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Knowing, Belonging & Becoming-with the Ōruawharo: An Ethnography of a River

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Social Anthropology

at Massey University, Albany Campus,
Aotearoa, New Zealand

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Abstract

This thesis is situated in the northwest of Te Ika-a-Māui, the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand along the Ōruawharo river, a salty tidal tributary of the Kaipara Harbour. For over a hundred and fifty years, the Ōruawharo and surrounding district have been storied by a dominant 'settler' narrative which maps onto place, as names, text, histories, monuments and civic apparatus. However, this is not the only story of the Ōruawharo. There are multiple stories, multiple ways of knowing the river; knowings which produce different belongings. As such belonging to a place is always a process of becoming, and this becoming is produced relationally, as a series of "withs", with both humans and non-humans. These becoming-*withs* produce embodied ways of knowing which in turn, remake place when given the opportunity to be *known* by others. This thesis aims to bring to light the unknown, hidden and subordinated Ōruawharo knowledges in order to reveal multiplicities and develop new ways of thinking about place.

This is Pākehā research done inbetween Māori and Pākehā worlds in a Māori-Pākehā place; a form of research which comes with its own set of troubles. As it is a Pākehā imperative to decolonise (Shaw 2021b), I stay with the trouble (Haraway 2016), and through a level of discomfort, produce small decolonising acts in written text, public speaking roles and through the curation of an exhibit. Decolonising actions, spurred on by this thesis, have then led to others as people come to know more, including that which cannot be unknown.

Drawing on knowledges generated with boats (boat ethnography), people (interviews and casual conversations), texts (archives, books, texts, journals, letters and documents), the curation of an exhibit and a wide range of encounters in my community, I debunk knowing place as a singularity and demonstrate the value of knowing place differently through these methods.

Ultimately, this ethnography of a river offers a multiplicity of knowings-*with* and in doing so, shifts human-centric and settler-centric narratives with tendencies to dominate. With dynamism, knowing, becoming and belonging are shown as

relational, embodied, in amongst the *withs*, ever in motion, shaping lives and reshaping place, place as seen, imagined, felt, understood, experienced and remade.

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To my mother, Una

This one’s for you

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Glossary of Terms

Ahikaa – burning fires of occupation
Aotearoa – New Zealand
Aroha – love, compassion, empathy, charity, affection
Atua – God, demon, supernatural being
E hoa – a friend
Hapū – kinship group
Haere Mai – welcome
Hui –- gather, meeting, seminar
Iwi – kinship group, tribe
Kai – food, meal, to eat
Kaitiaki – guardian, minder, custodian
Kaumātua – elder
Kaupapa – a principal, policy or philosophy of a person, group or organisation Kēhua
– ghost - spirits that linger on earth after death and haunt the living Kete – Woven
basket made by Māori
Kirihipi – sheepskin, parchment, written agreement, pledge
Kōrero – speak, talk, converse, discourse, address
Kuia – elderly woman
Kūmara – sweet potato, *Ipomoea batatas*
Mana – prestige, status, supernatural force in a person, place or object

Manaakitanga – hospitality
Mānawa – mangrove Manuhiri –
visitor, guest
Māori – indigenous New Zealander
Marae – meeting area for iwi or hapū
Matariki – Pleiades
Mātauranga – knowledge, wisdom, understanding
Mauri – life principle, life force, vital essence
Moko Kauae – a tattoo representing whakapapa on the chin of Māori women
Mokopuna - grandchild
Noa – free from the restrictions of tapu
Pā - village (in the past – a fortified village) Pākehā –
New Zealander of European descent Piwakawaka -
fantail, *Rhipidura fuliginosa* Raupō – bulrush, *Typha*
orientalis
Reinga – leap, place of leaping, departing place of spirits Rohe –
boundary, district, territory
Tā moko – tattoo
Tauihu – the head of a waka
Tangata te whenua – local people, indigenous people, people born of the whenua Tangi –
cry, weep, commonly used for funeral (tangihanga)
Taniwha – water spirit, monster, dangerous water creature, powerful creature, powerful
Tapu – sacred, restricted, set apart
Taonga – treasure, including socially or culturally valuable objects Taua –
war party, army
Te Ao Māori – the Māori world
Tikanga – custom practise, rule, lore, protocol, convention
Tīpuna – ancestors, grandparents
Tohunga – priest, healer, chosen expert, agent of an atua Tua
whakarere —the distant past, olden times
Tupuhi – storm, gale
Uri – offspring, descendant, relative, kin Urupā
– A Māori graveyard or burial ground Utu –
avenge, revenge, respond
Waka – canoe, vehicle
Wairua – spirit, soul, spirit of a person
Whakapapa – lineage, descent
Whānau –family group, sometimes used to include non-kin friends and community
Whare – house, building, dwelling
Wharekura – house of learning, school
Whare wananga – university, house of higher learning
Wharenui – meeting house
Whenua – land, placenta

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Chapter 1, An Introduction to a River Story

Suzanne

Suzanne takes you down to her place near the river
You can hear the boats go by, you can spend the night beside her
And you know that she's half-crazy but that's why you wanna to be there
And she feeds you tea and oranges that come all the way from China
And just when you mean to tell her that you have no love to give her
Then she gets you on her wavelength
And she lets the river answer that you've always been her lover

And you want to travel with her, and you want to travel blind
And then you know that she will trust you
For you've touched her perfect body with your mind…

Lyrics by Leonard Cohen (abridged)

Rosemary is my *Suzanne*, an old boat I bought mid covid lockdowns. She is my tea and oranges, my way to China, my place near the river, my fleeting fantasy, my rebellion, my ride, my ride to elsewhere. She took me down to a river, and the river took me in and with it, a research project I never saw coming. The river no longer ordinary and uninteresting, muddy and murky, but rather, alive and enigmatic, compelling and disturbing, provocative and evocative, a push and a pull, movement sparking curiosities and orientations towards what was coming, whatever was in my midst. In nature, beyond mundane life, I felt myself coming alive too. From atop Rosemary, I wondered more. What river is this? What does it do? How does it shape lives? What is happening to me? Who are the river friends, birds, fish and critter? What about these mangroves, mostly despised by locals. What about the mud? Has it always been there? What is this river doing to me? Why do I almost feel childlike again? This is the river of the up close, distant from the noise of human lives, something that will stay with me long after this thesis is finished. A time when life changed and I got to feel things again, like wind in hair, the salty spray, and *see*, a splash of a fish, a seal gone astray from open waters swimming right past my boat. And the joy of it all, like those terns flittering and darting in the late afternoon light at the top of a turning tide. Awestruck was I, dislodged from the middling life of my middle-ages, research feeling a bit like skiving off. But as time went on, the river became much more than that, a touchstone

which calmed my research nerves beyond the politics of social and cultural lives. Those more vexing matters are what started my research off in the first place, the wondering of how places are differently known within the context of a settler society[1] and, to a very large degree, the literal whitewashing of local histories. In amongst all of these entanglements and disquiet, the place that piqued my interest moved slowly off in the distance between riversides of difference, with her own matters at hand, a tide to follow, a moon to pull, foul wind to whip up standing seas and whiteheads signaling trouble and sunshine sparking light and colour with glory on a summer's day. That old river in the distance. A river called the Ōruawharo.

I can see her from my office window atop a ridge in Wharehine, in the northwest of Te Ika-a-Māui, the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand, this salty, tidal, estuarine tributary of the Kaipara Harbour. She snakes through narrow necks and then bursts out as a large lake-like basin then back a to a river again, these twists and turns of river edges shaping the force of wind and currents and fisher people know this so. She moves though farmlands with stands of native forests long gone, now large macrocarpa silhouette big skies, miles of mangroves line her muddy river edges, and the occasional boat floats along her, heading this way and that.

Riversides matter. I am on the mainly Pākehā southern edge and on the northern side, a signpost signals a Māori world, a red roofed Methodist-now-Ratana[2] church, but I didn't know it back then. It was just a church near the river with a red roof in a Māori community. Now it signifies change, a layering of histories, missionary beginnings and political turns, colonisation, contestedness, a time when the prophet Ratana came to the Kaipara, performed a miracle at Tanoa, then went by boat up Kaipara waterways converting Māori in his wake. These were people who were ready for change after the devastating years of mid to late 19th century colonisation, those settlers coming in great waves from Britain. To here came a people who called and still call themselves

[1] 'Settler society' is a term I have settled on. One commonly used term for Aotearoa NZ is 'post settler colony' but this reads a little as if colonisation is over. 'Settler society' indicates both the history of colonisation and the present of the impacts as ongoing.

[2] Ratana is a movement started by Taupōtiki Wiremu Ratana. This pan tribal movement was also political in bringing together many dispossessed tribes in the early 20th century (https://teara.govt.nz/en/ratana-church-te-haahi-ratana/page-2).

the Albertlanders, and this is how this place is told, is storied, is, on the whole, known. Albertland, is how it is referred to historically, the wharf and surrounding area is called Port Albert, named as such by the new settlers regardless of what it was called by Māori before. These settler stories move with ease through time and across space buoyed by notions of pioneer exceptionalism and the nomenclature of colonisation. Across the river, the little church indicates another story and so too, down the river from there, an urupā called Rengarenga, deeply tapu, high on a promontory, a place for iwi to bury their dead. For passing fishermen she is landmark, when leaving Port, "*go out past the Māori graveyard*" they say. People look and see and know differently. People live and tell differently. Power flows differently and the river flows on regardless. And knowing manifests in the inbetween; between Māori and Pākehā worlds, between people and place, the sensory and materialities, consciousness and abstraction, impression and expression, knowing and becoming. This inbetweeness is evident below in a sketch by early settler Edwin S Brooks Jr (1892). It memorialises the death of the paramount chief Te Aria and shows his resting place at Rengarenga urupā, a strange mix of Victorian sensibilities and sacred Māori place. Latterly, I am drawn to the generative space of the inbetween, theorised as becoming-*with,* the idea that becoming is always a process of becoming-with such things as selves, other people, the non-human material world, texts, relations between things outside of humans, the river. But early in my research, I wondered what others knew when they looked upon the river, and what things did, simply that, remembered overpage, as a flurry of early research thoughts, in the act of thinking back.

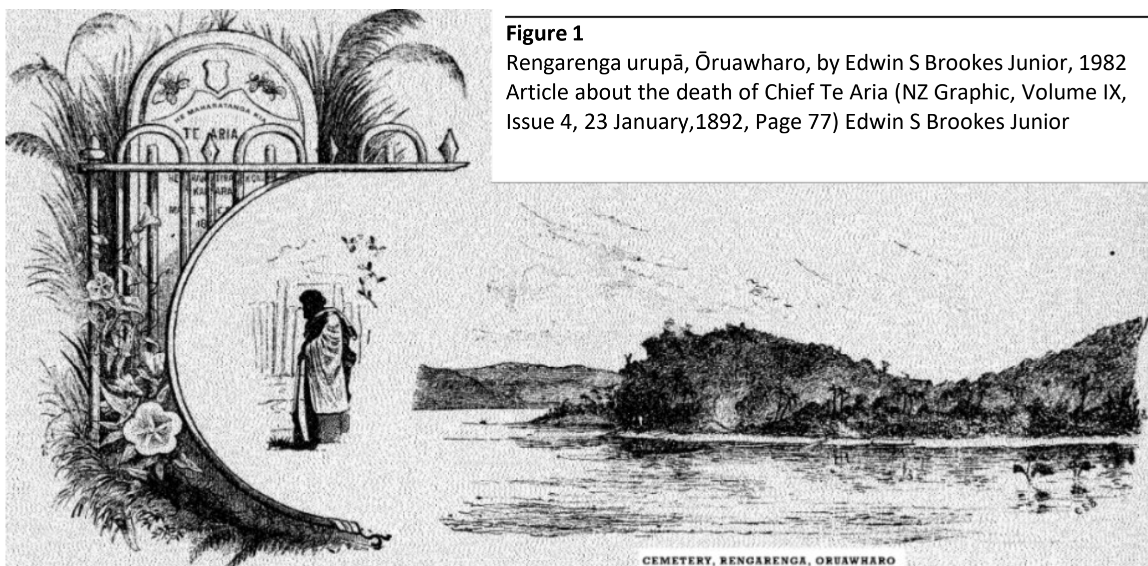


Figure 1
Rengarenga urupā, Ōruawharo, by Edwin S Brookes Junior, 1982
Article about the death of Chief Te Aria (NZ Graphic, Volume IX, Issue 4, 23 January,1892, Page 77) Edwin S Brookes Junior

A River to get to Know

I wondered what others could see
Simply that.
Standing by a river
Eyes cast out
A body full of being
And head full of life

I wondered what others knew
Simply that.
When they looked
Out to the water
With head full of knowing
And body full of life

I wondered how others felt
Simply that.
When they looked
Upon the River
Bountiful or bereft?
With head full of stories
And heart full of longing

I wondered about the Others
Simply that.
Water, tree, bird, mud, boat
Life along the River
The more-than-human
Bodies full of vital-being
Agency hard to grasp

I wondered about the stories
Names, maps, histories, poetry, art
Simply that.
The taken for granted
Power-filled, shaping
Bodies full of knowing
And senses of belonging

Mostly, I wondered about the unsaid
Obscured, silenced, near forgotten
Simply that.
Things beyond that one person
Standing by the River
With eyes that do the seeing
And body full of life.

Figure 2
Ōruawharo River

But these outwardly expressed curiosities and fleeting thoughts in retrospect belie an inwardness as something else imbued my research-eye, something nagging, and that is what is it to *be* Pākehā. Pākehā, meaning white New Zealander of European descent or, as more often the case, a white New Zealander descendant of the early settler colonisers. I am a bit of both, a child of a Scandinavian immigrant on one side and on the other, a descendant of settlers from Scottish settler ships that berthed in Dunedin in the 1840s. I am a Pākehā who grapples with native-*ness* and belonging. A Pākehā who knows no other home. A Pākehā who has always lived close to the Māori world and a Pākehā who entangles with precarity when wanting to come to know Māori worldviews. It is as Pākehā that I pose the following research questions,

- How can a river be known?
- How does knowing, becoming and belonging flow back and forth, through the generative capacities of a river and the vital materialisms of the non-human?
- How might coming to know a river help us understand how knowing, belonging and becoming emerge in a settler society?
- Does understanding knowing, belonging and becoming in place help to move us to a better Aotearoa?

From these questions other more theoretical questions emerge,

- Does knowing produce particular and different kinds of belonging?
- Does place produce particular and different kinds of belonging?
- Can knowing be understood as material not just ideational, an embodied material practice, produced and enacted in a particular place?
- What is the relationship between becoming and belonging?

I pay attention to knowing as produced through embodied experiences, engagements with materialities, encounters and engagements between people and between people and representations. These forms of knowing, becoming and belonging are always produced *with* something and so conceptualised as knowing-with, belonging-with and becoming-with. I delve into these *withs* throughout the chapter writing-up such things as with-boats, with-water, with-wind, with-moon, with-current, with-texts, with-

selves, with-histories, with-narratives, with-people and with-things beyond the human. Out of these withs different kinds of knowing are produced — the knowing of Albertlanders, fisher folk, Māori, Pākehā, the narratives, stories, histories, representations, texts, photos and paintings, always embodied.

Figure 3
Ōruawharo River by Biz Dempster, used with permission

I came to know these forms of embodied knowing through being actively and deeply immersed in my research across several years, but also through a long history of encounters, memories and experiences which stretch way back before this research started. I have spent the largest portion of my life here in Wharehine, over 30 years, never quite local, not *from* here, not a farmer, not an Albertlander. Not staunchly local, my roots elsewhere, but all of my six children were raised here and with that, I became embedded in local life. My house was full of children back then, my own and others and, for over 22 years my life centred around schools and school boards,

including many years as a chairperson of a primary school and deputy chair of the college. After my children all left school and home and during the course of my study, I took on other committee roles, such as chair of the Wharehine hall and president of the Albertland museum. Back in 2003, after 12 years of being at home with children, I went into paid employment and my husband took over the household. I worked across three neighbouring towns at Work & Income/Te Hiranga Tangata, the equivalent of a Social Welfare department. Through this front-line work, I came to know hundreds and hundreds of people stretching over a large rural district. I went through stressors and major life changes with so many people, doing interviews day in and day out for twelve years. While working full time, I was trained to be both a marriage and funeral celebrant. This again meant more people came into my life and I came to know them, and they came to know me in this way.

At fifty an extraordinary turn of events sparked possibilities. My 18-year-old daughter Eva asked me to accompany her on a trip to Türkiye — as a resource stretched mother of six children, I hadn't travelled for nearly three decades so was gobsmacked, beyond excited. When applying for leave, I had a realisation, that this was the time to leave the arduous work of the social services and even better, to go back to university to finish a BA I had started in 1988. I didn't apply for leave, I resigned. My world opened up again from the moment I entered that departure lounge and then on return, walked down the path to university, at the age of 50 on a beautiful early winter's day. Ten years have gone by since that first walk, a BA then an MA and then in the early days of the COVID pandemic, with few job prospects, I applied for and was granted a scholarship to do a PhD.

But this is a research interest that started way before that application process. Many years ago, my late friend Lyn (who passed away during the pandemic) showed me the old photos by Harold Marsh in the museum, some of which are featured in the thesis. I was transfixed, mainly by the photos of Māori staring back from the page. I did a presentation on them in an undergraduate paper and it was suggested to me by both an anthropology lecturer and history professor that this collection of photos would make an interesting MA project. Instead, my MA focused on Māori women who had undergone weight loss surgery. But still, those photos stayed with me and it wasn't

just the photos but the context of the photos, that being the place in which I live. Importantly, this is a district with a dominant settler narrative focusing on the Albertlanders (discussed later) and I just wondered what stories Māori have to tell, what are the other ways of knowing this place. I can see now that I initially hesitated in doing this topic as it would mean researching at home and I was worried about getting it wrong, overstepping and upsetting people, maybe detrimental to relationships and my reputation. But eventually, clearly it was the undercurrents that those photos stirred up and the place in which I live was what I needed to focus on.

This is a deeply immersive study, my connections and relationships extending over a large geographical rural area and through three local towns. My research is constantly with me and has been for these last four years in all sorts of situations I find myself in. Conversations, observing, listening but also partaking in so many different settings, across committee tables, functions, weddings, funerals, tangi, marae events, school events, as a parent and minder of many other peoples' children. My relationships extend into the Māori world, including Māori who work in community, many of whom I worked closely with when our clients were going through tough times. My children would often say, "how far will we get before Mum stops to talk to someone she knows?". From their point of view, no shopping trip could avoid such encounters.

This is a PhD of encounters, immeasurable, hard to quantify and in many ways stretching back years. Every time I leave my house, I am researching, I am attuned, I get nervous, the trouble with researching at home never leaving me, I look at the surrounding landscape and riverscape with research eyes-wide-open and I talk to people. Copious encounters, with me always interested in what people have to say and, as it was in those years working in the frontline at Work & Income, people seem to feel comfortable talking to me. My positionality, my relationships and my public roles are all integral to this research and this is the methodological practise through which the majority of the knowledges about the Oruawharo that are the heart of this thesis are gathered along with formal interviews. This is not just a one way street as, as I go, me in my place, I experience knowing more, seeing differently, becoming-with the knowing more, feeling a different sense of belonging-in while also sharing my own knowing and with it, witnessing others knowing this place in differing ways. Knowing,

becoming and belonging flow together through the current of a life lived in place, and so place is a significant part of my research. For example, the river-knowing of the fisher folk I interviewed is deeply attuned to waterways and weather systems, channels, and places fish are found. Their becoming is also enmeshed with the river and surrounding landscape, and their seeing is different from mine. The way they ascribe meaning to and from place and tell river stories is different and so too, the way they see place. Place, through this embodied knowing and seeing differently, is then remade and reimagined, other things of significance emerging from the shadows, new meanings attached to materialities and the taken-for-granted no longer taken for granted. This process is as fluid as a river flow but so too are shifts happening just below consciousness like an undercurrent shaping connections to place in an almost unnoticed sort of way. Such as, knowing more about a riverside and seeing and feeling it differently while boating past. Shifts can also be dramatic like a shock to the system, such as when I visited a Māori Pā site, once not known so hidden from my view and then being spooked by the ancestors (chapter 5) or a near miss on the river as the current and wind whipped up a frenzy putting me and my family at risk (chapter 3).

Knowing in these instances becomes deeply embodied, remembered like a shiver down the spine, shaping becoming, relationships with place and reorientated consciousness towards things not noticed before. And all of these instances, manifestations, experiences, feelings, thoughts, perceptions, spiraling out of the 'withs' — knowing-with and becoming-*with* — generate limitless ways of belonging-in and making sense of place. In the gathering up of a series of ways of knowing, I show that any one place needs to be approached as a multiplicity, not one narrative subsuming another, not one structure determining outcomes for all, not one way of knowing, not one sense of belonging nor one way of sense-making in place. The presence of power also needs to be accounted for. While not a central focus of my research, power flows throw place in unequal ways and in doing so, shapes lives similarly and dissimilarity — in particular the way that dominant ways of knowing, *dominate,* including some and excluding others. I mainly focus on the up close, the nuanced

trajectories of knowing, becoming and belonging but also think about how power shapes knowing.

These are the thought processes that connect my chapters on knowing to my overall argument that the relational dynamic of knowing, becoming and belonging is fundamentally an embodied process, ever in motion, shaping lives and reshaping place, shaping the ways a place is seen, imagined, felt, understood, experienced and remade. After talking this through with my son Vincent, who grew up here, he took some of my photos and produced the graphic below (figure 4), his representation of his mother's research crafted in a way that resonates with him.

I gather up these ways of knowing or representing in a kete with many leaky holes. Nothing ever contained nor concrete, and any-thing is never simply one thing. With this, acts of representation take differing turns — poems, photos, scrawls, verbatim interviews and stories about stories, all the while, interrogating the seemingly 'natural' categories by which we know. I also think about differing histories, what histories do within the flow of power and in particular, the ways in which dominant narratives silence and diminish other narratives, other non-narrative ways of knowing and other knowledges.

All the while, the capacities and virilities of non-human things make their way into this thesis, these 'its' not able to be taken for granted or ignored. The work of Jane Bennett (2010, 2020) allowed me to shine theoretical and methodological light into the obscure spaces of inbetween worldings, enabling me to see better. I go back to Bennetts work many times, not only for her insight into the 'thing power of things' (2010) but also the ways in which impressions can be expressed through a process of 'Influx and Efflux' (2020) or impression and expression, the latter of which I have tried many times when stuck — just breathe, attempt to unleash *some* sort of creative potential and express, throw something down on paper as Jane Bennett did with doodles (2020). Bennett's work made me feel as if I'd found my methodological home. I realised I had survived the excruciating tedium of my high school years in this way, scrawling all around bits of paper, doodling everywhere. Such doodling's did not make it into this thesis, but other fragments of on-the-way to my interpretation did. My sensibilities aligned with hers and I felt I was given the freedom to go further creatively and for this, I thank her so.

In the gathering up and the representing, these multiplicities have generated very different chapters on seemingly disparate topics — boats, rivers, mangroves, river people, Māori histories, the Albertlanders and the curation of an exhibition. Through this process of gathering up multiple ways of knowing, deploying forms of representations, engaging with the non-human while considering embodied ways of belonging and becoming-*with* in place, I contribute multiple stories of the Ōruawharo River, a salty tributary or 'finger' of the Kaipara. In doing so, the singular, dominant narratives which silence and diminish are shifted a little, leaving room for other ways of knowing. From there, possibilities of knowing even *more* are generated, as knowing is never resolved, never complete. This process of storying requires an attunement to the unsaid, the unnoticed, the unvoiced, the quiet, the stories that didn't make centre court in prior telling's and allows shifts in power to be made – this being the quiet political project of the thesis. Seeking answers to these questions shapes my methodological and research approach as described in the following section.

Introducing Method: An Ethnography of a River

> Storytelling, that uniquely human activity, is one of the most enduring parts of anthropological work. Accounts of what we have seen and experienced linger on the page long after we have left the field… storying captures an attitude of thoughtfulness and deliberation…Stories become pieces of history
> (Hyde and Denyer Willis (2020: 302).

In storying this river, care needs to be taken around what stories get to endure or 'become history' while others slip from view. I start with 'what matters' (ref Strathern[1991] in Harraway, 2016: 12) to the people whose stories they are, and in turn show that the storying of place is never a given but rather chosen, experienced, and curated, emanating from the 'what matters' to a particular point of view. In the early stages of my research, I did formal long interviews with ten people, fisher people, a farmer, Albertlanders, an artist, a truck driver and gardener, people, Māori and Pākehā. And over the four years, I also spoke to many, many others in more casual settings, down at the wharf, at functions, down the street, in amongst the everyday. In choosing which stories to re-tell, I focus on those with the closest connections to the river, and I attempt to leave these stories as unfettered by analysis as possible, transcribed onto the page verbatim, as is, to show how the tellers know and with it, what the effects of that knowing are.

With the gathering up of ways of knowing as my research focus, my supervisor, anthropologist Dr. Carolyn Morris, encouraged me to look amongst the ordinariness of the everyday and find out what people do, what they know, how they think about things and how they connect to belonging and becoming. My other supervisor, geographer Prof. Juliana Mansvelt, reminded me about place, and the way in which lives are shaped through context (Robertson 2019), where context is understood as situated and relational, and place as being continually made and remade through relationships and through knowing (Massey 1999, 2005; Ingold 2011). Juliana also ensured that I kept an eye on the river if there ever was a risk of it slipping from view. And both encouraged me to think about materialities, about what things do; books, photographs, maps, stories, institutions, histories, mangroves, water, people and

mud, and to never lose sight of the ramifications of the ongoingness of colonisation in a settler society. In summary, this is an anthropological thesis which also draws on geographical thinking and my history training acquired through a minor in history in my Bachelor of Arts.

Earlier I discussed the substantive method of this research, as one of being immersed in my local area both as a family person and active member of my community with connections to people over a larger geographical area. This was a form of observant participation used over the four years of research, drawing on experience and relationships stretching back decades. I use the term observant participation rather than participant observation as the latter implies a specificity of engagement within a particular field and the former feels a better fit, living within a place as a researcher attuned and observant, going about daily life with researcher-eyes-wide-open and on the lookout for different ways of knowing. This is also observant participation, as embedded in local life, dependent on the ebbs and flows of community, of street conversations, of tangi, of serendipity and historical and familial connection. I participated as I always have, attending functions as a community member and striking up conversations. As such, daily life folded into the thesis, stimulating questions, prompting reflexivity and differing ways of knowing. Phenomenological (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 2011; Leder 1990) and autoethnographic (Bochner and Ellis 2016; Ellis 1999) practices coalesced as I became entangled in the processes I was observing or becoming-*with*. Through these experiences, engagements and encounters, I was able develop an embodied sense of what it is to move through the relational processes of knowing-with, becoming-with and belonging-with, in place.

I also spent time in the museum archives looking at letters, journals, documents, old photographs, books, and displays, all forms of knowing and representation, along with historical research through the written histories in the public sphere (Brett and Hook 2001; Hames 1960; Borrows 1969; Byrne 2002; Scott 1987). Visually, I used a lot of my own photography in this thesis. These images help to tell such things as boat stories but also to evoke place, and represent other non-textual ways of knowing, seeing and experiencing. Images show that one place can be a multitude of things, such as being extraordinarily different, lit under different light and changing with weather,

season and current. Affective encounters are shown in these fleeting images; a mist lying low along a glassy river moves through the seeing eye into consciousness as deeply beautiful, embodied as awe and felt as a sense of wanting to be there, to belong. In another moment, the same river can change to choppy waters, becoming dangerous resulting in feeling dislodged, a rookie, an outsider. Photos tell stories but mostly show the multiplicities of river-ness, mood and affect — the reader then being able to understand myriad flows of knowing and becoming in this watery place. I also include drawings and paintings done by others and a large number of historical photos sourced for the Albertland Museum. The Albertland and Districts Heritage Museum (its full name) is in my local town, Wellsford. I joined the committee during my research in 2022, eventually becoming the president in late 2024 — another way in which my own becoming and sense of belonging was being shaped through research-knowing.

