she recalls the day this photo was taken of her cutting grass at a local school:

Gini: And I remember this day actually, and it was a hot day, and here I am in these hot overalls and this hat on my head and with just a whole attitude on my face. And I remember doing this work and really enjoying this work because it was like 'the grass episode' of - before you did it, it was all bush, and after you finished, it was all down, and when you realised the skill that you did it with your bare hands, without a machine, a lawn mower or a weed eater, I felt quite proud of myself that I had actually accomplished work, a job, that I did wholeheartedly like, regardless of my feelings or attitudes or whatever to put into it. And I remember I really enjoyed that sort of work. It was outside, it was in the fresh air and there wasn't somebody standing over you to make sure you were doing it perfectly, wonderfully, how they expected.'

In May 1978 assistant town clerk, Colin Knox reported to mayor Michael Fowler that the city council was 'pleased with the relationship' it had with Aroha Trust and Te Waka E Manaaki. 'The trusts are developing into an important agency in the city because they seek and provide for young Māori people an alternative to theft, alcohol and violence which is the preoccupation of many who come to the city from other areas,' he added rather pompously.²

Stable housing was a key factor in that alternative, not least because we needed to know where to pick up our workers up each morning. It also provided food on



"And I remember I really enjoyed that sort of work. It was outside, it was in the fresh air, and there wasn't someone standing over you." Gini, cutting grass at a local primary school. Pip Desmond collection.

the table, some personal security and a base for the trust's wider activities.

Aroha Trust's first attempt to run a large 'women's house' failed under the combined weight of police and gang harassment. From

then on, we rented smaller, less high-profile houses. Men were allowed to live in them, but only at the women's discretion. When things went wrong, it was the men who left.

We tried to run the trust as a



Tasi (left) and Jane renovate a house in Owen Street, Newtown. Pip Desmond collection.

democratic collective. All members were expected to attend regular meetings, participate in decision making, and contribute to a common bank account which was used for things like main-taining our vans, paying members' fines, going on trips, and funding our sports teams.

Not surprisingly, things did not always go smoothly. Horiana was one of the older members of the trust. She had her driver's licence and – while we tried to share responsibility as much as possible – often ended up in charge of the Education Board work gang.

In the next excerpt, she has just told me about sitting in a school smoko room one day, looking out the window, and seeing the trust van being driven round and round the playing field by one of the other women:

Horiana: It was really hard to deal with these women in those days especially because they were so young and they had a lot of their own issues and it was very hard, but I think once you started standing up and letting them know, 'Right, this is as far as it goes, this is where it stops', you got somewhere. Not all the time. Like sometimes I remember after I'd done a big spiel at work, got really shitty, three of them didn't turn up the next day. Then I thought to myself, 'Well, I don't care'. Yeah, trial and error. It was just take one day at a time, mate. You just don't know. You just don't know what you're going to be confronted with.

Pip: Did you ever think, 'I'm going to go and get a day job'?

Horiana: Nah, coz I really loved it, eh. I liked it. I really did. Like to stop the van going round and round

*the rugby field, I'd have to put the keys in my pocket. And then I'd get hounded and hounded. And then I got so good at just turning off, switching off, because you had to.*³

Why did young women who came to the city gravitate to the gangs?

Horiana: Because they offered a blanket for the night (more than anyone else did), protection of a kind, and a sense of belonging.

Aroha Trust as a group identified primarily with Black Power. However, the individual women transcended gang affiliations, and frequently went out with members of other gangs. Some tense moments arose, as you can imagine, when the Blacks, Nomads, Mongrel Mob and Highway 61s all chose to visit at the same time.

A number of individual gang members worked hard to support us. Gang culture as a whole, however, oppressed women in almost every way. This took a huge toll, both on individuals and on Aroha Trust as a group.

We often failed to protect the women in our midst. Yet, there is no doubt that the trust women, by presenting a united front and

organising ourselves effectively, we gained a respect, which is very rare in a gang scene.

Here's Gini again, recalling how she felt when the trust women challenged Black Power about their attitudes and behaviour toward women:

Gini: And I remember when we as the women were trying to make a stand against some of the things they were doing, like raping the women and putting them on the block and those blinkin' horrible things that they thought they could just do and get away with, and I was real supportive of us as a girls': a women's trust, to stand against those things, regardless of whether we were going to get our heads knocked off, or discriminated, or whatever. I was prepared to go all the way because by this time I had found another family – with the women. And that's probably when I started to realise there was such a thing as women's lib out there in the world, not being open to anything like that. Thinking, 'Yeah, these guys have got no right to do this. Let's take a stand together'. ...

Then I asked her, "Did the fact that we were a group of identifiable women make any difference?"

*Gini: Oh yeah, I think that made all the difference. I think there's no way an individual could have did it. I think there's no way a European woman could have did it. And, I think for us, the Māori women, without the European women, we wouldn't have been able to do it either, because we sort of needed their guidance and their know-how to be able to come together as a group to form that unity and that strength and hit those guys with what we knew was right.*⁴



Swannies, jeans and boots were the trust 'uniform': From left: Charmaine, Annie, Gini, Waynie. Pip Desmond collection.

Methodology

Although the women

of Aroha Trust are now scattered through-out New Zealand, a feeling of shared identity remains. At a small reunion in 1998, I first brought up the idea of recording their stories, with the idea of writing a book. With their permission and their help, I tracked down thirteen key members of the trust. All of them agreed to be interviewed.

I worked full-time on the project for three months at the beginning of 2000, travelling from Kaitaia in the north to Kaitangata in the south. Only one other woman and I still live in Wellington, and most live in small towns outside the main centres.

After each block of two or three interviews, I returned home to catch my breath, kiss my kids, and abstract, abstract, abstract. For those not in the know, that's the innocuous term used to describe the painstaking task of preparing your way around the tapes at a later date.

A grant from the Sesquicentennial Gift Trust for Awards in Oral History covered the costs of my travel, accommodation, equipment and koha. My methodology was based on Judith Fyfe's wonderful oral history courses, and Judith, and Linda Evans and Joce Chalmers from the Alexander Turnbull Library's Oral History Centre were an endless source of encouragement. Even so, I found it a lonely business, perhaps compounded by the fact that I was on a very personal journey.

As I went along, I developed two complementary resources: The first was a diary, in which I recorded physical details, practical problems, informal conversations, and general observations.

The second was a photo album, made up of old photos I borrowed from the women and photocopied,

and new ones I took on the spot. This became a great icebreaker. The old photos took the women back in time. The new photos helped to reconnect the group, some of whom had not seen each other for years, let alone their partners and children.

National MP Marilyn Waring provided funding and encouragement to get Aroha Trust to the United Women's Convention in Hamilton in 1979. Jane was 17 at the time, and she was to go on from the trust to become the national voice of the unemployed. In this next excerpt, she describes her response to a photo, which appeared in the post-convention booklet:

Jane: I didn't even know that photo existed before today and I had no memory whatsoever of what I was wearing until I saw that photo. For the first time in my life I'd knitted a jersey and it had 'Woman Power' knitted into the front of it. And I was so proud of that jersey eh. That just embodied how I felt about being part of the trust and the one-finger salute to the world. That this

was, women I guess were my whānau and the trust embodied that, and that it was a place that was like my tūrangawaewae at that time, my place where I could stand tall.⁵

Before I began interviewing others, I arranged to be interviewed myself - both for the experience and to add my own story to the record. The experience was unsatisfying a) because I told my interviewer too much beforehand, and then found myself not wanting to repeat 'stale' information on tape, and b) because I didn't tell her enough, and felt that some important areas were overlooked.

This was the first of many challenges that arose out of my dual role as Aroha Trust member and oral historian. I shared a history with the other trust women, but I had not seen most of them for a long time. We were both friends and strangers. Our relationship was both professional and personal. I was both insider and outsider.

As an insider, it wasn't possible



Pip Desmond collection.

