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notes on sources, articles or
reviews relevant to the principles
and practice of oral history.

Membership is open to individuals,
students, unwaged and institutions.

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We welcome contributions, whether long or short articles, book, documentary or exhibition reviews, reports of meetings or conferences, or work in progress. Long articles are anonymously peer-reviewed.

The deadline for contributions to the 2020 issue is 30 June.

A Guide for Contributors is available from the Editors and on the NOHANZ website.

Please send your contributions to the Editors using email link below.

If you are interested in becoming a peer reviewer for the long articles, please contact the Editors.

journalnohanz@oralhistory.org.nz

Editorial

This issue of *Oral History in New Zealand* begins with a revised version of a presentation from the 2020 NOHANZ conference in Wellington.

Liana MacDonald uses her connection with the Wairau Valley to reflect on how the story of the Wairau Affray of 17 June 1843 has been told and retold from various perspectives and for varying purposes over the years. Her findings are presented through the lens of narrative ethnography, a research method that attends to the internal and external structure of stories, to show how shifting perspectives of the Affray forefront a narrative of local history that aligns with Indigenous peoples' experiences of colonisation. Liana's iwi affiliations with Ngāti Kuia, Rangitāne o Wairau and Ngāti Koata, along with her teaching and research experience, give her article great resonance, especially in the context of the new school History curriculum which will be introduced next year.

Dame Gaylene Preston and the Alexander Turnbull Library have kindly allowed us to publish Gaylene's 2021 Turnbull Founder lecture. It is a fascinating overview of her theory and practice of using interviews to shape and drive her film work. We will publish the video clips on the NOHANZ website: www.oralhistory.org.nz because, as all oral historians know, a transcript is all very well but there is nothing like hearing and seeing the person speaking to gain a richer appreciation of their experiences.

Most of us record our own interviews for our own research, but Hanna Lu writes about using interviews with Chinese New Zealanders archived at Auckland Libraries for her university studies. While such interviews might not address the exact questions that a researcher is asking, Hanna notes that a reflective use of what has been said often uncovers what the researcher requires. Her article is particularly insightful about the role of the interviewer in oral history recordings.

As the Delta variant of the COVID-19

coronavirus continues to cause havoc in Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world, we are reminded of the shock (but also, in hindsight, the security) of our first lockdowns in 2020 by Michelle Rayner's review of the 'Kei Rotu i te Miru: Inside the Bubble' podcast series broadcast on Radio New Zealand in mid-2021.

An interview with TVNZ journalist, Mei Heron, who took part in the Verbatim Theatre production, *Transmission*, is an insight into both the production of *Transmission* and the role of news journalists during last year's lockdowns. As Mei says in the interview: 'We are often told, "Who cares about you, as a journalist? We want to hear about the people out there," so there isn't that space in our job to talk about our own trauma, or our own experience. We might get pockets of talking about that with our friends or our family, but in a COVID situation, when everyone is so heavily immersed in COVID, I think the last thing your friends want to hear is how you went through COVID when they have gone through it, too.'

This issue concludes with reviews of recently published books.

And this editorial concludes with a reminder that we are seeking contributions for the 2022 journal. For this issue we will have a theme: 'The Role of Objects and Material Culture in Memory'. Topics might include: how interviewees relate emotionally to their life history, environment and material possessions; harnessing the power of sight, touch and the smell of material objects to extend recollections and inform narratives; how interviewees can use objects to tell their life story narratives.

We welcome contributions of long articles or shorter reports. Articles are anonymously peer-reviewed. We also welcome book, documentary or exhibition reviews and reports of meetings or conferences. A guide for contributors is available from the editors and on the NOHANZ website. The contact email is: journalnohanz@oralhistory.org.nz

MEGAN HUTCHING

Display in the Marlborough Museum, Blenheim. Steve Austin



Shifting perspectives of the Wairau Affray

DR LIANA MACDONALD
(NGĀTI KUIA, RANGITĀNE O WAIRAU, NGĀTI KOATA)

Introduction

I was 13 or 14 years old when I first visited the Wairau Affray site with a class of peers from Marlborough Girls College. The fact I can't remember the year parallels how little I remember about the trip itself. I have no recollection of standing on or beside the battle site that has since become a grazing field for cattle. My only memory of that trip is sitting at the base of the large white triangular memorial in the Tuamarina cemetery, just above the battle site, awash in shame and discomfort. The adult accompanying the trip said that this was the spot in which "Maaris had murdered the settlers who had surrendered in battle". As the only student of Māori descent (Ngāti Kuia, Rangitāne o Wairau, Ngāti Koata), I felt naked, like a deer caught in headlights. The talking stops, and out of the corner of my eyes the other students begin to filter away.

The most historically significant military exchange between iwi Māori and settler militia in the South Island of Aotearoa occurred at Wairau on 17 June 1843. Up to nine Māori and twenty-two Pākehā were killed for reasons that differ depending on perspective. The changing title of the Wairau conflict: from a 'Massacre' to an 'Incident', to today's 'Affray', is testament to the slow acceptance of Blenheim's Pākehā community to consider that Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Rārua, Rangitāne o Wairau and Ngāti Kuia legitimately responded to attempts to steal the whenua. The New Zealand Company had their eyes set on the fertile Wairau to meet commitments to forthcoming settlers and ignored Ngāti Toa chiefs who challenged the legitimacy of its purchase (O'Malley, 2019). I remember noticing the name change in passing while driving home from Picton to Blenheim after catching the Interislander ferry, initially as a student during university holidays (from Massacre to Incident in the 1990s) and later as a secondary school teacher (Incident to Affray in 2000s). The name changes registered with some curiosity and maybe a passing comment, but I never thought about the social and political significance of the change, let alone that the battle at the Wairau was personally relevant to a woman of settler and Indigenous

heritage who was schooled within my own tribal boundaries in Blenheim.

Although the events leading up to and during the Wairau conflict continue to be hotly debated,¹ this paper is less concerned with what happened that day and more interested in the way the event is remembered by individuals associated with different Indigenous and settler groups. Collective memory is the perspective of one social group or community view of the past, which provides a framework for how individuals view history (Halbwachs 1992, Mills, 2007). In Aotearoa's settler society, historical amnesia of colonial violence is a well-documented phenomenon that affects how Indigenous-settler relations are conceptualised today (O'Malley, 2019, 2016). Yet, Barker (2018) notes that it is important to think through different ways that settler populations can dispossess Indigenous peoples to 'expose ongoing colonization and present disavowal of the settler colonial present' (p. 1137). In Te Tau Ihu, the Wairau Affray has never really been forgotten by settlers or their descendants. In this paper, interviews with a Pākehā historian and

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museum educator who taught local history to large numbers of Blenheim youth for over 20 years, and five mana whenua – my whanaunga – from Te Tau Ihu iwi,² reveal that the Wairau conflict holds varying significance for individuals from settler and Indigenous groups in the Marlborough regions. The interviews illustrate that despite the Wairau battle being taught in many of the schools in the area over several decades, there is no single narrative strand about the events or how they are understood in the present.³

My childhood is littered with painful memories attributed to settler perspectives of history and race relations (MacDonald, 2020). These memories once haunted my subconscious: buried because I didn't want to be connected to a villainous and savage Indigenous population. More recently, my relationship with these memories has changed. Listening to whanaunga share their perspectives about local histories of colonial violence has helped me understand why I was taught one particular narrative about the Wairau Affray, and how the shame and inadequacy that Māori are made to feel through the retelling is one of many ways mana whenua pay a price for bolstering settler claims to land ownership in Te Tau Ihu. To decolonise New Zealand history, 'we have to reimagine the story of what it means to be on our lands and oceans beyond the normative coloniser script' (Mahuika, 2020, p. 22). Drawing on narrative ethnography, I position contested and less well-known iwi perspectives of colonial violence alongside a popularised narrative based on settler memory, to forefront an alternative narrative of local history that acknowledges the ongoing structuring force of colonisation.

Decolonising local histories of colonial violence

Historical amnesia surrounding the New Zealand Wars can refer to how colonial violence is both remembered and forgotten (O'Malley, 2016, 2019). An amnesiac and sanitised narrative of colonial violence is integral to settler colonial nations, in which the collective memory of settlers is shaped in ways that relieve anxieties about the nature of settlement (Veracini, 2010). For

settlers, whose arrival is marked by the violent invasion of Indigenous communities and the assertion of colonial administration systems, laws and institutions, attachments to migrated lands are forged through a collective memory of colonisation that erases colonial violence (Kidman, 2018). Settlers can therefore feel threatened and defensive when national narratives of belonging, that silence colonial infractions, are challenged. For example, Kidman and O'Malley (2018) examined individual responses to a petition to Parliament for formal recognition of the New Zealand Wars. Some citizens responded by arguing that colonisation was a noble affair, others denied that colonial violence ever occurred, while some communicated fears that past violence would spread division among society today.

Craig Larkin (2012) writes that collective memory 'draws on such narrative structures to establish connectedness through time, place and social grouping' (p. 16). The ensuing narrative 'provides the temporal framework and cultural schemata for articulating our collective past. Individuals draw from a selection of dominant narrative plots and personal experiences to provide meaning to the past and purpose for the future' (p. 17). The Wairau Affray is nationally recognised as the most significant military exchange between settlers and Māori in the South Island, however key differences set the conflict apart from other colonial battles. The New Zealand Wars were fought between the Crown and different groups of Māori in the North Island between 1845 and 1872 (O'Malley, 2019). Iwi who took part in the major battles (occurring at Taranaki, Waikato, and Tauranga, for example) lost land through raupatu for "rebellious" against the government. The Wairau Affray occurred in 1843 and involved several iwi, the New Zealand Company, and a settler militia. Governor Robert FitzRoy later declared that the Europeans had provoked the incident. In 1846, Te Rauparaha was captured by Governor George Grey, and Ngāti Toa were forced, under duress, to sell their lands. Grey secured the fertile Wairau plains for the settlers, claiming it was reparation for those killed during the conflict. Greater

settler involvement, disagreements about who was at fault, and slippery methods of land confiscation differentiate the Wairau Affray from the North Island conflicts and impact how the battles are remembered by settler populations. For example, in 1914, the 50th anniversary of the battle of Ōrākau was held to celebrate how 'British mana' and the 'civilised world' had triumphed over 'a heroic and warlike native people' (O'Malley, 2015, p. 81). Conversely, references to the Wairau Massacre featured regularly

in Marlborough newspapers up until the 1920s, and it was not uncommon to read peoples' lives measured against the event in the obituary and personal sections of a local paper.⁴ Te Tau Ihu historian, Peter Meihana, notes that the Wairau conflict left a heavy imprint on settlers that is felt by their descendants in Blenheim today. Moreover, he argues that the Europeans who lost their life during the battle became a lynchpin for local settlers to also claim rights to the land (personal communication,



Wairau Affray interpretation panel photographed in 2021. Steve Austin

7 October 2021). Unlike battles in the North, where settler memory has waxed and waned, the unique circumstances surrounding the Wairau conflict have preserved the battle in settler memory to ensure its place within mainstream narratives of local history.

In this paper, narrative ethnographic methods are applied to interviews with one settler educator, called James, and five Indigenous historians, Hone, Pita and Piri, Auntie Margie and Uncle Timi⁵ who sit on the iwi boards and marae committee of Ngāti Toa ki Wairau, Rangitāne o Wairau, and Ngāti Kuia respectively.⁶ Narrative ethnography is a means for examining how and to what end narratives are constructed. Studying the internal and external structure of stories can provide ‘analytical access to the multi-layered embeddedness of stories in relation to other stories’ (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008, p. 254). The following sections take both the internal and external dimensions of narrative ethnography into consideration. First, by presenting the main issues that emerged from the participants’ interviews to reveal shifting perspectives of the Wairau Affray. These were: iwi uniting against the colonisers, the Wairau conflict, reservations and iwi division, and the settlements process and further division. Second, by presenting the main issues as a linear sequence to draw attention to a longer and larger narrative of colonisation that continues to this day. This is important because circumstances surrounding the Wairau conflict reveal how widespread acknowledgement of an episode of colonial violence can preserve the settler population’s sense of belonging and attachment to Indigenous territories. A third aspect of narrative ethnography considered are efforts to make somewhat transparent how the interpretations in this paper are guided by my personal relationship to the Wairau Affray and the participants, and the aims of a large-scale ethnographic study examining how New Zealanders remember and forget difficult events in their colonial past.⁷

Iwi uniting against the colonisers

Hone and I meet at Ngāti Toa ki Wairau headquarters on the edge of town; a disorderly site of temporary buildings that

service a number of small businesses. It takes a while to find the office, but when I do I’m given a cheery welcome and Hone waves me into a space that accommodates a large table with room to move comfortably around either side. He is dressed in a business suit and an array of papers related to the Wairau Affray are spread on the table. On the walls are eight identical maps of Te Tau Ihu with overlapping boundary outlines for each iwi. The lighting in the room is bright because the walls are white. It feels clean and a little sterile.

Hone tells me that he grew up with his grandmother (Ngāti Kuia, Rangitāne, Ngāti Apa, Ngāi Tahu) and grandfather (Ngāti Rārua of Ngāti Toa). Although his grandfather didn’t speak of the battle directly, Hone knew that he was raised alongside Māori who were at the battle. Two close tūpuna were at the Wairau Affray and his grandfather’s great uncle wrote down his account ‘many years later and it was verified by witnesses and written down by someone who was plausible’. Hone says that one of the issues about how the conflict is remembered was that Māori accounts of who fired first to start the fighting differed from European memory,

[My great great grand uncle] says that all the Māori evidence says that [the armed settlers] crossed back over the river and then ordered the firing. Whereas the European accounts all differ but they’re all sketchy. They say Māori were crossing back and forward across the [Tūamarina Stream by] canoe or waka and a shot was “accidentally” fired’.

Hone asserts that ‘the Wairau Incident was nothing to do with losing any land, it was to do with Ngāti Toa defending ownership of the land, and someone that was a foreign company that was coming here to take it. Neither [Ngāti Toa] or any of the other people that lived there wanted that to happen.’

