

**Seeking education success while maintaining cultural identity: The intergenerational educational experiences of an extended family**

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**Abstract**

Internationally the failure of societies to close the achievement gap between indigenous/ethnic students and dominant culture students in mainstream education is mirrored in New Zealand where successive governments have attempted to close the achievement gap between Māori and non-Māori students. This paper explores the inter-generational education experiences of a small tribal community in the North Island of New Zealand, from the 1930s to 2011, through archival records and the personal narratives of tribal members.

In the 1830s, members of this community had engaged with new knowledge introduced by missionaries, through learning to read and write in their native language. Increasing settler pressure for land in the 1860s saw the tribe involved in a decade of war with government forces that resulted in the loss of the majority of their tribal estate. From the middle of the 1870s the tribe struggled to maintain their tribal identity in the face of colonialism and the need to survive economically in a rapidly changing society. One of the tribe's initiatives was to establish a Native School within their community in an attempt to engage with European education; but it was a double edged sword that on one hand promised knowledge that would provide "the power and superiority of the European" (Winiata, 1954), while on the other promoted assimilation that threatened traditional knowledge and indigenous language that were at the very heart of tribal and community identity.

The struggle to gain the benefits of European knowledge through education while still retaining identity was to be a battle that was unfairly stacked against the tribe as government policy and the attitudes of teachers and government officials strongly emphasised the Europeanization of Māori with education seen as having a key role in this assimilation process. This paper provides an overview of tribal members' attempts to engage and succeed in education while maintaining their cultural identity and links to their tribal community through an exploration of archival records and the narratives of tribal members aged from 14 to 85 years of age.

## **Introduction**

As a part of an exploration of tribal history and to aid future tribal development my doctoral research has explored the intergenerational educational experiences of family members of Ngāi Tamarāwaho from the initial introduction of literacy through the Bible by early missionaries to the present day educational experiences of tribal children currently attending secondary schools in Tauranga Moana. By looking at past experiences, the positive and negative impacts of education can be explored to provide possible future developmental pathways for the educational success of the whānau of this hapū (the families of this sub-tribe).

Like other Māori communities throughout New Zealand the tribal group of Ngāi Tamarāwaho has survived to the present day, still living within their traditional settlement at Huria in the region of Tauranga Moana. However, they only retain a mere fraction of their traditional land base having suffered government imposed land confiscations in the 1860s, following armed conflict with the settler government forces. The loss of tribal lands condemned this small tribal group to ongoing poverty and reliance on itinerant labouring to ensure the survival of individual families.

My doctoral research has been framed around the following research questions:

- 1) How has one tribal group responded to the impacts of education over eight generations?
- 2) How has the identity of the tribe continued to be maintained over this period and in what ways are the youth of the tribe maintaining identity today?
- 3) What are the education aspirations of the tribal community of Ngāi Tamarāwaho?

## **My role as a researcher within a tribal community**

As a non-Māori I have an association with the tribal community that is the subject of this research that commenced well before I became a researcher. I am part of this community as a Pākehā hunaonga (European in-law), having married into the community and I have lived and been associated with the community for over forty years. Through my wife, our children and our grandchildren I am closely connected to the tribal families. Through the involvement of my wife and I in tribal activities and living in the tribal community of Huria I have established long standing reciprocal relationships of respect with tribal members. This trust has extended to being appointed as a trustee of Huria Management Trust, a tribal, community based health provider and Private Training Establishment (PTE). In support of my wife I have also assisted with the operations of the community dining hall where meals are prepared to feed visitors and local families during various tribal gatherings. In these multiple roles of

association I cannot escape or separate myself from any research finding that could have negative impacts on the community of which I belong. I have a responsibility to support positive tribal development and I cannot avoid the informants who have played a part in this research. I have a responsibility and relationship with the community that extends beyond this research.

My role as a ‘tribal researcher’ was established with tribal families when I undertook research for my MA thesis which looked at the history of religion within the tribal community (Woller, 2005). These findings were presented at tribal gatherings and at a meeting organised for tribal elders. The written thesis has also become a frequently used history resource for tribal members who are also engaged in study. At the direction of tribal members I also compiled a centennial history of the tribal rugby club (Woller & Heke, 2010) and I was granted access to personal diaries and photos held by tribal families.

### **Historical education contexts nationally**

Much has already been written about the role that education has played in the colonisation and assimilation of Māori in New Zealand (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Smith, G. 1997; Smith, L. 1996; Waitangi Tribunal, 1999). In the initial contact period Maori endeavoured to establish mutual understandings and relationships between themselves and Europeans in the traditional principal of reciprocity, a process of “giving and receiving by both parties equally committed to a relationship” (Jenkins, 2000, p 26). Rather than passive victims of colonial oppression “Maori were active, rational, thoughtful, hopeful and positive players” (p 43) in the acquisition of new technology and knowledge and their approach to European education, but legislation and education policies by a European dominated Colonial Government “played a significant role in disadvantaging Māori within the [New Zealand] education system” (Waitangi Tribunal, 1999, p 5). In contrast to the early enthusiasm and aptitude that Māori had demonstrated in their initial response to the acquisition of literacy and new knowledge, by the twentieth century “a pattern of under-achievement in schooling” (Simon, 1994) had become firmly entrenched and is still evident in current education statistics.