"Women, I guess, were my whānau, and the trust embodied that." Jane (far left) proudly wears her 'Women Power' jersey at the United Women's Convention in Hamilton, 1979. Other Aroha Trust women in the photo from far right: Wayne, Rangī, Sis.

to just breeze into people's lives with my tape recorder and out again. In almost all cases, I spent time with the women and their whānau outside the formal interview, often staying with them if they could assure me of a quiet place to do the interview. I wanted to and I needed to - to regain their trust and re-establish our relationship.

and it had affected me profoundly. It was disconcerting to find that while the trust had been life changing for some women, for others it had simply been a vague backdrop to their chaotic young lives, and their memories were hazy.

Knowledge, I found, was a two-edged sword. It was an enormous advantage understanding the

to talk about it. Whatever I wanted to say on tape, I said."

Another, explaining why she had not talked about a prison term, said: "Being locked up is being locked up. It was just more of the same - new friends, dope, no looking at myself".

I also found out things I hadn't known - for example, that Aroha Trust was unfinished business for many of the women. Some of the original, mostly older members, including myself, had drifted away one by one, burnt out and looking for other options. I hadn't known - or perhaps hadn't wanted to know - that those left behind felt abandoned, and ill-equipped to pass on the trust's kaupapa. The government's decision in September 1980 to axe the TEP scheme was the final death knell. After that, in the words of one woman, "the trust just dwindled away".

I may have been an insider, but I was also an outsider. Of course, this dated back to Aroha Trust itself, where my education, race and class made me an unlikely member.

One of the issues, which arose, was my role as a Pakeha interviewing mainly Māori and Pacific women. While no one questioned my right to do this - in the same way as they had accepted me twenty years earlier - it no doubt affected what some women told me and how they said it.

Legal issues also arose. The 52 hours of tapes that make up the Aroha Trust Oral History Project have been deposited in the Turnbull Library. Much of the material in them is sensitive.

In spite of this, only one woman put a blanket ban on people listening to her tapes for a period of time, a common condition for oral history recordings. All the others gave open access to



Pip Desmond collection.

Aroha Trust women and Black Power boys build a fence for the city council. Working with the boys was unusual. From left clockwise: Arthur, Charmaine, Rangī, Tasi, Jane, Peter.

This made my visits very intense. One woman began talking as I stepped across her doorway at 6 o'clock one Friday night. We spent almost all the next day taping, went out together that evening, and in the early hours of Sunday morning were still shouting at each other down the hall from separate beds. By that stage, I had no idea what was on the record and what wasn't. I hope it doesn't matter.

As an insider, I was not a dispassionate gatherer of information. I had put two-and-a-half years of my life into Aroha Trust,

trust, the gang scene, and what the women had been through. I knew what to ask, but I wasn't always clear when to shut up and when to add my tuppence worth.

Inside knowledge also meant that I knew about some things the women left out of the interviews. It was hard not to take this personally - 'I wasn't a good enough interviewer, they didn't trust me, etc'.

Of course, there were all sorts of reasons for their omissions. When I asked later about an incident one woman had left out, she told me bluntly: "I didn't want

listening to the tapes or, at most, required written permission.

I'm not sure why they have been so open, but I think it is because they have come to terms with their past, are proud of the progress they have made, and want to share their journeys with others. Perhaps, too, they have little faith in the ability of formal systems to protect their privacy.

However, their openness caused some legal headaches. The first relates to the Privacy Act, which says that any person has the right to know if an agency holds information about them, and what it says.

A blanket ban on access to the tapes might over-ride this right, on the grounds that the information is not in the public domain. But where the women let some

people listen to the tapes, it seems likely that any person identified on them would have the right to know what had been said about them.

The second legal question is whether the police can demand access to oral history recordings for evidence, if they suspect a crime has been committed. As far as I know, neither of these questions has been legally tested, but I had to warn the women of both possibilities.

Protecting them was my top priority, but I have to admit that I found it very frustrating, not only because I knew that the warning would affect how candid they were, but also because it undermined the open, safe atmosphere I was trying to create.

Conclusion

I want to thank the women of Aroha Trust for entrusting me with their stories and for allowing me to share a little of them. And I would like to leave you with a song composed and sung by Charmaine, who at 15 was the youngest member of the trust.

In this song, Charmaine describes what she - and most of the women I interviewed - never had, and what they want more than anything for their own children.

Charmaine: This one is called 'Blessed is the Child' and it's about the things and the qualities I see missing, the missing components that are so much overlooked as being the elements creating a healthy child. That it's not money, it's not all these nice clothes, it's about being emotionally available:

Endnotes

- ¹ Gini Shephard, interview, 3 March 2000, side 5
- ² 'The Temporary Employment Programme', memo, Colin Knox, Assistant Town Clerk, Wellington, to Michael Fowler, Mayor, 2 May 1978
- ³ Town Clerk, Wellington, to Michael Fowler, Mayor, 2 May 1978
- ⁴ Horiana Nuku, interview, 6 December 1999, side 4
- ⁵ Gini Shephard, interview, 3 March 2000, side 5
- ⁶ Jane Stevens, interview, 21 February 2000, side 5
- ⁶ Charmaine Anaru, interview, 19 February 2000, side 10

(The Aroha Trust Oral History Project is deposited in the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington. Most of the interviews are available to researchers, either with or without written permission from the interviewees.)

Blessed Is The Child

Blessed is the child with amazing grace
And blessed is the child with no one's shame on her face
The eyes will tell the window to one's soul

Blessed is the child who's allowed to grow
Blessed is the child in a loving home
And blessed is the child who knows no anger in her soul
Time will tell and time will surely show
Blessed is the child who's allowed to grow

Blessed is the child who can feel her way
And blessed is the child who knows how to say
'I'm in pain, please don't go away
Hold me in your arms, please don't push me away'

Blessed is the child with amazing grace
And blessed is the child with no one's shame on her face
The eyes will tell the window to one's soul
Blessed is the child who's allowed to grow ⁶

Rangahau mo Te Iwi - ngä pikinga me ngä hekenga

WHETÜRANGI WALSH-TAPIATA

*M*āori history and research have been heavily influenced by Eurocentric views and philosophies, which have led to the creation of a 'national norm of Māori history'. Any attempt to include a Māori perspective occurred by adding Māori ideas to traditional disciplinary frameworks, often resulting in Māori being portrayed negatively. Unfortunately, such material then became recognised as possessing a certain authority. Historically, research is not something exclusive to Pakeha: Māori too believed in storing or preserving knowledge with such information being maintained in waiata, whakapapa, and pakiwaitara. The scientific paradigm, or the ways in which western research has been carried out and then validated as 'real research' was the area that was new to Māori.

Māori have been heavily researched as a people with many Pakeha researchers and writers benefiting greatly and Māori benefiting little. The hegemonic education system also resulting in few Māori gaining the knowledge and skills of scholarship needed to undertake their own research and writing.⁴ It is only relatively recently that a growing number of Māori writers have evolved to challenge the 'authority' that Pakeha writers have assumed in their encounter with, and interpre-

tations of, the Māori world.⁵ Māori researchers are now looking for methods appropriate to Māori, with the critical factors being Māori participation in the design of the project; the incorporation of Māori world views and a reflection of the diversity of Māori.⁶

This historical background continues to impact on the development of whānau, hapū and iwi research. Both western and indigenous approaches are being used to meet the diverse range of research with which hapū and iwi involved. Tribal research today is more than just a recitation of tribal history, it is a reflection of the dynamic and ever changing social structures known as whānau, hapū and iwi. There is a growing realisation that research is necessary in a whole variety of areas, ranging from welfare and health needs, to economic strategies, to iwi registers, to Treaty claims. Hapū and iwi are now operating from a considerably stronger position in terms of stating what kind of research they require and who should undertake that research.