Lastly, I curated an exhibition about Rev. William Gittos—a missionary who worked for the Māori Methodist Mission— at the museum, a place which had prompted many of my questions about stories and knowing in the first place, as a site of the production of the taken-for-grantedness of local history telling and place making. In developing the exhibition I came face to face, in the most practical and public of ways, with the questions of stories and power. The curating was on the walls for all to see and with it, I felt very vulnerable and worried about getting things wrong. To temper these concerns, focusing on the encounters between Māori and Pākehā felt less precarious than trying to tell Māori stories alone. Eventually I adopted the position that these mid-19th century encounters *needed* to be told as to leave out Māori, which is often the norm in settler museums and was so in ours, was to discount a whole people, discount their agency, their capacities, their livelihoods, the land that was once there's and to ignore their loss. In retrospect, the worry felt in doing such an exhibit was outweighed by the value of bringing into the museum a variety of peoples who peopled the district in the mid-19th century. Post this exhibition, I don't believe that the Albertland Museum will simply be about 'pioneers' 'settlers' and frontier-like beginnings. Museum people know differently, including myself, and as ever, becoming-with new narratives shifts understandings and with it, the institution is slowly changing from settler-centric to diverse and inclusive.

This is a horse, my museum colleagues and I believe, that has well and truly bolted.

Within these four walls, conversations also began with visitors, some leading to events, and I went on to do several public talks in the museum. Such public speaking sparked conversations, more ideas emerged, threads of knowing coalesced or became reified, the exhibition producing a generative space with a liveliness of its own. This exhibition also became a place in which trouble was discussed at length, that being the trouble with a Pākehā coming close to telling Māori stories, an anxiety I felt throughout the research. These anxieties, shape knowing and becoming, with me as a researcher, very much in the thick of troubling things.

In many ways my research is embodied research: being in Rosemary, walking about, talking to people, making things for the exhibit, photographing, talking in public – both in doing specific history talks but also in the way that my research generated ideas and ways of knowings in other settings. For example, I was called on to do more funerals than ever before as our community went through a series of losses. Eulogies were shaped by knowing more and ceremony became also about acknowledging the past and reshaping a sense of place. As embodied, my research also influenced and continues to influence my other roles. Just recently, at the reopening of our local hall after extensive renovations, following a blessing from the kaumatua, I was able to acknowledge Te Uri O Hau as mana whenua and paid respect and aroha to the upcoming commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the battle of Te Ika-a-ranganui. This commemoration is an iwi event with the battle of 1825 barely known about by Pākehā locals, me also once in the dark. As an active community person, I now tell some stories as I go, or at the very least, acknowledge them, and in doing so, try to do a small part in decolonising and remaking place. I go through experiences, both familiar or foreign, easy or uncomfortable, along with the immersive experiences of being on the river on my boat Rosemary. And of course, the vitality of boat research emerges from its inevitability as an embodied form of knowing where the sensory is heightened (Ingold 2021).

This is a diverse field within which common themes and questions arose around belonging, becoming and knowing, along with how the vitalism of the material and nonhuman world shapes these aspects of life. This necessitated drawing on a cluster of theories which I organise under an overarching idea – becoming-*with* (discussed later). This is the concept from which all others cascade. Before going into this detail developing understanding of Māori ways of knowing as a Pākehā required a particular ethic of care developed over decades by universities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

An Ethic of Care

Academia in Aotearoa New Zealand is tainted by the history of settler-colonialism, and the embeddedness of ongoing colonising processes. Within this milieu, Māori have had to fight back and struggle for their own ways of knowing, especially in regard to the research and writing practices of Pākehā researching Māori. In anthropology, so much so, that a Māori Studies department, in seeking self-determination and sovereignty over knowledge, split off from the department of anthropology at the University of Auckland in 1991 (Mead 1983; Walker 2014) and others followed suit. Out of this contestedness came a demand to decolonise research from Māori academics, with the foundational work done by Linda Tuhiwai-Smith (2012, 2013). This approach commonly means adopting kaupapa or Mātauranga Māori models, with a preference for Māori to research with Māori and Pākehā encouraged to attend to the elsewhere. But there have also been changes, with some Pākehā academics continuing to work with Māori and doing so with care (such as Metge 2013, 2015, 2020; Salmond 2004, 2017; Sissons 1991, 2023). While this cross-cultural work does go on, it is more often the exception than the rule.

Within this context, I grappled with the appropriateness of me learning from Māori in my M.A., in which I explored the experiences of Māori women who had undergone weight loss surgery (Joensen 2019). This was a fraught space for a new researcher, prompting a great deal of thought. Eventually I positioned myself as a Pākehā wanting to learn from Māori within the intersubjective space of inbetween Māori and Pākehā worlds. Through this research, I learnt that there are possibilities for newness to emerge within this space. As with my M.A., this research required a full ethics application

to the Massey Human Ethics Committee, which was eventually granted – SOB 21/31. This included being guided by the cultural values outlined in the *Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations Involving Human Participants 2017* as follows:

- **Aroha ki te tangata**: A respect for people — allow people to define their own space and meet on their own terms.
- **He kanohi kitea**: It is important to meet people face to face, especially when introducing the idea of research, "fronting up" to the community before sending out long, complicated letters and materials.
- **Titiro, whakarongo…korero:** Looking and listening (and then maybe speaking). This value emphasises the importance of looking/observing and listening in order to develop understandings and find a place from which to speak.
- **Manaaki ki te tangata**: Sharing, hosting and being generous. This is a value that underpins a collaborative approach to research, one that enables knowledge to flow both ways and that acknowledges the researcher as a learner and not just a data gatherer or observer. It also facilitates the process of "giving back," of sharing results and of bringing closure if that is required for a project, but not to a relationship.
- **Kia tupato:** Be cautious; politically astute, culturally safe and reflective of insider/outsider status. It is also a caution to insiders and outsiders that in community research, things can come undone without the researcher being aware or being told directly.
- **Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata:** Do not trample on the "mana" or dignity of a person. This is about informing people and guarding against being paternalistic or impatient because people do not know what the researcher may know. It is also about simple things like the way Westerners use wit, sarcasm and irony as discursive strategies or where one sits down. For example, Māori people are offended when someone sits on a table designed and used for food.
- **Kaua e mahaki:** Do not flaunt your knowledge. This is about finding ways to share knowledge, to be generous with knowledge without being a "show-off" or

> being arrogant. Sharing knowledge is about empowering a process, but the community has to empower itself.

(Massey University 2017:5, adapted from Smith, L.T 2015)

Mostly these cultural values sit with comfort for me, (aside from not interrupting speakers, that requires restraint I struggle to muster!)— as my Pākehā-ness has always been shaped by being with and alongside Māori. In my MA thesis and subsequent article (Joensen 2019, 2020), I suggest that, while I can never know as Māori, I know Māori from 'over the fence', and from this position, and with an ethic of care, it is possible to converse across difference and within similarities and in doing so, new ideas may be generated. Aside from having a level of cultural awareness, at the very least these inter-subjective conversations require good manners, neighbourly-ness, respect, intuition and sensitivity.

What I lack, however, is courage. At every turn in this research, I was afraid of getting things wrong. I am also reserved and shy about contacting people, why would they want to speak to me? And with Māori, I really do question why anyone would want to speak to me or whether I should even ask. In the end I came to the position that it is important to keep wondering this, to avoid overstepping but also try asking people if it is okay to interview them or talk to them as it is highly likely that this will be fine if encounters are underpinned with respect and a level of awareness. And if they say no, I needed to be okay with that too (though that can be hard). I suggest that people in diverse communities are often more open to cross cultural research than those in academia might think, so I take my lead from the former, as not to do so undermines the agency and capabilities of the people I met in the field.

But still, this is research of the tentative. Martin Tolich (2002) argues that these sensitivities can cause a sort of Pākehā paralysis which then may lead to Māori being quietly left out of research. He suggests that this form of exclusion is in breach of the principles of Te Tiriti O Waitangi (the original treaty partnership being made between the Crown and Iwi at Waitangi in 1840). I experience this Pākehā paralysis, at times almost ossifying, fear creeping into my writing-up and the worry of misrepresenting or offending people, ever present.

As I neared the end of the thesis, I wondered if this was at the crux of research practise in Aotearoa NZ; heightened sensitivity, intuition, being culturally attuned, being neighbourly, knowing what you don't know, and having a fair dose of fear to dissuade arrogance and riding rough shod over others. There's also a somewhat tentative curiousness around ways in which stories can be generated through straying from the safety of research lanes, those rutted paths which have formed and reformed, walled up, shored up through ongoing debates round the politics of knowledge. Straying is hazardous but when done with an ethic of care, I suggest possibilities for newness emerge. In this research, I edge forward, with sensitivity and anxiety, finding things out and with it, shifting understandings, albeit in nuanced and somewhat unfinished ways, through adopting the stance that nothing is ever finished and final.

And as I go, I often stop to look at the river. I look at her in the distance from my office, or out the car window when a passenger on trips to town. This looking feels meditative, helping to both calm my research nerves and bolster a level of fortitude. Somehow that surging body of water settles resolve, but I'm not sure why. Perhaps it is because she is a flow that nobody can contain or claim—agentic, and beyond the human, a river who goes on being a river regardless. It is time to pause and introduce her, the Ōruawharo. The 'her' being a social constructed-ness of my own doing, with me not being able to find out whether she is gendered at all, it just seems to fit that way. A 'her' and a 'she' and a river to get to know and to become-*with*.

A River to Get to Know

Becoming-*with* and knowing requires a *knower*, a place to stand and a river to get to know, that river being the Ōruawharo, a tidal, estuarine, swampy in places, salty tributary of the Kaipara Harbour introduced in the map overpage.

Figure 5
Map of Kaipara Harbour showing the Ōruawharo River

To some, she is not really a river at all, not prized freshwater, flowing in one direction but rather salty, tempestuous and tidal, turning one way and then the other, swallowing up great swathes of sediment in her wake. A river often hard to get to, with a garrison of mangrove forest and Kaipara mud. Literature wise, this sets her apart from her fresh water counterparts, those legendary waterways which flow like an undercurrent through human consciousness, generating meanings, religion, miracles and mythology (Strang 2014), and shaping cultures and societies (Lipset 1997; Scott 1987; Strang 2003). These one-direction fast flowing rivers are more often experienced as moving people through journeys both literal (Winchester 1996) and transformational (Hesse 1973), residually laying down in language as metaphor and more often experienced as a quest for something. The tidal Ōruawharo evokes something more rhythmic, less 'a journey to elsewhere' more a back and forth with a return home most often the final destination. Similarly, the river stems from a bar harbour, the crossing so treacherous that staying within the harbour is the common choice. Further, these salty waterways are not as contested as their fresh water cousins—not as fought over as a resource and source of cross-cultural misunderstandings (Muru-Lanning 2016; Ballestero 2019) so this thesis, in the main, sits outside of the literature on fresh water rivers.

The saltiness, tidal and swampiness of it all, including the vast mother Kaipara Harbour, bring a host of other thinkers beside this anthropologist who seek to understand and to protect her waterways. Researchers explore the benthic environment; habitats on the riverbed, animals, plants, and sediment (Morrison et al. 2014). Above water, birds are counted, habitats protected, and migratory flows mapped (Baird et al. 2013). The ecosystems and fish nurseries of mangroves forests are surveyed, currents measured, sediment flows charted (Swales et al. 2013) and sounds recorded (Pine, Radford, and Jeffs 2015). From a social science point of view, the materialities of the river and surrounding area matter, but more so around what they generate, how they provoke, evoke, affect and shape lives along with how this rivery place is understood, known, experienced and narrated. The river sometimes recedes into the background then comes into view, the telling taking me where the tellers take me with me knowing more and seeing more as I go. A mish mash of stories forms in my wake, like mud stone on the Ōruawharo foreshore, both connected and not.

Figure 6
Mudstone, Hargreaves Basin, Ōruawharo River

Introducing what comes next

The rest of this chapter is written like a river flow, tides turn and thoughts are gathered in their wake. I move through theory and methods, back to theory and methods again, as one influences the other. I am, I think, I do, I move, I think and become-with. Similarly, snippets of knowing emerge in the text as examples of the production of knowledge. This is the way to read the remainder of the chapter — as a narrative of theory and methods circling back on each other like eddys on a turning tide. Firstly, I discuss my Pākehā positionality as a place from which research questions arose around what it is to belong in a settler society. I go on to open up my integral concepts in more detail, including becoming-with as understood through an anthropology of becoming, how belonging manifests in place and how I understand place in this research. I then circle back to methods and introduce an important research participant, my boat Rosemary and how she shaped my research knowing. In this watery place, on board Rosemary, and on the Ōruawharo, I show how the sensory and phenomenological orientate my research practise along with encounters with vital materialisms and the gathering up of ways of knowing through embodied experiences. From there I move back to methods; representation, the storying of stories, and theory, with a need to think about river time, an abstraction which

accounts for temporalities and differing ways of experience time in place and telling stories. My methodological approach to histories comes next in thinking about both what histories are and what histories do and from this the need to decolonise ways of knowing wherever possible. And lastly, before introducing the chapters that represent the knowings I gathered, I outline the importance of staying with trouble as suggested by Donna Haraway (2016) and how the thresholds and intensities of Bhrigupati Singh's (2014) theory of dialectical materialisms can help to account for nuance and the differing trajectories of actual lives. I hope that this meandering does not leave the reader all 'at sea' but rather attuned to the multiple ways and thoughts through which I produce knowledge in this thesis. I return to the deeper roots of the enquiry and begin with here, the place I call home.

Being Pākehā: From Me to Here

I first came here over 30 years ago, the northern Kaipara, a vast estuarine harbour, rolling hills of marginal farmland, most native forest long gone, granddaddy macrocarpa marking the horizon and big views with pieces of water in every direction, including the Ōruawharo River, a tidal saltwater tributary in the distance. Beautiful views, many say, but at first not so deeply felt for me. I was Bay of Plenty born, all my young life lived between the fresh waters and native forests of Rotorua, through the orchards towards the east coast, all the way to the sea and the family bach at Little Waihi. The bach was working-class, but I didn't know it then. Many people of few means had one and ours was a small ply caravan with a tiny room attached nestled in front of the native bush, no shower of any sorts and an outhouse out back. It just took you to place; a simple shelter[3] which orientated you towards all that there was to do on a given day.

I was at my best at Little Waihi. I could row, fish, swim between the rips, flounder, and clamber along rocky shorelines. I knew all the nooks and crannies of the native bush we called our own and the channels which snaked their way through the mud flats. Being able to walk barefoot for miles came with a particular kudos and who had the

[3] Kennedy Warne discussing baches National Radio 12/02/2021, spoke of simple structures in the environment.

toughest feet, a topic of discussion. Another, who had the best boat. My brother Johnny and I had one, a large rowboat that to us, outshone all others. Most of the bach kids had one too, the gatherings down at the mudflat's, epic. Trips to *Peach Tree Island*, we named it so, boat wars, boat fishing and occasionally venturing beyond the mudflats to the wide channel before the open sea but never into the open sea. The year Dad made an outboard motor out of an old lawnmower, caused us great embarrassment. A raucous and louder motor than any had known before, echoing off the sandstone cliffs and heard in every bach within the enclave. We soon returned to oars. And every couple of years, the worst chore of all, taking the boat back to Rotorua, to sand and paint.

Figure 7
Bach at Little Waihi. Our dog Sandy on my bed, 1970s

Figure 8
My brother Johnny trying out the new motor-mower-outboard motor and the boat back in Rotorua with a new lick of paint. Me and the boat in seventies orange.

This all seems like a long time ago now but the mere flicker of a thing, a smell, or a feeling of something close to what it felt like then can stir up the long gone and the missing in the present; people, boats, baches, mothers and fathers, a dog called Sandy and an orange skivvy worn with pride. With nostalgia I remember my childhood past.

Anthropologist Ghassan Hage (2017: para 1) describes nostalgia below,

> Firstly, nostalgia is a yearning/waiting for a past that is perceived to have been lost (that is, perceived to be lacking) in the present. Secondly, it is not a yearning for any kind of past, it is a yearning for an idealised past. Thirdly, it is an active and/or passive yearning/waiting which entertains the possibility of, and as such is hopeful that, such a lacking idealised past will materialise in the future.

Nostalgia has influenced my research beginnings, and until late in the thesis, in an unnoticed sort of way. On reflection, and prompted by my supervisors, clearly, I was trying to replicate my childhood past, "lacking in the present" — in my boat Rosemary (talked about later), like a bach on the water, and me aboard, feeling like the girl in the orange skivvy again. This was a Pākehā girl, not European, barefoot in nature, knowing no other home, with a deep sense of belonging, but I wouldn't have called it that then. A feeling of being *native* even. Environmental philosopher Freya Mathews argues that to be native,

> is to have one's identity shaped by the place to which one belongs: one is a creature of its topography, its colours and textures, saps and juices, its moods, its ghosts and stories. To be native is to experience the world as fundamentally continuous with one's own nature, rather than as an alien and lower realm of sheer mindless externality (2005: 58).

It's a rare feeling and perhaps more of a childhood thing "to experience the world as fundamentally continuous with one's own nature" as expressed by Matthews (2005: 58). Further, as Pākehā, this sense of deep belonging or *Native*-ness becomes problematised as we age into the contested and fraught space that is a post settler colony. Aotearoa is a place with enduring colonising processes, deep seated inequities

and an Indigenous population who have been in a long struggle in the fight back. The fight back for land. The fight back for the language, once nearly all gone. The fight back for recognition of Te Tiriti O Waitangi signed in 1840 and the fight back for the rights of first peoples, tangata whenua and their sovereign rights to self-governance (Jackson 2017, 2019, 2020; Walker 2004). From this stance, to *belong* is to be Indigenous, to be *Native* is to be Indigenous, an indigeneity which comes with multiple meanings when couched in the relationship between the Indigenous and the 'settler.' As noted by Avril Bell,

> This usage carries three meanings simultaneously. It distinguishes those who came first from those who came later… In addition, it articulates the specific sense of identity and belonging of these peoples, in contrast to that of the 'second' colonising peoples. Finally, a rather implicit… aspect of this definition of indigeneity is the link between indigenous status and colonisation. While the relationship to place of 'First Peoples' is not attributable to colonisation, the need to assert this belonging in the relative language of 'first-ness' points to the centrality of colonisation in claims to indigeneity (Bell, 2014: 13).

Within this contested space, being Pākēhā[4] and belonging-to is problematic, albeit less pressing, than grappling with ongoing colonising processes as Indigenous, but nevertheless, a slightly troubled way of being-in-the-world. Being Pākēhā is more often experienced as a feeling of being *un*placed (Warne, 2020: 75), not native and un-indigenous—to belong but only in some sort of less deeply felt or less connected, more tempered sense of the word, a belonging-*but* or as Bell calls it, living with a sense of "ontological unease" (2006: 254). This thesis, in part through auto-ethnography and attending to the sensory, grapples with my Pākehā-ness provoked by encounters with Māori and feeling-for place. The ease of connectedness in my childhood past is supplanted with an attempt to *belong* in the unsteady adult-present on a muddy estuarine salt river called the Ōruawharo and within the surrounding district once known as Albertland (see chapter six). Belonging emerges in the thesis as contested

[4] For some Pākehā, the alternative term/identifier Tangata Tiriti (people of the treaty) is less problematic or laden with guilt, encompassing all non-Māori and pointing at a form of active citizenship. (https://thespinoff.co.nz/atea/06-02-2022/what-does-it-mean-to-be-tangata-tiriti)

for (after the European settlers who came to dwell here) and generated through the ongoing process of becoming-*with* – as noted, the overarching concept I use to think with.

Becoming-*with*

Firstly, becoming-*with* always necessitates a becoming with others be they human or non-human entities—it is always relational, always changing and intimately connected to knowing-with. Becoming-*with* also needs to be thought through from my own positionality, coupled with the complex process of researching at home, the two feeling precarious and more often fraught with the possibility of getting it wrong. As researcher and local, it was often hard to differentiate between overlapping roles and know when to draw lines. For example, during the course of the PhD, I participated in community life as I always have, attending functions, sitting on committees (Wharehine Hall, the Albertland Museum and school boards) along with officiating at funerals and weddings as a celebrant. I met and chatted with people in amongst the everyday, down the main street, in café's and down at the wharf and so much of what I thought about or experienced circled back to the thesis and from the thesis to me; a to and fro process of shaping and reshaping research and researcher. I remember such a moment after curating the exhibit of a 19th century Methodist Missionary (as part of my research) then found myself officiating at a funeral at the local Methodist church as the minister died unexpectedly and no one could be found to do the service. I stood there at the pulpit as a non-Christian with that late missionary staring down at me from the wall feeling as though my research was somehow living through me, in an inextricable, visceral and embodied sort of way. Similarly, I attended a tangi of a kaumatua and on that rainy morning at the marae felt a profound realisation of living within differing temporalities, something I had been grappling with when thinking about river-time. This was an unintentional research moment manifesting in the everyday-ness of community life. These encounters illustrate the process of both knowing and becoming-*with*, two strands, which are inextricably entwined and underpin the construction of knowledge in this thesis.

As I became-with the findings of my research, I was not just thesis writing-with but also knowing differently-in, and this knowingness seeped into the contours of my daily life. I saw differently, did differently and knew differently; research within a home-place, amongst community, within the thick of it, emerging as having an agency all of its own. Similarly, my heightened sensitivities infiltrated encounters as I teetered on the tightrope of navigating multiple roles. For example, as Pākehā and community member, my various roles were unproblematic but as Pākehā and researcher, at times researching with Māori, my motivations and permissions were questionable and my reputation, vulnerable. Thinking within the thick of things is the central tenet of this thesis and I conceptualise as becoming-*with*.

Becoming-*with* can be about me, as above, a form of auto-ethnography, but also relational uncovering findings through experiences, encounters, sensitivities, embodied insights, intuition and a fair amount of reflection. Becoming-*with* can also be me and the non-human, me and the river, me and a boat, me and the texts that come my way, and me and conversations with others including Māori, Albertlanders and other locals. Becoming-*with* also encompasses place and the way in which particular places shape lives, perspectives manifesting as differing ways of knowing and senses of belonging. Becoming-*with* is also about stories and histories and the ways in which these influence local ways of knowing and silence others, the flow of power always present. Becoming-*with* goes up close to the non-human, the thing power of things, vital materialisms (Bennett 2010) and reveals both the ways in which human lives are shaped by the non-human but also the non-human regardless of the human. Donna Haraway (2016) takes this idea further by stating "becoming-with is the name of the game" and adds,

> Ontologically heterogenous partners become who and what they are in relational material-semiotic worlding. Natures, cultures, subjects, and objects do not reexist their intertwined worldings (2016 12,13)

The 'intertwined worldings' of the material world emerge in this thesis, including the imprint and ongoing vitality of colonisation which is revealed as a destructive force in a settler society. Becoming-*with* connects to belonging, both the personal and the

political and the ways in which temporaltıes shape ways of knowing. Ultimately, becoming-*with* generates the multiple ways of belonging and knowing a particular place, this being the Ōruawharo river and its surrounding district. All aspects of this thesis fold and unfold from this central position as illustrated below.

Figure 9
Becoming-*with*, Graphic by R. Hayward

These intellectual trajectories will be followed through in more detail in the following section but firstly I introduce an anthropology of becoming as conceptualised by João Biehl and Peter Locke (2017) as this theoretical approach underpins the notion of becoming-*with*.

An Anthropology of Becoming

In thinking with becoming, Biehl & Locke (2017: xi) emphasise the need to "listen carefully and notice swerves, follow leads and trajectories, and translate these movements into thoughts and writing." At this 'granular' level with an openness to "complexity and wonder" (2017: xi) becoming,

> troubles and exceeds our ways of knowing and acting. It pushes us to think against the grain, to consider the uncertain and unexpected in the world, and to care for the for the as-yet-unthought that interrogates history and keeps the modes of existence open to improvisation (2017: x).

Improvisation or possibilities occur within "the mutual constitution of entangled agencies," the plasticity and malleability of social fields situated within the multiple systems, flows, forces of human and nonhuman interactions. The human subject can be as "unstable assemblages organic, social, and structural forces and lines of flight that at once shape and are shaped by their milieus" (2017:8). For example, a local person may well be of few means but lives life as an expert boat person with exemplary knowledge of such things as weather systems and water physics. On one hand, their life is refracted through a more determining system such as capitalism or ongoing colonising processes, but up close, the same person may exhibit considerable agency, capacities generative of a viable life within a particular place. Becoming looks up close at the 'actual life' and 'logics for living' of such a person—trajectories for living generated within mixed-up moments replete with opportunities for difference, potentialities, foreclosures and about-turns. This is not to say that broader systems of power do not exist and are never accounted for, but on the whole, the frame for this research is up-close, meaning that nuance, subtlety, and the harder-to-explain, does not so easily escape from view.

As Gilles Deleuze once said: “For me, society is something that is escaping in every direction” (cited in Biehl & Locke 2017: 9). This is a complex theoretical space to occupy as any-thing is never just one thing and accounts are untidy. While determinates may sometimes be used to explain away phenomena, other times such theory obfuscates rather than clarifies. So, Biehl & Locke establish, an anthropology of becoming allows,

> theory to be always catching up to reality, always startled, making space for the incompleteness of understanding that is often a necessary condition for anthropological fieldwork and thinking (2017: 8).

This research sensibility of grappling with the becoming-things that ‘escape in every direction’ coalesces in much the same way, an unfinishedness or an ‘incompleteness of understanding’. Therefore, rather than conclusions, ‘concluding thoughts’ end each chapter, more beginnings than endings, new moments in time in which other ideas may well unfold and flow, key ideas emanating from the research which are captured in words and can then become ways of initiating further lines of thought. Further, becoming within place and notions of belonging (or not), flow together like watersmeet, infused with politics, power, the personal, emotion, disconnect and connectedness. From the human to the non-human, what it is to belong or not comes up in conversations with local people. Significantly, to belong or not lies beneath conversations between Māori and Pākehā, most often avoided or unsaid but ever-present in the room.

Belonging

Back to the bach at Little Waihi, barefoot and on top of the world, belonging was uncomplicated then, easy to claim and feel. Pākehā-ness was sensory, far from fraught, close to the bodily and attuned to a *sense* of belonging as opposed to the *politics* of belonging and here a distinction needs to be made (Kidman 2012). As Antonsich argues,

> Belonging should be analysed both as a personal, intimate, feeling of being

> 'at home' in a place (place-belongingness) and as a discursive resource that constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-political inclusion/exclusion (politics of belonging) (2010: 644).

All the way down this contested-ness infiltrates the everyday in a post-settler colony and comes with an imperative to decolonise (discussed on pages 51,52).

Similarly, as Pākehā, a sense of feeling-for and belonging-in is a hairs breadth away from the troubling realisation that Māori may not see me in the same light. For Māori, a belonging-to and being Indigenous, on one level, has to be fought for as the layers of colonisation settle deep and systemic violence through colonising processes endure (for example Jackson 2017, 2019, 2023; Pihama 2018; Walker 2004,2013). On the other hand, being Māori, as affirmed by whanau, whenua and whakapapa, does not require some exhausting process involving negotiating or battling with Pākehā and claiming space. In the personal and communal sense, oftentimes being Māori is simply enough. This thesis seeks to untangle some of these complexities by looking at the ways in which people know a particular place, story place and develop a sense of belonging or fight for recognition of belonging. A belongingness which moves between the bodily, social, cultural and political and ways of knowing which manifest and transmit which always happens within a particular place.