The importance of iwi uniting under the threat of a common colonial enemy was furthered by Hone later in the interview when he stated that Ngāti Toa intermarried with

tribes who were already established in Te Tau Ihu to bring peace.

Some people and iwi now think that [the Tainui and Taranaki iwi invasion of Te Tau Ihu] was done as subjugation, but that was never the intent. It was to marry to keep the peace so there would be no more conflict. There wouldn’t be any intertribal conflict anymore because we had a bigger problem on our hands, and it was white (laughs). Much bigger problem and the devastation of the influenza and the diseases coming from 1830 – because the 1830s was when most of the Europeans came [with their diseases] and the population declined and Māori could see it; they would have been able to see it then. And then they realized that well, we need to fight together. [The Europeans are] gonna be an issue because [Ngāti Toa] would’ve seen that all Māori were treated the same.

When Hone was a boy, his History teacher told his class that the Wairau was lost because Te Rauparaha had killed a whole lot of Europeans and the Māoris had lost all their land. He thought that was funny ‘because I knew my grandparents lived on Māori land down the Pā (laughter). Can’t have lost at all’. Hone said that he had heard a lot of people either talking negatively about what Te Rauparaha did or not talking about him at all. However, as Hone reflects:

When you think about it, none of us would be here without him because he owned the place. After he done what he did, over the fight, who did the New Zealand company negotiate with? Who did the Crown have to negotiate with? We would have nothing if it wasn’t for him.

The Wairau conflict

The interview with James took place in the education room at the Marlborough Museum. I look around and am fascinated by the fact that thousands of young Blenheim people have been educated about local history inside this space during his 20-plus years career. We sit in chairs facing each other, in the middle, and I feel exposed by

dim lighting and wide spaces around and behind me. However, James’s articulate voice and gregarious demeanour soon fill the room, and it’s difficult to feel lonely in the space for very long.

James is Pākehā and was raised in Marlborough; he describes himself as a ‘Top of the South’ person. James shares that he learned about the Wairau conflict primarily through reading books from local historians – from the 1960s to present-day – that have shaped his thinking. Some of James’s information was gleaned from ‘fireside chats’ with the books’ authors and he enjoyed and valued these occasions immensely. However, much of the interview focusses on his approach when teaching people about the events related to the 1843 battle in Wairau. James begins by explaining that one point of contention is how different members of the Marlborough community name the conflict. He notes that the label “Massacre” is still in use, particularly by ‘the generation who are now in the 80s, 90s, 100s who were taught the true definition of a massacre.’ He indicates his belief that Māori will no longer be cast as villains when the older generation fades away. James is sometimes invited to talk to older groups of people to about the Affray to relay a more balanced perspective, whereby the ‘majority of fault was with people from Nelson, and the only fault that really can be cast to anyone on the Ngāti Toa side was that Te Rangihaeata killed people who had surrendered.’

James’s main educational work, however, is reserved for young people. Part of his approach is to discuss how the events that unfolded in the Wairau can be attributed to different cultural values or understandings that were held by Māori and Europeans at the time. James understood that the death of the militia who surrendered was a point of contention with Blenheim’s present-day Pākehā community, so he shows how he tries to explain the concept of Utu to students,

Māori didn’t have this concept of ‘if you surrender you cannot be harmed’. And so sometimes that’s where I teach them about the concept of Utu. And I keep that simple. I say, “We still have an old English concept

of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. And if you – if it's boys – if you're playing rugby and someone's elbow causes you to get a bleeding nose and you're angry about it, then when the ref's not watching, you might whack that person on the nose as well. And that's sort of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". And then I say, "Well, the Māori concept of Utu was you kill one of us and we will kill four or five or six or seven of you. You kill two of us, we will kill two times four or five or six and seven of you."

Next, James talks about how the death of two women led Te Rangihaeata to kill the soldiers.

One woman was a cousin of Te Rangihaeata, who was murdered by a Pākehā man who was acquitted during trial for a technicality. The second woman was one of Te Rangihaeata's wives, killed during the Wairau conflict. James said her death can lead

to a discussion about polygamy and that some Māori chiefs had several wives. Some students respond that this should not be a reason to kill the British soldiers. "Oh no, who cares? He's got four more, why worry about that one?" James responds. "Well hang on. If you've got five friends, six friends and one of them ends up in hospital. Do you go and see him? Or do you say, oh too bad I've got these other friends, I'll ignore the one in hospital."

James also explains that his 'basic approach to keep the kids interested is as much hands on as possible'. He has a range of replica artefacts of swords, pistols, handcuffs, and muskets that the students are given to re-enact the battle when they are taken to the site. James discusses the logistics and politics associated with doing the re-enactment, particularly in the wake of the

2019 Christchurch Mosque shootings. He is clearly passionate about teaching the Wairau Affray and discusses many other significant historical events in the region but, I wonder, what are the limitations of critical historical thinking conducted within four walls and next to a bed of smouldering embers? While I admire James's breadth of historical knowledge, I can't help but think that his view of colonial violence and injustice is far removed from the kōrero of my whanaunga, who speak of injustices that preceded the Wairau Affray and the duplicity of settler laws and governance.

Reservations and iwi division

My cousin Pita offers to take me and a research colleague to sites of significance for Rangitāne o Wairau around the Marlborough region – a tour he has conducted many times before and with groups of Blenheim youth. We spend the first hour in the township, visiting pou and a recently-erected sculpture to commemorate the history of local iwi. The second hour takes us out of Blenheim to some Pā sites where our tūpuna lived. Unlike Hone, Pita was taught by a 'really good history teacher' who was a migrant to Aotearoa. When the teacher learned of Pita's iwi connections, 'he walked out to the back of his room and out to the resource room and brought out this big folder that was full of old copy documents from the Appendices to the [Journals of the] House of Representatives and all that kind of stuff. I saw all of the local Māori family names on the census'. Pita said he also got a lot of the Wairau stories from an uncle and from my own grandmother, who had a great memory and lots of knowledge about families within the rohe.

Wairau Bar Road is just north of Blenheim, at the Spring Creek turn off. The road leads to Te Pokohiwi/The Wairau Bar, which is a significant archaeological site that marks the arrival of the first Polynesian people to set foot in Aotearoa. While the area is rich in pre-colonial history and has seen several waves of Māori settlement, the area is also significant for the part it plays in colonial history and settler-Indigenous and inter-iwi relations in the region. We travel

for about 10 minutes down the road until Pita suddenly instructs us to pull up and jump out. He presents a narrative that goes alongside this place.

I say to the boys, "Did you know that in New Zealand we had reservations?" And of course, they've seen all the cowboy movies, and they know that North American tangata whenua were put on reservations, but they didn't know that we also had reservations. So pretty much what you can see here, going that way, was what was called the Wairau Reserve. That was set up in 1856, and from the very get go it was a problem. Rangitāne was of the belief that they were going to get a reserve that was two miles inland from the mouth of the Wairau River, 10 miles along the coast up into Port Underwood, two miles inland and then 10 miles back this way. And that reserve was then supposed to link up with the reserves that were set out in Havelock and Canvastown.

But what happened was that the government then reneged and said, "We're not going to give you that much. We're going to give you 770-odd acres," which was basically that and that [points at two divisions of land directly in front of us], shared amongst three tribes. They divided the reserve up into three blocks, so that part down there became Ngāti Toa, this was Rārua, and then down that end was Rangitāne. So, the situation you had was two tribes that had recently arrived in the area, who had been at war with the other tribe, and now they were pushed on to the same reserve. After that, you had lots of flow on effects, right? You have big families getting born. For example, one family has 13 kids, then the next generation has 13, 14 kids. It just exploded. And, of course, these blocks at that time were swamp, so you didn't have enough land to support families. What happens then, is you have competition and squabbles and the squabbling still going on.

So, you have swamp and the tribes fighting amongst themselves over the boundaries, because one tribe believed they should have more than the other.



Te Hora Marae: Melissa Banks

Once the boundaries were fixed, you had families within the tribes fighting over who should get what. Then as families grew and grew and grew, people got pushed out and pushed out and pushed out. Then the next lot of government reserves were set up in 1906, and the people who would have been here if the original reserve was set up got forced out. The people I come from were from here but because there wasn't enough reserve land we moved out to the Sounds. Then, after the Depression and the Second World War, those people started to move back to the Wairau but what happens is people get these ideas that, "Well, hang on a minute you guys are not from here, you're from out there." Well actually nah, "We were from here. It's just that because of what happened we got forced out but now we're back".

Pita next discusses different types of reserves, the role of Land Courts and how some Māori families were able to work the system better than others, while acknowledging that 'a lot of the issues we have come back to the Crown fucking up in the beginning. Yep.' The mood is solemn when we get back into the car to continue down Wairau Bar Road.

Hone's grandparents also lived on Wairau Bar Road, or the Pā as it is known by locals. He spoke about the reservations and the impact on local iwi,

[Our tūpuna] arranged marriages to create peace and stop intertribal conflict occurring but the focus shouldn't have been on intertribal conflict because we all ended up down the Pā. Everyone ended up down the Pā or on whatever reserve lands there were. We were all given places in the middle of nowhere to live and they had to

survive in those places. But then over the years, all their freedoms were taken away, like the freedom to go and collect food up the rivers, which was their traditional place to go get kai. All that was taken away with the invention of new societies and new laws.

The Europeans that kept changing the law so they could get hold of the land. 99 per cent of the land wasn't good enough, they wanted 100 per cent of it. They wanted to take the whole lot and I think that has direct connections to the [Wairau] Incident. They wanted to get payback to the Māori - for the massacre - because the European government at the time supported the actions of the Māori and the settlers couldn't handle that. And that's the mentality that still exists today. You go to a talk about the Incident in town and people are still jumping up and down

going, "They murdered them". Yeah, they did it almost 200 years ago and you've still got a bee in your bonnet about it.

Freeman (2011) writes that a common settler colonial phenomenon in North America is the invisibility of local Indigenous history, whereby "Indians" usually appear only in the first chapter and then 'exit stage left after treaty or battle' (p. 214). He writes that the Toronto purchase of 1787 resulted in 250,880 acres of surrendered land for ten shillings. The purchase was found to be invalid seven years later, then transformed to a treaty in 1805. Moreover, 'several of the early historians of the city saw no need to mention the Toronto Purchase at all. Yet the confirmed treaty is the foundation for Toronto's legal existence' (p. 214). Covert forms of colonial violence managed through agreements, purchases and settlements that



Wairau reserves: Liana MacDonald

are silenced in “official” written histories are an insidious means for settlers to tame and control the Indigenous population.

Settlements process and further division

The drive from Blenheim to Canvastown is only about 25 minutes but, in that short space of time, my shoulders drop and my neck relaxes. Any ties to an urban landscape have long disappeared, and the car brings me and my research colleague through grass fields and rolling mountains and hills. I always feel like I have stepped back in time when visiting Te Hora marae. This is my tūrangawaewae: the place I reconnect with relatives, the fields I roamed freely with cousins, the urupā that holds the remains of whanaunga and of my father.

The wharenuī, however, has completely transformed since I was a child. What was a modest steel structure the size of a small hall, has grown several extensions including a larger wharekai to the right. I meet Uncle Timi under my favourite spot on the marae: the porch that looks out on the urupā. It's been a while since we last saw each other but he is just the same. A little older but still quick with a quip. The day has turned out a beauty, hot and still. My eyes squint into the brightness. Flecks of pollen and darting insects screen the view looking out to the hills, my cousin's makeshift home perches in the foreground flanked by cars and caravans. I notice the fence cordoning the urupā has grown considerably. Scrub and trees line the marae on the right, blocking the view to the main road to Nelson below. Aunty Margie greets us and takes us proudly through the building extensions, then into the wharenuī to talk to Uncle Timi and cousin Piri about the Wairau Affray.

Except our kōrero covers a lot of historical terrain and very little of the battle itself. Piri drives the first part of the discussion and much of it centres on the Te Tau Ihu Treaty settlements process between the late '90s and early 2000s. He describes feeling frustrated, angry, and disappointed at court hearings. Each iwi had hired lawyers to write up reports that said 'real ugly things'. Piri said that relationships between iwi and hapū changed after the settlement process.

Although everyone knew we were Ngāti Kuia, we weren't arguing with our Koata neighbours and our Rārua neighbours and our Te Atiawa neighbours. We were still all cousins or uncles, I remember that growing up. And then the Waitangi Tribunal Claims came along and iwi started having to draw lines on the sand and present claims. I know the rhetoric was these are grievance claims against the government but, at the end of the day, it was iwi trying to stake their claim and sometimes that meant to the detriment of other iwi.

The process was hurtful and changed Piri's view of some relations. However, he later came to realise that it was 'the Crown and the policies and the laws and the government that keep driving it'. He spoke about Ngāti Kuia experiencing four or five 'life changing events that you usually only get one of them in a century, or every couple hundred years'.

Ngā Iwi Hau, the Taranaki-Tainui iwi, came through in the early 1830s or whenever it was. Not even 10 years later we're having the Treaty of Waitangi. Then within the next 20-odd years you've got all these massive land sales happening, and then the Native Land Court in the 1800s. Each one of them had massive effects on our people and not one of them through our own doing. All driven with the intent to alienate us, not just from our lands, but from who we were as Māori as well. So, it is a process and it carried on happening in the 1900s as well.

The Wairau Affray only featured twice, very briefly, during the interview. Aunty Margie said, 'We never learned about the Māori Wars at school. They taught us all about Waterloo and all of those big wars over in other places but they never taught us about the Māori Wars.' They didn't really hear about the Wairau Affray until actually the [settlement] claims. It was hearing from our Rangitāne and Ngāti Apa cousins about how they experienced the wars. All I know is that [the settlers] fired the first shot and started the war that ended up really really nasty. It was

Wakefield and Co. They fired the first shot, I believe. That was all I know about it.

Uncle Timi's mind wanders a little several times during the interview he said.