This article will use my own experiences of working and researching with and for an iwi to look at some of the trials and tribulations of which researchers and iwi have to be aware when

undertaking research in this domain. It is important for hapū and iwi that they do not walk blindly into this research arena and further perpetuate the stories of old, but rather that they ensure that the research process is culturally appropriate. Each iwi will need to develop their own set of processes and procedures, and therefore it is timely that some research issues of working within an iwi context be considered. This is by no means the recipe but is more a work in progress which iwi themselves will have to discuss and debate further as they undertake more and more research in the future.

Access

Conditions under which initial entry is negotiated will have important consequences for how the research is

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*socially defined by the members of the setting.*⁷

I am from Ngāti Raukawa ki te tonga and chose to undertake research within my own iwi context. Given the historical abuse that Māori have suffered at the hands of many researchers, there is considerable debate about who is the most appropriate person to undertake research in an iwi context. Smith and Mead offer a framework which clearly situates Pakeha researchers who are undertaking culturally appropriate research in Māori domains.⁸ Other writers however are clear that in certain domains the researchers need to be Māori or Māori of that iwi with the appropriate credentials. Soutar comments that '[re]searchers who belong to the tribe know the sorts of requirements for recording tribal history, often being at pains to balance these demands while still remaining faithful to a western historical tradition.'⁹ Walker also advocates Māori undertaking research in Māori settings and believes it is important that Māori develop research models and methodologies that are indigenous and founded on their own traditional knowledge bases.¹⁰

Durie agrees with the former writers but suggests that there might be different contexts in which you can look at different researchers, for example, when some people may not be Māori who are part of a Māori initiative and as long as the initiative remains Māori centered then the approach need not be compromised, and secondly because even when the researcher is Māori there is no guarantee that they will have the language, culture or tikanga.¹¹

The lesson learnt therefore is that iwi have to be clear about who it is that they want to undertake

their research and whether this differs dependent on the particular research that is required.

With my own research I asked someone in the University who was also from Ngāti Raukawa to be my supervisor. He agreed. He also suggested that in order to gain access to the iwi that I needed to appear before the executive body of the Rūnanga. I therefore wrote to them asking if I could present my research topic *kanohi ki te kanohi* and myself. They agreed to this. When I stood up at the meeting, I started by introducing myself stating what *whānau* and *hapū* I came from. I did not have strong connections with my *hapū* at that time and at this meeting my *hapū* representative approached me to say that as well as getting iwi approval that I needed to get *hapū* approval. That night I found myself also standing at a *hapū* meeting to talk about my research topic. Not only did that serve to identify myself to my *hapū*, a connection that has remained very strong since this time, but it also meant that they offered themselves as one of three *hapū* that I would eventually interview for my research. Whanaungatanga or genealogical relationships were important in allowing me access with regards to this iwi research.

The iwi agreed to the research but suggested that I needed an iwi supervisor. I said that I already had one. They said that that was an academic supervisor who happened to also be from the iwi, and recommended and nominated someone else from the iwi. I therefore ended up with three supervisors.

The stringency with which the Rūnanga had approached my request was particularly impressive - and also a little nerve-

wracking. They were clear in acknowledging their approval of the project because of my iwi connections, feeling that I would have an awareness of the information that I was gaining access to and would know how that information should be treated. People who are unaware of the nuances of *whānau*, *hapū* and iwi may not even know that the information they are being given is limited to that which is generally known, as only certain members are often entrusted with knowledge which is not broadcast widely for general consumption or which needs to be treated with care.

For this particular piece of research I interviewed nine individuals and three *hapū* groups. I knew most of the people involved, being an insider, but also because we had all been actively involved in developing iwi social services. One area of access that I was particularly nervous about was in interviewing *kuia* and *koroua*. One *kuia* in particular took some time to respond to my introductory letter. My supervisors said to persevere, however, and when I made contact by phone, I found that she had been unwell. I had thought her lack of response was a sign of lack of interest. She was known to be the matriarch of her *whānau* and had a reputation for being blunt. When we finally made contact she wanted copies of the questions sent out to her. She wanted to know my *whakapapa* connections and once that information had arrived she would not agree to being interviewed until she had checked me out with various other members of her family. She finally agreed to be interviewed and her interview was rich in so many ways. Firstly, she acknowledged my *whakapapa* by telling me how

we were connected to each other. She told me stories of my tipuna who she had grown up with at Ratana. She insisted that we had to share kai together and told me a lot of the stories of the local area. We even shared stories of her child-birth and her aspirations for her mokopuna in the future. All of this happened outside of the interview. The protocols and the rituals that needed to be observed took much longer than the couple of hours suggested on the information sheet. I became aware that because of our connections through whakapapa the research became only a part of the sharing. She was one very astute kuia who questioned each stage of the process but, I think, was proud to be a part of the project. These are some of the issues surrounding gaining access. There are some wonderful lessons about the importance of whakapapa, of kanohi ki te kanohi and of sharing kai that ensure access to information and the maintenance of life-long relationships.

One question I asked myself was whether there is a need for iwi to have developed some criteria for access by researchers, whether they be from the iwi or not, or Māori or not Maori.

The Rūnanga were convinced that having two people from my iwi as supervisors would protect the research. I am convinced that this consultation process and my supervisors' subsequent attention to detail, helped secure involvement of individuals and hāpu groups in the research. They felt that I had gone through the appropriate process. This iwi consultation affirmed that the authority, control and ownership of the research was a part of the collective identity within the whānau, hāpu and iwi.¹² The

research was not only guided by a whānau of supervisors but the Rūnanga were asking that those iwi supervisors monitor my progress and give feedback to them about how I was progressing.¹³ In addition, my hāpu asked for a similar monthly progress report. This served several purposes. I started regularly attending my hāpu meetings and continue to do so. Both the hāpu and the iwi saw this as a topic that would directly benefit them and they wanted to maintain an active interest in its progress. While there are benefits to being from the iwi in terms of knowing the players involved, it does not necessarily make the situation any easier.

Because of the length of time it took to complete the research, my supervisors suggested that I call a hui to update those involved. This hui was held on a cold wintry day, with two tangi on at local marae. There was a good turnout of people, however, who were interested in the progress of the research and in the initial findings. There was a definite feeling of collective ownership of the project because of the continued active involvement of individuals and groups connected to the research.

Another question that I asked myself was what forms of accountability should iwi insist on - from people within the iwi, and from people outside the iwi.

If an iwi is integrally involved in the research project from the outset, there is more likelihood that they will feel a sense of ownership of the project and the finished product. I was clear when undertaking this research that this was a jointly owned project. When the product was finished I got a Masters degree, but what has been beneficial for the iwi is that they

have been able to use my research to tender successfully for a number of contracts in the health, education and social services arena. In addition, many of my participants said that it was easy to read - and I found myself out of pocket as members of the iwi asked for 'their' copy. They felt that their mana had been maintained as their ideas had been considered. They felt included because I kept them up to date with the progress of the research. Many of the iwi said that they learnt a lot about the history of the iwi.

One of my goals was to ensure that the research would be a living working document that people from the iwi could continue to use. I have remained involved in the activities of my iwi Rūnanga in a variety of different capacities: as chairperson of the social services committee, as a member of the building committee, and as a person developing contracts. Interestingly, our Rūnanga has just started a research and development unit and I have been asked, along with my two supervisors, to be a part of an advisory group to oversee this new initiative.

A third issue to consider is how we ensure that iwi maintain ownership of the research they participate in and what effect this has on the research.

Iwi are now starting to realise that research is not something that belongs strictly within the province of universities and academia but is something that iwi can actively pursue. They need, however, to develop clear criteria when undertaking research on themselves by themselves or when others approach them who wish to undertake research on or with them. Te Awekōtuku suggests that such research:

... needs to be responsive to expressed Māori needs, needs expressed from within the community and not needs perceived by those outside it. . . . that the knowledge gained from research benefits the community. . the activity itself should have value and relevance to the people studied. The collective interest subsumes the individuals: in policy directed activity, the community's interest should have the highest priority: the collective interest should subsume the agencies.¹⁴

I hope that the research I undertook ensured that a genuine respect for the people was evident (aroha ki te tangata) and was indicative by ensuring that acceptance was acquired from all

of the right people and groups, (access), that whakapapa links were made and verified, (accountability), that regular feedback was provided, (ownership) and that a long term commitment to the hapū and iwi was evident and maintained beyond the research project.