Place

This is a thesis which is fundamentally about place. I understand place in a twofold way; as a way of thinking about the world and a way of being-in-the-world. As noted by geographer Tim Cresswell, place as a concept is both ontological and epistemological (2015:23). Ontologically, place, imbued with meaning, is a form of being-in-the-world embodied through materialities, and the flux and flow of everyday life. As Cresswell says, "the mobilities of bodies combine in space and time to produce an existential insideness—a feeling of belonging within the rhythm of place" (2015: 64). Cresswell goes on to say that "place is also a way of seeing, knowing, and understanding the world. When we look at the world as a world of places, we see different things" (2015:18). Here we have place as a concept requiring taking nothing for granted, your way of seeing always different than somebody else's and

ontologically, as dynamic, differently experienced and embodied along with differently known. Similarly, places are infused with power; the power to name, manifesting amidst and through unequal power relations (*introducing Marxist perspectives in* Cresswell 2015:55) and as having generative capacity in and of itself; a locale, a place to *stand*, become-*with* and to call home. Places, as sites of meaning which combine "locale, location and a sense of place" (Cresswell 2009: 169), are also constructed through human and non-human flows, networks and relationships which extend beyond the boundaries of these places as well as the social, material and representation practices engaged in and between human and non-human others (Robertson 2018). Hence, places are dynamic, discursively and materially constructed. To understand the placeness of this thesis, especially with materialities, mobilities and becoming-*with*, it is necessary to introduce a vital research participant, Rosemary and the methodological practise and generative ideas which stemmed from her.

Becoming-*with* Rosemary

My thesis begins with my boat Rosemary, somewhat unexpectantly so and with it, embodied experiences of knowing, becoming and belonging. Hitherto, I had looked out at the Ōruawharo River in a trying-to-figure-it-out but not particularly enamoured sort of way, then "like to the lark at break of day,"[5] along came Rosemary, a purchase made mid COVID[6] lockdowns. Akin to a fairy tale vessel of old, she scooped me up, charged my imagination and sent me forth into a watery world; a place of surging tides, howling winds, the still, a light breeze on a summers day, mirror like water and dangerous sea, critters, birds, colour, light, sound, and atmosphere. Rosemary has agency in this thesis and in short, discombobulated, enlivened and recalibrated my research. Simultaneously, the bodily-I was brought into sharp relief as front and centre in the research. My physicality or lack off; lifting, steering, clambouring, rocking, rowing, starting a motor, trying to lift a too-heavy mooring, sitting, looking and feeling. Further, with dynamism, in a boat on a river, movement matters; the turn of the tide, a fast current, the howling wind, swaying trees, birds, fishes and all manner of

[5] From Shakespeare's 29th sonnet
[6] During the course of this PhD, a worldwide pandemic of the COVID-19 virus forced lockdowns and closed borders. The estimated dates of the pandemic are from late 2019 to mid-2023.

vital things. This movement is not a free flowing, with ease, serene and trouble free, rather more turbulent both viscerally and theoretically as understood by Cresswell and Martin (2012). These geographers of mobility note that turbulence is not necessarily an adverse thing,

> but rather an event of creative potentiality. Moments of turbulence in quite literal mobilities produce sudden visibilities in systems that would otherwise remain mostly invisible and taken-for-granted (2012: 526).

With mobility and turbulence, both potentialities and limits spiral out of life aboard Rosemary. My own becoming a boat person, while fraught with fallibility, simultaneously manifests as a sense of belonging within this very ordinary, from afar, but up-close—extraordinary river. I feel a deepening affinity or level of intimacy between me and that watery place. Through the creative potential of movement comes a deepening sense of belonging, differing ways of knowing and becoming.

Similarly, literal movement and mobility orientates and reorientates research points of view, significantly so. Multiplicities manifest: I look from the boat to the rivers edge, to the predominantly Pākehā south bank or to the Māori north; the boat to the water, the currents and river life; the boat in the weather, rain, wind and light or from the river to the open harbour and sister rivers. I pivot again when a research participant tells me of the significance of crossing the treacherous Kaipara bar. As he talks, my line of sight lifts and moves towards another horizon – from the harbour to the bar or even more expansively - across the bar to the open sea in a freeing up, fanciful sort of way.

I imagine my Rosemary out to sea, swinging around to look back across the bar and siting aboard surrounded by sky and ocean. From there, boat bound and floating, I can transcend the heavily contested settler society spaces of Aotearoa New Zealand. As unfettered and noticing more, the boat becomes the space of meaning making, activity, practise, mastery or not, culture, discipline, (Papadopoulou, 2019), embodied knowing or bodily-flailing, all in mediation with, in relation to or in friction with (Tsing, 2004) —the sea. Akin to Cresswell and Martin's (2012) turbulent mobility,

Veronica Strang notes, "Tsing's (2004) writing on 'friction' is useful in this regard, describing a generative sea in which people, processes and things collide, abrade and affect each other, shaping and being shaped in the process" (Strang, 2014: 139). The sea beyond the harbour is no longer a watery bit of somewhere that gets you to somewhere else but rather a seascape, "contoured, alive, rich in ecological diversity and in cosmological and religious significance" (Cooney, 2004: 323) and 'vibrant materiality' (Bennett, 2010); an Antecedent Sea, mother of myth, philosophies, saga, poetry, and metaphor (Krell, 2019; Papadopoulou, 2019) and phenomenologically (Ingold, 2011; Merleau-Ponty, 2004) a Vital Sea; being-in-the-world deeply felt, perspective sharply orientated and 'being alive' experienced with sentience and intensity.

Back to the boat, the wooden enclave between me and the sea. Nidhi Mahajan (2021: 15) uses the Foucauldian term heterotopia to describe the relationship between boats, sites and space. A heterotopia "is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault in Mahajan, 2021:15). Foucault goes on to use a boat as an example of a heterotopia:

> a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea… (Foucault, 1984: 9 in Mahajan, 2021: 15).

Arguably, in regard to contemporary understandings, a boat is full of 'place'; symbols, practises, and meanings, but for the purposes of my sea going flight of fancy, I'm staying out to sea and heterotopic. The (recreational)[7] boat is imagined as 'a place without a place', a small structure beyond the strictures of mundane life. 'A floating piece of space', within which a becoming sense of self can soak up the seafaring ancestors, feel expansive, viscerally *in* nature and outwardly orientated towards the world.

[7] I make this distinction as a body of literature discusses the more often dire labour and lived conditions of those who work at sea (for example see Sampson 2013).

Another shift happens methodologically when the boat is imagined back in the harbour and on the river. Rosemary is now a floating space and place within a place. As Tim Cresswell argues, “in any given place we encounter a combination of materiality, meaning, and practise” (2009: 169). Within the placeness of the Kaipara the physical world matters; the sandbanks, salty water, currents, and narrows necks which shape flows and drive winds. Boat materiality also matters—wood or metal, old or new, the size of the boat and motor, which in turn, generate meanings and signify membership to particular groups or even boat-classes, my own being a boat with cultural capital as rendered from prized Kauri timber, infused with history (97 years old) and character. Rosemary and I move together with a certain gravitas positioning me with a particular kudos amongst Kaipara peoples — warranted or not.

Ultimately, propelled from the torpidity of sedentary life, boat research throws consciousness outward with immediacy while simultaneously allowing for a form of sensuous ethnography as articulated by Paul Stoller (2009), non-linear and dynamic. Similarly, boat research facilitates knowing along the way (Ingold 2021) through affect and within atmosphere (Pile 2010; Warne 2020; Brennan 2004). But mostly Rosemary felt like a friend, a guiding light in my research, able to lift me up and move me — both literally and psychologically — and show me the river in multiple ways, turning my attention to place in ways I had never experienced before. My boat research feeling like travelling to places unknown and in the doing so, knowing far more than before. Becoming-with Rosemary deepens a sense of belonging and often times I simply feel young again, like back when belonging flowed with ease through my bare feet to land below. Methodologically, my boat research culminates in a sensory embodied way of knowing as understood through the practise of phenomenology.

Phenomenology and the sensory are inherent, immanent and settle with ease like a guiding force in a boat on a river and methodologically underpins my boat research. The experience of being-in-the-world (Merleau-Ponty 2004; Leder 1990) is amplified, consciousness flowing from the embodied self, “a certain setting in relation to the world” (Merleau-Ponty cited in Csordas, 1990:36), drawn out by smell, sound, light, wind, water, current, squawking bird and the flash of a fish—towards all that is in purview. With dynamism, movement matters, the turn of the tide, a fast current, the

howling wind, swaying trees and all manner of vital things. Amidst it all, the sensory is heightened (Ingold and Vergunst 2008; Ingold 2011; Pink 2015, 2013; Van Manen 1990, 2018); noticing, feeling, an opening up to the world as expressed by Tim Ingold,

> To be sentient … is to open up to a world, to yield to its embrace, and to resonate in one's inner being to its illuminations and reverberations. Bathed in light, submerged in sound and rapt in feeling, the sentient body, at once both perceiver and producer, traces the paths of the world's becoming in the very course of contributing to its ongoing renewal. Here, surely, lies the essence of what it means to dwell (Ingold, 2011: 12).

With sentience, smelling, hearing, fending off motion sickness, knowing the weather, catching a glimpse of something wondrous in a peripheral view and in amongst this river-flux and water-flow, potentialities and closures unfold and enfold.

Figure 10
Shags on the wing

At an almost molecular level, this unfolding and enfolding manifests as unique experiences with singularity entwined with difference spiraling towards the *new*. The research field is seemingly freed up or undetermined as moments of being-*in* and becoming-*with* can't be explained away in an overarching universalising social theory

sort of way. The littlest of things felt with intensity make all the difference. A foot dangling in a river flow. The wake it makes. Light and water. The saltiness of it all. Rain on a cabin window. A seat atop with blasting wind, boat at speed and nothing else mattering much. Significantly, the flows, forces and materialities of the nonhuman world along the Ōruawharo infuse and shape becoming viscerally and with vitality.

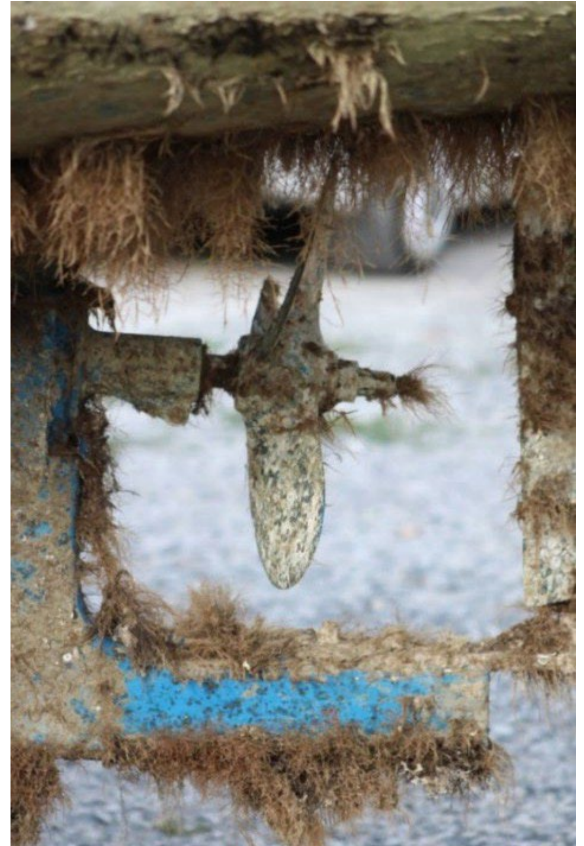
In becoming-*with*, vital materialisms matter or the thing-power of things (Bennett 2010). Rosemary, for example, is no docile player but rather agentic and infused with vitality as told in detail in chapter two. In discussing vital materialisms or vitality, Bennet refers to,

> The capacity of things – edibles, commodities, storms, metals – not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities or tendencies of their own (2010: viii).

All the way through this research I am being nudged towards the things with 'propensities and tendencies' that are harder to know and the more than human imbued with vitality. My inclination is "to follow the scent of the non-human, the thingly power" (Bennett 2010: xii). These vital materialisms manifest in this thesis in unexpected places: a virus that reconfigures maps, a diesel bug which throws my research into disarray (chapter 3), pā-things which call for more (chapter 5) - mould, wind, surging tides, water, barnacles, algae, mud, and mangroves (chapter 3).

In revealing the vitalities of the more-than-human or nonhuman, human exceptionalism is elided (Bennett 2010), research-bodies become differently attuned, the hard to grasp comes into view and questions arise such as – what does a mangrove do? What river is this? Why did the river turn on me? Was it a taniwha? What is this river and boat and rain and wind and surging tide doing to me?

Figure 11
Under the boat March 2023
Grappling with thinglyness



These are the things I want to know better. The things that I feel myself becoming-with, that shape my belonging and feelings for place. My research feels like two distinct trajectories or tributaries, one immersive on a boat in nature amongst the thinglyness of things and the other immersive in community in amongst the knowing, narratives and representations of others. Both tributaries shape my knowing and both produce knowledge accounted for in this thesis and come with the task of writing-up, including that which is hard to recognise, articulate or represent.

Figure 12
Boat Writing
aboard Rosemary

Writing-*with*, Rhythm & Representation

In the attempt to grasp the hard-to-recognise, forms of alternative writing make their way into this thesis (Marcus 2007, 2012). This is particularly so when noticing and capturing the liveliness of lively things as Mitchell (2005) notes,

> Things, … [signal] the moment when the object becomes the Other, when the sardine can looks back, when the mute idol speaks, when the subject experiences the object as uncanny and feels the need for what Foucault calls "a metaphysics of the object, or, more exactly, a metaphysics of that never objectifiable depth from which objects rise up toward our superficial knowledge" (*Mitchell cited* in Bennett 2010: 2).

The rising up of things, a ‘mute idol speaks’, and the listener struggles to reply. From this, representation or rather, the differently represented is contended with all the way through this thesis. If a poem comes to mind, a poem it is—with me always entirely unsure of how good or dire the said poem may be. Elemental list like words scrawled on the page atop a rocky boat are sort of thrown on the page and left as is. This inward and outward momentum, in the words Jane Bennett (referencing Walt Whitman’s ‘Song of Myself’) can be conceptualised as “influx and efflux,”

> “Influx and efflux” invokes that ubiquitous tendency for the outsides to come in, muddy the waters, and exit to partake in new (lively/deathly) waves of encounter. The process might also be called Impression-and-Expression, Ingestion-and-Excretion, Immigration-and-Emigration – different names for the in-and-out, the comings and goings, as exteriorities cross (always permeable) borders to become interiorities that soon exude. The “and” of influx-and-efflux is also important: it marks the *hover-time* of transformation, during which the otherwise that entered makes a difference and is made different (emphasis in original Bennett, 2020: x).

In the rhythmic back-and-forth, feelings matter and so too does the quiet, the still, the lilt of a boat on a summer’s day and in the rhythm of the ‘comings and goings’ river-writing is given a go. I try to speak *for* the river, but this doesn’t work so well, mostly put to rest in my ‘fragments of writing’ for another day. Less complicated, I write *to* the river in a heartfelt way when danger felt—like being let down by a good friend on a stormy day. Art and sketches of others are used all in an attempt “to give the virtual its due, to write *up*” (*emphasis in original*, Bennett 2020: xxii). Ultimately, this process of writing and constructing meaning through forms of representation generates mulitple ways of knowing and may well spark imaginations along the way.

Photos too, including historical photos, are irresistible in this watery place and proliferate as generative, a “manifestation of emergence… the embodiment of the encounter” allowing for a form “of an encounter with the encounter itself” (Rubinstein 2323: xi). Photos as encounters with encounters, abstract a fleeting moment, or ‘after image’ (Saorsa 2011), generate a response and enter into the consciousness as

something to be grasped just beyond the river itself—as evocative and ephemeral ways of knowing stirring up possibilities and potentialities. In pondering the multi textual riverscape, the “poetics of writing up” and pressing "forward a vitality proper to ahuman shapes” (Bennett 2020: xxii), I imagine sentences as articulated by Michel Foucault,[8]

> a sentence, an idea to life; it would light fires, watch the grass grow, listen to the wind, and catch the sea foam in the breeze and scatter it (*Foucault cited in* Bennett 2020: 124)

Hopefully the odd sentence ‘lights fires,’ catches the river breeze and turns boat memories into stories, the more epic the better, and in the retelling, the making of places are made and remade (Goodman 1978). As said by Donna Haraway, good stories matter: “Good stories reach into rich pasts to sustain thick presents to keep the story going for those who come after” (2016: 117). The reflections, stories, tellings and after images in this thesis iterate and construct, for the reader, flashes, fables, yarns and fulsome ways of knowing and in the same instance generate a form of knowingness as curated through my own experiences, realisations, encounters and decisions to both leave-in and leave-out. In the doing, a fickleness is revealed, that which gets to be known as dependent on what makes it into the telling. So too, power is revealed. Knowing the *new* uncovers the silences endemic to the colonial project and ongoing colonising processes, in particular, the crushing silencing of Māori ways of knowing within dominant discourses. As researcher, I ricochet between reveling in finding out something new and being astounded that I didn’t know it in the first place. All the while the stories of others, the ones that they choose to tell fold into this thesis like “singular organic jewels” (Le Guin [1969] 2019:1) which infuse the Ōruawharo with light, colour, drama, the everyday and the never to be forgotten.

[8] In Foucault (1997) *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954 -1984,* Vol. 1, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth,* ed. Paul Rabinow, New York: New Press, 323

Figure 13
Ōruawharo River

Stories Matter & Storying

The mattering of stories matters in this thesis, underpinning the known to the knower and the ways in which, with power, some accounts with vitality and durability are selected as facts and histories and some are ignored or go unnoticed. Others are whispered quietly along the riverbanks, held close, while some obscure the view. I also do my own choosing and leaving out, writing this thesis story-like, akin to a report from a homeworld fantastically imagined (by Ursula Le Guin) in another time.

> I'll make my report as if I told a story, for I was taught as a child on my homeworld that Truth is a matter of the imagination. The soundest fact may fail or prevail in the style of its telling: like a singular organic jewel of our seas, which grows brighter as one woman wears it and, worn by another, dulls and goes to dust. Facts are no more solid, coherent, round, and real than pearls are. But both are sensitive.
>
> The story is not all mine, nor told by me alone. Indeed I am not sure whose story it is; you can judge better. But it is all one, and if at moments the facts seem to alter with an altered voice, why then you can choose the fact you like best; yet none of them is false, and it is all one story.
>
> *The Left Hand of Darkness* ([1969] 2019:1) Ursula Le Guin

A story not mine alone, but mixed up with multiple voices and peppered with ones I remember best. The tellings in this thesis which come alive in the telling, gusto-like between people within enthralling enriching entangled moments in time. Like when a wise and clear voice enlivens the room and the fingery-ness of the river enters my imagination. The kuia sits near a window, lit from behind, turns her head, catches me with her steely gaze and says with outstretched hand, "You know the Kaipara Harbour is like a hand. A hand with five fingers, five rivers, five marae, and in the middle all the trouble begins." Swept up in the magnificence of her but a sense of unease stirs in the unsaid. Am I just another prying Pākehā, at risk of getting things wrong in conveyance, taking up her precious time? Was this research space a middle in which 'all the trouble begins'? (More on trouble later).

A local Māori man enlivens my day and infuses my memory when telling me he sometimes sees kēhua[9] in the river mist. I think about this often, especially on early morning drives when mist is lying low. These enigmatic stories of significance and wonder settle deep, endure and enchant, making this rivery place more intriguing than before. On a marae, I listen to the opening speaker recount his whakapapa and hear the name of a taniwha embedded in his genealogical line. Later, I ask his father about this and he said with a broad smile, "ah, yes, that taniwha is a relative of mine," a sentence that belies metaphor, a taniwha[10] not symbolising danger but rather a family member river deep.

Similarly, differently configured temporalities fold into the everyday, shaping the way stories are told. A Māori man called George speaks of a riverside pā where he likes to sit and see what he can feel. I imagine his past emanating in this present, knocking linear time off its seat of taken-for-grantedness. When echoes from the past are palpable in this research, I imagine spirals. Like the pā-things which spiral back and forth from whence they came while holding the watchers gaze, the past then folding into efficacious and potent present moments in time. Similarly, watching those

[9] Kēhua are ghosts or spirits that linger on after death haunting the living
[10] Taniwha are supernatural beings in Māori tradition found in watery dens or caves https://teara.govt.nz/en/taniwha

piwakawaka[11] swirling atop an old pā, stirring up the spirits, evoking the unknown and a potential turn indoors, signaling death. Storis and encounters shaping knowing and becoming and I realise in these particular moments that I am experiencing different forms of temporality, moments which reveal the multiple 'meantimes' of being-on-the-river. Moments which denaturalise clock-time, as enforced through the colonial project, and can be understood through the concept chronocracy.

Figure 14
Piwakawaka circling Solomon's Pā. Te Aria (also known as Solomon) was a paramount chief, tohunga and later minister, who lived on the river born approximately 1796 and died 6/12/1891. Solomon's Pā is situated at Atiu Creek Regional Park and overlooks the Ōruawharo River

These differing temporalities which emerge in encounters in my research highlight the taken for grantedness of hegemonic linear or clock time. In turn, this insight revealed how hegemonic understandings of time affect the storying of place. The concept of chronocracy articulates the connection between power and temporality. Chronocracy is, "a term that draws attention to the ways in which governance is shot through with the power to shape the temporalities in which people live out their everyday lives" (Kirtsoglou & Simpson, 2020:3). As temporalities are shaped through power, other

[11] For Māori and many Pākehā alike, a Piwakawaka (Fantail) coming indoors signals that a death of a close one is imminent.

ways of experiencing and knowing may be misunderstood and rallied for in forms of resistance (Kidman et al., 2021).

Through chronocracy, clock-time strips the Māori-past from the present, pushing it back-wards and taking the ancestors with it. Mana is potentially historicised, stretched back and flattened, and mana-filled events, like war, conquest and humiliation, are reduced to chronological markers of the ebbs and flow of populations and fights for occupation. Taniwha are submerged and become 'once upon a time' and if contemporised, are quietly and awkwardly referred to, like a whisper in the back of the room. Furthermore, chronocracy potentially changes the shape of Māori stories, forces the telling into an 'across time' view of things. George[12] feeling for his ancestors on the pā does not fit with linear time nor do other experiences in this research such as feeling an unexpected and extraordinary surge of mana at the tangi of kaumatua known as Uncle Ben. I wrote in my journal (July 2022),

> *You were there, Uncle Ben, and so was Mana. The big men spoke. Their voices moved across the room and the rain fell outside. Women in black scurried across the lawn, heading for the kitchen, knowing exactly what they had to do. They were there and so were you and as the words were spoken, the past was in the room. Everything I had read about the history, about the slaughters and slayings and movements of people merged in my thinking with the words and the feeling in the room. The capsising of Rongomai was there, the hundreds of waka going to retrieve Te Hana and wage war on Ngati Awa were in the room, but not there as events but as mana. Mana was being spoken, mana was being felt, mana was being established, and mana was a deeply present, beautiful, and powerful. Mana melted into the present[13]and linear time, became a matter of confusion, for me at least…You were there, Uncle Ben, in the room. And so was Mana* (July 2022).

[12] I have used pseudonyms for all people interviewed in this thesis.

[13] Melting is a term used by Henri Bergson in his explanation of time as duration (*Bergson* cited in Caton 2014:235).

Never had I had such a realisation of such a thing and from there on in thinking through the multiplicities of temporalities shaped my understandings of both what I experienced and of what was said to me, time no longer fixed but rippling with potentialities and complexity, like a light inflected surging current on a summer's day.

Figure 15
Ōruawharo River, water & light

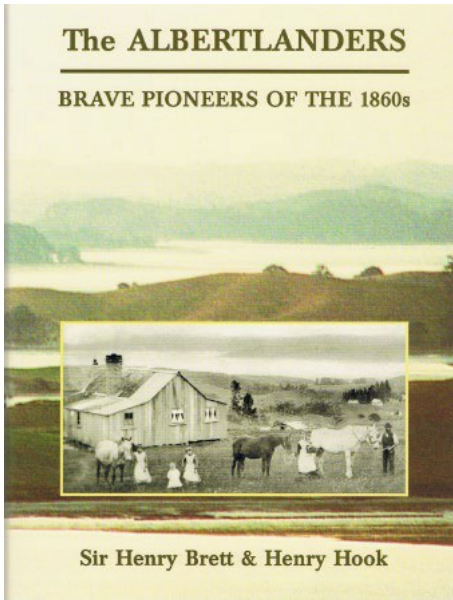
Differently so, an across-time point of view generates stories imbued with nostalgia and history-like, while others spoke of life in the amongst the everyday. A Māori women in her late sixties tells me about being a small child and the little shacks along the rivers edge where the old people used to lived. This remembering connects her to a past people that represented a very different time along the Ōruawharo. A Pākehā ex-fisherman talks of the moon, oceans and currents and extends my view to a much further horizon. A farmer remembers the extraordinary days back when he used to cross the treacherous Kaipara bar to fish (chapter 4). Descendants of settler Albertlanders narrate with pride, stories of settlement and hardship (chapter 6). With fishermen, moral codes come up, the rules of the game, places to fish and the turn of the tide, prevailing winds and the lives of fish, like flounder who flee up small creeks knowing a storm will come (chapter 4). Stories matter, some make it into the thesis, perhaps selected for their ability to enliven and endure, and in the telling, memories and meaning sediment the riverscape, power flows, belonging settles and resettles and

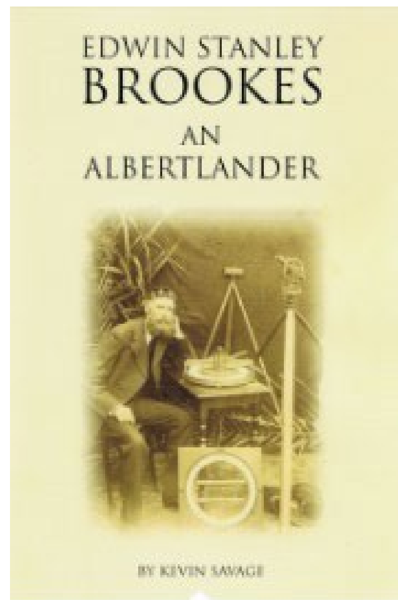
the Ōruawharo unfolds in multiple ways. Knowing is a way of being (Ingold 2021: 289) and seeing is altered by an alternate voice. I wondered if I could now, in the Kaipara mist, see a kēhua too.