At school no-one spoke to me much about the massacre. We all kept quiet because we weren't allowed to speak Māori. I spoke one word and the Headmaster heard me and he gave me six of the best, and said, 'Don't you ever let me hear you saying Māori again!'

Uncle Timi talks a lot about his role as iwi representative on the customary fishing board. His sense of humour undercut several serious issues that indicate the longevity of iwi memory.

It wasn't very long ago that a boat was built down in Havelock and guess what the silly people named it? Te Rauparaha. Well, there was people walking backwards and forwards in front of [the boat], "he better... get rid of that name..." and then the boat vanished! Never saw her again. He must've got the word from Rangitāne over there, Carver and his lot.

Te Rauparaha is a central figure for iwi in Te Tau Ihu and is associated with strong leadership (see Hone's narrative) or invasion and oppression. Aunty Margie, Uncle Timi and Piri express a range of issues pertinent to Ngāti Kuia. From the arrival of the Tainui-Taranaki iwi to the impact of the Te Tau Ihu settlements process today, colonisation is not fixed to one event or phenomenon that has been transcended, it walks with us today.

Conclusion

Marita Sturken (1997) writes, 'we need to ask not whether a memory is true but rather what its telling reveals about how the past affects the present' (p. 2). The Wairau conflict is certainly a significant event in our nation's history. Continuing vigorous debates regarding the antecedents of the battle and the event itself, demonstrate that it is taken very seriously at a community level. Nevertheless, examining shifting perspectives of the Wairau Affray from

multiple Indigenous and settler viewpoints highlights the limitations of a popularised narrative of local history that aligns with settler memory of colonial violence. James is passionate and committed to understanding why Māori and Pākehā reacted the way they did in 1843 and has made a positive impact on students and the wider community dispelling myths about who was at fault that day. Like most Pākehā living in Blenheim, however, James does not prioritise the ways that mana whenua experience colonial oppression. Instead, colonial injustice is associated with one event that happened in the past and racism is attributed to the actions of settler forebears.

Discussions with Piri, Hone, Pita, Aunty Margie, and Uncle Timi emphasise that they are embroiled in a set of politics that are informed by and transcend violent historical clashes with settler militia. Like workers in Terni, Italy, who mislay the date of the killing of Luigi Trastulli, but not a sense of injustice and outrage (Portelli, 1998), the Wairau Affray has contemporary resonance for my whānaunga in the sense that the event is associated with multiple colonial infractions within a longer narrative of colonisation.

It should also be noted that this paper has only touched briefly on the relationship between place and memory, and predominantly through my own reactions to the sites at which the interviews were held. Places that are associated with histories of violence are known to 'haunt' visitors, evoking a range of emotional and affective responses (Sendyka, 2016). For many Indigenous people, tribal stories of colonial violence continue to resonate strongly and never disappear (Freeman, 2011). For example, months after the interviews, I visited the Affray site with Pita who relayed detailed information about the causes and consequences of the Wairau conflict while drawing from different iwi perspectives. Therefore, an absence of discussion about the Wairau conflict by some participants does not mean that they view the event as insignificant. Physical location and relationships to whenua/places can drive an individual narrative and perhaps capture more pressing concerns. In this



Memorial: Steve Austin

paper, narrative ethnography was applied to participants' oral accounts, to draw attention to the discursive function of settler memory and how it informs how colonial violence in Te Tau Ihu is understood and retold (Kennedy, 1998). If colonial violence is only remembered as a past event, ongoing mechanisms of colonial harm will continue to be ignored by the dominant settler population. Or, in the case of the Wairau conflict, can be used to further entrench settler claims to the land.

Given that settler memory disregards colonial infractions that do not secure a sense of settler belonging and attachment to the whenua, oral history accounts from mana whenua are a more authentic and accurate means of gauging the nature of colonial violence within rohe in Aotearoa. The participants' narratives in this study indicate that it is important to draw from a wide range of iwi and hapū perspectives, as the issues that emerged in relation to colonial and settler conflict were diverse, contested and partial. Indeed, regarding interviews with Ngāti Porou elders and tribal experts Mahuika writes, 'oral histories and traditions were inextricably connected to their lived realities, to their identities, past, present, and future, and were constantly retold in an ongoing struggle for self-determination' (p. 99). Although the participants in Te Tau Ihu demonstrated shifting perspectives of the Wairau Affray, each account reflected how colonial structures have devastating and material consequences on the lives of mana whenua today.

Returning to points made in the introduction, my upbringing was influenced by settler narratives and colonial messaging that contradicted my lived existence as Māori, and I had few opportunities to engage with the oral traditions of my iwi. These personal experiences no doubt inform the interpretation of the Wairau Affray in this paper and its focus on colonial and settler violence; an approach that may not be shared by whānau who live Blenheim and engage more directly with iwi interests. To further illustrate, I sent this paper to my cousins to hear their thoughts about the analysis. One thought it important to acknowledge the building of a new pou

on the edge of the township next to the Ōpaoa River; a beacon for iwi in the Wairau to look to our tūpuna and tamariki for a more hopeful future. It feels important to acknowledge that my interpretation of the interviews as shifting perspectives of the Affray could equally be reformulated as local assertions of tribal autonomy; settler memory be damned. Yet, how we make sense of colonial history is as much about our personal and collective identities as the underpinning trauma that is evoked anew through the retelling. (Kennedy, 1998) Attending to diverse, partial, and incomplete oral accounts of local history from a range of Indigenous and settler perspectives can play an important role in decolonising local histories to reconstitute new narratives of colonial violence that can speak for us all.

Acknowledgements

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Notes:

1. See, for example, <https://natlib.govt.nz/blog/posts/the-wairau-affray-a-series-of-unfortunate-events>; https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Talk:Wairau_Affray; <http://www.theprow.org.nz/maori/wairau-affray/#.X7QZGmgzaUk>
2. Te Tau Ihu is comprised of eight tribes. Ngāti Kūia were the first to arrive on the Kurahaupō waka at the northern end of the South Island, with Rangitāne and Ngāti Apa also residing in the region prior to the 1800s. An alliance of Tainui (Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Rārua, Ngāti Koata) and Taranaki tribes (Ngāti Tama, Te Āti Awa) arrived in the early 1820s and "conquered and dominated that region" (see <https://teara.govt.nz/en/te-tau-ihu-tribes/page-3>).
3. After some inquiry, I could not find the exact length of time that the Wairau conflict has been taught in Blenheim schools. I spoke to a cousin who is in her 60s who said she purposefully missed the

school bus trip to the Wairau battle site when she was at primary school because she didn't want to feel singled-out and stigmatised for being Māori. Conversely, a local Pākehā historian relayed through personal email correspondence (14 October 2021) that he did not think that the Wairau Affray was taught at Marlborough Boys and Girls College in the 1960s and most of the 1970s.

4. See Papers Past <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers?snippet=true&title=MDTIM%2CMEX%2CMPRESS%2CPGAMA&query=%22the+wairau+massacre%22>.
5. The names of the participants are pseudonyms adopted for this paper.
6. The iwi rangatira sit on distinct iwi boards and marae committee; forms of community governance guided by principles and tikanga determined by each iwi. However, the five participants are related and can whakapapa to the other iwi in Te Tau Ihu.
7. See <https://www.difficulthistories.nz/>

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Listening in: Issues in the use of recorded oral history

HANNA LU

Stripped down to its essentials, the act of listening to an interview is really a kind of delayed, permitted eavesdropping. The researcher plays a recording and hears a conversation that has already taken place, created by people in the past for someone in the future. Different from both self-conducted interviews and written transcripts, it is a historical practice needing its own considerations, some of which I hope to address here.

Coming to oral history

Over the 2019-20 summer I was tasked with researching an aspect of Chinese Auckland history. The body of existing secondary scholarship in this field does have substance – works focusing specifically on Chinese New Zealand by Manying Ip, Ng Bickleen Fong, and Charles P. Sedgwick come to mind – but in the broader sweep of history, Chinese people were seen as a marginal group, spoken about rather than speaking, if considered at all.¹

One reason for this might be the fact that the variety of available evidence was limited. Early newspapers, for example, are a standard source but mostly provide commentary on the presence of Chinese New Zealanders: *New Zealand Truth* in 1910 bemoaned the presence of 'the leprous and loathsome Chow' with their 'slimy tentacles over "White" New Zealand', and slightly more favourable articles arose in response with the *Kaipara and Waitemata Echo* wondering in 1912 if 'China-phobes' knew that it was 'we, the good old irreproachable British' who 'invaded their country'.² Groups such as the Anti-Chinese League, the Anti-Asiatic League, and the White New Zealand League, whose views are self-explanatory, circulated pamphlets and made speeches, while the

Auckland Women's Political League declared that they 'would never vote for keeping the Chinese out'.³ Amongst this cacophony, the voices of Chinese people themselves were hard to hear.

The solution, then, is obviously the type of personal testimony that oral history would provide but, in hindsight, it took me too long to settle on this form. I was wary because I wanted evidence that was easier to access. Text is convenient; this was only my second time engaging with primary sources and when I imagined historical research I saw dusty archives, the handling of delicate paper, and the deciphering of handwriting. Audio couldn't be skimmed, and the collection listing that I first saw had just a brief paragraph's description: *Chinese New Zealand Oral History Foundation Inc. 21 Voices Project: NZ Chinese Poll-Tax descendants were recorded in interviews on aspects of their family background, their coming to New Zealand and their lives from then until now*.⁴

The poll tax was in place from 1881 to 1944. Most interviewees for this series of interviews were born in New Zealand and talked about their parents or grandparents. Recorded from 2007 to 2015, it felt to me too modern, and I had no personal connection to anyone involved—why should I presume to tell their stories when they could do it themselves?

Hanna Lu is an honours student in History at the University of Auckland. This project was undertaken as part of a Summer Research Scholarship provided by the University of Auckland for the Auckland History Initiative, using interviews recorded by the Chinese New Zealand Oral History Foundation stored in the Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections.

So, I left it and dallied with some other research areas, but this collection still called because very little work had been done with it and the potential hinted at in the abstracts was tantalising. As I would come to find, the riches it had to yield were substantial. The issue of my relationship to the interviews as a listener still remained, but navigating that was not a downside, it was part of the work.

The circumstances of divulgence

There are sections in the interviews on quite traumatic topics. One of these is the Second Sino-Japanese War, which started in October 1938. An interview that sticks in my mind is that of Grace Ah Chee, who was visiting family in China that year with her mother and her aunty.⁵ This section is notable because of an audible change in flow: it's more rushed, more urgent in tone, faltering at times and yet one of the longest sustained speeches we hear.⁶ A transcribed sample:

Then bombing, because the Japanese bombing Guangzhouxi and all that, we went to the country, and up and down here and there, because uh, so bad, we went to the country, and we said, we can't go into school if we stay in the country, so therefore, and then we came back, after, you know, two or three years, in the country. Then, after that, all of a sudden we said, we go back to the city, Guangzhouxi, and that moment, while we get the testing, you know all the, bombing, terrible, you know, very, we have to run... and then they stopped there, then we say, the boats have stopped there. Then, the whole lot of us, what are we going to do, sitting at the wharf? Then, Aunty Rose, she being the eldest, had more education and all that, she leading, Mum was expecting, and aunty expecting, then the worst part was, one of the little girl—that was later on. So anyway, where we can go? W-We can't go anywhere now.⁷

I get the sense that Grace doesn't get to talk about this event often. I think about my own grandmother, whose own traumatic experiences are a minefield we haven't been able to touch, and I marvel at Grace's openness. She doesn't lapse into silence, but neither do her words come easily. It does not

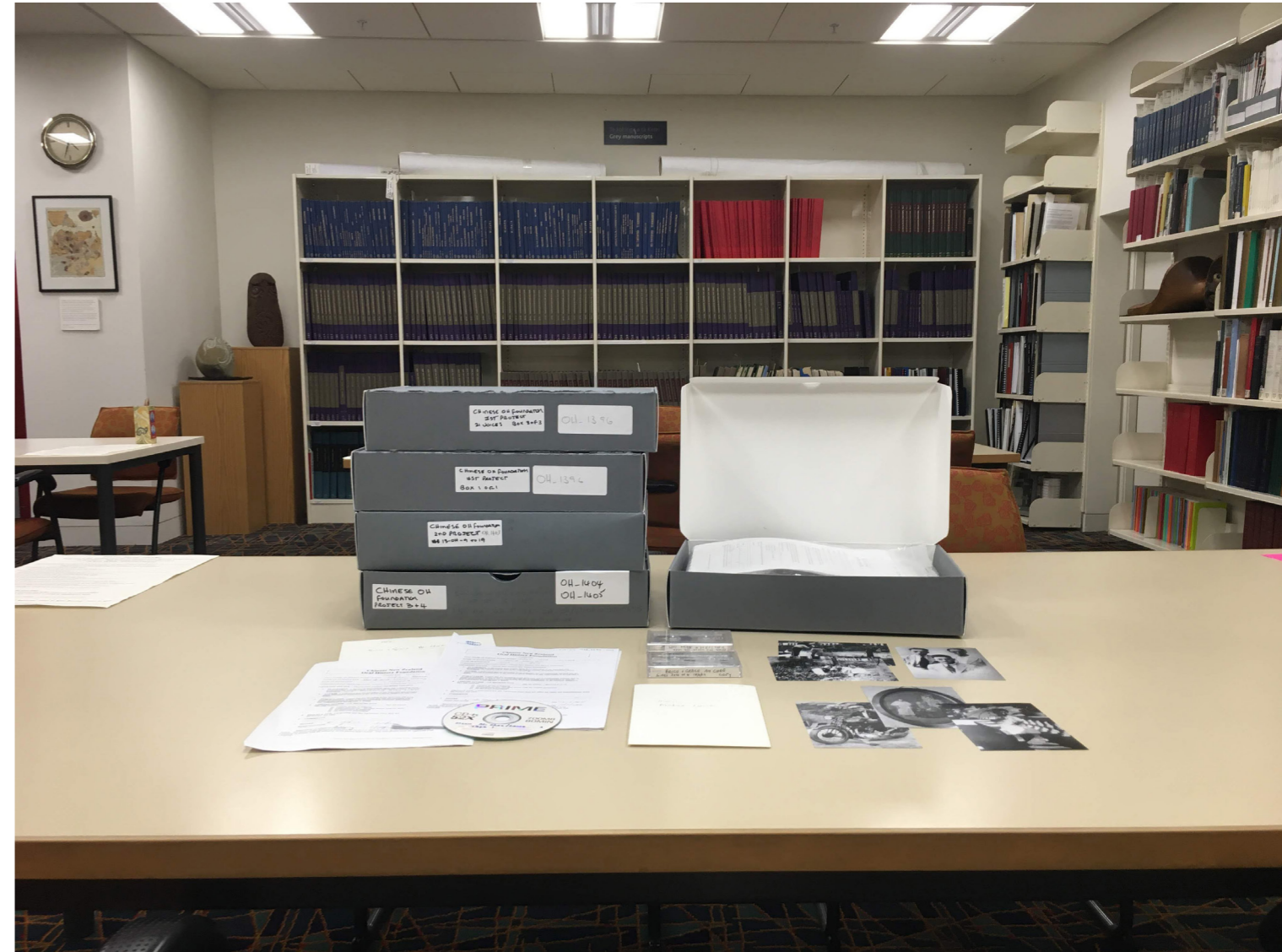
sound like she has relayed these memories many times.