For a researcher, venturing into the iwi research environment can be both a struggle as well as exciting. It is also an exciting time for iwi as they realize that there are benefits. They have reclaimed the inclusion of their own cultural processes in research that is benefiting their needs and aspirations. Indeed, the stories of the people are coming alive and

research is once again emancipatory for the people who are being researched as well as those doing the research. There needs to be a balance between solid research experience and a capacity to understand Māori people, society and culture. I agree with Durie who believes that there is no question that research should be conducted by Maori, but the challenge will be 'for Māori by Maori'.¹⁵

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The Past from the Paepae: Uses of the past in Māori oral history

DANNY KEENAN

The purpose of this article is to comment about one aspect of the very complex Māori oral history process. The primary point of reference in this article is oral history as you will hear it spoken on the marae during formal speech-making. The 'paepae' referred to in the title of this paper is the place on the marae where kaumatua stand, when delivering their formal speeches.

Literally speaking, the paepae is a clearly demarcated part of the marae, where elders might stand to address visitors. Normally, it is a part of the front of the whareniui (the main house). However, it can also be set aside, positioned further across the marae area. Or, it can even be located inside the main house.

Figuratively speaking, the concept of the 'paepae' can be used to organise Māori oral histories, wherever they may be presented or written. The idea of 'paepae' can be used to arrange Māori history in a certain way so as to ensure that it adheres to the same marae conventions as would bear upon one who was actually standing on the paepae itself.

The question this article is addressing then is – how do Māori frame their oral histories when delivered from the literal (or figurative) paepae?

In recent years, historical studies have undergone significant change,

in New Zealand as elsewhere. Increasing emphasis has been directed at subject areas and methods that were once thought to be peripheral to the conventional frameworks of history. Many such areas are now 'woven into the centrality of historical enquiry and historical research'.¹

In this context, the value of oral testimony as historical method, and as source of history, has been much debated, if less so these days than perhaps a decade or so ago. Some historians still consider oral testimony to be a flawed source of history, especially Māori oral history.² Others regard oral testimony as an exciting form of narrative that is readily located in context and time, with 'memory, recognition and history having many interconnections'.³

This latter, and more positive, view is certainly the case for most Māori historians for whom the oral record provides both source of narrative and framework of interpretation. The purpose of this paper then is to suggest how Māori approaches to such sources and methods of history might be distinguished from those choices being exercised by Pakeha historians working within the mainstream of New Zealand history.

For Māori people, oral history at once provides both narratives of the past, and frameworks within

which to interpret those narratives. This is because the past substantially converges into the present. Time, context and cognition easily connect within the active memory of kaumatua who, standing on the paepae, recall and mediate the past into important tribal and hapū histories.

Within such processes of historical construction, the value of oral history for Māori is not an issue of consequence. It simply does not feature in wider Māori considerations of 'what is an appropriate methodology' when Māori are seeking to tap into their past. This is because oral testimony, in its broadest sense, is accepted as a part of the Māori reality, and this has always been so. As a consequence, all important components of a tribal past, like the waka traditions, for example, are readily acknowledged by Māori as perfectly valid history that is constantly maintained within vigorous oral forms like tauparapara (chants), whaikorero (speeches) and waiata (songs).

Each of these components feature as an important part of the

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total connected account of tribal history and mana. Such accounts are mediated from vast store-houses of tribal knowledge, through the oral process, by kaumatua who are in command of tribal process of historical construction. Such histories are ultimately presented to best serve the ends of the tribe or hapū. As a consequence, Māori purposes in history are not always well-served by arguments about methodology which preoccupy mainstream historians from time to time, arguments like validity of process, or 'reliability of tribal traditions as history'.⁴

Of most concern, in the end, is (and always was) the mana of the tribe or hapū. It is here that the significance of Māori oral history can best be appreciated; not in the veracity of tradition delivered, nor in the validity of a particular method utilised. The significance

resides in the purposes for which the histories are being recalled, and by whom – and whose ends those histories will serve. It is important that we recognise that Māori purposes in history provide important frameworks, and frames of reference, for those histories. In other words, the reasons why a particular history is being told will often substantially determine *how* it is told. It is a process that is at once deliberate, pragmatic and intuitive, and the oral history process is flexible enough to incorporate a mix of all these approaches. To Māori, oral history then is more than just an aggregation of narratives. Oral history is also conceptual; it is about using a process for specific purposes.

Such purposes can be detected when differing tribal uses of waka traditions are examined.

Most tribes place special significance on their waka descent

traditions. While the recorded narratives of Tainui, for example, date from the earliest occupation of Hawaiki, it is from the Tainui waka that primary descent histories are sourced. According to Kelly's published account history of the Tainui confederation, 'the people of Tainui, in common with other tribes, take great pride in tracing their ancestry from those who came hither in their tribal canoe ... they trace back to the most important personage on board – Hoturoa'.⁵

The Te Arawa tribes around Rotorua claim primary descent from Tamatekapua, once a 'lad of spirit who in time was regarded as a chief of no ordinary importance'. Tamatekapua is said to have sparked 'the last trouble of a long and bitter series which finally caused a group of Ngati Ohomairangi to leave their homeland and travel to the land



Sir Apirana Ngata speaking at the centennial celebrations for the Rangiatea Church in Otaki, March 1950. ATL 1/2-058067; F

discovered by Kupe – Aotearoa'.⁶ This was a journey made on board the Te Arawa waka. Interestingly, the story is told by Maihi Te Kapua Te Hinaki of the two great ancestors, Hoturoa and Tamatekapua once coming to blows due to the 'unwelcome attentions of Tamatekapua to Hoturoa's senior wife, Whakaotirangi'. It is said that Tamatekapua was 'worsted in the contest' before the people intervened and stopped the duel because they were all close relatives.⁷

Not all primary descent histories place such emphasis on the Great Fleet waka, however. The origin stories of Takitimu illustrate this. The Takitimu people claim their descent from the Takitimu waka but of course take their tribal name from Kahungunu, the son of Tamatea who sailed aboard the Takitimu.⁸ Other theories as to the origins of Kahungunu have been advanced. William Greenwood's extensive survey of Ngati Kahungunu whakapapa argued that Kahungunu was in fact a later ancestor, separated from Tamatea by some two hundred years. The issue turned on two ancestors named Tamatea: Tamatea – Uruhaea of the Takitimu waka and Tu Tamatea Kai ariki, supposedly Kahungunu's real father.⁹

While the source of the Taranaki waka traditions attract less controversy, than perhaps do others, the origin accounts as perceived by the local tribes are nonetheless also utilised quite differently. The tribes of Taranaki draw their descent primarily from one of three waka — Kurahaupo, Aotea and Tokomaru. Descent from these three waka is frequently expressed in oratory, whakatauki and waiata of often

ancient origin. In reality, however, Taranaki histories of origin are rather more complex. More often than not, these waka traditions are located somewhere within longer tribal narratives of descent which in fact go back well before the believed arrival dates of these canoes. For example, some Taranaki tribes like Nga Rauru and Taranaki iwi place a greater store on pre-Great Fleet narratives when constructing their tribal histories. One Nga Rauru account which begins 'Matua te kore, te kore nui, te kore roa' (the absolute void, the great void, the long void) exceeds two hundred lines when written down. Only when concluding does it refer to Toi Te Huatahi who is believed to have arrived at the time of the Nga Rauru waka, Aotea.¹⁰ In other words, it takes about two hundred lines to get to the waka traditions.