This is the national, historical, education context that impacted and continues to negatively impact on Māori families and communities throughout New Zealand and a search of archival records shows a very similar, but more personal, series of events in the education history of the tribal group, Ngāi Tamarāwaho.

### **Historical education contexts locally**

The following table provides a brief overview of local historical events and periods that have impacted specifically on the tribe of Ngāi Tamarāwaho. These time periods and events are part of the historical context that has impacted on tribal members' ability to interact with schooling and education and are expanded in the following section of this paper.

<b>Time period</b>	<b>Historical context</b>	<b>Tribal responses</b>
<b>1830s to 1860s</b>	Introduction of literacy and Christianity by missionaries	Widespread enthusiasm by tribe to reading and writing in Māori language as tribal members sought access to new technologies, especially agriculture
<b>1862 to 1872</b>	Period of armed confrontations and confiscation of tribal lands	Tribe part of pan-tribal struggle seeking to maintain lands and independence.
<b>1883 to 1900</b>	Children attend Huria Native School located within their community until school was closed by government officials	Tribe establish a school within tribal village seeking to maintain some control over where and how their children were taught in English.
<b>1920s to 1939</b>	Children attend Otumoetai School until Education Department sanctions the removal of all Māori children from the school.	Tribe seek to keep tribal children together in one school site, close to tribal village.
<b>1940 to 1969</b>	Children attend Bethlehem Native School for primary education but become scattered when attending secondary schools	Tribe seek to keep tribal children together in one school site for primary education.
<b>1970s to present</b>	Beginning of national Kaupapa Māori initiatives (Waitangi Tribunal, Kōhanga Reo). Tribal children scattered in various primary, secondary and Māori immersion schooling options.	Tribe seeks to revitalise Māori language, culture and identity and increase education success of tribal children in secondary schools.

### **The Missionaries 1830s to 1860s**

Following the establishment of a permanent mission station in Tauranga in the late 1830s, the missionaries taught literacy to Māori in schools throughout Tauranga and the

wider district. These schools largely involved instruction, reading and writing in Māori, by Māori teachers and European missionaries to classes of Māori children and adults.

Missionary records (especially the Journals of Reverend Brown) indicate that there was great interest shown by many Tauranga Māori in learning, not just to read and write, but also an interest in gaining a deeper understanding of the Bible. In the late 1830s Brown often refers to groups of ‘enquiring Natives’ who spent long hours discussing with him scriptures that they wished to gain a better understanding of (Brown, 24 February 1838).

### **Missionaries and Ngāi Tamarāwaho**

There is evidence that missionaries were in close contact with members of the Ngāi Tamarāwaho tribe during this early period. In his Journal, Brown mentions visiting the tribal settlements at Motuopae, Matarawa (Huria) and Ahiroa (Brown Journal 1836 – 1850). These records show that tribal members were active participants in the missionaries’ teachings but that they were far from passive and accepting students. Brown records his frustration when his most promising scholars questioned his uncompromising theology. Brown had noted that one of his teachers, a member of the Ngāi Tamarāwaho community, had a great depth of knowledge about the Bible; “I know of no Native who possesses a more intimate knowledge of the Scriptures, combined with an aptness to teach” (Brown, 17 October 1848). Less than a year later, as a result of a series of incidents and prophecies by a member of the tribe, Brown attempted to dictate to the same teacher and other community leaders how they should conduct their worship.

I was obliged to forbid their continuing to act at present as Native teachers, but promised that either Mr Davies or myself would visit their village on alternate Sundays, if every second Sunday they would attend the services at the Settlement.

This they declined doing, and stated their intention of holding service by themselves and never again to join in public worship with the Church (Brown, 5 October 1849).

The missionaries’ records suggest that this lack of passivity and acceptance often led to periods of less than amicable relations between tribal leaders and the missionaries.

### **Land wars, land confiscation and the ‘Bush Campaign’: 1862 to 1872**

While the late 1840s and 1850s had seen growing peace and prosperity in Tauranga Moana this was to be threatened as the tribes of the region were caught up in the increasing conflict between other North Island tribes and British and colonial forces as settler pressure for land increased. Although commonly known as the New Zealand or Land Wars (Belich, 1986), Winiata (1954) labels this period of conflict the Inter-Race Wars.