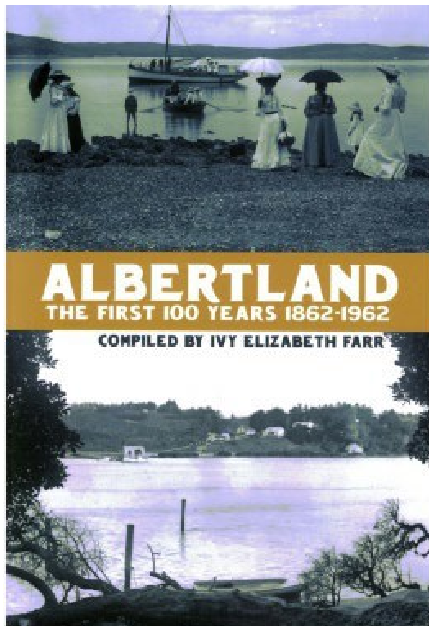
Figure 16
Ōruawharo River in the distance

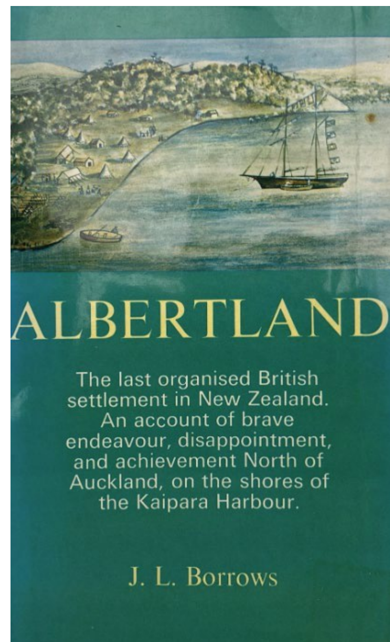
Histories that Tell & Histories that Don't

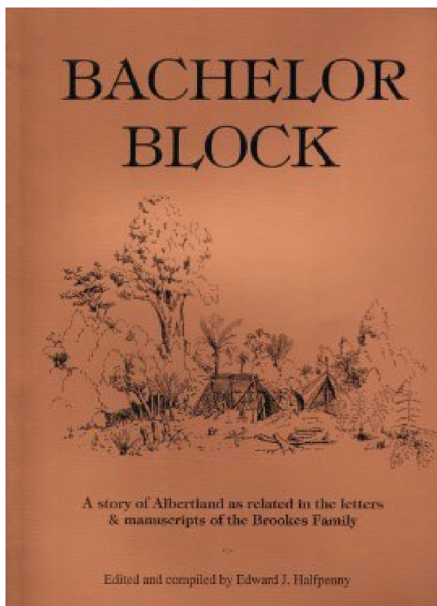
Knowing is also about living within places in which histories flow and methodologically, I spend a lot of time in my research and writing-up thinking about history. First off, I research the histories themselves. Initially, this required reading and drawing from local history books (such as Brett and Hook 2001; Hames 1960; Borrows 1969; Byrne 2002; Scott 1987; Wright 1996), some shown graphically over page. I also interviewed Māori and Pākehā who were knowledgeable about local history. Secondly, I think about histories as agentic, as both place-making and having an ability to silence. From here, dominant discourses are revealed, in particular that of the story of the Albertlanders. Significantly, history making, knowing and storying and knowing more in the local area is mostly refracted through a particular lens, that of remembering Albertland and Albertlanders (chapter 6). These settler histories with agency transmit and retransmit narratives of pioneer exceptionalism throughout the district, mapping onto the socio-spatial present shown in the examples below (Figure 17).


The ALBERTLANDERS
BRAVE PIONEERS OF THE 1860s
Sir Henry Brett & Henry Hook


EDWIN STANLEY
BROOKES
AN
ALBERTLANDER
BY KEVIN SAVAGE


ALBERTLAND
THE FIRST 100 YEARS 1862-1962
COMPILED BY IVY ELIZABETH FARR


ALBERTLAND
The last organised British settlement in New Zealand. An account of brave endeavour, disappointment, and achievement North of Auckland, on the shores of the Kaipara Harbour.
J. L. Borrows


BACHELOR
BLOCK
A story of Albertland as related in the letters & manuscripts of the Brookes Family
Edited and compiled by Edward J. Halfpenny

Images from
Albertland
Paul Campbell

On the whole histories in Aotearoa begin with ‘settlement’ and this is particularly so as this was a ‘Special Settlement’ called Albertland (chapter 5) as was the Puhoi Bohemian Settlement south of Wellsford (Sommer 2019) and the Nova Scotia Waipu Settlement to the north (Howell 2007). ‘Special Settlement’ stories are foundational stories infused with said special-ness and come with an acute ability to erase others. These transmitters have thing power with “tendencies and propensities” of their own (Bennett 2010), an ability to recount the past and ‘Albertland’ the present. Back and forth this rhythm goes, settler colony telling and Albertlander identity-making reverberating through the district with pride and infused with power. Within such a vernacular landscape (Massey 1994, 2004, 2006) Albertlandedness is unproblematised or ‘naturalised’ and an easy fit for many. The river then becomes about industry and settlement, supply boats and missionary trails, hardships and pioneer exceptionalism with the odd reference to Māori but more as extras within the Albertland narrative (for example Borrows 1969, Brett and Hook 1927). Further, settler narratives fit with ease into a material world replete with the colonial nomenclature resoundingly common in the present, for example the name of the local town, Wellsford, chosen around the late 1860s early 1870s, containing the first initial of settler families.

Figure 18
This name came from a combination of the initials of local settler families such as Worker, Watson, White, Edgar, Levet, Lester, Simpson, Scott, Stark, Stewart, Foster, Oldfield, Ramsbottom, Rishworth, Dibble and others. (sourced from display at the Albertland Museum, 2024).

The tellers who get to *tell* (and publish their work) and the namer’s who get to *name* clearly hold the power with veracity – as dynamic not static (Rose-Redwood, Alderman, and Azaryahu 2018; Dwyer and Alderman 2008; Kearns and Berg 1996; Berg and Vuolteenaho 2009; Alderman and Inwood 2013; Azaryahu 1996; Adebanwi 2012).

Simply put, a book doesn't just sit on a shelf and end there and neither does a place name albeit a simple signpost for many but for others—a signifier of loss, the silenced histories buried beneath those names that name and books that tell, stories which gain currency and travel well. Māori history, on the whole is not so visible, and most of what I know now was taken from a manawhenua report written as evidence for the Waitangi Tribunal (Wright 1996). This sort of history writing does not make it into centre court but rather found deep in websites and also comes with controversy, seen as biased as written to substantiate Waitangi claims (Byrnes 2004). From this controversy, I get the feeling that other ways of writing history, outside of the academy, are given less credence, a colonising act in itself. I argue that the report can be read in the context of what it is — evidence for a court hearing and which contains a vast range of research including oral accounts and history from history books in the public sphere. Importantly for me, I was directed to read this report by a kaumatua, he left it in his letterbox for me to read saying, "everything you need to know is in there". I took my lead from him. I approach history in two ways; firstly, developing an account of a selection of local histories and secondly, I think about what these histories do with a focus on what rests in the silences, the near forgotten, repressed or erased, in particular Māori histories. And all of this points to a central thrust of this thesis, an attempt to see colonising processes along Ōruawharo River and in the surrounding districts, and in the doing so, to achieve, at best, a small amount decolonising along the way.

Colonisaton as Ongoing and Decolonisation as Practise

Recognising ongoingness of colonisation and deploying decolonisation as a practise is a goal in this thesis. And as noted by Richard Shaw (2021b), there is much work to do at every level by Pākehā.

> The decolonisation of the exogenous (public spaces, institutions, laws, etc.) is one thing, but there is an equal imperative to decolonise that which is endogenous—the memories, stories and received wisdoms through which the descendants of coloniser families call their histories and identities into existence (Shaw 2021b: 11).

Part of the way in which coloniser peoples "call their histories and identities into existence" (2021b: 11) is to do a fair amount of forgetting along the way. This includes my own forgetting and takes me back to earlier in this introduction, to the bach at Little Waihi. Ghassan Hage (2017) talks of an "idealised past" within the salve tinged with longing that is nostalgia. Our bach sat on a long strip of land with front yard and back yard and a magnificent stand of native bush that stretched up to the road far above which snaked down the side of a hill. This was Māori land and the long-term lease cost ten dollars a year. A peppercorn rent it was called and the ten dollars year remained unchanged for years and years until controversially, it went to $600.00 a year in the mid-80s forcing my pensioner parents to sell. Ten dollars a year! Underneath a peppercorn rent sits a vast and on the whole, silenced story of colonisation including the enforcement of survey, land commodification and long term leases or leases in perpetuity, alienation and dispossession. My 'idealised past' sat blissfully unaware on top of the pain of those that went before.

This is a Pākehā story which could be replicated throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and of the sort uncovered through more recent scholarship using critical family history as a practise (for example, Bell 2020; Campbell 2020; Morris 2022; Shaw 2021a, 2021b) . Critical family histories reveal the unsettling stories underpinning this 'settler' past.

This can be subtle as in Morris' (2022) account of a vast family matrix in the Taranaki, farming people who simply did not talk about that which preceded their ownership of local farms, the before-settler past, resulting in a form of 'not knowing' from 'not talking' across decades. Morris grasps for the faint memories of the Māori world that came close to hers, an old house, an urupā[14] mid paddock, things that evoked and stirred childhood curiosities but of which she knew so little about. More shockingly, Shaw (2021a, 2021b) discovers his great grandfather, Andrew Gilhooly, was a part of the devastating assault on Parihaka[15] in 1881. In finding out more, all of these authors

[14] A Māori graveyard or burial site.

[15] On the 5th of November 1881, 1600, troops invaded the pacifist settlement of Parihaka. Led by Te Whiti-o-Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi, Parihaka was a refuge for Māori (many dispossessed) from around the country after the devastating wars of the 1860's. The invasion, including the rape of women, arrests, burning of houses "destruction of hundreds of acres crops" and "relocation of over 1500 people" (Shaw 2021a: 18), followed by a near five-year occupation by the Armed Constabulary, left a deep wound with Taranaki peoples and resulted in what Rachel Buchanan (2018: 53) calls 'The Very Long Sorry' – apologies from crown officials and police alike.

speak of the privilege that flows from these 'settler'—dependent upon on Māori loss—beginnings (Bell 2020; Campbell 2020; Morris 2022; Shaw 2021a, 2021b). Further, Shaw observes that "these types of accounts are often richly textured but in colonial settler societies there is always a whiff of amnesia to them" (2021b:3). Such is the case in the Ōruawharo and surrounding district. The Albertlander framing frames what is seen and this thesis seeks to seek out what rests in the silences, the near forgotten, that which recolonises, the repressed or erased. Through revealing these silences, accounting for other ways of knowing, I do a form of decolonising. And this is where the trouble begins.

Staying with the Trouble

As Pākehā, and (almost) local (but not an Albertlander), as community person, committee member of both the local hall (chairperson) and museum (president), as marriage celebrant and much relied upon funeral celebrant, as past school board member of both the high school and primary boards (22 years, 12 years a chair) and once public servant (Work and Income, Te Hiranga Tangata), I am visible and known in my community and in neighbouring communities, people expect things of me and I can't hide. I can't research and run. So how do I, with academic veracity, critique colonising processes which endure and in the doing so, risk offending people who sit around committee tables with me? Most often it feels like there is a lot at stake for me. Similarly, as Pākehā, telling Māori stories is inherently problematic, the risk of overstepping at every turn. Discomfort prevails. The inclination is to avoid and move past, but this is an important feeling that needs to be noticed and sat with in a settler society with complex entanglements between Māori and Pākehā worlds. The discomfort signals trouble but importantly, for Donna Haraway (2016), trouble is *the* rich and fertile ground within which *new*ness may emerge.

Nevertheless, Parihaka, as Buchanan argues, remains in the margins of NZ history telling or "beyond the margins, shadow things, for happenings, whispers in the corridors of 'the dementia wing of history'" (2018:57).

Figure 19
Ōruawharo River,
after the storm

This trouble is a mixed-up confluence that stirs up anxieties, feels both worrisome and promising—like something waiting to be known just around the corner from you. A place which requires becoming-with "unexpected collaboration and combinations" (Haraway 2016: 4), a process through which potentialities for newness spiral out of the push and pull of difference, a becoming-*with* and starting-in the middle of things. This middle of things is far from black and white: People do and say the most unexpected things. For instance, a local Pākehā man whose political views on Māori can be jarring, in the next breath, speaks of his family returning taonga to the earth, knowing full well the breach of tapu which has occurred. Or the Māori man who fights for remembering histories and the rights of his people, who shows up at a Pākehā Albertlander funeral, to lament over the coffin, as deeply moved by her passing. These are just some examples of complex entanglements between peoples around the district I call my home. Within these complexities, dichotomist coloniser/colonised thinking alone does not always fit the frame. While ongoing colonising reverberates with differing intensities along the Ōruawharo, so too does the nuance of the everyday differently inflect local lives in a becoming-*with* way of being-in-the-world—nothing is just one thing or another. In some ways, Bhrigupati Singh's (2014) problematising of dialectical thinking through developing a non-dialectical model via the Deleuzian

concepts of polarities (but not as binary opposites), intensities, and thresholds, helps me to with deal with nuance. Singh notes that,

> Deleuze gives us a range of concepts with which to inhabit a plenitude of life that exceeds structural or binary tensions, while not necessarily negating the analytical potency of particular oppositions (2014:163).

He goes on to add that ethnographic material would be lost if he were to only "tell a story through a master-slave dialect" (2014:164). Polarities, thresholds, and intensities enable a way of seeing "that enfolds more ambivalent thresholds" (Singh, 2014:166). Singh goes on to add, "tendencies too may morph and take on new shapes" (2014: 168) and notes that, "Deleuze spurs us further, to explore a range of actualizations of these potentialities and shifts and fluctuations within the tendencies themselves" (2014:168), a clear break from dialectical logic "which states a thing is either "a" or "not a"" (2014:168).

Things are more than one thing and intensities shift, such as the atmosphere when the political right came into power during the course of writing this thesis and with it, the all-the-more-need to stay with the trouble. As intensities wane and amplify so too does the tenor of my river research, moving like seasonal mood in the passing of time reorientating frame of mind, sentiment and attention, and with it, being differently attuned to whatever is more vexing and seeable coming into view. This is the flux and flow of the thesis — staying with the trouble, at times uncomfortable, hoping for *new*ness to emerge while also attending to the everyday, the differing ways of knowing, belonging to and becoming-*with* a salty old river called the Ōruawharo.

Concluding thoughts

Like tributaries, theory and method have moved through this introduction showing how I know what I know, how knowledge is generated and the ways in which becoming-with shapes knowing and belonging, each flowing into the other, in place. My research is one of many methods; part autoethnographic, with a boat, immersive, sensory, history research, in place, on a river, in community as an observant participant, as a curator, photographer, interviewer, colleague, committee member,

and writer.

This is an anthropological thesis which also draws on the disciplines of geography and history and strands of theory including Bennett's vital materialism (2010, 2020), an anthropology of becoming (Biehl and Locke 2017; Singh 2014), belonging (Kidman 2012) and the decolonising goal of Aotearoa academics (such as Buchanan 2018; Campbell 2020; Bell 2006, 2014, 2020; Morris 2022; Shaw 2021a, 2021b, 2024). Knowledge is generated chapter by chapter, through these tributaries of thinking and doing, in amongst the *withs* of this watery place and these can be thought of as stories of knowing summarised in the following section.

What follows

These stories of knowing in this thesis start with *Rosemary, the River & Me* (chapter two), partly autoethnographic, with me swept up in *her*, my new-old-boat and *she*—the Ōruawharo, a river to get to know. I begin to tell stories, stories that are immersed in the material, sensory, embodied, in written and visual representations, in talk, movement, and the imagined. Stories that wax and wane with time and telling, that collide and crash, and affirm and align with the already known, the unknown, and the silenced. Amidst all of this, the 'thing power of things' (Bennett 2010) manifest which shape those early research days such as a fickle boat, coronavirus on the move along with the reconfiguring of borders and a diesel bug which stalls progress over and over again. On the river, light, sound, wind, current, feelings, physicality, capacities and incapacities, fish, bird, mud and water infuse the possibilities of becoming-*with* within a particular place. Through the sensory, experiential, phenomenological and a 'view from somewhere', the process of embodying of river knowing begins. Seeing is differently *seen* and a belonging sense of relationship emerges from the with-in towards the with-out, the porous borders of the bodily-I now sensuously, physically, intellectually, aspirationally and emotionally infused with the *new*.

The *River & River Things* of chapter three become like calls from the wild eliciting attention. Water comes into view, so too the river friends—mangroves and mud and people with things to say about such things who look at river-things in differing ways. Weediness is used to think with conceptually, raising questions around who and what

gets to be weedy and the implications. The river emerges as both having a life of its own, with force and potency and as a shaper of lives for those who know it so. So too, does the agency of river and discoveries about human and non-human relationships, inform my way of knowing and with it, an ability to see things differently now.

The *River People* of chapter four are shaped by the rhythms of the Ōruawharo; sun, moon, rain and tide along with their experiences of knowing, becoming-*with*, belonging-in a particular place. The geophysics and materialities of the river and wider Kaipara come into view, baffling, to me, the novice—tales of wind going this way and that, turning tides, currents through narrow necks and into large bays manifest as ways of deeply embodied knowing generated within the material world. Similarly, these ways of river-knowing entangle with both making a living and staying alive. Stories come alive in the telling—the river, sea, wind, current, the fish below and the pull of the moon infused with near disasters, *rites de passage* and resounding successes. Ways of knowing in this chapter emerge as able to save lives, make a living and as profoundly able to shape becoming and belonging. My own knowing about the river shifts but mainly I learn that I know so very little and my becoming a competent boat person seems only possible through embodied experiences across long immersive stretches of time — through this, the river *will* get in and be *nearly* known. As I move through these chapters, the storying of place becomes understood as generative, as place making through iterating and reiterating that which matters. The mattering of stories is a central theme in this thesis.

In chapter five, *Tua Whakarere, Olden times*, I take an unsteady step, as a Pākehā researcher, into the choppy waters of researching Māori understandings of the river. I read about the rise and fall of empires, stories of significance, fleets of waka a thousand plus years ago, and acquaint myself with copious pā sites along the river's edge, pā and pā things which also manifest with agency in the present. This chapter moves between detail gleaned from history books, archives in the local museum, and stories told in casual chats with Māori, more often streetside in amongst the everyday. From the history telling, I rattle around in amongst the silences of contemporary narratives astounded at how little most local Pākehā know—me included. This not knowing (Morris 2020) and attempts to know more about the Māori view of things

goes to heart of this thesis and with it the most complex issues to grapple with such as who has the right to tell such stories, why have Māori histories been silenced and where do we, as a community, go from here? This chapter is also about the politics of knowing—while there is forgetting and some things which might be known, there are also knowings which belong to others as the holders or kaitiaki of this knowledge. What it is to know or not know, then emerges as situated and conditional on an empathetic willingness to learn, to reflect, to receive and to know or sense when to draw lines and go no further with lines of inquiry. This 'walking a fine line' between (and communicating across) Māori and Pākehā worlds moves through the thesis in an ongoing and unresolved way, culminating in my attempt to curate a museum exhibit with differently told stories (detailed in chapter six). Ultimately, I learn that these intertwinings between myself, a Pākehā researcher, and a Māori community need to be infused with an ethic of care, humility, an attunement to over stepping, an awareness of a history of past hurts including those by academia and a willingness to stay with discomfort (or as Haraway (2016) says – trouble) in order to learn something new.

In contrast to chapter five, the *Albertland & Albertlanders* of chapter six come with a story told multiple times before, a pioneer narrative which "make worlds" (Harraway, 2016: 12) and re-establishes the 'special settlement' as a foundation story which underpins and shapes the locale while simultaneously shaping becoming for many and potentially alienating others. I move between telling the Albertlander story and thinking about what the story does. Throughout the research, I have also become increasingly involved in the Albertland Museum and privy to the difficult decolonising conversations around the need to open up our narratives to include Māori story telling. Through happenstance, I find myself in the thick of it, curating an exhibit about Methodist Missionaries and Māori. The stakes for getting it wrong are high, the process troubling—bringing different mid century actors into the fraught space that is settler museum. The exhibition throws me publicly into the front and centre of such a process and with liveliness—conversations, events and controversies spiral out of this enclosed space. Through negotiating, at times, troubled waters, emerged ways of knowing that can change hegemonic understandings but in ways which provoke engagement rather than a shutting down of conversation or denial. As with much of

my focus, this is a stirring up of the unsaid, the beginning of conversations, noticing the silences, and listening out for the faint echoes which call for more along the Ōruawharo and surrounding district.

In chapter seven I bring these diverse flows, strands, things, research experiences and scholarly and embodied ideas together more as after-images or heightened intensities arguing that no conclusions in terms of the right/appropriate ways of knowing are possible (indeed they never were). These impressions include the thing power of things (Bennett 2010) and insight into the usefulness of foregrounding the non-human and thinking slowly through the political projects that follow (Bennett 2010). A variety of representations are then shown as generative and in doing so, open creative potential to know differently-*in*. Waxing and waning histories and stories entangled with power lead to insight into the politics of knowing, especially within a settler society colony. I think again about being Pākehā, a core methodological crux of my research practise and how anthropology in Aotearoa can be fruitful if couched within an ethics of care. Further, I go back to becomings-*with*, the granularity of this form of research, an attunement which gathers up multiple ways of becoming-*with* and knowing-*in*. Lastly, I end with the river. A river who goes on being a river regardless of the noise and curiosities of the human. As she unfurls in her watery voluptuous, voluminous present, knowing her as a researcher is fleeting, like gasping for air in her turbulent wake with entry points always escaping from view. Within the flow of the river and in the spirit of a Deleuzian plane of immanence, this thesis offers a multiplicity of moving entry points akin to Saorsa's description below,

> I described myself as standing on a high plateau, on every like the plateau that Gregory Bateson describes as a "continuous self-vibrating region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation toward a culmination point or external end point" (Deleuze 1999:22). For Deleuze and Guattari, Bateman's description translates into a multiplicity, endlessly connected to other multiplicities and, being always in the middle, the plateau has no definite origin and no foreseeable end. It is a point at which circumstances combine to bring an activity to a crucial juncture, but where it is not dissipated in a climax. It is a heightening of energies' sustained long enough to leave an 'after-image' that

can be redirected into further activity (Saorsa 2011:17).

The after images culminate as chapters differently attuned from each other. Fragments of stories from river deep to spiraling out of site, in river time and across time, twisting and turning with flows of belonging, becoming-*with*, knowing and not knowing along the Ōruawharo — an ethnography of a river and a river to get to know.

Figure 20
The Ōruawharo by Biz Demster, used with permission

Chapter 2, Rosemary, the River & Me

Figure 21
My grandfather, centre of picture, Gjógv, Faroe Islands, date unknown

I begin with an embodied telling which starts with me which, in turn, shows the way I have been shaped by people and things, by places known and unknown and by the people and memories I carry with me. This knowing matters for two reasons. Firstly, it establishes, in part, my positionality and secondly, it shows knowing as being both situated in the present and having tendrils into the distant past. In the present, I show the process of becoming-*with* a river, boat and the unexpected vitality of rivery things and flows from elsewhere such as a virus and diesel bug. From the past, memories shape the present, in this case, memories which flow from seafarers in the North Sea. These seafarers populate my (imagined and idealised) Scandinavian heritage, hundreds of years of them on my father's side, a Faroe Islander who left school at twelve and went to sea. He told me stories of fishing fields off Greenland, of seeing mirages in the Nordic Seas, including a sailing ship with men casting nets and hauling fish over the side. A whole boat he said! As a child, I thought of that ghost ship a

thousand times. He told me of needing to knit and darn clothes, of boats with no motors or radios and people back in the village Gjógv, never knowing if the fisher men would make it back. I wintered over once, in that place where the sea crashed on the shore and the spray was higher than houses. Starting with there, I move to here, from an ancestral village in the North Sea to a boat called Rosemary on the Ōruawharo and show the becomings-*with*, including the smallest of things, and views from somewhere which shape my becoming and sense of belonging in the early stages of this project.

Figure 22
Gjógv seashore 1986

There I was, back then, young, and mostly alone. I went to the wild places, getting soaked, standing far too close to edges of cliffs and rocky shores – and was once told off from an older relative for doing so. "People died off cliffs when the mist came down" she said. Like Katarina. Apparently, I was the doppelganger of young Katarina who had fallen to her death decades before. Some old people looked almost startled when they saw me, like they'd seen a ghost. As they stared, and murmured *Katarina*, I was unsettled, a little uncomfortable, and somehow strangely becoming-entwined. From over 17,000 kilometres away, I'd never had any other relative that looked like me. Thereafter, I took heed of my cousin's warning and went about with more care, never in the worst of the worst weather. Every now and then I thought I felt a trace of her, in the mist and cold, Katarina, my ghost-twin who died too young. I walked and climbed, and exalted, turned my face towards the Artic north and that dangerous oh so magnificent sea. Those seafaring-ancestors and freezing winds simply filled my soul with pride. I used to say I went to Gjógv half a person and came out whole.

Looking back from my middle-ages, wholeness no longer feels viable but, back then, at 22, the half became the whole — that's the way it felt. I left with more of a surefooted-ness, a sense of identity I guess, although I didn't call it that then. This was something that hadn't been so easy to attain when living in a settler-colony, oceans away from the places that people my people came from.

Figure 23
Me in Gjógv 1986. On the side of the Middagur Mountain. August sheep muster

Figure 24
Cliffs near Gjógv
Photo by my daughter Eva

I lost my father just two years after I had climbed to the top of those highest cliffs, and down to the water's edge to stand too close to that wild and thunderous sea. Dad died in Rotorua, Aotearoa NZ, fifty-two years after he left the Faroe Islands, never making it back home. An Alien in a foreign land cast adrift half a world away from that cluster of Islands in the Atlantic Ocean.

Figure 25
Registration of Alien
Jens Petur Joensen (my father)
Dated 27th January 1943

Figure 26
Ships pass, Anglo Mærsk
Dated 23rd December 1939.
My father, Jens Petur Joensen

I took him for a drive the weekend before he died, not realising it was our last, to Taupō to look at boats. He loved to look at boats. He came by boat, across the sea in WWII. Always the sea.

Twenty five years later my mother died and eventually we had to sell the humble family home, an ex-state house which Dad thought was a palace, wrought from years of hard work and financial hardship. We sold and I inherited a little bit of money. Then along came serendipity. A friend showed me a picture of Rosemary in an ad online. Rosemary, born in 1927, the same year as my mother - an adventurous soul my mother - and moreover, a boat. Clearly, they would've both approved.

Figure 27
Rosemary on mooring
Port Albert Ōruawharo River

Figure 28
Rosemary, Port Albert, Ōruawharo River

Fieldnote, 27 July 2021, on the Ōruawharo River, winter boating

Dad, you would like this boat.

"A good solid boat" Margaret[16] *said when I started to point out her rough edges.*

"It doesn't matter; it's a good solid boat"

A practical generation slipping away

I think the tide is dead out, a slack water they call it, but not so slack,

The wind pushing one way, the river choppy, the boat sideways to it all,

Tousling and Tussling.

I'm hoping it will point the right way soon.

Dad, I think you would like this boat.

I feel nostalgic but I don't know why.

Is it the wind?

The wind blows famously fierce in the Faroe Islands.

I bet you had your fair share in your day.

I think the howling is blowing in from then to now.

It feels that way.

She has nice lines.

That's what people say. If they don't, I point it out.

"Do you like her lines?"

Then there's the indoors, a place to boil the kettle.

"An all-weather boat" a neighbour called her.

Dad, I think you would like this boat

After nearly thirty years of working hard and playing less, Rosemary became everything I wanted my life to be, like grasping at an idea of something once desired but lost in the grind of the everyday; like standing on the side of the Middagur Mountain in Gjógv with life stretching out before you; like being young again. That's what Rosemary meant to me. But any-thing is never just one thing, a generalisable narrative that maps over the-all and sundry. Rosemary entered my world as materiality infused with vitality; a place of agency, energy, of feeling alive again; a

[16] Margaret is a family friend – 89 years old.

place of play, the sensory, the wind in hair and sound of water, the smell of mud and multitude of river kin nearby; a place of weather and light and moving along currents and taking it all in like an anthropologist of old.