The traditions of Taranaki iwi, further north, also largely predate their waka, Kurahaupo. This is again achieved by an extended reaching back to ancient narratives from 'I noho a io roto i te aha o te aao' (the development of life and knowledge through the interplay of past and present). These narratives in fact go back a long way; they predate the naming of the mountain. They contain references to Rua Tawhito, Rua Tipua and Rua Taranaki, ancient ancestors also claimed as tupuna by some of the Taranaki tribes further to the north. Rua Taranaki is the believed ancestor from whom the mountain took its final name. By climbing the mountain and establishing an urupa (burial ground) high on its barren slopes, Rua Taranaki claimed the maunga as wahi tapu for the people of Taranaki.

Much later, in the Taranaki iwi descent traditions, reference is

eventually made to the waka arrivals. 'The Kurahaupo people arrived in the fourteenth century and lived among Kahui Maunga ... in time, they defined themselves as the Taranaki tribe. The captain of the Kurahaupo was Te Hatauiria.'¹¹

The descent history of Ngai Tahu is more complex than most. It incorporates later large scale migrations from the Takitimu area merging with various peoples occupying Te Waipounamu, the South Island.¹² Some strong local debate has attached to traditions of Ngai Tahu descent, as Tipene O'Regan has recently indicated: 'Ngai Tahu are the people who claim traditional mana whenua over the vast majority of Te Waipounamu ... there are 3 main streams of descent which flow together in our histories ... these streams are Waitaha, Mamoe and Tahu.'¹³

That much, said O'Regan, was straightforward. The traditional ways in which Māori have managed their histories over time have always had unique and identifiable characteristics, he said. These characteristics were markedly different from those 'normally manipulated by the academic historian'. Problems therefore could arise when 'Māori customary authentication and the Māori perception of post treaty history (were) savaged by the professional historian'.¹⁴

It is not uncommon of course for divisions to appear over time between component descent groups within iwi or confederations, given the pressures exerted by competing claims to mana whenua on the use of validating ancient narratives. Their consequent mediation into seemingly straightforward tribal histories and traditions can result in unexpected contest appearing

between component kinship groups. This is a situation not confined of course to any one tribal area. It is especially prone to occur where 'history and culture are seen no longer to constitute recreational or scholarly pursuits,' said O'Regan. The Waitangi Tribunal provided a different forum. The stakes were now different, he said. The Tribunal was a forum where 'the evidence of the conventional historian and the whakapapa of the Māori are presented for one purpose (only) ... that of a substantial result in terms of money, resources or property.'¹⁵

Thus the uses to which long-standing waka narratives were put over time varied considerably, as tribes mediated their knowledge of the past for different purposes. Such processes of mediation were important to Māori people when organizing knowledge of their past, and, as O'Regan has suggested, most recorded traditions should be seen as having been recorded within a particular frame, and for a particular purpose. 'Very few things stand alone and unsullied without any direction or preceding shape... the mode of presentation of evidence is always driven by a purpose.'¹⁶

In the end, such descent narratives were recalled by tribes within a context of their histories of mana. Waka knowledge was therefore especially valued, not only for its own sake, but for its contribution to a total tribal account of past and present. The scholarship and debate on this subject is of course extensive. Much subsequent reference to waka histories by writers is

transfixed on issues dealing with the supposed veracity and validity (or otherwise) of tribal traditions and processes. Such references invariably misread the complexity of such descent traditions, or they misinterpret their importance as a source of mana to tribes. Frequent reference to the best known waka has also elevated the importance of those waka, especially when they are cited outside of their proper customary tribal descent narratives, and these frequently extend much further into the distant past.

I. L. G. Sutherland once reflected on the importance of waka traditions to Māori when observing a hui held at Ngaruawahia to celebrate the believed six-hundredth anniversary of the Great Fleet migration to New Zealand: 'at the gathering, for hour after hour, night after night, kaumatuas from various tribes tried to agree on the whakapapa... tracing descent from those who came in the traditional canoes of the migration.'¹⁷

Peter Buck and Apirana Ngata, who assisted in arranging the anniversary, often discussed the 'necessity of getting standard whakapapa for the various canoes'-an interesting idea, perhaps suggesting a certain view of whakapapa as more or less fixed in time and function. In their correspondence, numerous possibilities and alternatives were mooted.¹⁸

Pei Te Hurinui was also involved in the hui's inception, having suggested to the late Princess Te Puea the idea of celebrating the believed anniversary of the distant arrival of the Fleet. As he later

wrote, 'in fixing the year 1950 for the celebration at Ngaruawahia, we first examined several lines of descent of King Koroki, back to Hoturoa and other leaders of the Fleet Migration.' Hurinui's study of whakapapa had extended, he wrote, over a period of more than forty years. Over that time, variations and mutations in tribal whakapapa had always been checked and rechecked with his elders of Tainui. 'As a result of persistent questioning and careful study of our whakapapa, I [was] convinced that... our lines from the fleet [were] authentic,' he wrote.¹⁹

Accordingly, the waka traditions, though perceived differently by different tribes, were important in that they featured as authoritative tribal narratives from which individual histories could be drawn. Such narratives remained in the tribal memory over time, and were likely to be cited as constituting a basis for important knowledge of the tribal past.

Pei Te Hurinui demonstrated this in searching Tainui whakapapa for verification of the waka celebrations.

Such verifications drew heavily on tribal processes of recall and organising knowledge. These processes encompassed more than detail of common and overlapping descent narratives, with lateral and vertical connections established across the centuries. It also incorporated *how* tribal histories were in fact recalled and constructed. This was a recall based primarily on a common oral process with innumerable points of expression and reference. One such point of reference was the

ancient landscape, where 'names in the landscapes were like survey pegs of memory, marking the events that happened in particular place, recording some aspect or feature of the traditions and history of a tribe.'²⁰ Other points of reference were more difficult to manifest, embedded within varying Māori cultural forms like whakapapa itself, as Ngati Apa kaumātua, Reuben Ashford, has suggested:

That is why oratory is established when you arrived at the marae, you didn't know who they were but the oratory would open up with the normal greeting, saying who you are and where you people land, where your ancestors traversed, where they now lie in death, deceased, they all make mana of you and your people.²¹

Such whakapapa and whaikorero incorporated aspects of intuitive oratory and delivery which implied an underlying sense of past and present. However, despite the essentially intuitive nature of Māori oral recall, selections of narrative were, on different levels, likely to be arranged carefully, where the specific recall of history and tradition was at issue. In this sense, whakapapa played a central role as an organizing device. Such common intellectual organising processes and methods of delivery were inherently Māori cultural process. The communication of oral traditions in part provided a primary conduit through which the mechanics of establishing collective representations of experience and reality, past and present, could be continued.²²

Such oral processes incorporated narrative representations of the past. They also incorporated

conceptual frameworks through which these narratives were to be, at the very least, contextualised and rendered meaningful. Agathe Thornton considered the most important characteristic of such a process was its oral nature. It was extraordinary, she observed, that such a device as whakapapa was entirely oral, written down for the first time later only by those who wrote manuscripts. 'From conception and learning to performance [they were] either chanted or recited. How this is possible is not easy for us to conceive.'²³

Much earlier, officials like Native Land Court Judges after 1865 in Taranaki were frequently similarly confounded. Chief Judge Francis Fenton transcribed numerous pages of notes from Māori depositions in 1866, at Compensation Court hearings in New Plymouth, attempting to decipher the intricacies of testimony and whakapapa.

To conclude, Māori oral depictions of the past from the paepae tended to be, and are largely still, seemingly fragmentary and incomplete, not always as a consequence of the intuitive process however. Presentations of whakapapa and history were equally likely to be selectively attuned to the occasion for which they were presented. Of course, some occasions within Māori protocols such as powhiri and poroporoaki provide constraints enough of their own.

These seemingly fragmented presentations were in fact rigidly structured by practices like whaikorero, as Buck had written:

The fixed etiquette of welcoming visitors with oratorical speeches and

discussions of affairs of tribal or family interest, connected with birth marriage and death, all led to the development of high standards of speech and oratory ... participants all learned to memorise the higher forms of speech which contained references to myth, tradition and genealogy ... enriched with figures of speech and appropriate chants and songs.²⁴

Such 'high standards of speech and oratory' still issue forth from the paepae, which continues to serve as a controlling site for authoritative expositions of tribal whakapapa, traditions and history. Whilst these presentations might appear as wholly intuitive, astute listeners are aware, and are indeed appreciative, of the context and verbal contest unfolding. The exchange, for the most part benevolent but within vigorous constructions, facts merging with feint, all within given frameworks of historical construction, strongly asserts tribal validity and mana across the marae, from the paepae.