Although these conflicts took place outside their region the people of Ngāi Tamarāwaho had strong traditional links to both Taranaki and Waikato tribes so they, along with other Tauranga tribal groups, responded to requests for support by providing manpower, weapons and food to the tribes in the conflict areas. An 1864 census of Tauranga Moana by Government agents noted that out of a total of thirty Ngāi Tamarāwaho males from the Huria settlement, eighteen had “joined insurgents at Waikato” (Mair, 1937). When British troops landed in Tauranga in January, 1864 and blockaded the harbour to stop the flow of supplies to the inland tribes of Waikato, Tauranga became an extension of the Waikato war. Two major battles were fought in the region, the first in April 1864 when a combined force of tribal groups from Tauranga and other areas, consisting of between 220 and 240 warriors defeated over 1,650 Imperial troops (Mair, 1937). Seven weeks after this battle the British troops exacted revenge for their earlier defeat when they successfully mounted a surprise attack on an uncompleted defensive position that was under construction by Tauranga Māori.

Following this defeat Ngāi Tamarāwaho and other tribal groups remained in the forest covered hills that back the Tauranga district for the next eight years as ‘unsurrendered rebels’. They enforced a no go zone for Europeans and while they lived in isolation the colonial government enacted legislation that saw the confiscation of the majority of these groups’ tribal estate. These tribes had been pushed as far as they could go, there was no other place for them to live, so they stood their ground and threatened surveyors when the government attempted to survey the area for settlement by European settlers.

As a result of those confrontations hostilities resumed in a series of conflicts over a three month period from December 1866 till February 1867 that have been called the ‘Tauranga Bush Campaign’ (Belich, 1986). While the skirmishes have been described as “a small scale conflict” (Belich, 1986; Waitangi Tribunal, 2004, p 225), but for the small tribes who were attacked and harassed during this period it was a fight for their very survival in a campaign that has been described as ‘genocide’ (Risenborough, 1999). The Tauranga district remained on a war footing for the next five years and the areas occupied by the small rebel tribes remained out of bounds to Europeans.

The Ngāi Tamarāwaho tribe finally returned to their coastal village at Huria in 1872 after peace talks with Government officials. A newspaper report of the time records how peace in the district had finally been signalled by the return of these people.

War’s rude alarms have ceased to resound in this once eminently disturbed district. A tribe [Ngāi Tamarāwaho] against which, at one time, the entire male European

population of Tauranga was marched, supported by hundreds of militia and the Native Contingent, have left their old settlement in the bush, and now at Judea [Huria] occupy farms of their own which they have substantially fenced and planted. (Daily Southern Cross, 16 September 1872).

While the reporter writes that the tribe “occupy farms of their own” in reality only a few small blocks of land had been set aside for them as Native Reserves. Often areas of land cultivated by tribal members up until the 1940s were blocks of traditional land that had been confiscated, given to soldier settlers and then on sold to speculators and not utilised until the township of Tauranga started to expand. It was at this stage that tribal families were often evicted from the land they were cultivating.

For the tribe of Ngāi Tamarāwaho, and other tribal groups in the region, this period became a battle for their right to live on their ancestral lands and to maintain control over their destiny. They remained stubbornly determined to maintain their identity in the face of assimilation while still absorbing new knowledge and learning.

#### **Huria Native School 1883 to 1900**

Following the return of Ngāi Tamarāwaho to Huria in 1872 from their enforced exile the economic realities of survival in a cash economy must have become quickly apparent. Following the 1867 confiscation, the tribe was dependent on the small reserves of land that had been allocated by the Government and seasonal labouring work that provided some cash income. Despite these economic difficulties tribal members obviously decided that part of their future survival was going to be dependent on acquiring increased access to European knowledge.

They decided to establish a school within their community and they requested a European teacher so that the children of the tribe could learn to read and write in English. Education had become a major part of the civilising and assimilation policy of the Government and the 1867 Native Schools Bill encouraged Māori settlements to provide their own schools (Barrington, 2008). The Government would have been especially keen to establish a school in a community that was known for its resistance to European control, so in 1883 when a Native School was established in Huria it seems that the Huria community, the teacher and government agents, were all enthusiastic. During this period Tauranga was a relatively small township and an 1881 Government census recorded a Māori population of 1,020 individuals spread over 21 settlements throughout the district. The census showed that 72 members of the Ngāi Tamarāwaho tribe were living in the community of Huria and that 21 were children under 15 years of age (AJHR 1881 G3 p20).

In a memo to the Education Department, the local government official describes the school established by the Huria community.

A daily school has been started [at Huria] and when I visited it yesterday 20 children were present. Ranginui [a tribal leader] has given up a good sized room in a wooden house temporarily for the use of the school. I have requested the Natives to form a committee and have given them a Māori copy of the Code. (16 August 1883, BAAA 1001/345b)

In a letter to the Minister of Education the school teacher lists the men chosen by the Huria community to form the school committee and notes that the tribe had their own way of electing a committee.