Was there something special about the circumstances of the interview that allowed the space for divulgence? If it were me sitting in front of Grace as the interviewer, with my difference in age and background, would it have been more difficult to express the things she did? I think that is likely. The right to vulnerability is not a privilege that everyone has. She may also have wanted to protect someone younger from hearing about distress—even here she stops herself elaborating on the fate of the little girl.

Grace is able to say as much as she does because she was interviewed, with her husband Bruce, by Lorna and David Wong, who have established relationships to each other. They are part of the same community. They all know Cantonese. David and Lorna are much closer in generation to Grace than anyone younger would be, are of similar status as elders, and are more likely to understand. The fact of their presence as interviewers makes it easier for Grace to speak.

In other interviews, Lorna and David's positioning is even more of an advantage. When talking with peers, recollection is also reminiscence, taking pleasure in shared memories such as theatre-going, dancing, and visiting a prime date destination, the first hamburger bar on Great South Road.⁸ There is enthusiasm, mutual encouragement as each contributes details to the same event, and confidence that few obstacles will be met in communication.

But that same dynamic can also have its limitations. Historian Linda Shopes raises the possible issue of a community insider not wanting to disturb a comfortable relationship by asking difficult questions. Areas of discomfort, of interest to an outsider as moments of tension, might be left alone instead. Topics are selected by the interviewer, in this case partly motivated by the desire to preserve poll-tax-paying families' histories as valuable to New Zealand, which set the tone and circumscribe the range of discussion. And the shared experience that brings familiarity can also preclude explanation. Understandably, they can never be sure what a stranger might find



Boxes of The Chinese New Zealand Oral History Foundation resources at the Sir George Grey Special Collections, with some forms, CDs, cassettes, and photos. © Hanna Lu 2020

fascinating about their worlds—the ever-present is often invisible.

All of these features make the interviews what they are. Some things are not discussed, but that makes space for others to be covered in great detail. The interview gains its value from the circumstances of recording, and the specific relationship between the interviewee and interviewer. Without either, the oral history would not exist.

Research interests and the interviewees' experience

My initial research interests found the interview content an uncomfortable fit. I wanted to change the writing of history and

disrupt New Zealand's imagining of itself as 'a European instead of an Asian-Pacific nation', what Manying Ip describes as its 'persistent indulgence in an anachronistic dream'.⁹ I wanted to provide the impetus for a re-examination of ethnicity and nationhood. The poll-tax descendants talked about their lives, but where was the analysis, the theory?

For the most part, conflict around identity and experiences of discrimination are not topics the interviewees liked to talk about. Mentions of it were dropped in passing, or it is implied, and moved on from quickly. Legislation affected their life decisions: David, for example, left school at age fifteen to work full-time for his family

because immigration laws made it difficult to find workers—but there is little mention of the multitude of other laws around naturalisation, pensions, public service, and search warrants, or even of the poll tax itself.¹⁰ Most accounts are interpersonal: Joyce Khoo and Cheryl Num’s father protected his smaller friend at work, Wah Ying Chau says her son didn’t realise he was different until someone at school pointed to his skin and said, “You’re not gonna wash that off”, and Willie Wong explains that the Chinese gardeners avoided a certain market: ‘They knew what was going on. If you put your stuff out where the Franklins had their celery, by the time you turned your back around that’d be all on the ground. Just took them off and threw them all away. You’re not supposed to be there.’¹¹

I wished for more discussions about their conceptions of ethnicity and New Zealand identity, but I suspect that I would not have got my desired philosophical treatises even if the questions had been asked. Discrimination in a country where one is seen as an immigrant is a tough thing to navigate – concern with being a good representative of the Chinese community remains at the forefront, and is itself a reflection of their context.¹² In general, the fact of their own presence was not revelatory and they did not see their own experiences through an othered lens. They simply got on with their lives, and the way these lives were affected by constructs of Chinese-ness—positively or negatively—is for historians to tease out.

Memory and time

Another complication of using this oral history collection was the potential effect of memory and time, for the interviewees’ recollections are of events that happened decades before. This was a common criticism of oral history, particularly during its rise in the 1960s and 1970s: that it was unreliable, distorted by nostalgia, swayed by personal bias and retrospective memory.¹³

Listening to the oral sources, I questioned if the passage of time between event and recording had had some effect on the interviewees’ expressions of their pasts.

Sections of the interviews focus on the Second World War: although everyone “had a hard time” – serving overseas, training for the Home Guard, supplying produce for the troops, sitting on apple boxes in lieu of chairs, making do with rationed gas – there is a mood of general thrill about their recollections.¹⁴ Joana’s uncle Charlie would be given sweets by the American servicepeople for whom he did laundry, and Joana, once she was ‘old enough to go down by tram, would delight in visiting [him] and getting a few goodies, because it was so rare, it was so beautiful, he was almost like a fairy godmother.’¹⁵ David describes those years as ‘turbulent and exciting’.¹⁶

Many of these facts are straightforward enough to verify using written sources, newspapers and other evidence. I was then left with the emotions that the interviewees associate with their memories and their potential change over time. What happened when their experiences became more and more those of a minority? How did they modify the significance of their pasts in order to proceed with their lives, or incorporate myths in a way that was functional? Memories are re-formed each time they are called on, so how did the person they were speaking to influence what they recalled and said in the interview?

A taster: here Joana and David are remembering with fondness, seeing themselves as part of a national project, participating in an equalising struggle—displaying some of the national pride that would lead to the official abolition of the poll tax in 1944. There is an audible range in how relaxed the other interviewees are with the idea of being recorded and having others listen, which determined levels of reticence, affecting information offered, memory selection, and their framing.

We cannot be certain of what they could have left out, or the various alternative ways their memories could have been articulated. But even then, that is not a reason for discrediting them; rather, the meaning they attach to their memories is valuable in itself, distortion and all. In the words of oral historian Alessandro Portelli: there are ‘no false oral sources’.¹⁷ Nor any that are not useful.

Conclusion

Listening to oral history can be an intimate experience, as if the voice of the past is speaking directly in one’s ear. But in between the researcher and the person on the title of the recording sits context, relationships, interests, and memory. I have discussed some of my experience with these issues, and – perhaps most relevantly – the role of the interviewer. Both creator and participant, the interviewer moulds the telling of the story, and in the study of the recording is revealed to be a crucial part of its history.

Endnotes

1. See: Manying Ip, ed., *Unfolding History, Evolving Identity: The Chinese in New Zealand*, Auckland University Press, Auckland 2003; Ng Bickleen Fong, *The Chinese in New Zealand: A Study in Assimilation*, Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 1959; Charles P. Sedgwick, ‘The Politics of Survival: A Social History of the Chinese in New Zealand,’ PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, 1982.
2. ‘The Chow Spread,’ *NZ Truth*, 1 January 1910; ‘Mokai,’ *Kaipara and Waitemata Echo*, 11 December 1912.
3. ‘The Chinese Question,’ *Observer*, 16 May 1896; Fong, p.27.
4. Kura, ‘*Chinese New Zealand Oral History Foundation Inc. 21 Voices Project*’: <https://kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/digital/collection/oralhistory/id/2466/>
5. Bruce Ah Chee and Grace Ah Chee, interview by David Wong and Lorna Wong, *Chinese New Zealand Oral History Foundation 1st Project: 21 Voices*, 6 October 2009, audio.
6. *ibid.*
7. *ibid.*
8. Thomas Wong Doo III, interview by Lorna Wong, *Chinese New Zealand Oral History Foundation 2nd Project*, 1 September 2011, audio.
9. Ip, *Unfolding History*, p.xii.
10. David V Wong Hop, interview by Edwin Welch, *Chinese New Zealand Oral History Foundation 2nd Project*, 22 August 2011, audio.
11. Joyce Khoo and Cheryl Num, interview by Charles Chan, *Chinese New Zealand Oral History Foundation 4th Project*, 27 September 2014, audio; Wah Ying Chau (Chong), interview by Charles Chan, *Chinese New Zealand Oral History Foundation 4th Project*, 21 July 2015, audio; Willie Wong and Elsie Wong, interview by David Wong and Lorna Wong, *Chinese New Zealand Oral History Foundation 1st Project: 21 Voices*, 20 August 2009, and 6 September 2009, audio.
12. ‘Centre Will Keep Chinese Unity,’ *Auckland Star*, 14 May 1975.
13. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds, *The oral history reader*, Routledge, New York, 2006, p.3.
14. Ella Hoy Fong (née Wong), interview by David Wong and Lorna Wong, *Chinese New Zealand Oral History Foundation 1st Project: 21 Voices*, 2 July 2009, audio; David V Wong Hop, interview; Willie Wong and Elsie Wong, interview.
15. Joana F Sang (née Wong Hop), interview by Lorna Wong, *Chinese New Zealand Oral History Foundation 2nd Project*, 19 January 2012, audio.
16. David V Wong Hop, interview.
17. Alessandro Portelli, ‘What Makes Oral History Different’, in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds, *...*, Routledge, New York, 2006, p.37.

Verbatim Theatre's Transmission

MEI HERON INTERVIEWED BY PIP OLDHAM

This is an edited transcript of an interview by Pip Oldham with Mei Heron, television journalist based in Wellington about her involvement in the Verbatim Theatre play, *Transmission*, which was performed in April 2021 at Wellington's BATS theatre. *Transmission* is based on the events leading into the national lockdown in March 2020 against the spread of the Covid-19 coronavirus. The interview was recorded on 4 October 2021 and has been lightly edited.

Mei Heron

I've been a journalist for about 10 years. Before working at TVNZ, I worked at Radio New Zealand producing politics. Currently I manage the newsroom for half my job, and I report out of Wellington for half my job. I work part time and I have a two-year-old kid.

Pip Oldham

Transmission deals with the events around the first national lockdown. And now, obviously, we've had another national lockdown, and ongoing restrictions against the spread of the virus. It would be helpful just to record what your recollection is of those early months of 2020.

Mei

It seems so far away, to be honest. It seems like we had such a good run of COVID-free days with very few restrictions. In a work sense, we were starting to go back to getting and being able to report on non-COVID related stories, which was really amazing and so to be thrown back into that is a little bit like *deja vu*. The first one, there was a lot more anxiety; there was a lot more fear because we didn't really know how it was all going to play out. But I think that the first time, there was a bit of novelty to it. There was a bit of: We're all in this together, we

can do it. I think by the second time around, everyone was a lot more tired.

Looking at the play now, it would be interesting to see - given we've had a second lockdown - how the audience would receive it, because the first time around, it definitely started off like a one-off event. I think the narrative after that event was: We will never have a lockdown like that again. And given that we then did have one, almost a year and a half later, does change the play a little bit. Maybe it takes away some of the gravity of what happened because we have now done it twice.

I think that there is a significance in entering a nationwide lockdown all together. I think people in Invercargill were equally as worried about COVID as people in Auckland, but this time around, despite the whole country being in level four again, it did really feel like the worry was isolated for Auckland.

Pip

How did you come to be involved in the play?

Mei

I had interviewed [Otago University epidemiologist] Michael Baker several times before this pandemic. Ironically, I even did a story about Michael Baker predicting a pandemic - having to close our borders -



Clockwise from left to right: Michael Baker, Mei Heron, Moira Sa'imoa, Stewart McKenzie, Jacinda Ardern, Grant Robertson. ©Harcourt McKenzie Partnership

maybe three years ago when I first started at TVNZ. So I've worked with Michael on and off for a long period of time. In one interview, just before Jacinda Ardern had called for a level four lockdown the first time around, Michael was very reluctant to do the interview, but I convinced him to do it with me. He was basically saying that if we didn't go into lockdown, we would all die. The significant part of the interview was that halfway through, he got visibly upset – tears in his eyes, he couldn't continue and had to leave. It was quite a big moment in both of our careers, but neither of us really acknowledged it. I had a doubt about whether I should use that content or not, decided against it and never really talked about it with him over the next few months when we were interviewing [him] almost on a daily basis.

Months later, he called me up and asked me if I remembered that interview and I said yes. He said, "Stuart McKenzie is a director and he's looking to do a play. Can he call you and ask you about what you remember about that time?" I said, "Sure."

Stuart called me and we had a bit of a chat about it and I think it did dawn on [him] how that moment was not only significant for Michael, but it was also significant for me as a journalist. As we talked more, he felt like it was a definite viewpoint or perspective that I had that was maybe missing from the play and that's when he asked me whether my interview could go beyond that individual moment, and look at my life during lockdown.

Pip

And how did you then go ahead and talk about it?