Figuratively speaking, the paepae can be said to be the controlling site of all Māori knowledge, including knowledge of the past. The paepae is the place for oral exposition, for argument, for assertions of histories of mana. Understanding how Māori organise and present those histories of mana, from the literal or figurative paepae, helps us to appreciate the uniqueness and potential of Māori oral history, and all oral history.

Endnotes

- ¹ Juliet Gardiner, *What is History Today?*, London, 1988, p.1.
- ² Some Pacific historians seem especially troubled by Māori oral histories. See I. C. Campbell, '1350 And All That: Why The Great Fleet Story Is Not History', *Historical News*, No.68 (May 1994), pp. 4-6.
- ³ Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts. The Social Construction of Oral History*, London, 1992, p.1.
- ⁴ Māori historians often choose not to enter such scholarly debates, as 'how reliable or historical are tribal traditions', simply because scholars advancing such debates rarely show any knowledge of, much less any empathy for, Māori conventions which should apply when representing those same Māori histories. One notable exception has been Sir Tipene O'Regan, 'Old Myths and New Politics. Some Contemporary Uses of 'Traditional History' in *New Zealand Journal of History*, 26:1 (1992), pp. 5-27.
- ⁵ Leslie Kelly, *Tainui. The Story of Hoturoa and His Descendants*, Wellington, 1949, p.67.
- ⁶ D.M.Stafford, *Te Arawa. A History of the Arawa People*, Auckland, 1967, pp.1-2.
- ⁷ George Graham, 'Tainui', in *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 60:1 (1951), p.60.
- ⁸ J. H. Mitchell, *Takitimu*, Wellington, 1944, p.73.
- ⁹ William Greenwood, 'Kahungunu and Tamatea' in *Journal of the Polynesian Society (JPS)*, 60:1 (1951), p.60. Greenwood was one of a large group of Pakeha scholars who in the 1950s made good use of the JPS to debate the 'veracity' and 'reliability' of tribal histories and traditions.
- ¹⁰ Vanessa Sturmey, Submission of Nga Rauru, Waitangi Tribunal, Te Ihupuku Marae, Waitotara, 14 October 1991; *Wai 143*, F1, p.7.
- ¹¹ Milton Hohaia, Submission of Taranaki iwi, Waitangi Tribunal, Parihaka, 16 October 1991, *Wai 143*, F12, p.2.
- ¹² Tipene O'Regan, 'Ngai Tahu; ko wai te iwi?', Conference paper, New Zealand Historical Association conference, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 11 May 1991.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ O'Regan, 'Old Myths', p.5.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.24.
- ¹⁷ I. L. G. Sutherland, 'Māori and European' in *JPS*, 61:1 (1952), p.153.
- ¹⁸ Apirana Ngata, letter to Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa), 2 October 1929, in *Na to Hoa Aroha. From Your Dear Friend*, Vol 1, 1925-1950, (ed) M.P.K. Sorrenson, Auckland, 1986, p.245.
- ¹⁹ Pei Te Hurinui, 'Māori Genealogies', *JPS*, 62:2 (1958), p.162.
- ²⁰ Te Aue Davis with Tipene O'Regan, *He Korero purakau mo nga taunahahtanga a nga tupuna. Place Names of the Ancestors*, Wellington, 1990, p.xiii.
- ²¹ Reuben Ashford, Ngati Apa (Whanganui), personal communication, October 1992.
- ²² Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, London, 1985, p.124.
- ²³ Agathe Thornton, *Māori Tradition As History*, London, 1985, p.124.
- ²⁴ Peter Buck, *The Coming of the Māori*, Wellington, 1925, p.360.

Book Reviews

Julie Liebrich (ed), *A Gift of Stories: Discovering how to deal with mental illness*, University of Otago Press, 1999, 192pp, paperback, illustrated

Reviewed by Helen Gilbert

A personal story belongs to the person who lives it, to nobody else, unless the person makes a gift of it,' the editor notes in her introduction. Liebrich points out that when *other* people tell stories about mental illness, the stories are called 'case histories', novels, newspaper articles. If most of our knowledge of mental illness is derived from these last sources then, as oral historians know, the voices of the subjects - those who live with variable levels of mental health - may be still unheard.

The stories gifted in this book have been produced in collaboration between storyteller and editor. The process involved a recorded interview, transcription, re-interview (in some cases), and then the editor wrote a draft. The final version of the story was re-worked by the storyteller and the editor together - in-the-same-room-together rather than in cyberspace.

In compiling the stories, the editor deliberately eschewed comment and interpretation as intrusions on the integrity of the storyteller. The process has worked well, providing distinct voices with specific stories rather than generalisations.

Some stories focus on details: of acute periods of illness and the challenges involved in accepting the reality of the illness. Others emphasise more the experience of living a full and active life while yet adapting to managing, as far as possible, their mental health. Some stories are told simply, baldly even, and the courage of the storyteller in constructing a whole life is all the more poignant for it. Other stories are more comprehensive tellings of mental, physical and emotional experiences, taking the reader on a journey that is as convincing in the years of calm and clarity as it is in the periods of pain or confusion.

The jacket of the book features overlapping sheets of brightly coloured and textured wrappings materials, which invite the reader to open the gift, turn the pages, and peel back their own layers of ignorance, prejudice and personal experience of people with mental illness. Photographs and illustrations throughout add depth and colour to the stories. Prized people, pets, places and achievements flanking the stories emphasise further the intensely personal nature of what is told. They also highlight the breadth of interests and activities of the storytellers.

As I read the book I was struck by the range of the storytellers' paid occupations, which include artist, author, scientist, factory worker and manager. Of further note was how many of the

storytellers use their skills directly in the field of mental health. Of the 21 storytellers, more than half work in an area allied to mental health, whether as manager of a rehabilitation centre or as a biological scientist teaching and researching brain function.

Love and belonging recur as a theme in many stories. While all the storytellers have achieved both very human goals, for some it has been a long, lonely struggle. During some periods of some illnesses, altered priorities and perceptions make it difficult for people to maintain their connections with the people they ordinarily love dearly. All of us need, literally, desperately, to belong somewhere, to some people. The despair that accompanies acute social isolation and loneliness compounds the challenge of living well with a mental illness. Here are many stories of people who love courageously - the storytellers themselves and their families (however constructed) and friends.

One of the struggles for people living with mental illness is to be accepted as full human beings: people who happen to have mental illness rather than as a dangerous disease inhabiting an uncontrollable body. Through the breadth of the stories told here, the distinction becomes very sharp. Further, more of us than dare to admit take drugs to modify our mental health (and let

us face it, Prozac and its successors do not have the same moral status as vitamin C.)

Finally, some of my enthusiasm for the book is because of *my* story. *A Gift of Stories* shone a beam of light and hope into a frightening time in my life.

Rachael Selby, *Still Being Punished*,
Wellington, Huia Publishers, 1999.
70pp, paperback.

Reviewed by Kelly Bevan, M.Phil

The personal stories of five Māori men and women reveal the grief associated with loss of a language and the anger at the physical disciplines endured for speaking one's language in school. These are linked with Māori education policies and unfold the participants' desire for healing.

Selby recalls her father's stories passed on to him by his kaumatua who wove their stories on marae. This reinforced for Selby the importance of the oral traditions of Māori and the natural way that knowledge is transferred from one generation to another. Her book focuses on te reo as a means of Māori passing on stories and knowledge.

This book explores some of the factors that influenced the participants' experiences of losing te reo Māori. The Waitangi Tribunal's report on te reo Māori records evidence from kaumatua who had been punished at school for speaking Māori. Their testament in the past disbelieved, Māori

in contemporary times are believed, paving the way for others to begin telling their stories of truth.