I may mention that those now chosen were not elected in strict accordance with instructions received from the Department. Many of the people preferring the old method which they maintain. However I believe a very useful set of men have been appointed. (6 February 1884, BAAA 1001/254b)

While the Education Department was obviously keen to acquaint the tribe with the Government's rules pertaining to the administration of Native Schools it seems that the community were just as keen to maintain their traditional leadership structures.

While the Inspector recommended that a school house be built at Huria he acknowledged "that the possessions of the Huria Natives are very limited indeed" (18 August 1884, BAAA 1001/254b) and a series of reports and letters from various Government officials and members of the tribe over the 17 year life of the school all attest to the poverty and dire circumstances of the community. But while the poverty was readily acknowledged by various Government officials, the Government's role in creating that poverty was not acknowledged and neither was it seen as an adequate excuse for the failure of pupils to attend school and their subsequent failure to pass examinations.

In 1893 the school was temporarily closed due to a lack of students. In his report the Inspector lists the reasons for the absent pupils:

At the beginning of May [1893], 18 of the pupils left school to help their parents work in the maize fields at Te Puke. In June measles came; the disease was very fatal, five deaths of infants resulting. By 24<sup>th</sup> July three fourths of the school had left the settlement along with their parents and by the 9<sup>th</sup> of August the settlement was almost entirely forsaken. On 14<sup>th</sup> August there was not a single pupil in attendance. The rain, the measles epidemic, and the need for going far away to get food have been



temporarily fatal to the school, which should be now closed. (26 August 1893, BAAA 1001/255a).

The Inspector remained sympathetic towards the plight of the Huria community and felt that they should still be given the opportunity to reopen the school if they were able in the future. But it is also clear from his statements that he had little confidence that the community would ever benefit from the 'educational advantages' that the school offered.

I cannot see that it would be right to desert the Huria Natives. There lot is an unhappy one and they will never be able to make full use of educational advantages, but something should be done for them (23 August 1893, BAAA 1001/255a).

While the school did reopen in late 1893 the ongoing problems of poverty and disease, which impacted on the ability of the children to attend school, continued. However, the patience of the Department of Education was wearing thin and it seems that the Inspector of Native Schools had also lost his earlier sympathetic position towards the Huria community and in 1899 he recommended that the school be closed.

It seems that the time to close this school has fully come. The Natives are thoroughly apathetic and have little intent in the education of their children... thus there is really no prospect of even partial success here and I think the school should be closed. (16 May 1899, BAAA 1001/255a)

A request to the Secretary of Education from the Huria community, to have the school reopened was declined and in response to further requests for the school to be reopened, the Inspector of Native Schools stated that "[f]ew Māori schools have given us more trouble and less satisfaction" (14 April 1901, BAAA 1001/255a). In 1904 the school building was finally removed, but the Huria community continued to petition for their own school. In 1901 and again in 1909 they offered to supply a suitably qualified tribal member as a teacher if the school was reopened but the Education Department wasn't favourably inclined towards the community and the tribal children were forced to attend other schools.

It is interesting to note the shift in attitude of the government officials involved with the Huria community. They had originally supported the establishment of the Huria School in response to the community's request and had given 'official' recognition of the poverty that existed within that community. However, this initial understanding and sympathy towards low attendance rates and poor examination results that existed in the 1880s and most of the 1890s turned to frustration and the eventual closure of the school because of the 'apathetic Natives' who had little interest in their children's education. It is interesting to speculate as to some of the potential reasons for this gradual shift in the official stance towards the Huria

community. The poverty which forced the families to become transient labourers was not unique to this community and in other regions Māori families were also forced to travel to other areas to dig gum or to do seasonal work on farms. Although from the statements made by officials it does seem to have been more extreme for the Ngāi Tamarāwaho community than for other communities, they also noted “the Natives [of Huria] are of a low type, very Māori” (13 August 1891, BAAA 1001/255a).

From these comments it can be assumed that the tribal community of Ngāi Tamarāwaho was seen by government officials as being less civilised or less European orientated than other Māori communities. This ‘backward’ or less advanced stigma was to be retained by officials towards the Huria community until well into the 1940s when comments were recorded about the poor educational standard of the Huria children who were shifted to Bethlehem Native School. It is possible that officials and teachers became increasingly frustrated because they felt that the community was resisting assimilation by maintaining their language and other traditions, but it is hard to justify the claim that the tribe was not interested in the education of their children when it was the community that had initially instigated the establishment of the school.