Mei

It was just a very casual chat, something that I feel like I'm quite familiar with, where you feel like you're in a coffee house, chatting to an old friend. Except, and I think what surprised me and Stuart to a degree was, it was the first time that I had not only talked about that interview, but also talked about and reflected on my time during lockdown. That was because, even though it was months later, and the lockdown had finished,

we were still immersed in COVID stories. It was all that we were doing.

For us [journalists], it wasn't over. None of us had had time off, none of us had time to pause and reflect on how traumatic or significant that period of our lives was.

So to have someone ask very pointed questions about how I felt during that time, what I did during that time, or that time did to my marriage, what it did to my family, what it did to my employment, it was quite confronting in a way. I think I ended up revealing more than I thought I was going to, and I think [Stuart] ended up receiving more than he thought he would.

To be honest, my role in the play ended up being bigger than I thought it was going to be.

Pip

What was that like for you? This is very interesting for oral historians, because we are trying to document the pandemic, as you are, in a different way and with a different purpose. But, in the same way as you are, we're participants in it too. We're experiencing it in our private lives and working with it in our professional lives. What was it like for you having that opportunity to speak about that experience?

Mei

It was very cathartic in a way. It was almost like a mini counselling session, which sounds very cheesy, but I guess we – journalists – are taught to not talk about our experience. We are often told, "Who cares about you, as a journalist? We want to hear about the people out there", so there isn't that space in our job to talk about our own trauma, or our own experience. We might get pockets of talking about that with our friends or our family, but in a COVID situation, when everyone is so heavily immersed in COVID, I think the last thing your friends want to hear is how you went through COVID when they have gone through it, too. It ends up being a topic that you don't really dissect over a dinner table because we're all just too tired to talk about it.

In our careers, we write and document it all, and we're taught to think of ourselves

as not being participants despite being a participant. I also think being part of that play allowed me to stand up for journalists in a way that maybe we haven't been able to stand up for our careers. We got a lot of criticism for our job over COVID and found that really tricky, and many of us just had to take it on the chin. Some people wrote opinion pieces on it, some people might have done the odd social media post about it but, on the whole, most of us just had to go, Oh, well, no one understands our job. Let's just soldier on. We know the importance of it.

So given a very small space, but still a very profound space, to be able to address those criticisms directly and maybe put a human aspect to it was really, really special. While people out there criticise us or yell at us or are abusive towards us, we're not just computers or robots. The play showed we're humans with very complex family lives and professional lives and personal lives.

Pip

One of the issues that you surfaced in what you said in the play was the changing role of the media during the course of the pandemic. The role of having to spread the public health messages at the same time as your traditional roles of questioning and bringing out information. How well do you think the play did the job of describing that?

Mei

One of my first comments to both Miranda [Harcourt] and Stuart [McKenzie] after I watched the play was that I congratulated them on not picking a villain or a hero. I think that was really important, because they could have taken the easy way out and made Jacinda Ardern the hero. And Michael Baker and the media as the villains, or even vice versa, made Jacinda Ardern the villain and Michael Baker, the hero.

Instead, I think that they showed the light and the dark of each person, and that's important. It was important for me, because, like you say, we have a complex role in a pandemic. We hold a lot of authority, and we hold a lot of power, we have a lot of eyes and ears watching us, particularly in a time where people can't go out and gather

information on their own in the same way. They can do it over the internet, but they can't walk out onto the street and look at the town in the same way as they could before. They had to rely on us for some of that really fundamental public messaging: Where can you go to get tested? Who should get tested? What are the symptoms you should be looking out for?

At the same time, we couldn't neglect our other really fundamental role, which is holding those in power to account. Is the government doing the right thing? Are they putting the right measures in place? Are they going too far? Every day we had to balance that. When we first entered lockdown, we had to be very deliberate about not pushing that accountability too far, so that we undermined the public message. But as I say in the play, it was important that that changed.

Pip

What was it like for you sitting there watching the play?

Mei

I only got sent my specific scenes. It was really hard to know what those scenes were going to be like in the context of the entire play. It's quite weird watching something that you were a part of. I wonder if most people in the crowd felt like that, because obviously I wasn't the only person to have gone through that first March 2020 lockdown. It was a little bit strange. To be honest, it's very hard to put into words what it was like watching something that you had already experienced. But it was very helpful in getting some insight into what individuals were thinking at the time. From my point of view, they portrayed me very accurately.

The power of Verbatim is that they literally took my words, and so I couldn't go back to them to say I didn't say that. It was a slightly out-of-body experience watching someone else play me and be me.

My husband was there with me and he hadn't seen any of it. He hadn't read the scenes or anything and in the play he's mentioned a few times. I think, maybe, it was more powerful for him because he was getting an insight into my life that I hadn't let him into before.

Pip

You shared that it had been difficult for him and for you at times during that period. How did he feel about having that information surfaced?

Mei

I did give him a heads up that I was going to share a little bit about that. And we had talked about how that slightly mismatched personality of me being a journalist and him just being an average citizen who genuinely doesn't care about the news at all comes up quite a bit amongst our friendship group. It's even a bit of a running joke in our office, how little my husband cares about the news and engages with it. So, in some ways, I don't think he was surprised about me categorising him in that way. But I think also he was really cognisant to also paint it as an us issue. Our family dynamic problem wasn't my problem, or his problem. It was something that an external force had created for our family and it was us together having to deal with that. I think he really appreciated that painting of it, as opposed to me versus him battle.

Pip

Given that you talked at more length with Stuart McKenzie than you had expected, what were you thinking, while you were being interviewed, about how this might be used?

Mei

I remember the point where we finished talking about that very specific moment with Michael Baker, that scene, and he asked me, "Mei, is it OK if I ask you a little bit more about what it was like being a journalist at that time." I remember thinking, Oh, he's just going to ask me about my job. And then he started asking me about my family life. I've always had the viewpoint that you are one person. You don't have a work person and a home person, and a sports person, and a mother person – you are one person and these are all elements of one person. So, in some ways, I think without even him realising it or me realising it, I was always prepared for those questions, because I see being a journalist during a pandemic the same as

being a mother during the pandemic because they intersected. It was too hard to separate what my life as a journalist was like with what my home life was like.

I had to talk about coming home from 12-hour days, 15 in a row, having not seen my very young son for that period of time. I had to talk about coming back from those days, and stripping off in the garage, putting my clothes straight in the laundry, making my husband hide my child in the next room so I could run into the shower without being seen. Those are all part of being a journalist. It was very hard to not talk about my family in the same breath. I wonder, on reflection, whether I gave those answers without even him needing to prompt them too much.

Pip

And in terms of the public use, what was the permission process?

Mei

[Stuart] outlined to me at the very beginning what the play would look like. I was really lucky to come in very late in the creative process, because they hadn't expected my role at all. They just thought that I would be interviewed for my little scene, and that would be it. A lot of the decision making about how it was going to be used, what it would look like, where it would be used had already been made.

I know that, for example, Jacinda Ardern, Michael Baker, Grant Robertson had all been involved much earlier on. I wonder if the permissions chopped and changed a bit more for them. For me, it was very straightforward. The play was going to be called 'Transmission', it would look at the period of the lockdown, it would all be verbatim, I would be able to look at my script before it went out. I was allowed to record the interview if I wanted to, so I could double check my words. It felt very structured and rehearsed. I only needed to do one interview and I was done. Many others like Michael Baker and Jacinda Ardern were contacted several times, so I wonder if the process was slightly more complicated to them.

Pip

And so, what does it mean to you to have this record of your work and that time?

Mei

I feel very privileged that I got to be involved with that play. I hope that they do another touring because it was only shown at BATS here in Wellington, which is a very small theatre and not all my friends and family could go and see it. I would love there to be an opportunity to be able to do that, or a recording. I think it would be really cool to be able to capture my role in it. I'll always have the memory of being part of it but, as I was touching on before, as a journalist, you're often told that your story is not important and being part of this told me that my story was important.

Pip

I'm interested to hear what you think the purpose was, what the play was about.

Mei

I think it was to show that the people that you see on the television every day, we're more complex than we thought. Grant Robertson's story about his father and his family was really profound. This is what I mean about them not picking a hero or a villain. They made every person complex. I think the purpose of the play was to show the humanity behind what were key decision makers or key roles during a very significant time in New Zealand history.

Pip

The Spinoff was critical in its review of just the focus that you've talked about. What are your views on that?

Mei

I remember reading that *Spinoff* article. I disagree with it. I think, in some ways, *The Spinoff* was expecting a bit more critical view of our time there. I think the purpose was more of a snapshot. And I think [the play] provided balance in a slightly unconventional way. In journalism, if you were to provide the same piece of work, you would definitely be called biased because you can't interview

Jacinda Ardern and Grant Robertson from the same [political] party, Michael Baker, who many people know as a Labour [party] supporter. You would have to go to National, to ACT, you'd have to go to other people.

But I don't think a play is restricted by that same view of balance. They can create balance in their piece in a different way, which I think they did. They showed the disagreement between Michael Baker and Jacinda Ardern. They showed the tension between me, as part of the media, and the officials up on stage. They didn't dive deep into the individual decisions that were made during the lockdown, which maybe is what *The Spinoff* wanted. A bit more insight into how Jacinda Ardern came up with this. Instead, it looked far more at the personal life of these people and some of the emotions and I don't think that that's a wrong thing. I think that it's up to the creative directors to decide what they want out of the play, and I think they achieved that well.

Pip

Has it changed your thinking in any regard?

Mei

I hate using this word, but I think I've always been a little bit holistic with my thinking about the journalist's role in society. You get some journalists who are very: we do nothing wrong, we do our job, we have the right to be abrasive and argumentative because that's just who we are. Deal with it. And then you have others who are like, I hate dealing with journalists like that so I'm going to be very compassionate, very graceful, and kind of ignore my responsibilities of upholding the truth.

I sit somewhere in between the two, I think. Every day you have to make a judgement call between the two characteristics. I think that's why I like the play so much, because it was very much what I believe. It might be a bit naive of me that most of us sit around with those two characters battling each other, and you're trying to find the balance between the two. Sometimes you swing one way and sometimes you swing the other. I think the play reaffirmed a lot of what I believe about our roles, rather than creating any new learning.

Pip

And the 2021 experience and situation, how are you thinking about the situation here and now?

Mei

I feel the fatigue from the lockdown, much more than the first one. I think within a week or so everyone was over it. We had the first lockdown in slightly warmer months, and so more walks and it was lighter for longer periods of the day. But this time we were still in winter, and it was cold. It was dreary, a lot of rainy days. My husband, in particular, found being cooped up in a small home with an older child who can now argue with you. And, I think, every story that we did felt the same. There were so many times in the mornings, we would have conversations as an editorial team and go, We've already done this story. And someone will go, Yeah, but that was last time. We have to do the same story again. Stories about testing, about supply chains, about shipping for Christmas and presents. I'm sure even the public can feel like they've seen the story. I'm pretty sure I did the same story twice – about warrants of fitness and whether they should be extended or not. Because it's so Auckland-focused, the poor Auckland team has had to go through this in a much more severe way than the rest of us. And they're still going through it. Some of us have had a slight reprieve and some of our bulletins are starting again to touch on non-COVID issues.

Pip

You've said that there's that familiarity and repetition around the stories, what are the stories that are not being so well covered from your point of view? There's that question of selection and how you decide what it is that you're going to pay attention to for the historical record.

Mei

That question comes up quite a lot in terms of when COVID spreads amongst South Auckland families for instance, versus Devonport families. Are we accurately telling both sides of those stories or with a

bias? Are we telling one story slightly more through one lens than another? I think that that problem is coming up again. I think the question of inequity, particularly amongst our Māori and Pasifika population, those stories are fighting to be heard, and they are hard to tell.

As mainstream media, we don't often have the trust of those demographics of people and so we're very lucky at TVNZ to have someone like Barbara Dreaver, for instance, who was so tapped into the Pasifika community. Me and my colleagues were just reflecting the other day that, without her, it's very hard to imagine how we would be able to tell those stories, not out of a lack of wanting to, but it's an access and a trust thing. I think the same goes for the migrant population. There is such a massive migrant population here in New Zealand, and we haven't really talked to them too much about what it's like being isolated. People who are used to travelling to see their parents or brothers or sisters in Asian countries or other European countries who don't get that luxury anymore. How isolating have they found this pandemic? I think there is a group of people who are under-represented here. But it's an access thing, too. It's not having those connections that makes it difficult to suddenly just tap into them.

Pip

It's an issue that oral historians also have to think about. What haven't we covered about Transmission, the play, and the experience that you'd like to say?

Mei

The main thing, from a personal point of view, about that experience was how cathartic it was in some ways. And for me a real challenge to think that there is a lot in my life that as a journalist you experience and then kind of bottle away or park up and move on. I've had some friends who, in more recent times, have had that come back and bite them. I'm really acutely aware of that now.

It's been a pretty heavy few years for journalists. The mosque attacks, Whakaari White Island. As journalists, you go through

each of those events. And so, I think that maybe there is more space for journalists to tell these stories in a safe and maybe even more artistic sort of way.

Pip

Is there something formalised for you, in this respect?

Mei

We have access to counselling sessions that are free as part of TVNZ. Both [you and I] believe in the power of telling stories, we understand how important that is for the individual, how healing it is, how important it is to other people to hear those stories. Maybe, because journalists are so used to being the people who tell them, there needs to be more focus or space for just telling stories, and sharing them in an artistic way. It's so great that I got to be part of a play. Normally, journalists would never be part of a play like that. So, I really encourage creative directors and people who have the opportunity to include journalists in the storytelling to do so more often.

Pip

You had cleared your participation through your employer. Your employer was in favour of you doing this and is happy for you to do this [interview] as well. Do you want to mention that aspect of it?

Mei

Everything that I do as a journalist at the moment, I am representing TVNZ, and I'm very aware of that. I think there was a trust element too about what I'm going to say. They trust me as a person and as an employee. And that's from years of building that trust. I think it also helps that I'm part of the management team, so I built that trust in a deeper way over the years. But I did run it through them, and they were very happy for me to be part of it. I explained to them the kind of things that I would be talking about. [This interview] is an extension of my experience with the Transmission play. I think for them, it's cool to be captured. Like I say, it's about capturing me in the media landscape from that point of time.