Figure 29
Me piloting Rosemary for the first time through a large body of water Kaipara Harbour June 2020

Rosemary also came with great difficulties, throwing my inadequacies into sharp relief. Not enough bodily strength to lift an anchor or mooring. Not being able to bleed an airlock in the motor and having to fend off sea sickness on a rocking river. She quickly also became a place in which my feminist sensibilities slid away, a gendered space, like generations of boats before her.

Figure 330
Boat repairs. My husband Tony Hayward

6/9/2020

When there's nothing you do but sit & wait. Decades of thinking women can do a lot but the reality sinks in. A slow sinking is. Fuel pumps, fuel lines, fuel filters, dodgy diesels, heavy anchors, smoking exhausts. Right now the 'male' terrain. Terror... Terror, Timidity, Timid, hopeless, without purpose, purpose-less. What's stopping you? It's so much easier for him! Clearly it is.

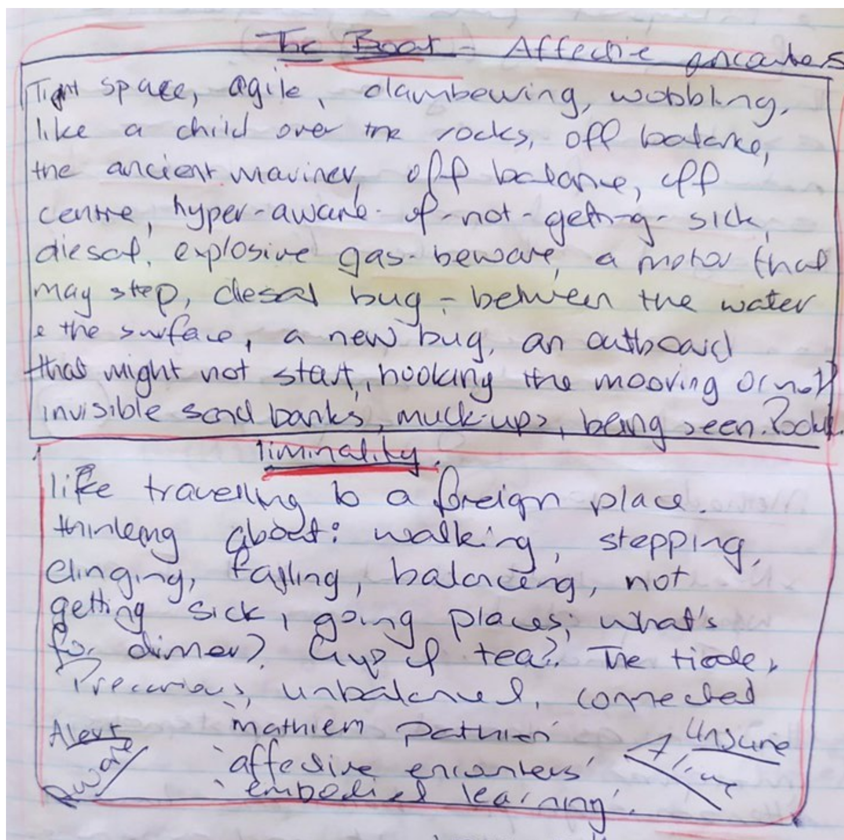
Figure 31
Fieldnotes written on Rosemary
6th September 2020

When Rosemary needs repairing, Tony fixes her while I made the tea. I realised early on that Rosemary had to be about the both of us. While eternally grateful for what he can do, I feel a level of disappointment that I haven't mastered the boat, my imaginings of being alone along the river—that I know now, bar some sort of impossible metamorphosis, will never be. But together we work with Rosemary. We share her triumphs and troubles and when it is good it is better than good. When there is trouble, we spend months figuring it all out, at times despairing, and in the figuring out, a subtle sort of becoming and becoming-*with* unfolds; two novice boat people being shaped by Rosemary and the river.

Figure 32
Piloting boat
Tony in background
26th September 2020.
Photo by my son, Jasper Hayward

Figuring it out isn't the only thing however, that generates becoming-*with*. Less cerebral and more sentient, immersive rather than transcendent, more felt than thought; River-ness and boat-ness, I argue, move inwardly through the body via the sensory and the experiential. Boat-ness and river-ness then move outwardly into the world through expressions of difference and movements in capabilities—or not; generating potentialities and limits, openings and closures and the possibility of the new (Biehl & Locke, 2010). This inward and outward momentum, in the words of Jane Bennett (2020) (referencing Walt Whitman's 'Song of Myself') can be conceptualised as "influx and efflux," moments of transformation in which bodies with porous and permeable borders in places, in boats and on rivers discombobulate, and re-orientate,

absorb, feel, sense, and embody knowing. Through efflux and influx and in amongst currents, tides, smells, and wind—bodies move *in*to and through the material and natural environment coalescing as a differing sense of belonging and more inscrutable way of knowing—more felt than spoken, affect-like residing in the bodily (with potential) and below or prior-to cognition (Pile, 2010: 8).[17] These back and forth, exteriority and interiority, in and out, rocking and moving, smelling, seeing, feeling, and hearing lively encounters, are experienced in multiple ways—such as fraught, mundane, magnificent and not always comfortable - see fieldnote below, written aboard Rosemary.



The Boat - Affective encounters

Tight space, agile, clambering, wobbling,
like a child over the rocks, off balance,
the ancient mariner, off balance, off
centre, hyper-aware-of-not-getting-sick,
diesel, explosive gas-beware, a motor that
may stop, diesel bug - between the water
& the surface, a new bug, an outboard
that might not start, hooking the mooring or not,
invisible sand banks, muck-ups, being seen. [illegible]

liminality

like travelling to a foreign place.
thinking about: walking, stepping,
clinging, falling, balancing, not
getting sick, going places; what's
for dinner? Cup of tea? The tide,
Precarious, unbalanced, connected
Alert / aware
mathiem [illegible]
'affective encounters'
'embodied learning'
Unsure

Figure 33
Fieldnote winter
June 2020

"The child over the rocks," in the scribbles above refers to me at my finest, that barefoot young girl at Little Waihi, climbing great boulders on the beach and along the rocky foreshore. I thought of myself as an expert rock climber. I see now that the "Ancient Mariner" of my teenage years makes an appearance, a time when I took to

[17] Geographer Steve Pile (2010: 8) describes affect as "spatially located below cognition and consciousness" and "prior to representation."

rote learning poems that were about epic adventures to somewhere else—"like travelling to a foreign place." The "mathein pathein"[18] (learning through suffering) must have been thrown on to the page in one of those uncomfortable moments. I am Aware, Alert, Unsure and Alive, precarious, unbalanced and connected. What of the 'I' at the beginning of this sentence and the 'connected' at the end? Starting with the 'I', Bennett (ref Whitman) (2020: xi), "offers a distinctive model of I: it is a porous and susceptible shape that rides and imbibes the waves of influx-and-efflux but also contributes an "influence" of its own." She adds,

> It is no easy matter to parse what is involved in that influential effort. It is especially tricky after contemporary theory has taken a nonhuman turn that locates the human on a continuum of lively bodies and forces—a continuum that elides conventional dichotomies of life and matter, organic and inorganic, subjective and objective, agency and structure (Bennett 2020: xi).

Amidst this "continuum of lively bodies and forces," Bennett asks, "How to bespeak an I alive in a world of vibrant matter?" (Bennett, 2020: xii). She proposes thinking with dividuals as opposed to individuals, the latter sounding closed off or indivisible. To exist, she argues, "dividual persons absorb heterogeneous material influences" while giving out from themselves "their own coded substances – essences, residues, or other active influences" (2020: xii). Having established the 'I' as dividual, it is necessary to think about what it means to be connected. On one level 'being connected,' points to a deepening relationship. On the other, like 'individual', I argue, 'connected' is bounded-off as it is premised on a link between I and another, between a thing and another, a river and a body, a boat and a body, each side of the dichotomy—indivisible. To counter this, Bennett's notion of efflux and influx, within the "continuum of lively bodies and forces" manifests in porous bodies, on boats and along the river.

[18] Mathein – to learn. Pathein – to suffer

Figure 34
Pied Shag, Kāruhiruhi, Ōruawharo River, 27th December 2020. Photo by Jasper Hayward

Everything is closer than proximate; smells get in, sounds get in, splashes in the peripheral view, if you turn your head quick enough, become spectacles of wonder. Wonder gets in.

Figure 35
Birds above the Ōruawharo River June 2020.

Similarly, Tim Ingold (2011) locates sentient bodies as moving in the world with openness, wonder and astonishment, these being integral to what it is to *be,* to *know* and to *see.* Furthermore, he adds that such things as astonishment, find no home within the conceptual categories of inquiry and 'rationality' as expected in contemporary times. To Ingold, astonishment is,

> The sense of wonder that comes from riding the crest of the world's continued birth. Yet along with openness comes vulnerability. To outsiders unfamiliar with this way of being, it often looks like timidity or weakness, proof of a lack of rigour characteristic of supposedly primitive belief and practice. The way to know the world, they say, is not to open oneself up to it, but rather to 'grasp' it within a grid of concepts and categories. Astonishment has been banished from the protocols of conceptually driven, rational inquiry. It is inimical to science (Ingold, 2011: 93).

Much of knowing on the river is beyond the conceptually driven modes of so-called 'rational' inquiry. With sentience and through affect, wonder turns a person towards place. These experiences most often begin with light - shifting and imbuing everything that is to be seen and felt. This multiplicity of light draws the inward outward, the interiority towards the exteriority and back again as consciousness moves towards the natural world and moods shift below. For example, the awestruck as: riverbanks turn to inky black silhouettes before the golden sky; reflections double up a beautiful day; clouds burst forth like opera singers and river light dances along the ripples – a murky tidal estuary then masquerading as the Mediterranean.

Figure 36
All photos above taken on the Ōruawharo

Less vibrant, the silvers and greys stir up the contemplative, the insular and the more subdued.

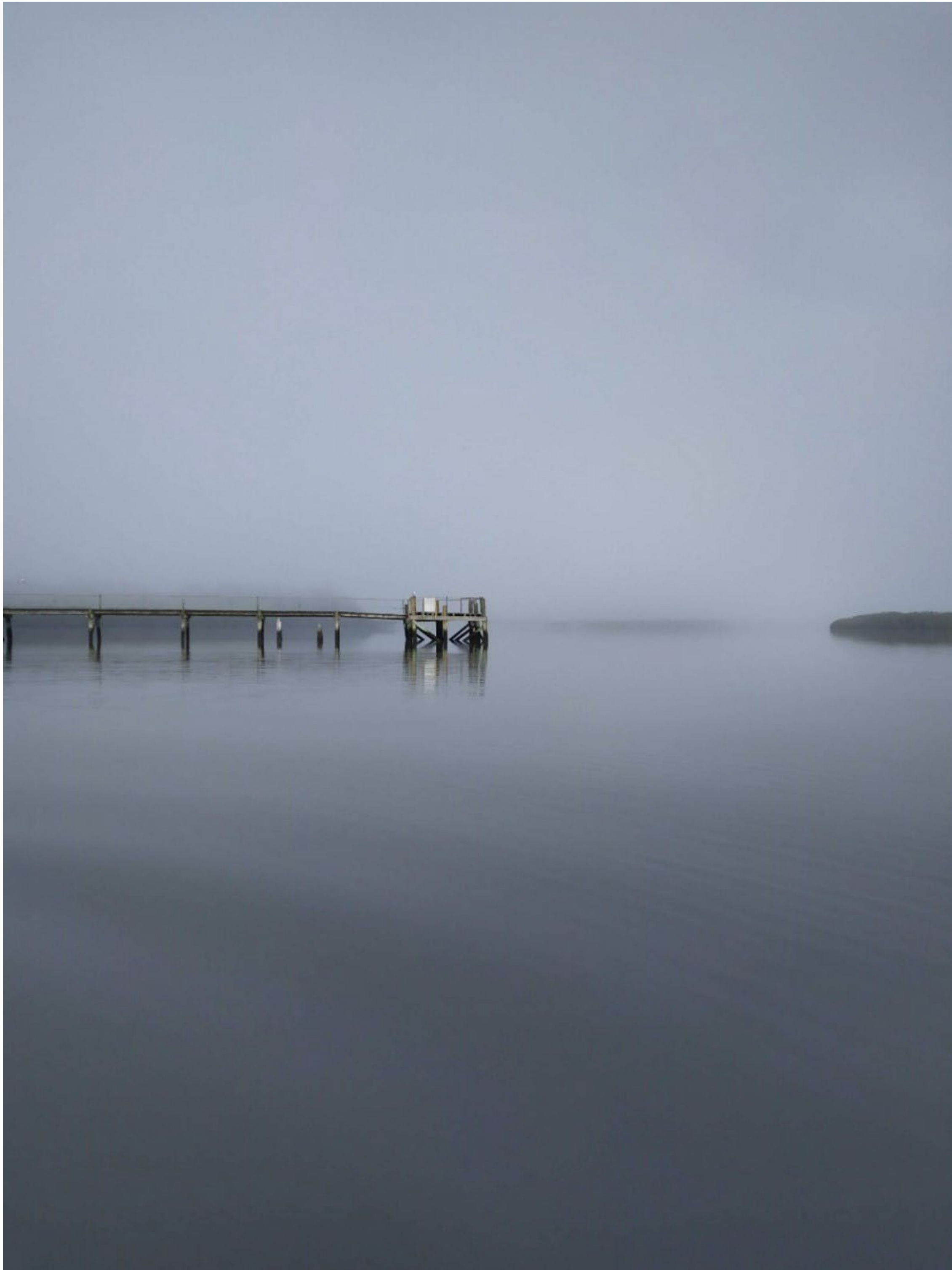


Figure 37
Port Albert Wharf
Taken from aboard Rosemary

In the silver-greys, Rosemary becomes a quieter place, where the damp settles on skin, breath is cold, the kettle gets boiled for cups of tea and living feels like dwelling-in a still and fulsome moment in time.

Figure 38
Rosemary, winter
Port Albert, Ōruawharo River

All the while, something is happening to the closer than proximate-in-nature dividual divisible-I. A deepening sense of belonging coalesces as almost cellular, a feeling of being *of* a place, belonging *to* and nearly *Native* but this term feels inappropriate in a country which still grapples with ongoing colonising processes. A place in which, through necessity, most Māori, collectively, politically and personally, hold steadfast to their Indigeneity or native-ness and deeply felt kin connections to all that is and of this place; the land, sea, rivers, every critter, plant, and of-nature-being from the ancestor mountains to the rising of the stars and the fish within the sea.

What to do with the Pākehā divisible-dividual-I in all of this? What to do with the barefoot-child-I, who could clamber over rocks, physicality orientated towards the

world and atmospherically infused with every aspect of an extraordinary stretch of beach in Aotearoa NZ? What to do with the young-woman-I, returning to the other-home, feeling for the ancestors on the wind and traces of the ghost-twin moving through the mist? What to do with the middle-aged-I, who moves with Rosemary along the river, sentient within sentience, being-in and becoming-with that murky tidal estuary? If the lens is moved beyond the structural; the colonising, political, social and cultural—towards the bodily, a bodily as lived through a "continuum of lively bodies and forces," an I with porous boundaries "alive in a world of vibrant matter" (Bennett 2020: xii), then I argue, respectfully, and in no way staking some sort of claim, that I too, can be *Native*.

Rosemary Comes Home

Being *Native,* becoming-with, and belonging-to requires being-amidst, as noted, a "continuum of lively bodies and forces" (Bennett, 2020: xi). This continuum is not however, an unimpeded flow from one to the other but rather more rhizomic—a vast matrix or assemblage of lively agentic things that shift, shape, open and foreclose, and spiral off in more often unpredictable ways (Biehl & Locke, 2017). Referencing Deleuze, Bennett notes that,

> Assemblages are ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts. Assemblages are living, throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within. They have uneven topographies, because some of the points at which the various effects and bodies cross paths are more heavily trafficked than others, and so power is not equally distributed across its surface (Bennett, 2010: 23, 24).

The liveliness within an assemblage can occur regardless of the human or alongside the human on a plane of multiplicities. Furthermore, this milieu is "a turbulent, immanent field in which various and variable materialities collide, congeal, morph, evolve and disintegrate" (ref Serres [2018], Bennett, 2010: 23, 24). Bennett adds that anthropocentric or human-centred thinking, "sustains the fantasy that "we" are really in control of all of those "its"" (2010: x). With Rosemary, this fantasy was fleeting.

Human exceptionalism was briskly elided in the boat on the river, and the "its" kept doing what they do, more often regardless of the human. Simultaneously, becoming and knowing is shaped through grappling, negotiating and encountering these 'its.' Rosemary emerges as neither docile nor obliging; things bend, twist and break, fuel lines get blocked, wood decays, paint peels and sacrificial anodes underwater corrode and need replacing and worryingly, weed grows on her bottom towards the mud below. Unsightly lichen creeps up above the water's edge and critters and birds move in.

Figure 39
Rosemary, creeping lichen and the resident black-backed gull, July 2022

As lichen spreads up and matter grows down, the thing-power of things materialises, and boat life becomes a matter of contending with and being amongst. Such vital materialism can manifest at the microscopic and generate multiple outcomes and turns towards both the unexpected and the complex. This was particularly the case with what is somewhat notoriously known as diesel bug. Diesel bug was to shape our lives and my research in multiple ways. To start at the beginning, prior to knowing about the forceful flow of this tiniest of things, we set off to pick up our new (97-year-old) boat - a day recounted in full below.

The Trip Home

Rosemary was negotiated through lockdowns amidst a global pandemic, which impeded viewings, purchase dates and the ability to bring her home. There was a lot to organise. She needed to be hauled out the water and trucked from the swanky east

coast marina to the Hoteo, a tidal estuarine river on the Kaipara—our watery route home. The day finally came. We borrowed a neighbours van which could fit our rubber dingy inside and arranged for our son Reuben to come along—transport the small boat, take us to the Hoteo River, then head home. We set off predawn, in the dark and turned up at Gulf Harbour Marina in time to join the owner Hermann to steer Rosemary to the dock from which she was hauled up onto the dry. Up she went, suspended in mid-air, looking big from below. Rosemary was then loaded onto a truck, tied down and then we set off, the driver and truck to meet us there at the Hoteo River, out west.

Figure 40
Rosemary
Gulf Harbour Marina
19th June 2020

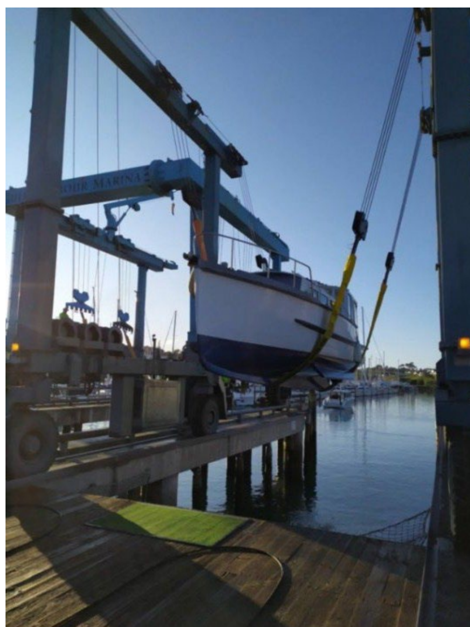


Figure 41
Rosemary being lifted on to the dry dock

Figure 42
Rosemary on back of truck
19th June 2020

We left the marina, feeling more relaxed, having got out of the way what we thought, somewhat mistakenly in retrospect, would be the trickiest part of the day. The thought of hauling Rosemary out of the water had caused me stress in the weeks before and part of this, as with anything new, is the feeling of being inexperienced in such places as dry docks and marinas where others confidently go. We stopped at a small town on route, sat on the steps of a local pub to eat a pie for breakfast and along came Rosemary atop the truck, hurtling through the town at quite a speed. We jumped up, climbed into the van, three up front, to follow her down to the river for her re-berthing. Up and down hills and the truck went; still it seemed, a bit fast. And then the most precarious moment of all happened. The truck flew down a hill over a rough patch of road and out from under Rosemary, detached one of the main supports holding her up. The truck driver was oblivious, and we watched in horror as Rosemary

bounced up and down on the back. We had to stop and retrieve the steel support while Rosemary and truck disappeared into the distance. I managed to find the number of the haulage company, rang and slightly panicked, asked them quickly to ring the driver and tell him stop.

Figure 43
Heading west to the Kaipara
19th June 2020

Time slowed down. I remember the intensity of that catch up drive, fully expecting to find Rosemary shattered along the road. Miraculously, we turned a corner and there she was - the truck stopped, Rosemary in one piece, and a very sheepish driver, attempting to repair the truck. The relief! It turns out the day was going to be a series of momentous feelings of relief, although we didn't know that then.

Figure 44
Breakdown State Highway 16
19th June 2020

The next complicated and slightly nerve-wracking part was to get Rosemary into the Hoteo River, a tributary of the Kaipara Harbour. Our truck driver was more than helpful, we berthed successfully, Reuben drove home, and Tony and I headed up the river on what was to be an excursion like no other.

Figure 45
Rosemary being lowered into the Hotea River Mast tied down.

Firstly, there was the Hoteo, a river I had driven past hundreds of times, but never had I seen it like this. The birds! This river passage was a trip of, “look at that, look at this!” From those first moments on the boat, my feelings towards the Kaipara started to shift. I had only ever looked from afar and that view was one of a dramatically altered landscape, human impact not doing the harbour any favours. On the river, these thoughts slid away, and I had a feeling that was harder to grasp—of being-in something, something somewhat intriguing and beguiling. The muddy, swampy, salty water felt and smelt good. Rosemary was taking me to a better place, something needed but not known until it happened, a place outside of the four walls of my domestic and work life. It really felt better than ever expected.

Figure 46
Hoteo River taken day before the launch

We headed out across Kaipara harbour and had our first fright as the boat unexpectedly and somewhat alarmingly scuttled across sand banks as we approached Moteremu Island on the south side of the Tapora peninsula. We consulted the map but knowing that the sand bars shift, we quickly realised that our local knowledge was sorely lacking. More riveted to our intended course, we headed slowly along the southern side of the peninsula with an eye for the more open harbour beyond. After a couple of hours of boating, we reached the end of the peninsula, turned north, and skirted out into the middle of the open water, knowing that there were large sand banks off the end of the Tapora Peninsula—both indicated on our map and talked about locally. This was something we did know. Out in the harbour, the storm clouds gathered, and the water started to cut up rough. It felt like being at sea. I had my first turn operating the boat. This was to be a day of firsts; the first on-board cup of tea, the first stormy weather, the first running into a rough sea.

Figure 47
Rainclouds on the open water, Kaipara Harbour

Momentarily, I was on top of the world and riding high. Then silence, bar the lapping water and wind, Rosemary's motor having stopped right out in the middle of the open harbour. This was also a first—the experience of a boat without a motor in a growing sea and a feeling of fear, of not being in control. More than fortuitously, we had bought an auxiliary outboard motor off Hermann, putting it into the back of the van at the last minute. Tony hauled the large, barely run-in outboard from the storage and hinged it on the back of the boat. All the while, the boat was flaying about in the choppy waves. Alarmingly, this motor would not start, two motors now not going—one of the longest half hours of my life. I found an instruction manual and realised it needed a safety clip to disengage the emergency stop button, so Tony fashioned one out of a twisty tie. Massively relieved, the outboard motor started, and we inched ahead.

The western head of the peninsula is a longer stretch of water than we envisaged, especially so when thinking that any moment we would run out of petrol. We moved slowly, taking care with the new motor that needed running-in. It seemed to take forever to get to the mouth of the Ōruawharo River. We turned eastward and crawled our way along the tributary towards home. Tony had only experienced much older outboard motors and was certain that this one would run out of petrol long before our destination, Port Albert approximately 18 kilometres (9.7 nautical miles) up the river. Anxiety set in. We looked to all the riverbanks, contemplating the places we could get ashore on the rubber dingy should the motor stop. Worryingly, the river edges looked inhospitable; long stretches of farm, forest, cliffs, few places to land and even fewer signs of places we could walk to, to get help. We motored on, every piece of river traversed, now feeling miraculous—the petrol lasting longer than expected. Our six children, some at home, some dispersed around the country and one in Sweden, started to track our progress, our son in Wellington still having me on shared maps in Google and sending progress reports along the way.

What's happening now?" fired up our family messenger chat, all turning their attention to Mum and Dad crawling along the river. Space and time converged and all of us were there, transfixed on the troubling journey along the Ōruawharo. The sun

was going down, but in the dusk, we started to feel hopeful, thinking that we may well make it, every inch closer to home feeling promising.

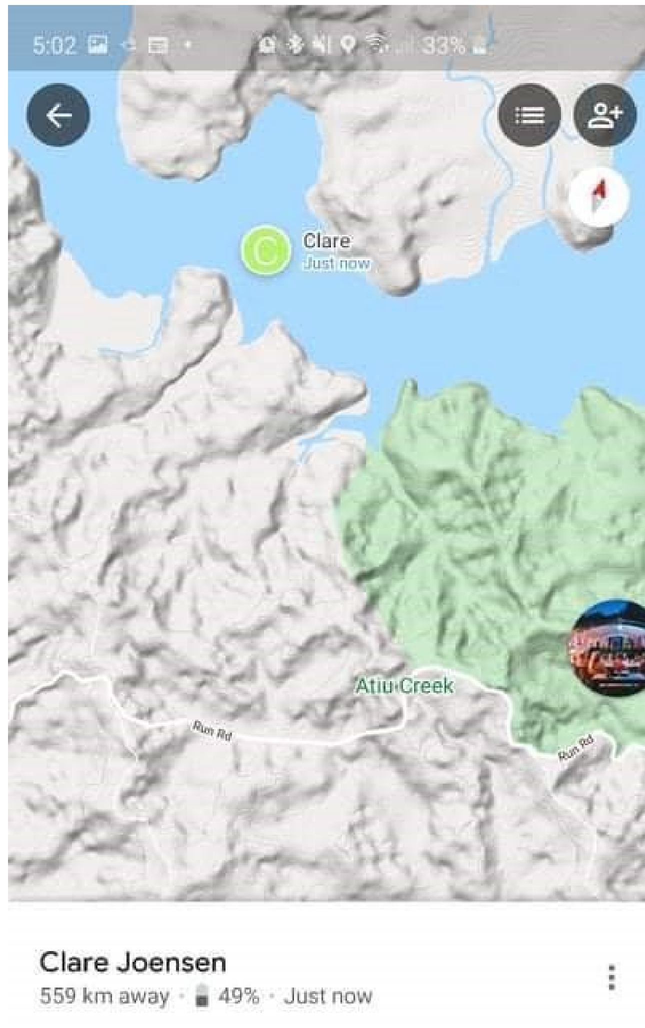


Figure 48
My son Jasper notifying the other children of our whereabouts via 'sharing location' Google Maps

All the while, the underwater was troubling us, knowing that there were sandbanks but not really knowing where. Amidst the worry, there was also relief, exhilarating relief. There had been three such moments so far that day. Firstly, when discovering that the boat hadn't been smashed into a thousand pieces on State Highway 16, secondly, when that auxiliary started after half an hour of almost despairing and deep worry in a rising sea, the third was when we turned the bend into Hargreaves Bay, familiar territory. While a large body of water, there were neighbours on the south side who could rescue us if the motor stopped. The relief was palpable—we had very nearly made it through. Two of our children stood on a high ridge and spotted the boat, a small dot in the distance. "We can see them!" they said, typed into the chat.