### **Otumoetai School 1900 to 1939**

Following the closure of the Huria Native School in 1900 parents in the Ngāi Tamarāwaho community of Huria were forced to send their children to alternative schools. In a 1901 letter from the Huria community, requesting that the school be re-opened, it was stated that the children of the community were either attending Te Wairoa School (Bethlehem), Otumoetai School or the Tauranga District School (9 April 1901, BAAA 1001/255a). A search of the available rolls of these schools shows that only a very small number of community’s children attended any these schools but by the 1920s Otumoetai School had become the preferred option as it was the closest school to Huria (2.3 km). In an interview for the Waitangi Tribunal claims process Ngāi Tamarāwaho elder Morehu Ngatoko described the difficult school environment and the racism he experienced in the 1930s at this school.

Although we got on well with most of our [European] schoolmates we were always aware of the differences between us, that feeling of superiority from them, there was always a gap, prejudice I suppose. We slowly got used to their ways, learnt to adjust, it was a case of having to. I will always remember the stern teachers. [They] taught us all about the British Empire; William the Conqueror, 1066, the Battle of the Roses and big maps of the world on the walls showing the British Empire. It has all stuck in

my mind for a long time. It was colonial education and it was drummed in (Morehu Ngatoko, 2 December 1998).

As well as having to deal with elements of prejudice and the difficulty of adapting to a new environment tribal children were also faced with the exclusive use of English language within the school.

At first I had difficulty understanding [English] because the language of the [community] was Māori although sometimes the adults would speak pidgin English. [The teacher] was very strict about [Māori language], we were not to speak Māori at school. If we were caught we had to stand in front of the class and get the strap. Some of the [European] kids would tell on us if we spoke Māori, we would be singled out and punished (Morehu Ngatoko, 2 December 1998).

Lack of knowledge in English by tribal children was seen as a problem by Government officials as noted in the following school inspectors report.

Reading, Oral English and Arithmetic are mostly fair except in the case of some of the native scholars who have not been very long at school, the chief difficulty with them appears to be the fact that they do not understand English (17 December 1926, YCAF 4135 121a).

The community suffered further disruption to the schooling of their children when in 1939, under pressure from European parents; the Māori children attending Otumoetai School were removed to the Bethlehem Native School. Otumoetai School had increasingly become the preferred option with children from both Huria and the Te Reti (Cambridge Road) settlements of the tribe making up a large percentage of this school's student population. In 1938 the school roll was reported to be 70 with 57% of these students being Māori and predominately from the Ngāi Tamarāwaho community. This increasing percentage of Māori students created some concerns for the European parents and that year the Otumoetai School Committee discussed the possibility of making the school European only. In a petition, the parents proposed that the Department of Education should either provide a new school for the Māori children at Huria or bus them to the Bethlehem Native School.

A petition from parents was received asking that the Board be asked to arrange for a Māori school at Judea, the children's health being threatened by overcrowding especially with so many native children who frequently arrive wet and suffer constantly from colds. After considerable discussion it was decided to send a covering letter with the petition to the Board asking that the Native department be asked to provide a bus to take the Māori children to the new native school now in course of

erection at Bethlehem (7 April 1938, Otumoetai School Committee Book 1927 – 1940).

The native school at Bethlehem wasn't new and had been in operation since 1884 but the distance to that school and possibly because it lay in the district of another tribal group meant that very few Ngāi Tamarāwaho children had attended that school. Following the land confiscations of the 1860s the tribe had tried to maintain their presence in the area by continuing to live and cultivate blocks of land that were no longer legally theirs and often, especially during the 1930s, families were evicted from these blocks by the European owners. It is therefore feasible that the elders of the tribe viewed Otumoetai School as a tribal school because of its location and that this encouraged the concentration of community children at the school. But the reality was that no Māori parents were members of the school committee either during this period or at any earlier time so decisions regarding their children were made by the European parents and the Department of Education.

The school committee were notified that their application had been successful in October 1939 and the committee was doubly pleased because not only were the Māori children removed but they also retained the two teachers that the school employed. No time was wasted in removing the tribal children from school and three weeks following the notification 42 Ngāi Tamrāwaho children ranging from six to 13 years of age were enrolled at the Bethlehem Native School.

While overcrowding was given as one of the reasons for removing the Māori children from Otumoetai School the Inspector of Native Schools report about the Bethlehem Native School in April of 1940 clearly states that the school's facilities were 'severely overtaxed [and that] the influx of the large number of children from Judea [Huria] had created many difficulties of organisation and has, temporarily affected the general efficiency.'" (13 April 1940, YCAF 4135 229a). So while the Otumoetai School committee was celebrating because they had retained their two teachers, in spite of reducing their roll by 42 pupils, the headmaster at the Bethlehem Native School was forced to employ an assistant teacher at short notice to cope with the sudden influx of new students (30 November 1939, BAAA 1001 931b). In the November 1940 report the School Inspector again noted that "[t]he present overcrowded state of the school and the poor quality of the existing accommodation is a severe handicap" (4 November 1940, BAAA 1001 931b).