Alexander Turnbull Library Founder Lecture 2021

GAYLENE PRESTON

Filmmaker Dame Gaylene Preston gave the 2021 Friends of the Alexander Turnbull Library Founder Lecture, 'Image to Imagination'. In due course, the recording of the lecture will be posted on the National Library's website.¹ This text version contains links to the video clips provided by Dame Gaylene.

She comes to sit before the camera on the stage at the Century Theatre. The afternoon is balmy outside, but the theatre is cool and dim with just her seat carefully lit. We are here gathering interviews from survivors of the lethal earthquake that devastated Hawkes Bay, and Napier in particular, on 3 February 1931.

As Hana Cotter takes her seat and we prepare the lighting she is quiet and possibly tired. The event is now over 50 years ago.

Having grown up in Napier, I was told earthquake stories from the time I was ten. The place was awash with them. They centred around well-trod terrible tales that, as many do after a tragic event such as that, cloud the real terrible, terrible thing.

For example, one story told often, was of a woman trapped in the Cathedral with the fire coming closer. No-one could get her out. Dr Butterworth was fetched and he administered a lethal dose of morphine as the smoke engulfed her and he had to flee the fire. This is indeed a true story. However, it masks another more dreadful fact that is less told. The fire that began within twenty minutes of the main quake and could not be put out, made it impossible to free many people who were still alive but trapped in rubble. Many of



Gaylene Preston delivering the Friends of the Turnbull Library Founder Lecture on 28 July 2021. ©Bruce Mackay

the victims of the Napier earthquake died in the fire.

When I was commissioned by the Hawkes Bay Museum² to film *Survivor Stories*³, though everyone was getting on by then, I was wanting to fill holes in the official version. There was another outstanding blank covered in a couple of sentences in the written histories: 'Our Maori people were very good. They looked after themselves.'

So, we went asking. The person everyone told us to talk to was Hana Cotter. I had no idea, as she began telling her personal recollection, how important it would be.

Hana Cotter 1⁴

[Begins with archival image of newspaper headline: *Terrible Earthquake – City of Napier in Ruins – Great Damage at Hastings – Very Heavy Loss of Life*]

They told us how desperate it was in Hastings, and Napier. And since we were able to move around and we can do things, organise ourselves and go there and help the people in the relief work while they're working, to give them cups of teas and things like that. Give them something to eat.

[Archival footage of trucks passing, people drinking tea amongst the wreckage]

We didn't realise what really, it was like 'til we got here. Oh gosh, we thought it was the end of the world.

[Archival footage of destruction]

We got the cups of teas and when we got that ready you called the men in and you see them struggling with the bricks and that, well, you can't stand there and look.

[Archival footage of people clearing rubble]

Well, what do you do? You throw your coat off or whatever, your apron off, get in there and start helping them with pulling some of the people that was, you know, captured underneath the bricks and that.

[Archival footage of people clearing rubble]

I did not doubt what she told us, of course, and with a Sherlockian interest went looking to see if I could find any visual recording of that experience. I certainly had never seen any young Māori women helping pull out people from the rubble and this was not referred to in any written accounts. I couldn't even find a single image of any Māori work

gangs clearing rubble in either Hastings or Napier. The story is of the sailors from the New Zealand Navy ship, HMS *Veronica*, who were there within hours to rescue the stricken town.

So, I did what I could to make you think, dear audience, that you might have seen Hana and her cousins there, by implying they are just outside the frame. Context is everything.

Hana 2⁵

[Archival footage of people clearing rubble]

You had to be careful. The next day we were advised to come with gloves.

[Archival footage of people clearing rubble]

I, myself – several times there, you couldn't look at what you see. We had to get a handkerchief and tie it in front of our nose, just our eyes, because some of them, the smell was coming up with the smoke and with the human flesh, I suppose, and all these... It was sad. We just couldn't turn away, it had to be done. Well, sometimes it takes about two, three of us to pull it out. And if it was too hard then we used to beckon to the boys to come and do it, but if us girls can do it, we went ahead and did it.

[Archival footage showing the destruction]

We didn't come through 'til the day after the earthquake. And others, I believe that were there, they took away those that... had breath in them, breath of life. But those that they couldn't, those are the ones that we tore out and put them all onto the tray, and then take them over to the cemetery and bury them there. Took them there different times. The tray was full, then take them over. It's sad, I tell you. It was sad. It really made us realise the importance of one another.

[Archival still images of a priest above a mass grave]

When we went back, our kaumātua got us all together and we had to pray. You know

they, they karakia-ed what they could, they karakia-ed us and asked the blessings of the Lord to help us overcome whatever there is, and whatever we've been through.

[Archival footage of destruction]

Hana Cotter - karakia

No reira e pa ko tipuna nei tenei wahi hei tipuna maunga mea tahua. No rei nga manakitia kia poua tenei mea te rangatiratanga [. . .] āmene

I've been interested in exploring the gap between the official version and the personal one for most of my filmmaking life. Probably because I grew up with two parents who did not share the prevailing view of the New Zealand common folk's experience of World War Two. My father loudly proclaimed the American war films we saw in the fifties as 'Yankee Blah,' and the British ones as 'Tommy Rot', while my mother held her pain close and quiet. So I guess I was born to get to the bottom of that particular fault line. I was fortunate to make two features – *War Stories Our Mothers Never Told Us*,⁶ and, twenty years later, *Home by Christmas*, that aided that personal odyssey.

But I didn't start there. Back in 1986, with Judith Fyfe, I began gathering oral histories of women's experience during World War Two – these are lodged in the Collection of Oral History & Sound here at the Turnbull.⁷ At the same time, I was working with Graeme Tetley and Robin Laing dramatising Sonja Davies' herstory, *Bread & Roses*.⁸ In the course of research, I discovered the pristine 35mm black and white film stored at Archives New Zealand shot during the war by the precursor of the New Zealand National Film Unit – the *Weekly Reviews*. What a treasure trove. When I discovered 'Country Lads' leaving for war,⁹ I devoured it. In *Bread & Roses*, the TV series, Sonja goes down to the docks to farewell a friend – Charlie Davies. I wanted our restaging to be as accurate as possible.

Here's a piece of *Country Lads* – for its time, a very understated, cleverly nuanced piece

of national pride aimed at strengthening community cohesion, screening before the main feature film at the movies. A clever piece of propaganda.

Country Lads¹⁰

[Title cards. Footage of crowds watching soldiers marching past.]

Narrator

Just a few months ago, these men were working alongside of us in shops, factories, cow sheds, and offices – good workers and good friends. We might be talking to a man in the tram or in the pub one day and find him in uniform the next week. Or we might be Anzacs ourselves. This is a war with everyone in it, women too. It is just a matter of taking our turn. In a few weeks or a few months, we may be on the inside: trained, skilled and proud of it. It's not just another army marching past, but our army. They weren't used to marching in step then. But if marching had been a useful job in civvy life, they would have done it. If it's milking, they can milk. If it's building roads, they can navvy. If it's banking, they can bank and if it's fighting, they can make a pretty thorough job of that too. 'Poor deluded country lads' Hitler called them. Though no army in all history has known better what it was up against, or what it was fighting for. They helped to make this country the way it is: happy, prosperous, free. Country lads and town lads. They have gone right across the world to help those who feel like us to be free, and happy too.

[Archival footage of New Zealand soldiers departing on ships]

When it came to staging our dramatised version for *Bread & Roses*, it was an exercise in distillation, and filming it took every inch of ingenuity from the art department. We found a three-storey high warehouse down at the wharves with a big crane set inside and hung a slice of ship off that. Anyone who tells you a picture never lies – that's the biggest fib of all!

Bread and Roses, Leaving of Aquitania¹¹

[A young Sonja Davies runs through the crowd as a brass band plays in the background. Charlie Davies appears on the rounded decks above her.]

Young Sonja: (Calling)

Charlie Davies! Charlie Davies!

[A woman with a megaphone shouts up]

Woman with Megaphone

Bryan, I love you! I promise I'll wait and be true.

[She turns to Sonja]

Woman with Megaphone

Has yours got his stripes?

Sonja Davies

No, I don't think so. He's in the Army Service Corps.

Woman with Megaphone

He won't be fighting then?

Sonja Davies

No, thank God.

[The woman shares a dirty look. Charlie Davies sees Sonja and yells down to her]

Charlie Davies

Sonja!

Sonja Davies

Charlie! I came down as soon as I could...

[She is drowned out by the brass band and the singing of 'Now is the Hour']

Charlie Davies

What?

Sonja Davies

I came down to...

[Charlie cannot hear. Sonja shakes her head, blows a kiss, and waves to Charlie. He waves back. Sonja joins in with the singing of *Now is the Hour* as she tearfully watches Charlie.]

We gave the departure iconography to the conchies!

As I was making *War Stories* with Judith, I was also hearing the women's version in spoken word oral histories. This included my mother's. I managed to follow up with a film that would tell seven personal stories, from women who were there, interspersed with those precious *Weekly Reviews*. I had found myself an honourable way to plunder the treasure. What joy.

War Stories was made for the cinema and as such could have a Dolby stereo sound track. The sound enhances and deepens the little squeaky tumpty-tumpty music and makes the *Weekly Review* footage so much more present and dramatic. After a screening to Hollywood elite at the American Film Archive in Los Angeles, I was asked where the power lay in this very simple, talking heads film. It is in the sound. But problems arose with the *Country Lads* archive.

Flo Small. In her story, Flo goes down to the docks with her mother to wave goodbye to her brothers. In her version, everyone down there is crying and very sad. In *Country Lads*, they are mainly cheering and smiling. So in order to support Flo's version, I headed back to look at the off-cuts. Indeed, the camera does at times capture people crying, wiping a tear, and looking dejected, but when it does, the camera immediately turns off or looks away. (This wouldn't happen now, as they would head in for the close up) Back then, they were using their precious filmstock to project a proud nation. So, with Paul Sutorius's editing – he has been involved in all of the films I am discussing today – we set out to offer a different version of *Country Lads* to support Flo's experience.

Flo Small¹²

Well, we had John first to go. And Mother got dressed in the morning crying half the night of course. And we went down to the wharf where there were hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people saying farewell to boys. And I don't think anybody wasn't crying because everybody on that wharf, for some unknown reason, had suddenly realised that this was a war. And

that New Zealanders were going. Before it was kinda like a fairy story: they were out in Trentham and out in camps, and they were still home and they were still your boys. And suddenly, your boys were away on a big ship. And we were waving madly, crying and standing there and couldn't do one thing. And that made you realise that people, our boys, were going to die.

[A solo harmonica rendition of 'Now is the Hour' plays over archival footage of the departure of New Zealand soldiers onboard ships, making it feel sadly nostalgic.]

And all those boys on the ship, I remember my mother saying, 'How many of them will come back?' Never thinking that ours wouldn't come back. Because every mother there thought her boy was coming back. And it was depressing when we came home and watched the ship go out. There was nothing you can say. It's a kind of funny, you cry and you go into a bedroom where someone's been and you think of something that perhaps you and your brothers, or you and your sons have said and something funny, and all of a sudden you don't really know what to do. Now my mother scrubbed a bench, and she scrubbed it about four times. I remember Mum with a scrubbing brush and a cake of electric sandsoap scrubbing this bench. And I said, 'Mother, What? You've scrubbed that bench. What are you doing?' She said, 'If I don't scrub it, I'll go mad.'

[Archival footage of the ship's shadow against the sea]

In this edit of the departures, I used the sparse material of sad people wiping a tear before the camera turned off, and wide shots of groups with their backs to us. I wound down the cheering and added lonely harmonica.

In Flo's story, she tells of falling in love with an American soldier and ultimately having his baby. This sent me off to the American archive¹³ – and what a difference. Those Hollywood cameramen were not from

a British documentary tradition. They like to stage the action. I'll just show you our cut down of a slice just because it's fun.

American Style¹⁴

[Archival footage of trams passing by, soldiers speaking amongst themselves. A brass band plays unseen as the General addresses the American men.]

General

'You'll find that you'll like New Zealanders, or most of them, and that the New Zealanders will like you, or most of you.'

[Archival footage, soldier imitates almost getting hit by car]

Right, so those departures – I continued my investigation of what was essentially my parents' sometimes mutually exclusive telling of their war experiences. My mother's is to be found in the centre of *War Stories*, told to me when she was approaching eighty; my father's is recounted in *Home by Christmas* with actor Tony Barry recreating my father's interview that I recorded on a little cassette recorder twenty years earlier. My father's account of his country lad experience is characteristically without honour of glory.

*Home by Christmas, Departure*¹⁵

[Archival footage of people entering train, crowds watching soldiers marching]

Ed Preston

Burnham to Christchurch. [music] People lining the streets, women, girls, they had flags and waving and cheering, I don't know what they were cheering about. I didn't have any feelings about it. All of us, we just wanted to get on the boat because we knew that when we got on the troopship, that's when things would start to really happen. They gave us another medical before we got on the boat and that was just to make sure that the boys were leaving clean. They didn't have any diseases like venereal disease or any of that sort of thing. [Archival footage of soldiers departing on ships].

Working with a talented committed film archivist – Alex Boyd – buried deep in the independent archive at what is now Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision, a couple of 8mm film rolls were found deposited in a family collection, shot by a soldier on one of those departing ships. Now I had a fuller story that supported my father's ripping yarn in images shot from the same point of view, as you saw at the end of that clip. I swear that man must have been standing next to Dad as they embarked on their great adventure.

We were always looking for the things that weren't in the official version. Alex found this stunning piece of the boys 'playing up' in Fremantle. Once we edited it and added voices and music – there we had a home movie.

*Home by Christmas, Fremantle Japes*¹⁶

[Archival footage of men on trains, advertisements for Emu beer]

Ed Preston

Well, when we docked at Fremantle we were the only ship allowed into Fremantle. They took us by train into Perth. When we arrived in Perth, we arrived on this side of the station and on the other side of the station they had all these brothels lined up.