Selby's personal schooling experiences sparked a desire to begin piecing together the stories about Māori being punished for speaking te reo Māori in school. Contributing factors are explored, such as school assimilation policies designed to bridge the gap between Māori and Pakeha, as well as the Department of Education's advice to Native School teachers to instruct students only in English as it was believed that a second language would be learnt more quickly if the first language was not learnt at all. Selby refers to British and European settler attitudes as being fed by the power that many of the teachers had over Māori children which bound them to discipline children—often severely. The stories contained in this book reveal how such policies affected Māori.

Four of the stories are from men and women who went to Native Schools; the fifth story is from a woman who attended a main stream school in New Zealand. All were left with lasting memories and their ability to learn and speak te reo Māori altered. "There is a story of grief and loss in this book and in the stories recorded here. For some of the children of these generations the pain has continued, for others it has dissipated, for others there have been opportunities to heal as te reo Māori has been revived." (Selby, 1999)

The book finishes with lessons learned, which serves to link the storytelling practices of Māori to global indigenous forms of language revitalisation.

Selby's book reveals through oral methodology a powerful

glimpse at what lies in the heart of those Māori who were punished for speaking Māori in schools—it is an exploration of issues central to, and contributing towards, the beginning of the Māori language revitalisation movement.

Suzanne P MacAulay, *Stitching Rites: Colcha Embroidery Along the Northern Rio Grande*,
University of Arizona Press, 2000,
206pp, hardback, \$NZ75

Reviewed by Penelope A. Dunkley

Suzanne MacAulay has a PhD in folklore and ethnography from the University of Pennsylvania and is currently head of the School of Fine Arts at Wanganui Polytechnic. This book is based on a dissertation and reads as such. The text is dense and at times impenetrable. The map of the San Luis Valley (p. 2), which is essential to the story, requires a key to the digits and symbols, and a magnifying glass for the script. My Rand McNally Road atlas of the United States provided the answers. A glossary of the Spanish words used would aid the non-Spanish speaking reader.

Colcha embroidery is a traditional Spanish style of textile, bed covering or wall hanging from the nineteenth century. Diagrams of the making of the colcha stitch would be a welcome addition to the text.

These caveats apart, the author has many good stories to tell in the pursuit of her subject matter. She initiated a documentary project in the San Luis Valley in

1979, returned in 1988 and worked on this project for two years from 1990. The six chapters encompass the stitcher, Josephine Lobato, who is used as tour guide to her own culture, the change and tradition in historical colcha making, embroidery revivals, the sewing circle of San Luis and the stitches of myth and memory. The illustrations date from the nineteenth century to the 1990s and include current pictorial subjects, floral and geometric designs. The author's travels, researches, reflections and interpretations are wrapped around verbatim quotes from her subjects.

Josie Lobato was born in San Luis in the late 1930s. Josie describes a piece she was working on for her family: 'So this is sort of a story. But it's sort of a legacy. I started to think about it and thought, well, what do I want to leave my children? They'll never know much about Hispanic life ... about the Hispanic traditions because they weren't raised with Spanish traditions. They were raised in Denver, Colorado, and we lost a lot of our traditions when we went to the city—both my husband and I.'

Many societies are recapturing old traditions in art and craft, endeavouring to ensure that they are not lost to future generations. Explorations of links across national borders and between disciplines accompanies this search. This book thus well serves the stitchers of the Northern Rio Grande.

Dianne Bardsley, *The Land Girls: In a Man's World, 1939-46*, University of Otago Press, 2000, 170 pp, paperback, \$39.95

Reviewed by Megan Hutching,
History Group, Ministry for Culture
& Heritage

On 6 November 1941 regulations regarding the establishment of a national Women's Land Corps were published. In September 1942 the Corps was reorganised as the Women's Land Service. But most people know of these women as the Land Girls in the title.

The primary aim of the book, Dianne Bardsley tells us (p. 141) was to recognise the land girls' contribution to the war service. It is a contribution that she and they feel has been overlooked or ignored by those who have written about the war. Bardsley also points out that, beyond a letter of thanks, the land girls received no official recognition of their contribution to the war either – they were not eligible for 'rehab' loans, for example – nor were they allowed to join the Returned Services Association.

The book begins with a chapter which compares the Women's Land Service (WLS) with similar schemes in Australia and the United Kingdom and then gives a brief historiographical overview of the home front during the Second World War, making the point that the WLS has been treated rather cursorily in published histories until now. Then the stories begin.

One hundred and thirty women were interviewed for the book with 90 providing written interviews (by which must be meant answers to a questionnaire). The eleven chapters cover various areas –

some are biographical, some are about particular farms, some are thematically-based – and use the women's stories to great effect. The book is very nicely illustrated with wonderful photographs of the women going about their work. In fact, the descriptions of the very hard work that farming was before the introduction of much mechanisation is one of the strong points of the book and is vividly conveyed by the women.

I also found the depiction of rural life – how people entertained themselves – and of family relations quite fascinating. Many of the women expressed great admiration for their fathers for having taught them about farming. Some of the women reported that their mothers knew nothing of how the work was done out on the farm, while others were very closely involved with that work. Bardsley states that there was little support from farmers for the idea of land girls, and that the New Zealand Farmers' Union openly expressed its opposition.

There is a chapter on the difficulties that these young women faced, although Bardsley notes (p. 107) that many of the women that she interviewed were reluctant to have their recollections of unpleasant experiences published. The disadvantages described are therefore mainly confined to how hard these women had to work.

I suppose my greatest criticism of the book is the lack of analysis. The book is mainly descriptive, and I kept saying, "Why?" as I read it. "Why did they become land girls?" "Why did they not want their less pleasant experiences published?" "Why did the Farmers' Union oppose the WLS?" This lack of analysis, I think, arises from Bardsley's wish to tell an

untold story and to ensure that these women gain some recognition for their work in the war effort. As a chronicle of the experiences of the women of the WLS, this is successful; it is less so as something which helps us understand the motivations of the women and the society from which they came.

(It would be extremely helpful to know if these interviews were recorded on tape, and where they and the paperwork associated with them, are archived.)

Anna Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour: Working the New Zealand Waterfront, 1915-1951*, University of Otago Press, 2001, 202 pp, paperback, \$39.95

Reviewed by Lesley Hall

2001, the fiftieth anniversary of the 1951 lockout has produced a television documentary, exhibitions, seminars, and now this book by Anna Green. Many previous discussions of the events of 1951 portray it mainly as a dispute between the government of the day and militant trades unionists. Anna Green disputes this oversimplified description, arguing that the roots of this 'epochal event in New Zealand history' are to be found much earlier:

In the first half of the century, a regime of low wages, insecure employment and unsafe working conditions created permanent antagonism and covert resistance among the labour force. When the economy improved, the

balance of power shifted (to the watersiders) on the waterfront, and traditional strategies were utilised to great effect against the employers. The causes of the 1951 dispute were structural and embedded in the labour process.

The third party in the dispute highlighted in Anna Green's analysis is the employers, particularly the British Shipping Companies.

This book combines thorough research of union, government, shipping and stevedoring companies' records with 35 oral history interviews of waterside workers, representatives of shipping and stevedoring companies, the Waterfront Commission and others. Analysis of this material leads Green to assert that the 1951 lockout was the culmination of a long period of struggle between employers and watersiders in which beliefs and behaviour became entrenched on both sides. Approximately a third of those interviewed were the sons of watersiders who had absorbed the history of labour relations and practices on the wharves from their fathers from a young age; memories of the 1913 strike, for example, still lingered. Demonstrating the added dimension that oral testimony brings to the historical record, one Auckland resident explained to Green:

Of course. I would have to have unionism. It was instilled in me from the day I was born...As a kid I went to the Socialist Sunday School, they called it. Singing 'The Workers' Flag is Deepest Red', and the 'Internationale', and the 'Marseillaise', and that Welsh song...and this is where...the old man, you can miss this and miss that, but you dare not miss this...