From this historical overview it would seem that the tribe's ability to interact and succeed in the European education system was severely compromised by the handicaps of poverty and racism. These issues, which were the result of Government policy and actions,

have negatively impacted on succeeding generations of tribal families creating a situation similar to ‘education debt’ as described by Ladson-Billings (2006, 2008). The assumptions of racial and moral superiority of white colonists over the Māori indigenous population, has led to a system of power and authority that defines European cultural values and beliefs as ‘normal’ (Consedine & Consedine, 2005). This institutional racism, while reinforcing and maintaining ‘white privilege’, has marginalised and threatened Māori cultural values and beliefs to the ongoing detriment of tribal families and communities who have wished to maintain their unique identities while participating in wider society, nationally and internationally. It is this intergenerational suppression of cultural values that has contributed to the education debt that continues to marginalise Māori student achievement in the New Zealand education sector.

### **Kaupapa Māori 1980s**

The economic demands of World War Two and the economic growth experienced by New Zealand quickly and dramatically changed the previously isolated situation of many Māori communities. The demand for unskilled labour in towns and cities created an ‘urban migration’ that saw an end to rural Māori isolation. This increased Māori interaction with European mainstream society due to increasing urbanisation led to an increased knowledge of mainstream processes and structures by Māori which in turn led to the development of the “political structures and strategies to deal with Pākehā [European] domination” (Walker, 1995, p 506). Many of these strategies were influenced by the changes in western politics of the times. The civil rights movement of the 1960s in the United States, followed by feminism, Vietnam and anti war demonstrations and the Green movement are examples of some of the protest movements that affected and shaped politics in many countries including New Zealand.

For Māori political activists, land issues became the key focus of the 1970s and the 1975 Land March from Te Hapua to Wellington became a highly visible protest against the alienation of Māori land. The Land March and other protests played a major part in the passing of the Treaty of Waitangi Act (1975) and the subsequent amendment in 1985 that allowed for the investigation of possible Treaty breaches since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. While land loss was seen as a major factor in the dislocation of many Māori from their cultural identity the falling number of Māori language speakers within the Māori population also became a concern for continuing cultural identity (Benton, 1981). This concern led to a national Māori initiative in 1981 to establish Kōhanga Reo, the Māori language learning nests for pre-schoolers. Also established in the 1980s were Kura Kaupapa

Māori (Māori language immersion schools) and Te Ataarangi, a Māori language learning method for adult learners as te reo Māori became a focus for those who wanted to maintain and restore cultural identity (Karetu, 1990). This strong grass-roots movement of resistance to colonisation and assimilation by Māori became known as Kaupapa Māori (Bishop, 2005; G. Smith, 1997; L. Smith, 1999) and has led to a revitalisation of Māori language and cultural values.

### **A frame work for analysing narratives**

As part of the process of writing up my research findings I have developed the following themes, taken from my research questions, to explore more recent tribal educational experiences through the narratives of research participants.

- Educational contexts
- Culture, identity and education
- Education aspirations and outcomes

The following selection of narratives are examples of some of the stories that participants have shared with me during the interviews conducted as part of my doctoral research. These narratives, from different generations of tribal members, are some examples of the educational contexts they experienced; the impacts of education on their culture and identity; and participants' education aspirations and the outcomes they experienced. I am currently collating these interviews into intergenerational case studies of extended families and these case studies will then be used to provide the final analysis of my research results.

### **Heeni aged 80 years**

Heeni lived in Huria in the 1930s and 1940s with her grandmother who only spoke Māori language and she often found herself being punished for speaking Māori at school and for speaking English at home.

We went to school and we started learning English, we came back and spoke to my [elders] and we used some English words and they got angry because they didn't know what they meant. But we had the same problem at school if they heard us speaking Māori they told us off, they punished us, by withdrawing us and making us sit on the steps, sit in the corner all playtime, all lunchtime. Sometimes they did smack us (Heeni Goldsmith, 16 April 2010).

For Heeni and other tribal children of her generation this was part of the educational context of their schooling; their indigenous language and customs were seen by the education system as an impediment to Māori adapting to the modern world.

Heeni saw higher education as a pathway to employment and an escape from the itinerant labouring or domestic cleaning jobs that were considered more normal for tribal members. She saw higher education and a career as a teacher as a way to escape the lack of life choices that were often the fate of many tribal members of her time, but there was a cost. While Heeni has always acknowledged her tribal connections she has lived the majority of her life in Auckland with little interaction and contact with the community she grew up in.

I feel guilty every time I come [to the community at] Huria because I'm not having an input. When my children left home I had to make my mind up if I should come back to Huria or whether I should stay with my family and my grandchildren [in Auckland] and the family won. So that's why I can't get back to Huria and be as supportive as I would like to be (Heeni Goldsmith, 16 April 2010).

Heeni had high aspirations in education and although she achieved her goals the outcome cannot be seen as especially positive for tribal development. She has moved away from the region and her skills and knowledge are not easily available to the tribe.