Figure 49
The boat entering Hargreaves Basin, a small dot in the distance spotted by two of our children, Photo by Reuben

After the wide stretch of water, we moved into the narrower channel of river that headed towards Port Albert, the site of our mooring and the new home for Rosemary. It was getting dark, and the sandbanks felt very close. Unfortunately, they were closer than near, actually right under us as we came to sudden stop, stuck and feeling like two rookies again and there was nothing we could do until the tide came back in.

Figure 50
Sun going down
Hargreaves Basin

We made our beds and planned to stay the night. I imagined people along the river edge, awakening to the two of us embarrassingly stranded and in full view. Having settled in, we felt the boat move. The tide was coming in faster than we thought. We inched across the river and then stopped—we were stranded again. This time we waited as we now knew that we would float off again soon, the inward tide doing what it always does.

Figure 51
Stranded on sand bank
Ōruawharo River

Then there was the moment I will never forget, the simplest of things that made all the difference. I switched the map on my cell phone to 'satellite' and there was our boat stranded, a circle on the map, and most importantly, there were the sandbanks marked out. Now we knew the way to go.

Figure 52
Rosemary on sandbank - white circle
Google maps 19th June 2020

Pitch black now, I put on a head lamp, stood astern and held the phone in one hand looking ahead. Tony steered the outboard motor, and I gave directions all along the last part of the river, "left, right, left, left, right." The fourth moment of intense relief was when the torch flashed on the mooring ahead and we knew we had made it, a predicted three-hour boat trip turning into seven and half hours and a fifteen-hour day in total. We made it! We were exhausted but more so, elated. For all the worry and all the doing of it, I said thereafter, it was one of the best days of my life.

Figure 53
Tony and I home after 7 1/2 hours on the water. Photo by Reuben Hayward

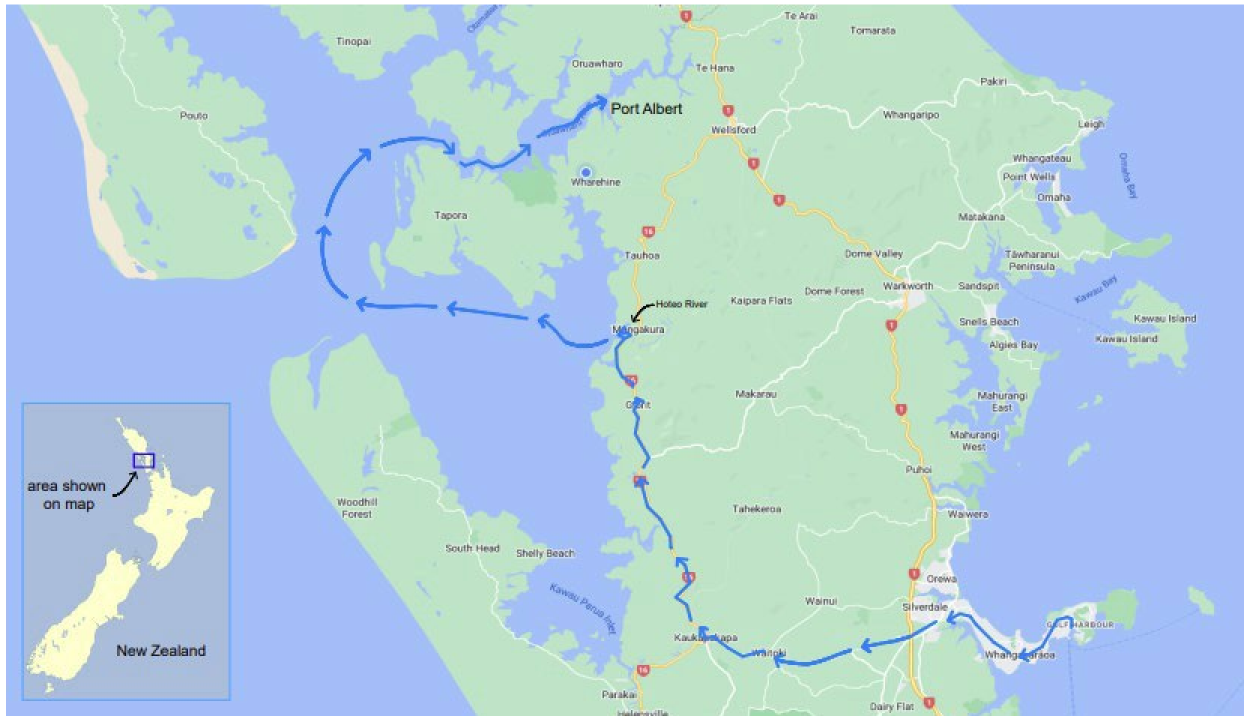


Figure 54
Trip home from Gulf Harbour Marina to Port Albert on the Ōruawharo home

For me, this trip was experienced as a deeply felt un-mooring from domestic and mundane life: a movement from the static materiality of home and office into the strong currents, fluxes and flows of the river and the mysterious underwater world beneath; from ordinariness into the extraordinary; from the subdued and world-weary towards something bigger than before. Rosemary and the river rendered both the expansive and the fraught, and amidst it all, I felt alive-in-the-world. Furthermore, this turning point trajectory of my research and my becoming as a boat person entangled with multiple flows on the river including wind, current, sandbank, tide, and weather. A turning point because I initially set out to hear from people and find local stories and now the river itself became intriguing in and of itself. Something shifted below, a sort of knowing without words, a sense that, while the (overwhelmed) research-mind wandered to and fro, the river needed to be kept close—a feeling-for her ultimately mattering more.

All the while, other social, political, and cultural flows moved through this maiden voyage—such as the materiality of the boat, the capacity of the owners, maps, resources such as money to purchase a boat in the first place. Starting out research life

on the boat brought this milieu into view, Rosemary now shaping both myself and my research in unexpected ways. And deep down below, flourishing amongst the fuel and condensation, lived (and lives on) a small and slimy thing that most likely caused the breakdown in the first place, a microbial conglomeration of things – notoriously known as diesel bug, a river thing that still looms large two years down the track.

Diesel Bug

A host of thinkers move with me into the dark and shadowy space of the motor including: Bennetts vital materialism and the thing-power of things (2010, 2020); the actants or catalysing interveners and distributive agency of Latour's actor network theory (2005) and Deleuze & Guattari's (1999) unfurling rhizomic assemblages. Thinking-with this conglomeration then coalesces within something that feels closer to the sticky, slimy, emergent and, in this instance, troubling world of the microbial and that is Harraway's articulation of what she terms - the tentacular.

> The tentacular are not disembodied figures; they are cnidarians, spiders, fingery beings like humans and raccoons, squid, jellyfish, neural extravaganzas, fibrous entities, flagellated beings, myofibril braids, matted and felted microbial and fungal tangles, probing creepers, swelling roots, reaching and climbing tendrilled ones. The tentacular are also nets and networks, IT critters, in and out of clouds. Tentacularity is about life lived along lines—and such a wealth of lines—not at points, not in spheres (Haraway, 2016: 32).

Furthermore, Haraway, troubled by the hubris of the human-centric, suggests thinking with compost as opposed to posthuman(ism), "as humusities instead of humanities" and notes that with these ideas she was able to "jump into that wormy pile" (2016:32). She adds that we as humans "are not in a separate compost pile. We are humus, not Homo, not anthropos; we are compost, not posthuman" (2016: 55). Moreover, amidst all of this, she notes,

> The tentacular ones make attachments and detachments; they make cuts and knots; they make a difference; they weave paths and consequences but not

determinisms; they are both open and knotted in some ways and not others (Harraway, 2016: 31).

As entangled within the tentacular, from within the compost and "wormy pile" of our watery-boat-lifeworld, the diesel bug looked up at us from Rosemarys disemboweled tank and exuded both vitality and tentacularity with consequences and pathways that took months to unravel and understand.

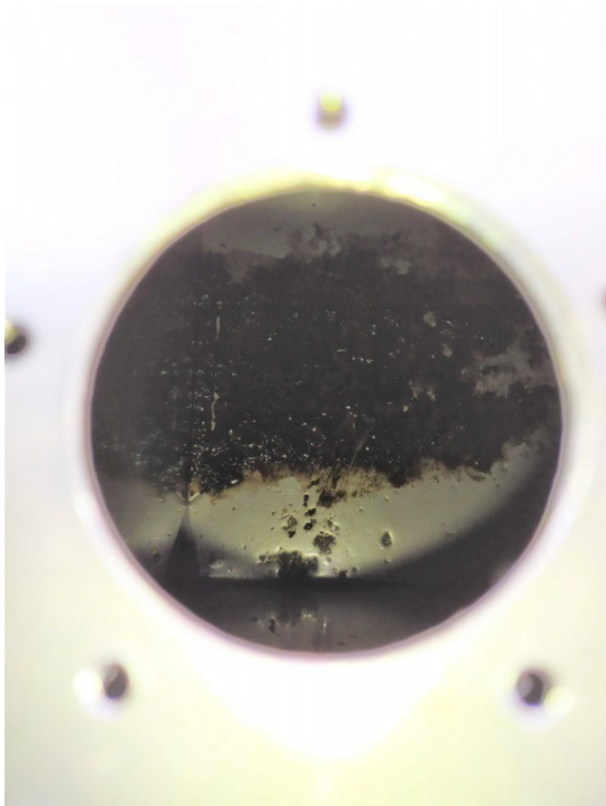


Figure 55
Diesel Bug - in Rosemary's tank
28th July 2020

At first, we were baffled by that sudden breakdown on the trip home. That was until we talked to others, farmers, fisherman and mechanics. They all said unilaterally, "diesel bug." Tony had been a farmer familiar with diesel motors but had not encountered such a thing, but we realised that diesel bug arrived after he had left the farm. This was a period when a combination of factors, including the increasing concern around climate change, and eventually, a series of legislative changes, unwittingly established a context for the flourishing of diesel bugs in the motors of Aotearoa NZ. These factors included legislation in the US and EU, during the period of 1996 to 2006, which were enacted to reduce harmful emissions by lowering the amount of sulphur in diesel (*Kraken Yachts*, n.d.). Similarly, the US congress, in 1990,

amended the Clean Air Act (1970) to include strict emission reduction targets and limits to sulphur contents in fuel. By 2006, "the maximum sulfur limit in diesel was slashed from 500 to 15 parts per million" (*AXI International*, n.d.).

In 2001 in Aotearoa NZ, Associate Minister Paul Swain announced a 5 – 6-year plan to lower sulfur levels in diesel, with current regulations allowing for up to 3,000 parts per million (ppm). Discussion was had on whether to target specific populations or apply to the whole country. Either was possible as it was determined that the Marsden Point Oil Refinery in Northland could facilitate the reduction of sulfur in diesel going to particular populations via the pipeline to Auckland, by truck to the North and on ships down the coast (*Beehive.Govt.Nz*, n.d.). Eventually the limits in NZ were reduced incrementally from 500 ppm in 2002, to 50 ppm in 2008 (Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2015), then reviewed down to 10 ppm in 2016 (*Ministry of Business Innovation & Employment*, n.d.). This fuel is known as ultra-low sulfur diesel or ULSD. The focus on climate change and reducing harmful emissions, the legislation that followed across many countries, led to the production of ULSDs which then flowed through substantive networks into engines. All of the actants or actors in this vast network shaped what was to become, as noted, a flourishing environment for the conglomeration of bacteria, filamentous moulds, and yeast, known as diesel bug.

Ultra-low sulfur diesel is more hydroscopic or has a "higher affinity to water than traditional diesel" (*AXI International*, n.d.). Water is always present in a fuel tank to some degree and accumulates in many ways including through condensation on the sides of the diesel tank. As water is heavier than fuel, it sinks to the bottom of the tank. This is particularly so in untreated and/or static diesel in an unused boat. The diesel bug is then able to thrive in the interface between the water and the diesel. As noted by fuel suppliers, " a constant supply of energy from the diesel, and dissolved oxygen from the water, … creates a perfect environment for these bugs to quickly takeover" (*Fuel Equipment Specialists*, n.d.). These bugs have a short life span but "one microbe can produce more than 7 million new microbes in a 24 four hour period" (*Kraken Yachts*, n.d.).Diesel bugs produce waste and this waste turns to sludge and sludge, if untreated, moves through fuel lines, blocking filters and potentially doing damage to the engine.

The multiplicity of flows from environmental concerns to legislation, across networks, through pipelines, trucks and shipping and eventually into Rosemary's diesel tank — which we later realised had been dormant at her previous marina—all coalesced in that momentous moment, the breakdown of our boat on the trip home. The thing-power of diesel bug was profound. It was talked about in PhD supervision meetings, money was spent to fix the motor, research was stalled, this being very upsetting as I had pinned so much on Rosemary as a research participant and all the while we knew that such flourishing could only be temporarily stopped. As noted, humus-like we were de- exceptionalised amidst our connectedness to this smallest of things. As compost-able, permeable, and vulnerable, we were (and are still) caught up in a flow of multiple tentacular lines. It goes on. If Rosemary lay dormant, diesel bug multiplies. If we don't keep topping up the tank, condensation will form on the inner walls and diesel bug will flourish. Being with Rosemary is life lived amidst the multiplicities, lines in movement, weaving myriad paths and consequences, openings, and foreclosures as is life along, on, and beside the Ōruawharo. Similarly, and convergent with diesel bug, another of the smallest-of-things was to move through and reconfigure the course of events in multiple ways, this other thing being the coronavirus.

Coronavirus & the Near to Nowhere

Coronavirus swept through the world, causing the greatest impacts (to date) from late 2019 to early 2022, the period covering the first part of my PhD research. The vitality or virality of this virus shaped social worlds at multiple scales, life as we knew it being curtailed, thwarted, and reconfigured by the thing-power of the coronavirus. Furthermore, as noted by Donna Haraway, we were "forced into the temporality of the virus" (2020: 23:57) which moved very fast indeed. Similarly, in the Auckland region of Aotearoa NZ, we were legislatively reconfigured into the new spatiality shaped by the virus, as this area went through several hard lockdowns. This had consequences for my research as the northern border of Auckland was etched along the Ōruawharo River, shown in the map below (*Newsroom*, n.d.).

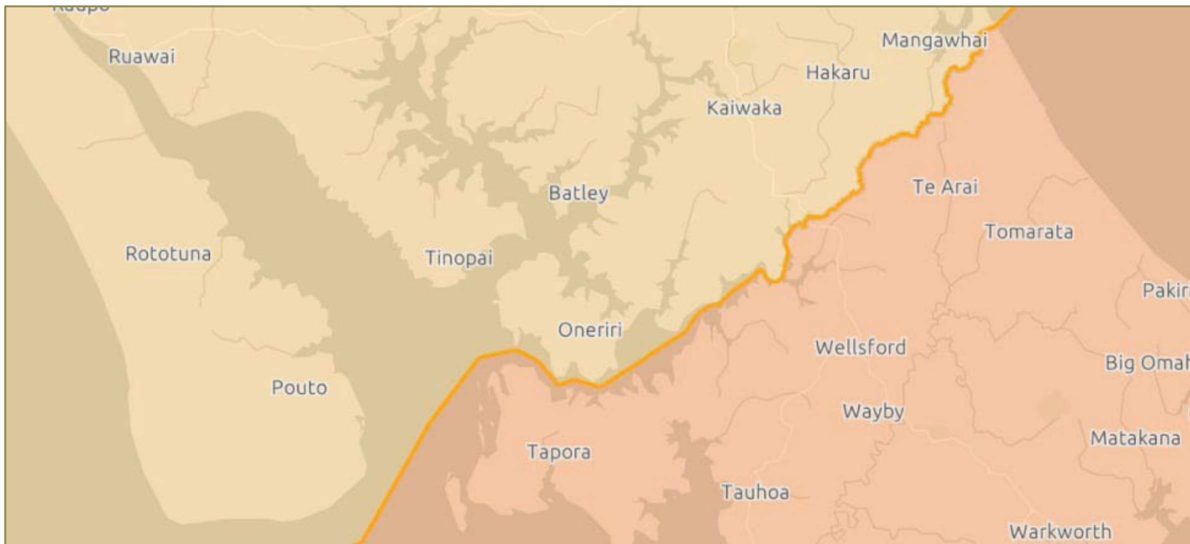


Figure 56
The alert level border between Kaipara and Rodney districts.
The orange line runs along the Ōruawharo River.
(*Newsroom* n.d.)

Other maps of the Auckland region followed with the Ōruawharo as the northern border; yellow maps for Covid (*Unite against Covid-19*, n.d.) and blue for police and police checkpoints (*Nzherald.Co.Nz*, n.d.) – see below.

Auckland 3

- Alert Level 3 from 11.59 on Sunday 14 February 2021 for 3 days.
- Travel in and out of Auckland is for essential travel only.
- Gatherings restricted to no more than 10 people.
- Maintain physical distancing. Wear a face covering if out.

Mangawhai Heads
Warkworth
Whangaparaoa
North Shore
Auckland
Waitakere
Manukau
Papakura
Pukekohe
Waiuku

New Zealand Government

Unite against COVID-19

Figure 57
Borders of the Auckland Region under lockdown – level three.
Northern edge (of yellow) runs along the Ōruawharo River
(Unite against Covid-19. n.d.)

Figure 58
Police checkpoints including those near the eastern end of the Ōruawharo River
(*nzherald.co.nz*. n.d.)

These borders with 'thing power' (Bennett 2010) were significant for those of us on the south side of the river. We were locked down for extended periods, which meant, due to restrictions, that we were not able to use the boat, while those on the north could boat freely. Rosemary sat unused for weeks on end and this provided the perfect conditions for all that could to thrive. The birds moved in, lichen and mould spread, biomass grew towards the riverbed and of course, the diesel bug was left to flourish. Each return to the boat felt like starting again. Furthermore, as space was reordered in the pandemic, and we were locked down, my point of view was substantively and concretely drawn away from the river and back to the office. This felt in some ways like being displaced or even, to stretch a concept, "a view from nowhere" (Nagel, 1974, 1986). Bruno Latour (2021) uses Thomas Nagel's term "a view from nowhere" to refer to the history of the scientific view of the world, a legacy, in the western tradition, inherited from Christian theology and an all-knowing God, "which is an all-powerful God, which is itself, himself or herself – nowhere" (2021:10:02). Latour also notes that scientists,

> Imagine that they are themselves transported somewhere in the out-of-space abstract calculable model. So they confuse the invention they have of the world, of the ideal world, with they themselves being somewhere idealised in another world (Latour, 2021: 8:43).

He adds that this is now well known in science critique as the "view from nowhere" (2021:9:15) and deeply problematic as it is never possible to escape the subjective point of view. Challenging this cosmology, Latour calls for a "view from somewhere," from the inside of things, the terrestrial, earth bound, experiential, actual lives and the multiplicities that unfurl through the mass networks along which agency differentially diffused. He adds that the coronavirus has been prodigious in revealing the connectedness of things and the unpredictability; dis-order rather than order and the ways in which we need to learn to live within the world, not transcendent, not wishing to leave (2021:21:25).

As noted, while not transcendent and clearly subjective, being confined to the home and office felt like, with regard to the river, a view from nowhere. From nowhereness, the river is murky and distant, the riverbanks inextricably altered through human contact, an environmental concern rather than a place of wonder—ordinary rather than extraordinary. As the Ōruawharo became a hard border in one lockdown after the other, I turned to my books and all the while, emergent temporalities spiraled out this strange new normal. Stories across linear time seem to become pertinent (some of which to be covered in following chapters). For example, the river as hosting fleets of waka as far back as 1250; the river as a current for the flow of religion as missionaries made their way around the Kaipara in the early 19th century; the river as a crucial supply route for new settlers from around the 1860s; the river as a the final funereal route for Kauri trees, as the giants of the forests were felled and sent to ports around the world at turn of the 19th century, and mid pandemic in the 21st century, the river as a local border in a global pandemic. While this across time view of the Ōruawharo was useful to think about those significant events which happened across clock-time, the river seemed to be differently-synched; a rhythmic tidal back and forth more akin to what Biehl and Locke refer to as meantimes, a temporality that "unfolds in the present" (2010: 6) —a river being a river regardless. From afar, this river-being-a-river

regardless was, in a subtle, hard to grasp sort of way, calling me for more. I came to realise that there is a distinct difference in my thesis-thinking between a view from the sort-of nowhereness of my office and a view from the somewhere of the river. In amongst the 'somewhere,' the river-world disclosed itself to me in a multitude of ways including ways of river knowing, feelings of becoming-*with* and a sense of belonging-*in*.

Concluding thoughts: Rosemary and a View from Somewhere

Being on the river with Rosemary, albeit with all its difficulties, profoundly altered my orientation, point of view and my research experience. The view from somewhere was deeply felt; astonishing, wondrous, at times troubling but more often enchanting. Previously, this somewhat ordinary, in the distant murky river, had never stirred up such feelings. As I diligently attempted to learn about the river and the boat, any intellectual pursuit was unwittingly subsumed by all of what was in my midst. Knowingness emerged out of seeing, smelling, listening, moving, doing, and feeling. What mattered was the smell of the salt river, the feel of the winter wind, the splash of a bird in the peripheral view, the rock of the boat, the turn of the tide, the drop of an anchor and a successfully hauled up mooring along with the surges of anxiety when Rosemary broke down. Amidst all of this, abstraction seemed to be almost a distraction while consciousness in and from somewhere, also revealed the unexpected, the things that sort of came in sideways; flashes of nostalgia, feelings of what it is to *be* and *belong*, memories and longings.

In part, knowing, belonging and becoming feels child-like or play-like in Rosemary on the river; like putting one foot in front of the other while concentrating on the most granular of things; like sitting atop the boat feeling the thrill of it all; making tea in what feels like a child-hut, the kettle and cups nestled amongst the simplest of things. Each of these was experienced in evocative lingering moments in time. Moments in which it seems that all there was, all there is, and all that there will be, fold together, coalescing within the bodily-I as a deeply felt sense of belonging. Moreover, this bodily-I is dividual, has porous boundaries, and within a process of influx and efflux, moves amidst a multitude of flows which territorialise with affect, agency, and impact.

The 'I' is de-exceptionalised amongst it all and knowing becomes about knowing that there is much that you can't know or predict and even more that you can't control. Cast into the world, terrestrial and aquatic, I argue that the research-I is thrown off the abstract while simultaneously ontologically and sensorily reoriented towards what seems to matter more. What matters, is the river itself with all its capacities, agency, troubles, kin, vitality, and flows. As sentient, bodies then absorb knowing from both within a deeply nested sense of becoming-with and from the point of view of being somewhere. In Rosemary and on the river, the some-where is unequivocally, expansively, and enchantingly—there.

Figure 59
My son Eamonn and daughter Eva on board Rosemary, 27th December 2020

Chapter 3, River & River Things

From this place of knowing more, feeling more, becoming-with, belonging in, view from somewhere, I go down to the river and look anew to see if things can be seen differently. This learning from a river is a hard to grasp place to start, like knowing without words. It feels akin to the prior-to abstraction/objectification moment as explained phenomenologically by Csordas (1990:39-40). Csordas calls attention to the quick moment between consciousness and perception, between subject and object. In that slither of the in-between, I wonder about the possibilities for difference, newness born of being differently attuned. This feels like learning in a moving current into which copious human and non-human entanglements, and social, cultural, political flows, swirl about in the murkiness of it all. I try to see past these currents as much as possible and just look at what is in front of me, what comes into view, such as mud and mangroves, which feel weedy, the leftovers of the denudation of felled forests and farms to river edges. I question weediness (Tsing 2004, 2017) and instead, use agency to think about the non-human (Kimmerer 2020) and start to understand these river things in an 'in and of' themselves sort of way. I include the thoughts and feelings of local people who experience mangroves and mud in contested ways. I talk about the river itself/herself and draw from those who study her and the broader Kaipara, and ask, what water is this and go on to include my own encounters with the river. As I write up these accounts, I, in turn, embody knowing and experience a deepening sense of belonging, to me, the Ōruawharo, becoming a river friend—when calm and obliging– and an interesting place to get to know.

The Weedy & the Wild

Within the hard to demarcate, social, natural, inextricably altered and far-from-wild ordinariness of the Ōruawharo, a weediness prevails. For Tsing, "weeds are a form of human disturbance, and the forms they take depend on the kind of disturbance and the kind of unmanagement that follows" (Tsing , 2017:3). In amongst the weediness, gaps emerge between the "cultivated" and the "wild" (Tsing, 2004: 177). Tsing draws attention to these in-between spaces and conceptualises them as gaps. She notes "gaps are conceptual places into which powerful demarcations do not travel well" (Tsing,

2004). Tsing goes on to say, (in the spirit of Mary Douglas), “everything between is matter out of place” (2004: 193). The Ōruawharo feels weedy; the much despised mud, contested mangroves, fly-over birds, sediment flows, invader species lurking in riverbeds and foreign trees with whispers of the once grand native forests barely here and there.

Thinking from the river, I attempt to see these weedy things in an *in* and *of* themselves sort of way. What do they do? How do they fit? How do we demarcate or not? What do they evoke, provoke and compel? From this point of view agency matters. Environmentalist and forest biologist Robin Wall Kimmerer, having reframed her understandings through her Potawatomi language, stresses the need to learn the “the grammar of agency” (Kimmerer, 2020: 55, 58), (along with the language of science). This requires shifting thinking in the nonhuman world from “its” and nouns to “persons” and verbs – specifically the verb – *to be*. She uses the example of a bay and notes when named as such with a noun, the bay is “trapped between its shores and contained by the word” (2020:55). She goes to note that the Potawatomi verb *wiikwegamaa* – “to *be* a bay – releases that water from bondage and lets it live” (2020:55).

> “To be a bay” holds the wonder that, for in this moment, the living water has decided to shelter itself between these shores, conversing with cedar roots and a flock of baby mergansers…Water, land, and even a day, the language a mirror for seeing the animacy of the world, the life that pulses through all things. *This* is the language I hear in the woods; this is the language that lets us speak of what wells up all around us” (Kimmerer, 2020: 55).

Writing in the post-colonial environmental context—as ravaged by the excesses of settler power—and from the viewpoint of the bay and forest that get *to be*, she foregrounds the agency of the natural world and concludes, “And the vestiges of boarding schools, the soap-wielding missionary wraiths, hang their heads in defeat” (2020:55). As with Tsing’s hard to demarcate weedy gaps, a grammar of agency can displace humancentred-ness and foreground the vital materiality, virality, openings , foreclosures, struggles and the triumphs of the more than human world.

Agency, however, is not other worldly, but situated and expressed within particular social, cultural, political, economic, historic, and importantly for the Ōruawharo River, a colonised and colonising environmental context. This necessitates thinking back, imagining more, and trying to see how it was, how it is, and what happened in-between. At the scale of the river and harbour, this process is beyond the scope of this thesis as this covers a vast geographical area. A small section of the river, for example, could reveal layers of histories, intersections of colonial power and tikanga, contested narratives and multiplicities of flows - material, ideological, legislative, and beyond. Feeling overwhelmed, the Ōruawharo generates a way through, a fluvial approach to research and analysis. I imagine thinking with the surging and falling river tides, moving as the river moves, at times, floating and up- close, then more expansively, noticing a broader horizon buoyed by the swelling waters below. As questions arise, I lift the eye and fill the page with more. This also requires drawing on other scholarship about the Kaipara, examples of which are covered below in order to bring in other ways of knowing.