[Archival footage of drunk soldiers standing together.]

All the girls out there in shorts and just their bras on. 'Come on boys, come on over'. Well of course some of the chaps started to go over and the officer he could see it's gonna get out of hand. So he said, 'Go on, away you go, over you go. Be back in an hour.' And off they went.

Gaylene Preston

And you didn't go?

Ed Preston

No, I bought a rabbit.

And for every piece of film you have viewed here today, I have to tell you that I have signed a contract that agrees I will not

change the artefact. But the artefact gets changed the minute it is put in a different context, the minute that sound is added, or changed, the minute there are edits. But, most of all, everything is context. This pictorial treasure in stills and in moving image held here in this National Library, is priceless, and while none of us want to see it exploited, it is only by using it that it can really live on.

These days, the gap between the official version and the unofficial version is almost non-existent. People shoot stunning footage on their phones. The iconic memorial image of the year is the sad nine minutes recorded on a cell phone that saw the death of George Floyd recorded by a passing young woman. It will be for future generations in mediums yet to be invented, to boot the old stuff into new life.

Hopefully it will be provocative and compelling, creative and even slightly disturbing. Like the old stuff itself, it will reflect the age it is made in, rather than the empirical way it was. You will always be searching for the truth on the edge of the frame, just as I was in the story of the Napier Earthquake that Hana Cotter told us.

So, when does footage shot today become history? In making *Hope and Wire*, a dramatised series of the Christchurch earthquakes, I wanted to amalgamate hundreds of accounts across age, social status and experience, incorporating central city stories and accounts of the liquefaction nightmare of the eastern suburbs, the hill scramble to Lyttleton and the plight of the homeless and dispossessed. The people who argued about their paintings, and those that became squatters in the red zone.

Re-enacting an earthquake dramatically and supporting it with archival reality brings the audience right into the experience. They are not just looking on, they are involved.

*Hope and Wire*¹⁷

[A mother sits in her car waiting in a supermarket car park. She calls her son.]

Son

Hi, mum.

Mother

Hey Tim, I'm by the university I could drop your folder off?

Son

No, no, it's not necessary- Ah! (He screams.)

[Earthquake occurs at 12:51 pm. Cuts to various different settings and groups of characters. Screams, shouts, falling masonry. Archival footage taken from security cameras]

Son

We've got to get outside!

[Archival footage of people running, buildings crashing to the ground. The mother's phone goes dead as sirens begin to blare. People stand in the streets, shocked]

Woman Speaking to Camera

After September, we worked out a plan.

I want to end this lecture with a clip from a piece I made recently to celebrate women's suffrage. The brief was to bring a modern and youthful lens to the slightly musty images of those early feisty women. On a very limited budget, too, I might add. I was wracking my brains in the bath – the best place to come up with something – when I heard on the radio, a presentation from the sound archives of three elderly women talking about the actual moment in 1893 when the vote became reality. Extraordinary. They were in their very late years. One was 103 when she was interviewed in the early 1970s. They were old women when they told their tales, but they were young women when they faced the task.

Using extremely talented actors, one of whom is my daughter, I saw a way to fulfil the brief from the Auckland War Memorial Museum. To conclude my address here today, here is a clip from *Hot Words & Bold Retorts*.

Hot Words & Bold Retorts¹⁸

[Title cards. Scans of archival newspaper headlines and imagery: *Perfect Political Equality – Parliamentary Heights: The Summit at Last – Woman (sic) Suffrage Passed – The Woman's Suffrage Bill assented to – Woman's Suffrage gained*]

Announcer

[Music] Well, the marvellous thing did happen: on 19th September 1893, the universal franchise bill was passed and Miss Lovell Smith recalls the scene at her home when the news was received.

Hilda Kate Lovell-Smith (1886-1973) played by Jean Sergent

I was a small child at the time, but I do remember the day the government passed the Bill. A special messenger was sent out from Christchurch out to my home, which was just seven miles out of town, to tell my mother that the Bill had been passed. And my mother came out to a group of us who were playing out of doors and told us and I remember, I had three brothers and they all cheered and threw their caps into the air.

Helen Wilson (1869-1957) played by Lucy Lawless

It was said that New Zealand women had the vote handed to them on a platter, that they were given it before they ever asked for it. This was not at all true. There were a great many agitations and articles in papers and stormy meetings and hot words, and a great deal of house to house canvass and petitions to Parliament. And though there was no violence, there was some absurdity. They said women were too sentimental to listen to reason. One said that women would always vote for the handsomest candidate.

Arabella Manktelow (1871-1963) played by Chelsie Preston-Crayford

Oh, it was an exciting time, let me tell you. Old Seddon didn't want it, you know. He didn't. He put everything he could against it. And the old hypocrite, [laughs], when the whole thing was over, he congratulated the

women on having won the franchise, and one woman looked at him and she said, 'You're nothing but a hypocrite'. And he said, – "No, I'm a politician. I always side with the winning side.'

Interviewer

But the men didn't like it? They didn't like their wives, their daughters voting?

Arabella Manktelow

No, they said their wives didn't want it. My own father said, 'My wife is content to be as she is'. And my mother said, 'But I'm not.' So we had a row at home over that, [laughs]. Oh it was quite exciting, you know.

That's all folks.

Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua.

I walk into the future with my eyes firmly fixed on the past.

Endnotes

- 1 <https://natlib.govt.nz/events/recorded-events>
- 2 Now MTG Hawke's Bay Tai Ahuriri
- 3 The names of Dame Gaylene Preston's films are in *Oral History in New Zealand* house style. Please refer to Dame Gaylene Preston's website <https://gaylenepreston.co.nz/films> for the style in which each film is branded
- 4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufOzL6Uex5w&ab_channel=Bultitude
- 5 <https://youtu.be/xFYqrs9Nyp8>
- 6 *War Stories Our Mothers Never Told Us* (1996). <https://ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz/film/war-stories-our-mothers-never-told-us/>
- 7 Women in World War II Part I, OHColl-0060; Women in World War II Part II, OHColl-0064
- 8 *Bread & Roses* (1993), <https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/bread-and-roses-1993>
- 9 'Country Lads' leaving for war, <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/video/country-lads-leaving-war> Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 6-Oct-2021
- 10 https://youtu.be/Lmhl_dJDIs0
- 11 <https://youtu.be/QbJtyIvuhaA>
- 12 <https://youtu.be/74pWdNBaICU>
- 13 The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration
- 14 <https://youtu.be/2OTHdRDKbqA>
- 15 <https://youtu.be/rqeR5zrB9U0>
- 16 <https://youtu.be/muOd9LElfp8>
- 17 <https://youtu.be/3TbrkBuqAH4>
- 18 <https://youtu.be/fCOHYAhw2iY>

Reviews

Ministry for Culture & Heritage

Kei Roto i te Miru: Inside the Bubble (podcast series)

Reviewed by Michele Rayner

As I began listening to the podcast *Kei Roto i te Miru: Inside the Bubble*, the bubble of my home city of Melbourne was undergoing its sixth lockdown since the beginning of the pandemic in early 2020, and in the grip of a surge in COVID-19 infections, thanks to the Delta variant. In the time it took to listen to all five episodes of the podcast, Auckland also went in another hard lockdown, after an outbreak of infections across the city.

After being asked, earlier in the year, to review this podcast, I'll admit that I kept putting off listening. With 2021 turning out to be, at least for me and over five million other residents of greater Melbourne, one long, unrelenting, rollercoaster ride in and out of lockdown, and communities fracturing, not just over the mandated shutdowns, but also, this year, the vaccination rollout, did I really want to immerse myself in the experiences of the 2020 national lockdown



Graffiti during lockdown: exciting times for MISANTHROPES on a wall in Island Bay, Wellington. Wikimedia Commons/Ballofstring

in New Zealand? After all, there are all those true crime, fraudster, music and comedy podcasts on tap, which offer an easy escape from all things Coronavirus.

Well, I shouldn't have been so hesitant about listening to *Inside the Bubble*. Rather than adding to the emotional and psychological toll (and torpor) of nearly two years of pandemic induced lockdowns, I found the five-episode podcast an engaging, well-paced and somehow heartening, re-assuring experience.

The series, released by Radio New Zealand in March/April 2021 to coincide with the anniversary of the 2020

lockdown, was produced using some of the 25 oral histories commissioned and funded by Manatū Taonga, Ministry for Culture and Heritage with Auckland Libraries. The project's website tells me that nine oral historians undertook the oral history recordings using online technology, such as Zoom, Skype and

Michelle Rayner is an Executive Producer, Performance & Features at ABC Radio National, Melbourne. She has been involved in the production of many oral-history-based radio programmes.

Microsoft Teams (and possibly other tech which allows for remote recording that I'm unaware of). This is no small feat. Anyone who has conducted an oral history is fundamentally aware of the importance of developing rapport, a sense of respect and trust, between interviewer and interviewee, and being in the same room, the same space, is the starting point for building that engagement. So it's a real credit to both the interviewees and the interviewers that there's a great deal of candour, a sense of trust, and connection between interviewee and interviewer. There also seems to be an enthusiasm, on the part of all involved, for the overarching aims of the project (or at least the content from the larger, raw, oral history interviews that has been included in the podcast).

The breadth and diversity of these lockdown life stories from Aotearoa New Zealand is also a real strength: from a frontline health worker nurse, through to small business owners, and overseas backpackers – the podcast offers an intimate window into how each person's lockdown was shaped by their circumstances at that moment in March 2020, when Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern laid out the terms and conditions of the national lockdown.

The podcast is hosted by Emma Jean Kelly, audio-visual historian with Manatū Taonga, Ministry for Culture and Heritage – and her

presence, as narrator across the five episodes, is terrific – warm, candid (she confesses the pandemic has unleashed her inner 'germ-phobe') and thoughtful. She weaves in a welcome level of humour, a light tone, at just the right time (she and a friend decided to try and make their own hand sanitiser – out of gin! We learn that it was not a resounding success). As narrator, Kelly positions herself as much as a participant as the interviewees, in the collective experience of the lockdown. Another of the strengths of the podcast is the way that it illuminates how the national lockdown was at once a collective experience (who didn't sense some anxiety, some frustration, some sheer ennui?) and yet also a singular one – each person's experience was unique to their circumstances.

The latter is largely due to the wide-ranging nature of the interviewees: teenagers, a Trans person, European 20-somethings stuck in New Zealand, a mother of five (the owner of a hair salon, which of course, had to shut up shop) who ends up with a household of 13. The podcast does not shy away from the less palatable social realities, such as racial inequity and the growing economic divide already present in New Zealand before Covid – and which the pandemic and lockdowns – as the oral histories reveal – have both amplified and laid bare.

Is the openness and candour of so many of the interviewees partly a result

of the fact that the project matched oral historians who held 'specialist knowledge of their communities' with specific interviewees? Given the existing limitations imposed upon recording oral histories under lockdown conditions, the degree of intimacy and the honesty of the interviewees is admirable. One experience which is, I'm pretty sure, absent from the podcast, and which came to mind as I was listening to the podcast, is that of someone who became infected with COVID-19 in that first wave in 2020, and recovered. Perhaps this fell outside of the narrow focus of 'life inside the lockdown bubble' – but given New Zealand's 'gold standard' capacity for containing the virus in 2020, it could have been fascinating to have heard of a lockdown story which included a positive test result, and what this meant for the individual. Or, given that in 2021, thanks to the ferocity of the Delta strain, Auckland has experienced a brand new wave of infections, perhaps an additional set of interviews from Covid survivors could be recorded and added to the existing oral history archive collection? The pandemic has, after all, turned out to be longer and more unpredictable than we could have thought back at the beginning of 2020.

Listening from an Australian perspective, the strongly bi-lingual nature of the podcast is a revelation; Māori language and culture

are seamlessly interwoven and respectfully reflected as part of the life experiences we hear about. That the title of the podcast is presented in both Māori (first) and English sets the tone of the podcast upfront and unambiguously.

As a producer of audio podcasts and documentaries, I was also impressed by the sound design and production of the podcast; the theme and sound effects are intelligent and subtle. The breakdown of the five episodes might initially appear a little anodyne – We Prepared, We Cared, We Learned, We Moved, We Connected – but it does provide a simple framework upon which to hang the broader experiences and strange phenomena (Zoom parties, online choir groups) that lockdown gave rise to. It also meant that some of the surprising upsides of the lockdown are revealed to us: the Pasifika airline steward who, suddenly grounded at home with his family, teaches his children some traditional dance; the interviewees who reflect on how the lockdown forced them to slow down, to inadvertently begin to appreciate anew what might be termed ‘simple joys’ – baking, the pleasure, daily walks, the comfort of a pet. It was incredibly heartening to hear that, for some interviewees, the lockdown led to a reassessment of what they valued in life – I know that this has been something I’ve experienced

– and including these more thoughtful insights and perspectives in the podcast helped to balance out the tone and mood, and to fully reflect the diversity of experiences of lockdown.

The collection of full interviews from this project is held in the Auckland Libraries. From the information in the cataloguing on the collection’s website, the full recordings don’t seem to be overly long, with a couple sitting at a bit over an hour’s duration. The audio is not publicly available to listen to online, though there is a clever little sound clip from each interviewee – plus photos in some interviews – on each recording’s discrete webpage. A written request to listen is available via an online submission form. This oral history collection, as do others recorded around the world last year (Denmark recorded oral histories with primary school age children, and made a podcast from these, broadcast on Danish Public Radio) will provide an invaluable resource for future researchers of the pandemic in New Zealand and elsewhere. And aside from future researchers, this collection of oral histories is important as an archive, a snapshot or time capsule of Aotearoa 2020 – a year which turned all our lives, to a greater or lesser degree, upside down, and the realisation that vaccinations, and learning how to live with this virus is going to

be the ‘new normal’. There’s no going back to the ‘before time’.