### **Hape, aged 74 years**

Hape attended Bethlehem Primary School in the 1940s and never attended secondary school. For her Māori language was also the dominant language in the home and it was the only language her mother spoke.

My mother hardly went to school she didn't know how to write her name, she didn't know how to speak English either, she just [spoke] Māori and every time she signed her name it was a cross until one day [her eldest son] taught her how to write her name so every time she went into social welfare she could sign her name.

But my dad was a very knowledgeable man [in English] and very cheeky (Hape Kuka, 14 July 2010).

She has unpleasant memories of her learning experiences at primary school and can still remember the book that she was forced to read aloud in front of the class.

I can remember the book I read and if I didn't put expression into that reading I got a whack. "Can you see the frog?" If the writing reads as a question you have to make your voice go up. "Can you see the frog? The frog is in the tree." I can still remember because I used to get a whack. The best thing they did for me was they taught me how to write, they said "you have good writing". But the cruelty, you have to read with

expression otherwise you got a hiding and it embarrassed you because they did it in front of the kids. I was glad to finish school [aged 15 years] (Hape Kuka, 14 July 2010).

For Hape her language and culture as a tribal member were marginalised by her educational experiences and although she has remained a strong supporter of tribal activities she is part of the generation that are the last native speakers of Māori language but who never spoke Māori to their children. Due to her often traumatic learning experiences her main education aspiration was to finish school as soon as possible and she never went to secondary school.

### **Tamati aged 70 years**

Like others of his generation Tamati was also raised in a Māori speaking household. During his childhood he lived with his great-grandparents in Huria and often travelled with them to many traditional Maori gatherings throughout the central North Island of New Zealand.

While he felt that he coped well in the secondary school system during the 1940s and 1950s he failed to gain the qualifications required to qualify for admittance to higher education.

Tamati had wanted to be a teacher but his failure to pass English meant that this career option was unavailable to him.

When we started in college in the third form you didn't know how you got put in a class but afterwards you realised that it was your level of understanding and comprehension of English and general knowledge, not how tidy your book was and how neat your writing was; although, they would always remark what lovely writing all the Māori kids have got. When it came to English I got kicked in the guts, so I never got School Certificate when I was at school, I had a lot of high marks in the other subjects to be well over the 280 mark but English was the lowest one and you had to get English to pass School Certificate. All the teachers told me that [in exams] they either scale up or they scale down and when it came to English we all got scaled down that year because there was too many who passed. If they had left it alone I would have been alright I would have passed (Tamati Tata, 1 June 2011).

Ironically it has only been later in life that Tamati has perused an academic career and he is currently employed by a tertiary institute where his skills and knowledge in Māori language and culture have become a sought after resource. He is currently completing a masters degree.

### **Pae, aged 54 years and Rangiherea aged 52 years**



Pae and Rangi are two sisters who have lived all their lives within the Huria community. They were brought up by their maternal grandparents and both attended Bethlehem Primary School in the 1960s and Otumoetai College in the early 1970s, although Pae spent a short, traumatic period at Tauranga Girls College after she left Bethlehem Primary School. Pae talks about her transition from a predominately Māori primary school to a large secondary school with a high percentage of European children and teachers.

The transition was horrible for me, I went to [college] for about 3 weeks. It was a huge difference; Bethlehem School was like a country school and all [the relations] there. Plus at home we led a very sheltered life; our life was Huria and the school. That was our upbringing we knew nothing else. So to go where I knew nobody else, well just a couple of people but they were in a different class, was totally foreign. Even mixing with [Europeans] it only happened when we got to college, because Bethlehem was predominately Māori (Pae Harawira, 5 July 2010).

At secondary school Rangi remembers that it was often difficult to engage with learning in subjects that she found boring and of little relevance.

Some of [the classes]..., like science, it was so boring. I can't remember learning anything, there was no incentive to learn. I didn't know there was a Treaty [of Waitangi], it was never taught to us. We were taught about America, Fiji, China. The other thing was if you were asked a question at college no Māori would put their hand up because of that fear of failure thing or getting laughed at. We weren't forthcoming (Rangi Thompson, 5 July 2011).

But she remembers one teacher who was different, a teacher who had high expectations of all her students.

There was one teacher who was nice to me, my English teacher, she was really nice. She was quite a young teacher but she wanted to see everybody succeed and it was noticeable, she made it clear what she expected. She wasn't harsh, she was very well spoken. Her expectations for us to learn and understand were very clear (Rangi Thompson, 5 July 2011).

Pae and Rangi relate how they had been good learners at Bethlehem Primary School but that there were not high expectations for them to succeed in higher education from both the college and their grandparents and they now blame themselves for failing to achieve at secondary school.

Although we came from a predominately Māori school we were quite intelligent so we were put into classes that weren't down there, we were in the middle so we were quite intelligent (Pae Harawira, 5 July 2010).