There are a multitude of voices that move through the Kaipara and her tributary rivers. Scholarship such as that from ecologists and scientists who map the intricacies of such a place (Baird et al., 2013; Haggit et al., 2008; Kanwar et al., 2015; Makey, 2020; Makey & Awatere, 2018; Morrison et al., 2014; Pine et al., 2015; Swales et al., 2013), accounts, at times, inflected with solemn tones of nostalgia as locals remember what places were like before; sandy beaches, clearer water and snapper feeding in the shallows (Morrison et al., 2014). Similarly, troublesome stories from the past loom large; devastated Kauri forests,[19] (Ryburn, 1999) drained wetlands,[20] dairy factories spewing forth pollutants such as whey, nitrogen and phosphorus and chemicals from cleaning products, for decades, nitrate runoff from farms and sediment finding its way into waterways below (Makey, 2020). Amidst it all, the harbour emerges as a colossal sink of yesteryear, now in need of incalculable amounts of remediation to bring it back

[19] Kauri were milled predominately from the 1880's to 1906 at its peak producing 30-40 million feet a year with the forests finally depleted, (having also harvested Kahikatea as the kauri ran out) by 1918 (Makey, 2020: 43).
[20] Examples of Government funded draining of wetlands include the Tokatoka swamp which was initially 15,000 acres [6,475 hectares] of wetland, "Glorit (653 acres) [264 hectares], Kukutango (274 acres) [107 acres] and Oyster point (368 acres) [264]"(Morrison et al., 2014: 7).

from the brink. Around the waters' edges, there are commendable calls for action from those who work hard planting thousands of trees under the shadows of global forces such as climate change and impacts within the local; the flow of sediment into the harbour from the tree-less places beyond.[21] Contested voices from cultural places and political stances also collide and converge as the human is de-centred and re-centred in debates in which principles and ontologies do not align. I am reminded of Tsing (2004), in noting the clamor of contributors which entwined with her ethnographic work in Indonesia, the voices, global to local flows, emotion, ideas and quests.

> Incipient nostalgia had caught us, enlivening our encounter. Indeed, the globalism of our exercise meant that our list was charged with emotions, quests, and voices originating from many sites, each buffeting us with their whiffs of pleasure, charisma, terror, dead authority, or charm. They crowd around me, in telling the tale, bringing their eccentric habits and irascible opinions to any purpose we might have concocted (Tsing, 2004: 157, 158).

Similarly, both buffeted and crowded, and interested in gaps, I turn, in part, from the more historical and scientific, toward the whispers from the salty, muddy places and attempt to learn from the river and river things. This is an unsteady and somewhat untethered stance and more child-like as, armed with minimal expertise, I approach the river world with an openness to whatever turns up. Additionally, Bennett's work on vital materialism lends a helping hand (Bennett, 2010, 2020). Bennett (2010) argues that all things; objects, the human, and non-human are made up of an assemblage of vibrant matter, a vital materiality that acts upon the world. This is an anti-anthropocentric point of view and one in which,

> Materiality is a rubric that tends to horizontalize the relations between humans, biota, and abiota. It draws humans sideways, away from the ontologically ranked Great Chain of Being and toward a greater appreciation of the complex entanglements of humans and nonhumans (Bennett 2010: 112).

[21] Example of groups involved in restoration work include the Integrated Kaipara Management Group(*Integrated Kaipara Harbour Management Group*, n.d.) and the Kaipara Moana Remediation group (*Kaipara Moana Remediation*, n.d.).

Horizontilised, I turn to the river and riverine environment, observing and describing what there is to be seen, heard, and felt, what questions percolate, and what river-beings have to say. Ultimately, this is an attempt to story the Ōruawharo from an immersive thinking-with the river point of view with openness to following hunches, feelings, and nudges from the natural world, always in the hope of finding something new. This is also an attempt to use gaps to think about the power behind the way in which demarcation occurs; what is happening in the naming and categorising of landscape and landscape things. As Tsing notes,

> Gaps are only experienced from the perspective of a particular, historically instituted line of demarcation in relation to which certain ways of being seem invalid or illegible. From another perspective, that gap may be another form of ordinariness. Yet some perspectives are more powerful than others. To the extent that categories are drawn with power, the gaps they stimulate are worth taking seriously as critical spaces and sites for emergent voices and dreams (2014: 196).

Within the in-between sites of emergent voices and dreams, I begin with a question that looms large and ask, “What River is this?”

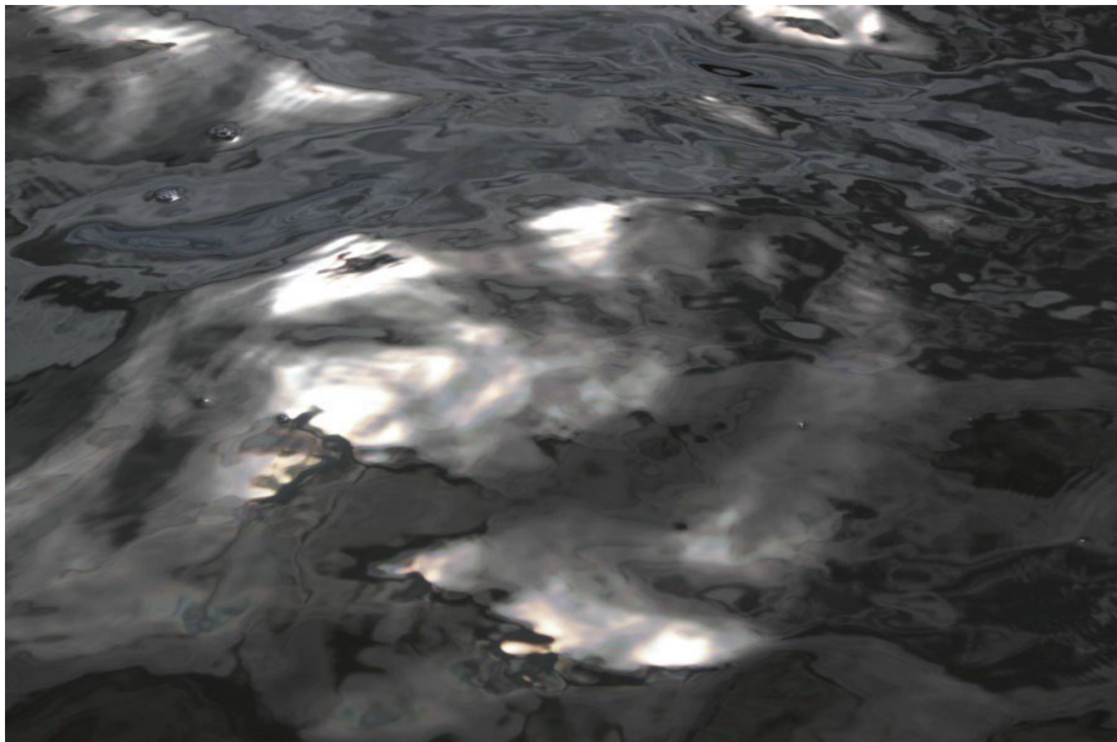


Figure 60
River Portrait

What River is This?

“What River is this?” depends very much on your point of view. As noted in the introduction, a local kuia changed my view of things. She turned her attention to the harbour, paused, held up her outstretched hand and said with gravitas and a certain amount of resignation, “you do realise it is a hand with five fingers, five marae, and five currents and in the middle is where all the trouble begins.” The Ōruawharo then became a finger and the connectedness of it all is never far from my mind. Somewhat prophetically, I was also forewarned as in the middle was where our trouble with Rosemary began.

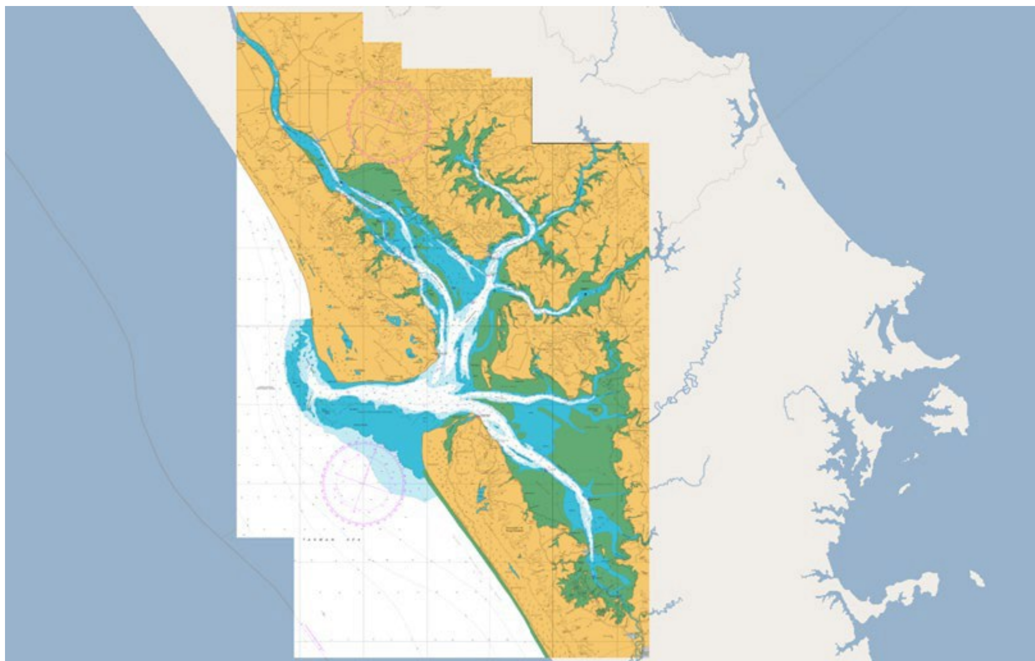


Figure 61
Raster chart image of: NZ 4265 Kaipara Harbour
Scale: 75000
(data.linz.gov.nz)

Outstretched and fingery, flows comingle and things from other places are inextricably linked to both the else-where, and through multiple durations. This is particularly so with sediment, the silt of the Kaipara, which dis-colours the waterways, fills up the banks and presents the biggest of challenges to those who wish to turn back the ravages of time. Marine ecologist and restoration practitioner Leane Makey (2020), via the narratives of Māori women and the tracking of vast swathes of ongoing

sediment pollution in the Kaipara, lays bare the ways in which ecological violence manifests in the present.

Similarly, sociologist Hugh Campbell (2020) frames the colonial farm as dispossessor of indigenous peoples, while simultaneously eradicating, or fighting against ecological frontiers such as forest (or *scrub*) and wetlands (or *swamps*). The colonial farm, supported by legislative frameworks, capitalist goals and the proliferation of agricultural science, then became modernist projects, politically neutralised, and imbued with substantial cultural and social capital. The taken for granted-ness of 'the farm' as a fixture or feature of the rural landscape in turn, made other worlds invisible and more often in an unchallenged way, as noted, wrought havoc on fragile ecosystems (Campbell, 2020). Campbell goes on to say, "New Zealand agriculture also displays vexing ecological contradictions—inhabiting an 'empire of grass' where less than two centuries ago stood dense native forests and wetlands" (2020:21). Mostly, this 'empire of grass' is what moves towards the water edges in the Kaipara, blanketing areas in which there were not only wetlands (see footnote page 103) and forests but also areas of past Indigenous lives (see chapter 5). From the grass blankets, the sediment flows, shown at its most prolific in red in the map below.

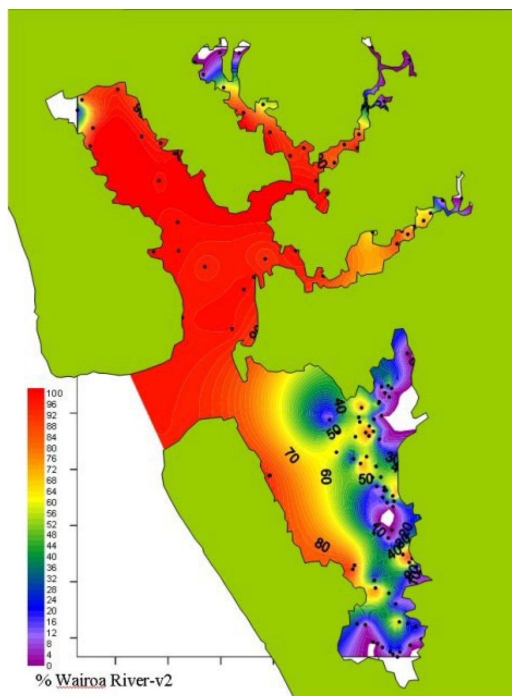


Figure 42
Sediment map
Kaipara Harbour
(Swales, et al., 2013: 109)

Sediment degrades the harbour health, silts up the tributary rivers and shapes and reshapes foreclosures and perceived impossibilities. These are stark, and somewhat defeating thoughts as *my* river becomes primarily a polluted place of struggle. Clearly this is something that matters, or even, all that matters. This is overwhelming for me as a researcher; it knocks me off my tiller, derails my anthropology of open-minded-ness and feels ethnographically limiting. I struggle to find a way through. Thankfully, thinking with unfinished-ness and an anthropology of becoming, enables moving past this impasse and opens a search for possibilities in amongst the multiplicities of the everyday. As noted by Biehl and Locke,

> An anthropology of becoming demands more than the flat realism that comes with standard practices of contextualization and historicization, and it must not simply echo the dark determinisms that mark much of social theory (2017: xi).

Furthermore, attending to the unfinished requires, "a conscientious empiricism wedded to an analytical openness to complexity and wonder" (Biehl & Locke, 2017: xi). The muddy silted-up-river is more often filled with wonder, on an autumn day, great clouds of mist follow her waterways, lifting to show the light and the way. With agency and vitality, the Ōruawharo pulls and moves with all the power she ever had, currents imperceptibly strong and tides that never fail to turn, a river being a river regardless.

Figure 63
A bend in the river, taken from Atiu Creek

In being a river, however, her riverness can be called into question as she does not do what rivers are usually thought of to do; not flowing in one direction, from one place to another taking hopes, dreams and aspirations with it, but rather pulling and dragging back and forth, shrinking, filling up, the tides dictating all that is able to be done on a given day – see example of a tide chart below (*Tideschart.Com*, n.d.)

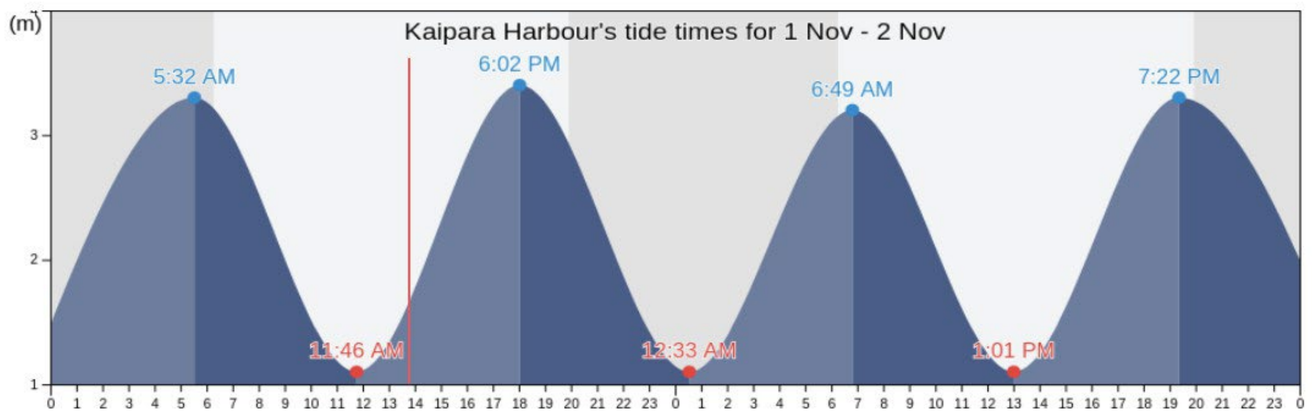


Figure 64
Tide chart for the Kaipara 1/11/2022 -2/11/2022. Graph from timechart.com

Mānawa: River Friend

As the tides move in and out, the Ōruawharo changes from voluptuous, in places sea-like and inviting, to channels down through the narrow necks and bordered-up by mud; mud which is terribly difficult for people to navigate in places. Not so for mangroves, for in the mud, the mangroves grow, great river edge forests of them, stirring up both strong and mixed feelings from locals. Some proclaim their worth and others want them gone. As noted by a local fisherman and farmer,

> (Ivan) Yeah, bloody mangroves on the beach, they never used to be there. That was a nice beach down there. We haven't got any photos, but we should have taken some photos. But years ago, they had some, oh, fifteen foot ti tree posts up in the air with a platform on it and for all the kids at that time, like my age

Figure 64
Mangroves Ōruawharo River

> when I was young, all the local kids and people could picnic down there, and they'd get up on the ti tree and they could jump into the water and there was a nice shelly beach down there. But all those mangroves should soak it all up now.

Mangroves evoke emotions - frustration, nostalgia, and a sense of loss. He adds,

> (Ivan) If you go back through the old Port Albert photographs and so forth. Port Albert was not a mud hole like it is now.

Figure 66
Disembarking on the Ōruawharo, date unknown, photo by Harold Marsh, used with permission, Albertland Museum. 2004.97.556 Interestingly, the wild-ness or natural state of this pre-mud and pre-mangrove, mass-forest scene is questionable – rather a colonial constructed beach for landing backgrounded by hills denuded of trees.

Figure 67
Labour Day Picnic 1919
Ōruawharo River
Photo by Harold Marsh
Used with permission
Albertland Museum
2004.2.99.695

Figure 68
Port Albert mud

From this point of view, mangroves arrive and make more problems in their wake,

> (Ivan) All those mangroves bought all that silt down— they're holding the silt there and there are a group of people, including me, that think that that should be able to be put back to what it was 100 years ago. Therefore, get a helicopter and they reckon round-up does wonderful on mangroves —go in there and spray them out. Look what they've done… now they should rip them all out.

His wife then added that she had discussed this with a visiting university ecologist who suggested that the mangroves along the river are not the right type to do the right job and are not like the ones in the tropics. She notes,

> (Sarah) It depends where you are and there's mangroves and there's mangroves. They protect that particular beach in some ways, but then in other parts they just take over.

Being the *right* ones refers to an ability to nurture fish in the watery tree root nurseries of the tropical north. The New Zealand temperate mangrove, mānawa or Avicennia marina var. australasica, however, is slightly built compared to tropical mangroves. These tropical mangroves,

> Tend to have much greater mangrove species diversity and structural complexity (including complex buttress roots) than their temperate counterparts, along with some areas remaining permanently submerged throughout the tidal cycle (Morrison et al., 2014: 79).

Similarly, another report notes,

> Unlike tropical mangroves, Aotearoa NZ mangroves have no fauna or flora that are dependent solely on mangroves, they are not associated with high biodiversity, and they do not have a role as fish nurseries. This creates a tension between 'accepted' international mangrove literature and practices, and the NZ experience (Le Heron et al., 2022: 457)

Being seen as lesser than the tropical mangroves is one reason for some to devalue their utility and further the case for removal. This perspective is more often entangled

with both a sense of loss—especially as a great extent of the mangrove spread has occurred within living memory (Horstman et al., 2018) —and the idea that mangroves are imported. Ultimately, not only is their usefulness challenged, so too is their native-*ness*. As one famer declared: "They are not from here. Some say they have come over from Australia."

To be non-native is to be weedy. Weediness entangles with precarity (Tsing, 2004), including the risk of being gotten rid of, and to a lesser extent, of being thought of as something that simply doesn't belong. Belonging then seems to imply certain duration, a deeply rooted connection to, in this case, Aotearoa New Zealand across the required amount of time. A shadowy parallel emerges between mānawa (mangrove) and non-Māori, many here across generations but not (or never) quite belonging. More significantly for mangrove, however, an imposter myth seems to have flourished. It turns out they have been here for the longest of time as noted in the following,

> The presence of mangroves in New Zealand has been dated back to 19 million years BP by association with Miocene deposits (Sutherland, 2003). Pollen records show that the mangrove species Avicennia marina has been present from around 14,000 years BP (Pocknall et al., 1989), long before New Zealand was discovered (Horstman et al., 2018: 23).

Clearly *native* and in defense of mangroves, environmentalists note their efficacy in the fight against climate change, acting as "ecosystem engineers" (Horstman et al., 2018: 30), providing barriers to both rising sea levels and sediment from farmland, purifying water and acting as a significant carbon sink as noted below,

> As mangroves in New Zealand are estimated to cover 26,050 ha (Morrisey et al. 2010), this rate equates to 104,000–260,000 tonnes of carbon produced each year within New Zealand mangrove ecosystems (Horstman et al., 2018: 36).

Figure 69
'Creek' by Biz Dempster

Figure 70
Mangroves Ōruawharo

It seems mangroves, from the perspective of Kaipara people, can be good, bad, or somewhere in between and so too are their practises; the cause of problems or the solution. Another ex-fisherman and small land holder expressed great frustration at those who wish to see the mangroves gone. I asked him if he thought the mangroves were necessary:

> (John) Absolutely necessary! ... It's nature's way of cleaning the water. It also is a nursery for fisheries and stabilises the coast and hangs on to all the mud and

cleans the water. It's a slow process; you're looking at 100 to 200 years...They don't create the mud; the mud is silt in the water they hang on to it.
(Clare) Oh I've heard that they create the mud.

He replied emphatically,

(John) They do not create the mud.
(Clare) They hang on to it?
(John) The mud is in suspension which is affecting the sea and all the sea life and everything else. And it's all to do with their aerial roots and the way they live.
If you go and see mangroves that have been there for a long time, you'll find that it's shallower where they are and all around them. They go out and it's almost a bank that they live on. It's still below the tide, but it's raised, and they hang on to that and then behind the mangroves, you get swampland, which is usually flax and cabbage trees, which is usually followed by wet water trees like kahikateas, and they are reclaiming that silt that we're putting in the water.
(Clare) So are they helping those trees in the back grow?
(John) They are buffering them from the salt water. And that mud that they create, though it's full of salt, and takes a while to come right, it is extremely rich. That's why they drain all these flatlands of mangroves and put farmland on it because it's really rich in nutrients because the mangrove has been hanging on to it out of the water and storing it. And it's also all the dead creatures that live in the mud and everything else while it's there, it becomes very rich soil.
(Clare) So what do you think about the idea that they are getting rid of them? I mean, this is a dumb question, given what you just said, getting rid of them to get a beach back like a shelly beach back?
(John) Terrible idea!
The only reason that they are there is because mud was there in the first place. If you take the mangroves away, you won't get rid of the mud.
But the sediment is going to be dealt with differently, the runoff and no trees and all that business.

And the only way we can deal with long term and to get the Kaipara clean again, is to let the mangroves do the work and stop all the runoff. And people think of it in their lifetimes.
You know, here never used to be muddy there, but it is now as simple as the mangroves. You get rid of the mangroves get rid of the mud.
(Clare) Oh that's the way they are thinking?
(John) That's the way they're thinking. Human beings think in terms of 40 or 50 years or maybe 60 or 70. Nature doesn't.
But we need to think in terms of 100-year cycles – I don't know, I'm making that number up, but you know what I mean.
Mangroves are our best friend.
(Clare) So the main work they are doing is holding onto the silt?
(John) They are holding onto the silt, and they are cleaning the water.
They are using that silt as well, to turn it into mangroves.
I mean, they're using the nutrients in the water and in that mud to grow with…all those little aerial roots…
They just hang on the mud settles round. And on those aerial roots, you get little barnacles and oysters and things like that.
They are also full filter feeders.
So, they're also cleaning the water as well.

Figure 71
Mangrove - seedling,
Port Albert

Figure 72
Port Albert, Tide out

I also asked my husband, a Kaipara resident of 45 years, what he thought or felt about mangroves,

> (Tony) I don’t think you can blame the mangroves. They are here because of the mud… another species that has found a new environment that we have created and colonised… Maybe there’s other species that are really glad that the mangroves are here. I’m not sure if they’re good or bad to be honest. You’d have to assume that the environment was in equilibrium before, you know, before people came having evolved over billions of years and we're not the same numbers of mangroves as I understand it, so. So, the balance has been altered and taken advantage of. They have just been bopping along the ocean since time immemorial because that’s how they spread. They have a good place to land.

Figure 73
Mangrove seed or propagules

Thinking about Mangroves

"I don't think you can blame the mangroves" he said
How do you know "whether they are good or bad?"
"They have just been bopping along since
Time immemorial"
Looking for muddy homes
Others said mistakenly
"They don't come from here!"
As if coming from here is all that matters
But I wonder now
Is it time to open our hearts to those who roam
Across borders
To other-homes, with space to plant the seed
And let those that follow
Crustaceans, the smallest of fish, mud that clings
And birds on the fly
To and from their mangrove homes
And ask who gets to decide
Who and what
Is good or bad?

Figure 74
Seedling Port Albert

Figure 75
Seedling, Port Albert

In many ways, mānawa have a people problem.[22] More often than not, they are seen as an invader, spreader, blocker, a spoiler of views and leisure time, along with their co-conspirator, the acres of accompanying mud. Nostalgia and a sense of loss flow through perception towards the places that are no longer like they were before. Simultaneously, mangroves have allies, ecologists and environmentalists who see the value, especially in the throes of climate change, and fight for their very existence. Out of these competing currents, ontologies collide and contestedness prevails. As one scientist notes, it is not a topic you bring up around the bar-b-que (le Heron et al., 2022).

Where is the river in all of this? The Ōruawharo moves along and through the mānawa, creeping up through the forests in high tide and draining out on the low. While always having had some mangroves, the rivers of the Kaipara once knew far greater forests, ancient stands of Kauri, Pūruri, Karaka and all the native cousins, moving down towards the waters edge. As noted in the following excerpt from the novel *The Story of a New Zealand River* ((1975, [1920]) written by Jane Mander who lived on the sister river of the Ōruawharo, the Ōtamatea, in the early 20th century.

> From the mangrove banks to the sky a great variety of trees in fifty shades of evergreen covered every yard of space. There was a riotous spring colour in the forest, voluptuous gold and red in the clumps of yellow kowhai and crimson rata, and there were masses of greeny white clematis and bowers of pale tree ferns to rest the satiated eye. Stiff laurel-like puriris [sic] stood beside the drooping fringe of the lacy rimu, hard blackish kahikateas [sic] brooded over the oak like ti-toki with its lovely scarlet berry (Mander, 1975 [1920]).

Back to the present and way less spectacular, mangroves populate an expansive area particularly along the injured riverbanks, offering a salve of sorts for times gone by, holding back the sediment, and keeping others out; boats can't get through, people struggle to walk along, and land developers and the monied-up are put off by the muddied views and homogeneity—the ordinary little trees that seem to go on forever.

[22] I have borrowed this idea from the title of Margaret Cook's book (2019), *A River with a City Problem: A History of Brisbane Floods*.

But the birds and little critters like them as do the multitude of things that thrive in their midst, along with the river, her waterways being filtered and protected by her leafy neighbours. Ultimately, I think that the Ōruawharo does not have a mangrove problem but rather, a guardian—vast and expansive mangrove friend.

Figure 76
Spoonbill amongst mangroves
Port Albert

Figure 77
Pied Stilts
Left & above,
Port Albert

What Water is This?

Down from the banks, mud and mangrove forest to the water, the river moves with a force that belies its often times sleepy sheen. I know this because we have been caught up in it, and all at once, I knew I could be in trouble. This started with an attempt to clear some weed off the bottom of the boat.

> *I jumped in and the current swept me along. I didn't see that coming. I flayed my arms against the tide and reached out for the tender, dragged myself along and back to Rosemary. The murky water felt as good as a swim in the open sea; salty and refreshing, but the strength of the current stayed with me, like a fright long since remembered, I really had no idea. I clung to Rosemary and managed to complete a useful task; rudimentary cleaning the rudder; all caked-up like wearing a riverbed coat. It was useful but sobering. If that was the rudder, how was the rest of the underbelly?*
> *A neighbour who knows more than me about such things, admonished me for jumping in the river, "you wouldn't want to be doing that" he said.*
> (Fieldnote 3rd January 2022).