Green challenges what she contends are two opposing myths about the 1951 dispute. The first is

the dominant liberal myth that describes the lockout as a struggle between labour militants and labour moderates; the (National) Minister of Labour of the day, William Sullivan, for example, denounced the union leaders (erroneously) as "communist wreckers", and linked the dispute to the Korean War. From this perspective, by rejecting arbitration in 1951, those who controlled the watersiders' union challenged 'the power of the state', thereby destroying the union, 'and public confidence in the Labour Party, which had vacillated on the issue'. Green argues that this view fails to adequately address the cause of the dispute.

Not to be accused of partiality, Green also takes issue with the socialist myth that has tended to discuss the dispute in terms of a heroic working class attempting to create socialism. Green argues that both the liberal and socialist explanations insufficiently explain events: '...it is essential to examine the labour process on the wharves: the nature of the work and the way in which it was organised by the employers, for it is here that so much of the conflict began'.

In Chapter 1 Green argues that the role of the British shipping companies in twentieth century New Zealand is not as benign as contemporaries appear to have believed. Rather, New Zealand was a "rich harvest" for the employers and they attempted to protect it at all costs. Chapter 2 discusses the often unpleasant nature of waterside work, the dangers, and the insecurity of not having regular work. Men worked in refrigerated holds for long stretches without the benefit of modern thermal clothing, and many of the cargoes were unpleasant – animal hides for

example were often covered with maggots. Again showing the utility of oral testimony, one man told Green:

I stood alongside two fellas, they got killed alongside me. One was on a ship that was discharging telegraph poles from Australia on a wire sling...The block of the yard arm winch gave way as the telegraph poles were coming down on the wharf and they hit this fella. Rogers was his name...Killed him on the spot.

Very long working hours were probably a major contributory factor in the poor safety record on the wharves and 'in private – the shipping companies, recognised the deleterious effects of a working week of fifty-nine hours'. The employers, it appears to Green, had little interest in improving working conditions. Maximising profit, and profits were 'substantial', was of the utmost importance.

Chapter 3 describes the events leading to the formation of the New Zealand Watersiders Union and discusses how solidarity amongst the watersiders was achieved in a variety of ways. One narrator commented that 'there was a great fellowship amongst the workers that didn't exist in a lot of other unions'. Another, 'I would always remain loyal to my class because I was one of them...you wouldn't ask a soldier to be disloyal to his regiment would you? I was a wharfie.' The allusion to the military is interesting as, in the recent TV One documentary on the 1951 lockout, several of those interviewed commented on the sense of betrayal they felt at the treatment meted out by the government, when only a few years before they had been welcomed home as heroes after the Second World War. Jim Roberts and Jock Barnes,

two important men in New Zealand waterside history, are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4 discusses the major reforms on the waterfront after the election of the first Labour Government in 1935: replacement of the 'auction block' with a bureau system, award negotiations, and the Waterfront Control Commission. Particularly revealing for me were Chapters 5 and 6 which discuss the informal resistance engaged in by watersiders including spelling (taking rests), gliding away, and go-slows, to undermine the employers' attempts at greater productivity. Insightful explanations into how some of the workplace practices, often perceived externally as negative, had come about was illuminating. Green argues that the use of such tactics could be a double edged sword at times:

The union leaders saw watersiders' informal control over the work process as the origin of their negotiating strength with the employers, but it could equally undermine their efforts to gain and maintain better conditions, and achieve formal control over waterfront work.

Chapter 7 describes events leading to the finale – the increasing tension that led to the eventual lockout of New Zealand watersiders. In support of her view that the 1951 lockout was not a two-sided affair, that is, the unions versus the government, Green describes how the shipping companies chose to passively bide their time and wait to see what either the government or the unions would do. She argues that the employers 'waited their opportunity to provoke a confrontation with the union, then performed the ultimate disappearing act of hiding behind the government'. The government

obliged by declaring a state of emergency, deregistering the union, and replacing wharfies with the armed forces:

Civil liberties were drastically curtailed: there were to be no avenues, public or private, through which discussion of, or assistance, to the strike could legally be given. Any member of the police force above the rank of sergeant could enter any premises. Censorship, preventing publication of the union case in the dispute was more or less total.

I recommend this book as a valuable contribution to labour history in New Zealand. I would have liked to hear even more from the oral history participants themselves as I think it is the personal stories that, for me, bring events to life. Some comment from women involved, particularly the men's wives, could have contributed an added dimension too: Freda ('Fuzz') Barnes, for example, organised the wharfies' Auckland Auxiliary, which assisted worker's families.

Anna Green is to be commended for her practice and advocacy of oral history as a useful research method that provides 'insight into the nature and meaning of past experience'. Unfortunately, not all historians are so accepting, more's the pity!

Oral history enthusiast, LESLEY HALL co-taught a Women's Auto/Biography course with an oral history component, at Victoria University of Wellington from 1992-2000. She conducted oral history interviews herself for her current project, her PhD (Working title - Women, Communism and the Family).

NOHANZ ORIGINS

The National Oral History Association of New Zealand
Te Kete Kūrero-a-Waha o Te Motu (NOHANZ)
was established as result of the first national oral history seminar
organised in April 1986 by the Centre for Continuing Education
of the Victoria University of Wellington and the New Zealand
Oral History Archive, a professional organisation based in the
National Library that worked on major oral history projects.

Objectives

- To promote the practice and methods of oral history.
- To promote standards in oral history interviewing techniques, and in recording and preservation methods.
- To act as a resource of information and to advise on practical and technical problems involved in making oral history recordings.
- To act as a coordinator of oral history activities throughout New Zealand.
- To produce an annual oral history journal and regular newsletters.
- To promote regular oral history meetings, talks, seminars, workshops and demonstrations.
- To encourage the establishment of NOHANZ branches throughout New Zealand.
- To compile a directory of oral history holdings to improve access to collections held in libraries archives and museums.

Code of ethical and technical practice

This Code exists to promote ethical, professional and technical standards in the collection, preservation and use of sound and video oral history material.

Archives, sponsors and organisers of oral history projects have the following responsibilities:

- to inform interviewers and people interviewed of the importance of this Code for the successful creation and use of oral history material;
- to select interviewers on the basis of professional competence and interviewing skill, endeavouring to assign appropriate interviewers to people interviewed;
- to see that records of the creation and processing of each interview are kept;
- to ensure that each interview is properly indexed and catalogued;
- to ensure that preservation conditions for recordings and accompanying material are of the highest possible standard;
- to ensure that placement of and access to recordings and accompanying material comply with a signed or recorded agreement with the person interviewed;
- to ensure that people interviewed are informed of issues such as copyright, ownership, privacy legislation, and how the interview and accompanying material may be used;
- to make the existence of available interviews known through public information channels;
- to guard against possible social injury to, or exploitation of people interviewed.

Interviewers have the following responsibilities:

- to inform the person interviewed of the purposes and procedures of oral history in general and of the particular project in which they are involved;
- to inform the person interviewed of issues such as copyright, ownership, privacy legislation, and how the material and accompanying material may be used;
- to develop sufficient skills and knowledge in interviewing and equipment operation, e.g. through reading and training, to ensure a result of the highest possible standard;
- to use equipment that will produce recordings of the highest possible standard;
- to encourage informative dialogue based on thorough research;
- to conduct interviews with integrity;
- to conduct interviews with an awareness of cultural or individual sensibilities;
- to treat every interview as a confidential conversation, the contents of which are available only as determined by written or recorded agreement with the person interviewed;
- to place each recording and all accompanying material in an archive to be available for research, subject to any conditions placed on it by the person interviewed;
- to inform the person interviewed of where the material will be held;
- to respect all agreements made with the person interviewed.

*National Oral History Association
of New Zealand*

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NOHANZ

Cover image from MY PLACE



PHOTOGRAPHER
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'MY PLACE' actors [L-R]: Annette Facer, John Dawson,
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