The expectation wasn't there from our family, my [grand] father didn't expect me to [succeed] and I didn't expect to [succeed] as well. It was myself, you turn 15 and you go get a job (Rangi Thompson, 5 July 2011).

Just go to school girl and if you don't like it oh well you can finish (Pae Harawira, 5 July 2010).

### **Justin, aged 40 years**

Justin remembers secondary school in the 1980s as a place where there were few expectations for Māori boys to succeed and he relates an incident when he first ran away from school and discovered that no one really cared if he was there or not.

I think for me [secondary] school was where I started to go astray to be honest. That's where I learnt to wag [truant]. I remember the first day I wagged from school ever in the third form with some friends. One of the boys said 'let's just go' and we left... we went to town to watch a movie, came back to school at the end of the day and no one had even noticed. From then on it sort of started we would wag and no one really noticed [or cared] (Justin Heke, 4 July 2010).

Justin also found that teachers had little tolerance for anything they regarded as disrespectful behaviour directed at them from Māori students and he relates an incident that saw him ejected from a science class.

My worst experience was a science teacher... in my fifth form science class and she was talking away and nobody could understand her. So I put my hand up, 'excuse me miss, we can't understand what you are saying, none of us can understand you'. She just went nuts and said 'you get out of my class, get out, go to the principal's office'. So I went to the principal's office... and I tell him I got kicked out of class. He asked me what I had done because I used to get into a few fights with other students. So I told him I got kicked out of class for telling the teacher we couldn't understand her and he told me get back to class and behave and I told him I didn't want to go back to her class and told him to put me in another class. But he said no you just have to go back to your class, so I said ok, walked out and went home. Funny thing when I got

the report at the end of the year the teacher had written ‘can’t give him a mark because I haven’t seen him the whole year’ (Justin Heke, 4 July 2010).

### **Piripi, aged 16 years**

Piripi was in his third year of secondary school in 2010 and he has attended a mixture of mainstream and Māori immersion settings since commencing school. He is currently in a bilingual unit and attends a mixture of classes in Māori and English language. For Piripi knowledge of Māori language customs were important and this knowledge gives him self-assurance about who he is and where he belongs.

That’s very important to me because I have to know where I come from and other people would like to know where I come from too (Piripi Ranui, 6 July 2010).

Inflexible timetabling of secondary school subjects often means that students are locked into curriculum options once they have made initial subject choices. In his third year at secondary school, Piripi has found that course options are often dependent on course choices made in the previous two years and that once you have made a choice it is often difficult to switch to a different option.

I want to become an audio engineer, but it’s hard in our school, we had to do music last year in order to do it this year. We have a Māori teacher in the music department and he can take in Māori students but he doesn’t want the principal to know because most of the Māori students couldn’t do music last year because they were in [the bilingual unit] but now he is trying to put more Māori students into the music area. But the [European] teachers won’t take us in unless we have a talent (Piripi Ranui, 6 July 2010).

At the time of his interview Piripi was struggling to maintain any interest in school work. Instead of encouraging this student’s enthusiasm in a subject area that he was passionate about an inflexible school system has trapped him in subjects that failed to address his aspirations.

When you hit fifth form you have just had enough (Piripi Ranui, 6 July 2010).

### **Preliminary Discussion**

As I start my final analysis of the archival record and the personal stories of tribal participants I am aware of my responsibility to deal respectfully and honestly with the history of this small tribal community. While on one hand there is a story of oppression, suffering

and loss there is also the story of resilience and the maintenance of tribal identity. Both stories deserve to be told but it is within the second story, about the strength of purpose of a community to survive and maintain their unity for the future generations, that the lessons for future individual and tribal potential can be explored.

The limited success of successive generations of tribal families to achieve educational success has impacted on the ability of each generation to provide support to following generations and in many cases has led tribal members to blame themselves for educational failure. However, more recently, official recognition of the systemic failure of the education system to deliver successful outcomes for Māori students has led to a shift in Government policy and a questioning of what educational success actually means. In consultation with Māori (Durie, 2005), a policy has been developed that calls for educational success for Māori as Māori that includes the language, identity and culture of Māori students and “supports Māori self-development and self-determination” (Ministry of Education, 2009).

Discovering what educational success might mean for the families of Ngāi Tamarāwaho will be a part of my research but it is clear from an initial review of the history and the narratives that the tribal community has always desired the ability to decide the directions of their development through a process of self-determination or the ability to express their ‘Mana Motuhake’. This term is used to describe the situation where people have the power and authority (the autonomy) to be able to make decisions about their future directions. Since the 1860s it has been increasingly difficult for tribal members to participate in education on their terms and in a way that has maintained tribal language, culture and identity. The challenge for the future is whether these core tribal values can be retained and then further strengthened.

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