So, despite my initial reservations, listening to this podcast proved to be heartening and heart-warming, even reassuring; because ultimately it reminds us of the power of human resilience, of empathy and kindness. It is also a potent reminder of the fact that societies are more than a collection of individual units; that we need to rely on one another to come together (alone) for what might be described as ‘the greater good’. This intimate audio chronicle of New Zealand in 2020 reveals that, in the face of a national emergency such as a pandemic, we must be willing to act collectively, to think beyond our own immediate selves, even if it is from ‘inside a bubble’.

Endnotes

- 1 <https://mch.govt.nz/kei-rotu-i-te-miru-inside-bubble>
- 2 <https://kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/digital/collection/oralhistory/id/3103/rec/1>
- 3 <https://www.rai.it/prixitalia/news/2020/07/2020-Radio-Documentary-Reportage-Programmes-b21d19e7-048d-447d-ae3d-66b87f938f4c.html>

Mark Beehre

A Queer Existence: The lives of young gay men in Aotearoa New Zealand. Massey University Press, 2021, 344pp ISBN: 9780995146570

Reviewed by Malcolm McKinnon

Mark Beehre’s *A Queer Existence* is an absorbing journey into the lives of 27 young men living in New Zealand. A project for his Master of Fine Arts in 2012-13 saw Beehre photographing and interviewing the first half dozen or so men who feature in the book, with further interviews and photographs following through 2014-15, another two in 2017 and two in 2020/21 rounding off the series. Four others who were interviewed chose not to be part of the publication.

The portrait colour photographs are striking and engaging, particularly once the related interviews have been read.

Beehre was the author of *Men Alone—Men Together* (2010), interviews of gay men who came to adulthood before homosexual conduct was decriminalised in 1986. This volume focuses entirely on men born after law reform, very much so for one: ‘I knew nothing about Homosexual Law Reform. I didn’t even know it was illegal back in the day.’ (p 239).

The book is not strictly a work of oral history. The transcriptions of Beehre’s interviews are lodged with the Lesbian and Gay



Archive and/or the Oral History Collection at the Alexander Turnbull Library (the fate of the actual recordings is not clarified). For the publication Beehre converted the interviews into first person narratives, which ‘usually involved some rearrangement of the sequence of material’ but aimed to preserve the ‘individual voice’. In this latter respect Beehre succeeds, the sheer variety of the personalities captured is one of the treasures of the book.

That said, some editing might have helped the flow of the narratives, whilst in the last paragraphs of many of the interviews the narrative garb falls away as identical territory is traversed: self-description – gay, queer, something else; law reform; the impact of HIV/AIDS. Given that the

book is not working with transcripts, this material might better have been distilled into a companion essay.

Very different circumstances, generationally speaking, shaped these young men growing up, compared with their elders (using dating apps is a standout contrast), but it is striking how ‘coming out’ and the attendant stress or anxiety with family, friends, schooling, are still fundamental. I was watching a movie with my mum one night and my dad came into the room. That seemed as good a time as any... I just said,

‘Mum, Dad, I’m gay!’
The room became tense.

Malcolm McKinnon is an historian based in Wellington.

I got asked a lot of things.
'What do you mean by gay?'

My Dad's next question.
'What do you mean, attracted to men?'

Then that was it and Mum didn't feel like watching the movie anymore. The next day –

'You're not going to tell anyone are you?'
'Tell them what?'
'That you're a homosexual.' (p 115).

The interviews are about whole lives, so there is the expected rhythm of personal growth and personal relationships and, more unexpectedly but plausibly, the rhythms of migration. They come from all over – Waikato, Bay of Plenty, East Coast, Hawke's Bay, 'Palmy',

Wairarapa, West Coast, North Otago and Southland. But in many instances – reflecting no doubt the snowball technique – they are now living in Wellington and Auckland. So, a novelistic sense of personal and geographic journeys mixed. By comparison 'overseas' does not loom large (plausibly the ones for whom it did have 'gone').

Reflection on identity – especially on being Māori – is a vivid part of some of the more recent interviews. So, also, the impact of religion with Beehre himself commenting on 'the seemingly high proportion of participants who grew up in strongly Christian families' (as Beehre himself did). The ways the interviewees navigated the tension between church going and

their sexuality were as varied as the responses (some accommodating) of their families to the revelation of sexual orientation.

A couple of oversights: Why not a table of contents which paginates the 'chapters', that is the individual interviews? And a thematic index would have been a bonus.

In the scheme of things those are minor failings. Twentyseven young men have laid bare their lives, their troubles, their triumphs, themselves. They collectively, with Beehre, have created a work that will resonate with thousands of readers today and will be as compelling, and in some ways more significant, when read decades from now.

Jane McCabe

Kalimpong Kids: The New Zealand story, in pictures

Otago University Press, 2020, 146pp

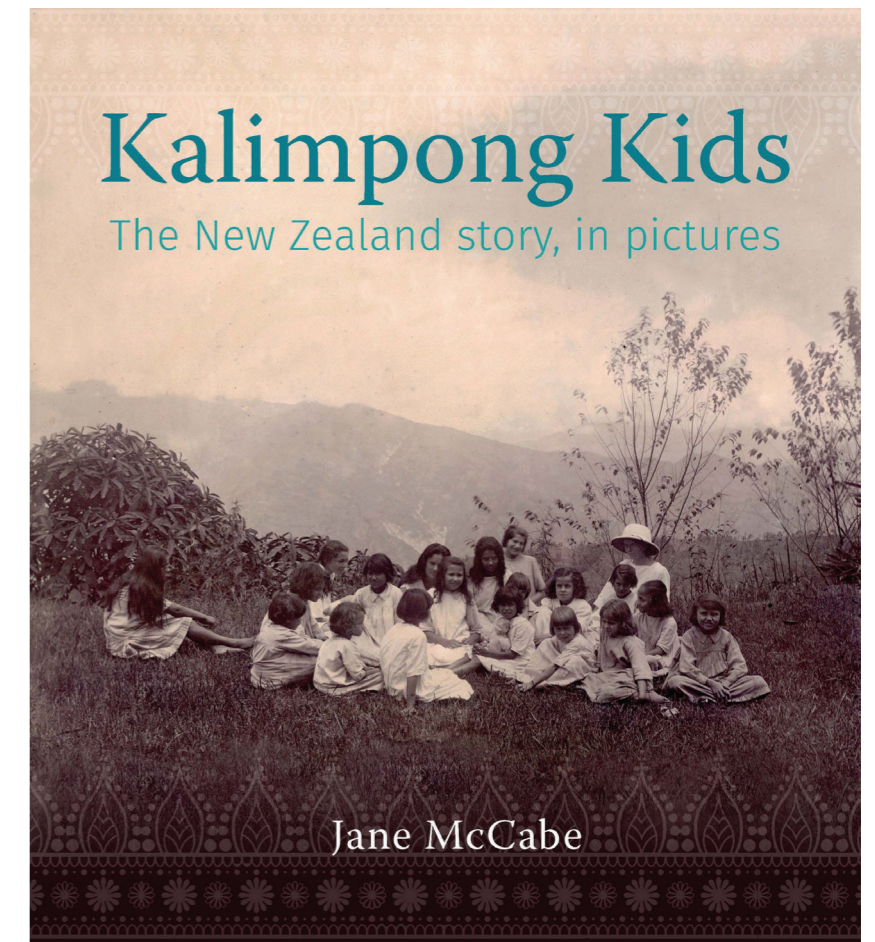
ISBN 978-1-98-859236-7

Reviewed by Dorothy McMenamin

Jane McCabe's grandmother, Lorna Peters, died in Otago in 1978 having never spoken about her childhood in India, nor why she arrived in Dunedin in the 1920s. *Kalimpong Kids* is McCabe's fascinating commentary on her own journey to Kalimpong, a township nestled in the northeastern Himalayan foothills where, in her words, she learnt more about her 'grandmother's early life than she ever imagined possible'. A photograph of girls, with "Kalimpong School" written overleaf, led her to visit the remote school in 2007.

Fittingly, that photograph culminated in this pictorial book, supplementing McCabe's earlier monograph. She provides details of the interviewees and earlier emigrations from Kalimpong to New Zealand between 1908 and 1938 – her grandmother being one of 130 émigrés. The depictions show entrancing locations, people, and journeys, vividly re-creating the personal stories; but interview details are excluded.

Like Lorna Peters, most of the original emigrants shared little of their



childhood experiences with their families. But surviving photographs and those held in the school's meticulous archive, together with McCabe's photography in Kalimpong, make up this enchanting book. The boarding school, now named Dr. Graham's Homes after its founder, a Scottish Presbyterian missionary, was established by Graham specifically for the offspring of local women and British tea planters employed in Assam and Darjeeling districts. He devised the immigration scheme and visited Presbyterian missions in Dunedin and Wellington to set up the network of homes and farms where the graduate children worked after arrival.

McCabe uses a neutral tone describing the transgressive relationships from which the children were born. She states the mixed families were 'open secrets' amongst the local [my emphasis] British and Indians but remained 'hidden' or 'shrouded' within [more distant] British and Indian families. Emigration was Graham's solution to the dilemma of the erstwhile fathers who paid for their children's education and wished to secure them a 'better life'. The majority of school children were employed in British Indian cities, such as Calcutta, but

Dorothy McMenamin is a Christchurch historian with an interest in Anglo-Indian history

McCabe's focus is on the cohort to New Zealand.

She notes that Graham made it his mission to 'rescue' the mixed-race children who were 'beyond the bounds of social acceptability in British India', implicitly suggesting British discrimination, whereas traditional cultures in India strongly ostracized all mixed offspring. This local ostracization, largely ignored by McCabe, suggests why Graham and the fathers sent the children out of India. But removing the children evokes criticism of practices against the likely wishes of their unknown mothers.

Indian records about the mothers are nonexistent, while the school archives provide minimal details in line with painstaking

record-keeping practices that fully identified the British. Only one haunting photograph of an Indian mother survives. [p.25] Interestingly photographs depicting domesticity show comfortable conditions shared by the tea planters and local mothers. These include the children running freely around the homes and plantations until, to their dismay, they went to boarding school. Of 'surprise' is that several fathers kept in touch, some leaving financial bequests or emigrating to be near their offspring.

McCabe's crisp prose and clear sub-headings make this book a pleasure to read and is an invaluable heritage album for contemporary and future descendants of New Zealand's Kalimpong Kids.

Ruth Greenaway and Megan Hutching

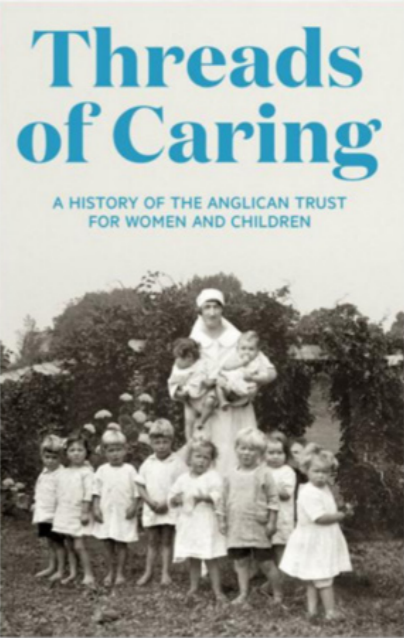
Threads of Caring: A history of the Anglican Trust for Women and Children

Anglican Trust for Women and Children, 2021, 300pp

ISBN 978-0-473-59284-4

Drawing on archival and oral sources, the book's authors evoke the voices of the children, the mothers and the staff to bring life to the history of the Anglican Trust for Women and Children and its precursor homes. The organisation began with an orphanage in Auckland in 1858 and has changed its focus over the years in reaction to what the community and church-led welfare service realised was necessary.

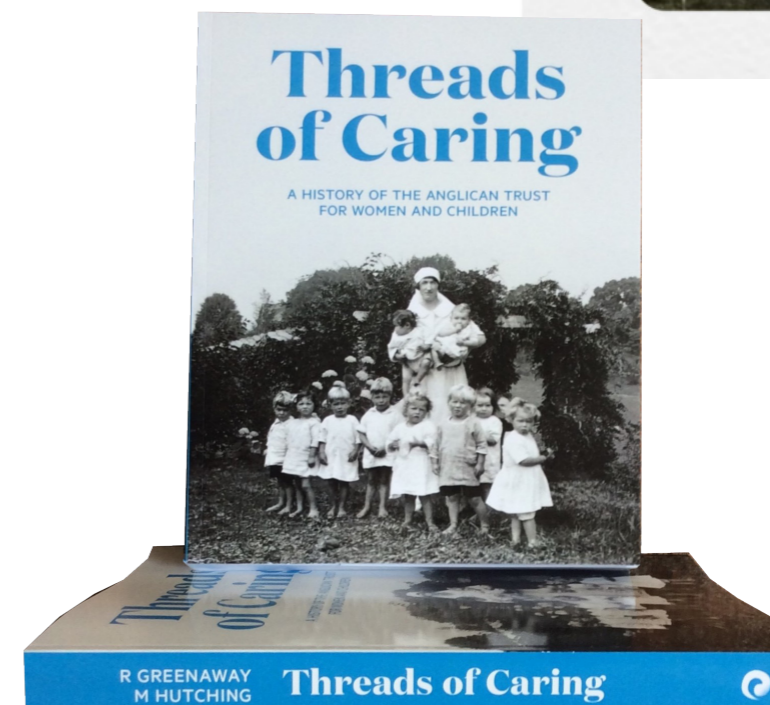

Available from the ATWC <https://atwc.org.nz/threads-of-caring/>



Threads of Caring
A HISTORY OF THE ANGLICAN TRUST FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

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By Megan Hutching and Ruth Greenaway



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 interviewees and people interviewed of the importance of this code for the successful creation and use of oral history material;
- » To select interviewees on the basis of professional competence and interviewing skill, endeavouring to assign appropriate interviewees 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.

Interviewees 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.

NOHANZ Origins

The National Oral History Association of New Zealand Te Kete Kōrero-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 then 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.

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NOHANZ

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