The river catches you out. Similarly, a boat trip with my six adult children on board could have ended very badly. After writing about a picnic in the bay, I recall the trip home.

> *The sky was blue, the water calm, we stood on the deck and rang the bell to signal our departure home. Tony had glanced sideways at the white caps rolling up the middle of the river through a narrow neck funneling through from the large basin, our picnic spot – Hargreaves Bay. He didn't say a word.*
>
> *We encouraged the boys [our two eldest sons] to take up the helm. The sou'wester was blowing up and the opposing outgoing tide moved with force against the prevailing wind. The water went from calm to choppy to very choppy in the blink of an eye.*
>
> *And then the motor stopped. Suddenly we were sideways rolling sideways in a following sea—great heaving, lulling, tipping and the mast, a metronome*

slashing from side to side atop the perilous tide.

It felt dangerous and I felt responsible for the seven others on board, now at risk, me an amateur right out of my depth. The river was aggressive, a show of force. Those of us on top went from recreation and leisure in a moment to high drama infused with fear and down below, the kids watched as things slipped and slid and fell from shelves.

Somehow in the middle of it all, Tony astride the cabin for balance and bowl in hand managed to bleed the motor, she started and off we went. On top, we barely spoke all the way home. Had I risked the lives of all of my six children on board? The force of the river remained, like a shudder up the spine.

(Fieldnote, December 2020)

Water is a mere slither of a term with which to describe a river with force, like calling a hurricane out there—*wind*, a desert storm—*sand* or a scream in pain—*sound*. Water is there, unfathomable heaving and surging, but is it the force of the thing that makes it a river; a force complicit with the cousin-moon pulling the tide and propelling currents; a force fueled by the tempestuous wind cutting up rough—inducing fear in the faint hearted, and attentiveness in those who know more; a force that subsides at the top of a tide allowing the human to relax and the human-eye to see more. And in amongst it all, a momentum that moves just beyond the grasp, leaving a feeling of the implausibility of ever really getting to *know* such a thing.

After our near miss, I wrote (with a little W. Whitman getting through)

River O River
How you besiege me
I thought I was getting
To know you
But then you turn on me
River friend no more

(Fieldnotes December 2020)

Concluding thoughts: Impression & Expression

This River-friend no more both put me squarely in my place and left a residue of knowing-not-knowing within the bodily-I. By this I mean the memory of the near disaster settled deep as both a warning and a story to be told with vigour like fireside performances of old; a way of knowing which enfolds into becoming-with such a rivery place—encounters which propel different vistas and ways of thinking, doing and reacting. Being unsettled emerges as learning more, junctures in which thoughts are forced to be thought about within the creative potential of turbulence as understood by Cresswell and Martin (2012: 526). Simultaneously, not-knowing lingers just below consciousness, like staring into the eternal eye of a wild thing and encountering something which can't be known back. All the while, people, through the sensory, find ways of expressing the thing that barely can be known via the back-and-forth movement of impression and expression or what Bennett calls "influx and efflux" (Bennett, 2020: x). Light becomes photos, photos become art, rhythm resettles in the poetic, encounters as memories, story the riverscape and reshape becoming and belonging.

Weediness whispers more, the diminishing category only one way of understanding such a thing, with the thingly-ness of the thing, in and of itself, opening up other possibilities for knowing. Agentic and compelling, the materialities of mangrove and mud manifest liveliness, capacity and vitality—character, smell, colour, chemistry, nutrients, cohabitants, ecosystems and a particular way of being-in-the-world, regardless of the human. Similarly thinking through weediness, or not, changes perspective from invader to guardian or friend. In doing so, these new perspectives potentially reshape relationships and from then on, rework implications and actions/intentions, promoting a more inclusive sense of knowing and belonging. Taken further — away from mangroves, mud and 'invader' species — a strand of weediness can be seen to entangle with the politics of knowledge. With precarity, a weedy outsider may well feel unsettled when encountering gatekeeper insiders, those who get to tell stories and belong in an unquestioned and surefooted way.

All the while, along the troubled waters of the Ōruawharo, the river goes on being a

river as it always has. A river: a great surging flow of water which turns with the tides becoming muddy creeks in the east and an enormous sea in the west. A river: with a life of its own resisting representation and moving in the rhythm of river-time. A river: with light, colour and mood, one of five fingers with a danger lurking below. A river, which settles inwards, deepens belonging and manifests, through expression, into other things, art, photography, prose and the like. In becoming-*with*, the river transforms, knowing is differently known, people are transformed, practices emerge and belonging becomes intrinsically connected to the reaches of this muddy, mangrove lined salty place. This is particularly so for people who boat and fish, known in this thesis as river people.

Figure 78
Shipping oysters from Ōruawharo
17/9/1924
Photo by Harold Marsh, used with permission Albertland Museum 2004.2.2007.545

Chapter 4, River People

Fisher People

Out on the river, people boat, and fish, and in amongst it all, know as they go.[23] In this chapter I talk to fisher people about their river knowing, connected to such things as tide, moon, and currents; as mystifying for someone like me as a school-day physics class of forty years ago. I hear about how they know, how they come to know, and this connects to their sense of belonging, these things being more implicit in conversations, alluded to, when John says that being on the river is “like going to church.” I hear about crossing the bar and imagine it as a *rite de passage* within a wild place which profoundly shapes becoming. When hearing about forces like wind, current and moon, I listened and hoped that when back on the river I would understand more, become more of a boat person. I was struck by a passage in the *Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula Le Guin. The young boy says to his teacher, “but I haven’t learnt anything yet”, to which the elder replies, “Because you haven’t found out what I am teaching” ([1968] 2019: 21). My finding out will only come with experience and is unlikely to match the knowledge of the people I get to meet along the way. These fisher-people have spent years within a watery world in motion, the smell, sounds, damp, air, light and dark of a place, moving with porous bodies, calibrating, and recalibrating that which is to be known and embodied more. Through experience, the body knows. Through the senses, the body also knows and conterminously, memories are remembering more (Csordas 1990, 1994); the way of the currents, the location of the fish and mussel beds, the sound of a sound motor and the multiplicities of craft at sea, the rise and fall of the tides and the strengths of the currents. What follows are excerpts from my longer conversations with three fishermen and shorter chats with others. This river-knowing is mainly refracted through a particular orientation, the fisher-body, a person who sets upon the water with an *eye* for the catch, and ontologically, deeply attuned to the aquatic and beyond and expanded through my own thoughts about what is being said to me.

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[23] Tim Ingold (2013) speaks of knowing as you premised on restoring knowing where it belongs “at the heart of being” (2013: 6) with an orientation directed towards the world.

I met up with Ivan. We unravel a map, and he tells me about boating a long time ago, in the pitch black of the night.

> (Ivan) I knew all of this like the back of my hand at midnight. I could leave here, okay, in the middle of the night, and why the middle of the night because you wanted to catch the low water down here [points to map]. I'm talking about the middle of the night. It might be two o'clock in the morning okay, but the tide might be out down here at four, so you wanted to get going. I'll zoom down here knew where all the channels were in the dark, down here through the banks back up here and under here.
> And the mussels - the mussels used to grow in a big carpet.
> (Clare) Oh right!
> (Ivan) And the bed would be here [points] and there would be a big carpet of mussels. On the sand! Not rocks! [After all these years, he is still astounded by this].
> (Clare) Oh, on the sand
> (Ivan) On the sand and you're just go and fossick through them and take the bigger ones and put them in your boat and come home.

Like magic carpets in the dead of night, Ivan harvested mussel's hours before others raised their sleepy heads. This was many years ago, Ivan now in his seventies, a large man with Dally gum digger roots[24] and swarthy skin to match. He's weathered a storm or two, both in life and on the water, but speaks with gusto about those times on the Kaipara, the places he went, the things he caught, and the boats he built. A life lived within place, elemental, physical, embodied, expansive, and to the sedentary amongst us, at times, legendary. We start back a bit, Ivan as a young boy, and his dad, with sugar sacks over shoulder, walking overland to gather scallops from the harbour. Not many people had boats back then. He tells me about the early days.

[24] Dally is short for Dalmatian, a term referring to the migrants and descendants of migrants that migrated to NZ predominately as gum diggers, from the 1890s https://teara.govt.nz/en/dalmatians. I worried that this term is an insult now, but Ivan thinks not. I take my lead from him.

> (Ivan) Anyway, we were in Wellsford, my father was interested in fishing therefore we used to travel to Tapora to walk out…We used to walk out and get our scallops.
> (Clare) Were did you get your scallops from?

We spend some time looking at the map. And he drew light pencil lines of the places he went with his father decades ago.

> (Ivan) So, all your scallops were right along this bank here for walking, right along the low tide mark. Okay, so you can imagine you could go out here you could go out there. You could go up there. And that was all just scallops.
> We get scallops here, here, up here.
> Up this side here
> Along the face there
> Along there
> Some here
> There were some – but it is only a little bed there.
> And this is where the scallop beds were at that time anyway.
> Oh, you would have picked the odd one up here.
> Now scallops for walking … were really plentiful … guys would have a sugar bag full—probably a sugar sack on their shoulder that they would walk home. That was the limit for their family—a sack full.

From driving down the peninsula and crossing paddocks on foot, next came boats, as Ivan noted, “in late stages boats took over” and with boats, came boatloads.

> (Ivan) Out in the middle of here, it becomes dry. There were boatloads of scallops. You could you out and park your boat against low tide bank, get out of the boat and take your bag with you and just fill it up and then bring it back to the boat.
> (Clare) You and your dad built a boat, is that right?
> (Ivan) Yeah, I did and then when I come up to leaving school, I spent money on buying glue and plywood and so forth and built boats instead of buying cars.

(Clare) You built boats instead of buying cars [very surprised]?

(Ivan) Yeah

(Clare) Just for yourself or were you selling them?

(Ivan) Just for myself

For a couple of years and then build another one.

I probably ended up building about six the same size about 16 foot in the end,

And probably a little one 13 or 14 footers, um, two or three of those

I did a 24-footer, and they were all Pelin designed plans.[25]

There he was then, a boy with his father, on foot, with a sugar sack full of scallops, and a long way to go. Later, a teenager and his dad, eying a larger scope and scale, building a boat together, this being the beginning of the younger man building many of his own. All the while, boats took them and him further afield, all around the harbour, east coast and west and later, over the Kaipara bar.

Ivan also told me about when the scallops started to back off.

(Ivan) There was just tonnes, there was heaps. In about 1967 they sort of backed off. They backed off.

Yeah, and a lot of it at that time, was the dairy company at Te Hana which discharged all its effluent down the pipe down the Te Hana River.

(Clare) Ok, well that's straight into the Ōruawharo then, isn't it?

(Ivan) Yep, yep. And a lot of that lands and survey land was being broken [being cleared for farming].

(Clare) So these simultaneous things are happening—everything happening at once. Can you remember the change?

(Ivan) I can remember changing from plentiful scallops to the next time you went, which was on the spring tide a couple of weeks later. And there'd be less there. And then you go again, a couple of weeks after that, and they were disappearing. They were just dropping off and you really had to start looking for them then.

[25] Frank Pelin designed boats have been prevalent in NZ since 1965.

In 1967, the scallops back off. In 1967, the scallops begin to leave. Ivan ascribes agency to the non-human long before it becomes *de rigueur* in the social sciences.

Another man I talked to, George, remembered these times but from a different perspective, as a young Māori boy with his siblings, riding the bus from the Ōruawharo settlement on the north side of the river, down along the peninsula into school in the local town. I asked him if he could remember seeing stuff going down the river from the dairy factory at Te Hana.

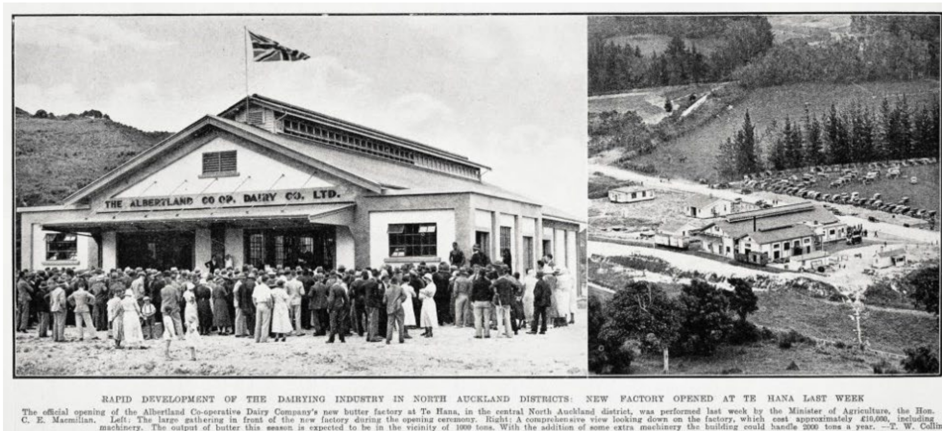


Figure 79
Te Hana Dairy factory Northland
Whites Aviation Ltd: Photographs. Ref: WA-38543-F.
Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23527682

Both he and his sister Tania recall this as a time when everything changed.

> (George) Yes, we could see it from the bus.
> (Clare) You could see it from the bus!
> (George) You could see the different colours in the water, when we went over that bridge at Te Hana
> (Clare) Could you smell something?
> (George) Yeah you could smell something. [Tania calls in the background – yeah yeah!] You could smell it down here too [pointing to where they lived along the river – far from the dairy factory].
> (Clare) Oh you could smell it down here!
> (Tania) Every time we went past the bridges you went ohhh!
> (Tania) And that's what ruined this river.

The ruining of the river is shocking in the context of the lives this brother and sister had growing up in Ōruawharo with a river bounty that was part of the everyday. George talks of his father, once part of the 28th Māori battalion in WWII, who returned home from war, and in the fifties, along with three other families took up ballot farms in Ōruawharo. This is a complex post-colonial lost-land story as Māori from other iwi were allotted farms within the rohe of Ngāti Whātua, causing some ill sentiment to the present day. But as Pākehā, I sense an unease and feeling like I am overstepping, steer away from this story.

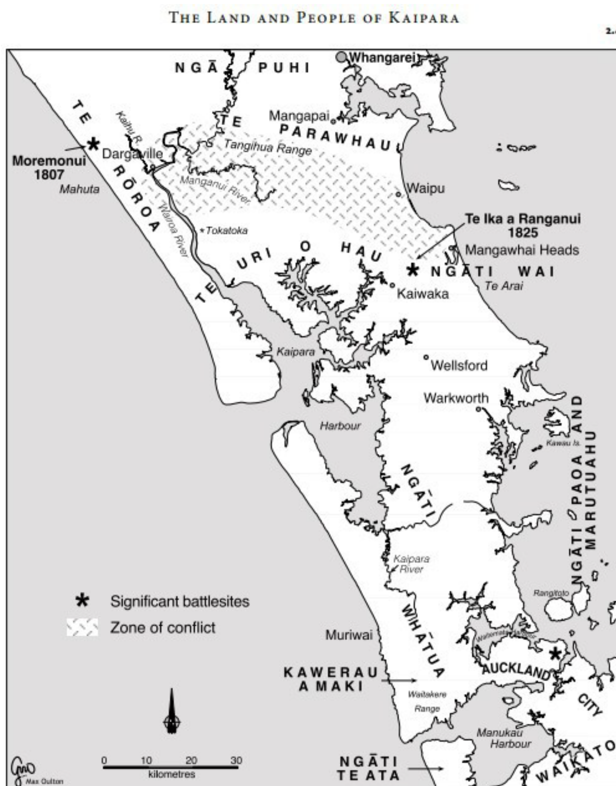


Figure 80
Map showing the iwi of the Kaipara
The Kaipara Report, WAI 674, 2006:6

Ultimately, it feels wrong to unsettle past hurts that are not mine to unsettle. The three of us talk about life on the river instead, life with mum and dad and their twelve children. The farm tractor had a big part to play in this.

> (Tania) And Dad used to come down here on a tractor that we would come down here and we'd catch our fish in the river across there [points out the window as George and his sister now live on the south side of the Ōruawharo].
> (Clare) Oh, a tractor from your place? All the way down to the edge there somewhere?

(Tania) Yes, straight across. See the Urupā [she points to the graveyard across the river].

(Clare) Yes, that would be quite a hike from your place on the tractor?

(Tania) Yeah, seven miles.

(Clare) So what were you catching down there.

(Tania) Oh snapper, flounder, we used to go floundering at night.

(George) We used to come down a lot for the oysters.

River knowing emerges via the practicalities and practises of everyday living, the collecting of river food, once plentiful, for family and neighbours and through working life along a rivers edge. Tania and George's memories reminded me of the following old photos of river life at the Albertland Museum, not taken in their time but the remembering of river harvests reach back to a more distant past.

Figure 81
The Oyster Pickers at Rapotu 1924
Photo by Harold Marsh
Used with permission
Albertland Museum
2004.2.2007.10

Figure 82
The Skippers bait, Ernie Farr fishing,
Photo by Harold Marsh
Used with persmission
Albertland Museum
2042.2007.547

Figure 83
Fishing Trip on the Ivy, Ōruawharo River, 12th February 1923
Photo by Harold Marsh Used with permission Albertland Museum 2004.2.2007.548

Figure 84
Hair cutting time on the oyster picker's boat, date unknown
Photo by Harold Marsh Used with permission Albertland Museum 2004.2.99.695

Tania herself Māori of course, then conjured up a distant memory about 'Māori's—a term Māori were called before the incorrect plural (s) was dropped. Tania uses the plural as a reference to people long gone: a people seemingly other to her—people who lived along the riverbanks. She points across the river,

> (Tania) And there used to be Maoris living down there where that bush is there. But they're all gone now. They used to have their little homesteads where the bush is over there. They used to be living near you know, but they're all gone now of the little homesteads and down below the school.
> (Clare) These are people who were there a long time ago?
> (Tania) Yeah but they've gone now, and the houses have all fallen down

This feels like one of those conversations that bridge a childhood memory of sixty plus years ago to a more distant past, connecting to people that moved in other times, beyond the edges of the memories of the present day. I wonder how close the river hut people's memories were connected to those from long ago, the people in the pā sites that once populated the river. These echoes from the past reflect back at me from a photo taken in 1912, road workers. They look this way, some ahead and some aside; the eyes of people who knew the river differently from today, who had whānau that lived along the edges, plenty of river-food within easy reach and tumultuous change across their lifetimes.

Figure 85
Road workers
Photo by Harold Marsh,1912
Used with permission,
Albertland Museum
2004.2.2007.837

George takes me back to the river in the 1950s and 60s and we talk about floundering.

> (George). We would go down there at night and catch over 100 dozen flounder.
> (Clare) Oh my lord!
> (George) But we would go all night.
> (Clare) Oh all night
> (George) And there'd be maybe, half a dozen of us.
> (Clare) And what do you share them [the flounder] around or something?
> (George) Yeah, there were no fridges or anything so on the way back, we'd drop off two or three dozen at each house.
> (Clare) Wow
> (George) Because there were ones like the [...] and they didn't have a tractor or anything so they couldn't get down onto to the beach.
> (George) And Dad always did.
> (Tania) But we didn't give them our oysters [she laughs] ... he wouldn't put the oysters in because they said no, we're not gonna share our oysters [laughter all round] except to some of our favourite neighbours.

Then there were the scallops.

> (Tania) Sometimes we would go to school, and we'd come home, and we'd walk past the bathroom, and the bathroom was full of scallops, Dad and them would just go down there and pick up sacks and sacks of scallops and bring them home. Oh, I would hate scallops, but I love them now.

I also asked about boats and George noted that "we had boats now and then". Tania laughed in the background and said,

> (Tania) The white man came along, Jack Farr, and he had a big boat, and we could go out in his big boat [laughs] we could go fishing in his big boat!
> (Clare) Oh was that the Ivy?
> (George) The Vicky, he had a daughter called Vicky. He had a big wooden launch, and he would take a lot of people in the district.

George went on to explain how people would do things together [Māori and Pākehā] used to take a lot of people in the district.

> (George) We had haymaking because we all used to work together …We used to go from farm to farm helping one another. And then at the end of that, that particular working season of getting hay, Jack Farr would take us down fishing. We went down to the graveyard [out near the mouth of the harbour] and in about an hour and a half, we had 300 snapper!
> (Clare) Holy moly!
> (George) Yeah. You put your line up and you had three or four hooks on it, and you would get three or four fish.
> (Clare) Oh wow!

Tania tells me about going fishing with māmā, mother of twelve.

> (Tania) I remember going down with māmā on the Vicky and yeah, and Mum's line wouldn't even touch the bottom and she would be pulling in fish and my job was just to—she would just she would just drop them on the floor My job was to go and pick them all up and put them in containers [she laughs] and I never got to fish [laughs]… then I had to help clean them.

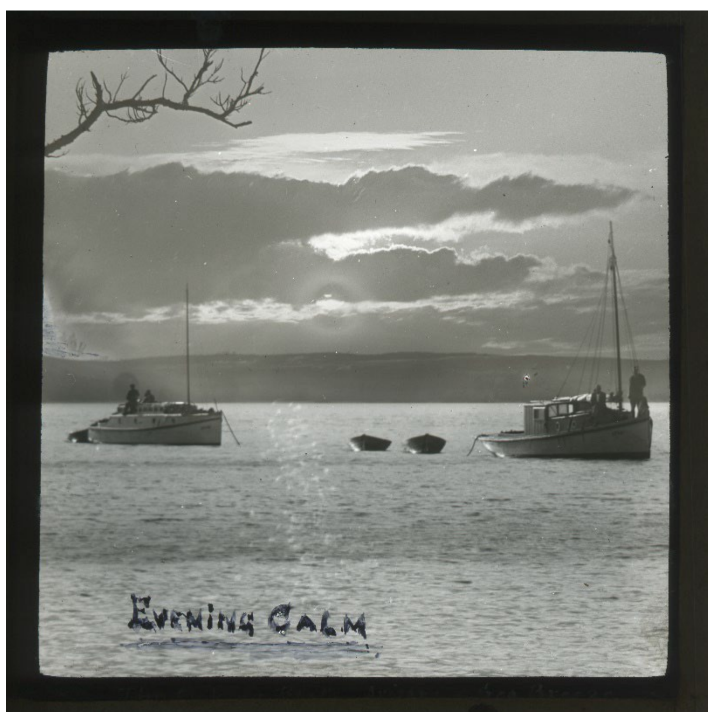


Figure 86
Evening Calm, the fishing boats, Arizona and the Sea Breeze Photo by Harold Marsh Used with Permission Albertland Museum 2004.2.2007.237

Fishing memories are more than just fishing memories. They are embodied and, through affect, recall the past into the present, a form of remembering as evocative as a river flow on a late summer's day. Wind, rain, rides on the tractor, scrambling for the catch as a mother heaves the line, the smell of diesel and rock of a boat, saltwater, and the surging sea off over the bar, spearing and boating in the dead of the night, feeding the village, walking with Dad and the smell of sugar sack coming from over the shoulder, and most of all, the water. Water that touches and smells and flows through, that both astonishes and saddens as the pollution finds its way, water that changes with every day yet somehow remains the same, flowing back and forth while river people live out their time in its midst. Water gets in. The river gets in; memory, nostalgia, and affect manifesting as a deep, but sometimes distant— like grasping at a childhood memory — sense of belonging and enplaced way of knowing.

The wateriness of the river is also sea-like, surging salt water from the Tasman only made rivery from the banks that encapsulate it so. I noted in my journal,

Today it was about the
Salt and sea air
Unexpectedly, it came out of left field.
When you think you're going to the river
And smell the sea.
A bonus
Plus, five spoonbills on the wing
Portside!
Journal entry 13th June 2021 – aboard Rosemary

The ocean also came into my river chats, the mighty Kaipara stemming from a surging sea. Ivan told me the story of crossing the bar—infused with the epic and compelling from beginning to end. The trip, being up the river, across the harbour and out to sea, I argue, is akin to a primal crossing, a rite de passage de passage, a ride through a wild

sea, across the place of wrecked ships[26] and lost lives, to the other side with a new status and kind of knowledge intact.

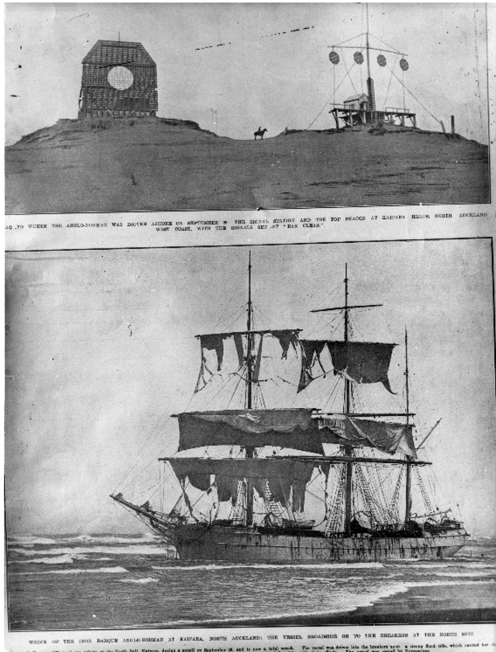


Figure 87
Photo from newspaper by Harold Marsh, "Norwegian Barque 'Anglo Norman' wrecked Kaipara Bar
26 Sept 1914
Used with permission
Albertland Museum
2004.2.97.986

Crossing the Bar & Out to Sea

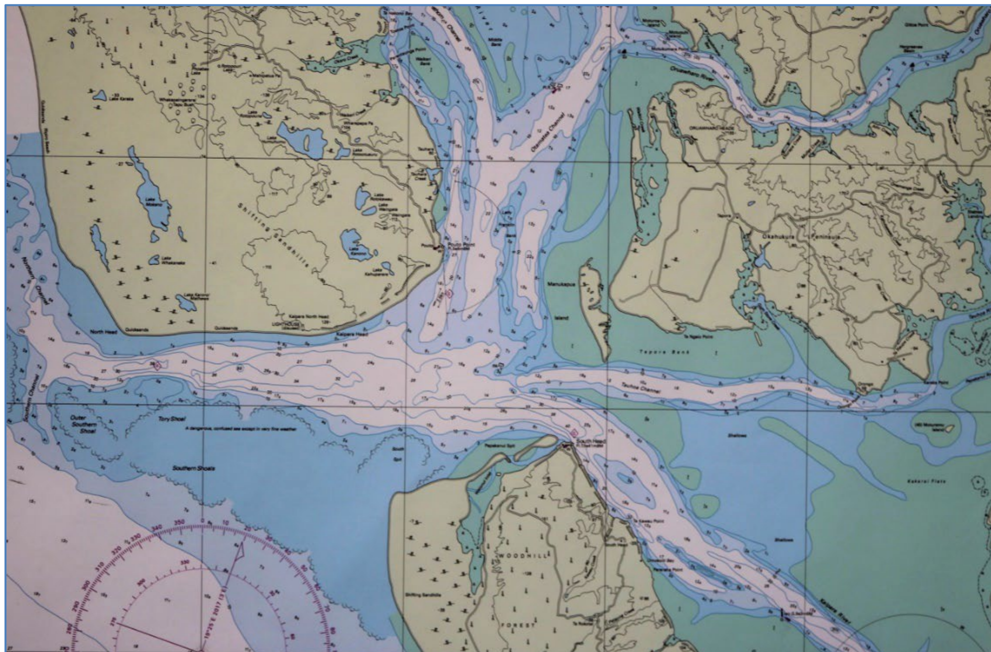


Figure 88
The Kaipara Bar - section taken from Kaipara Chart - the Ōruawharo in the top right-hand corner (Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand, 2018)

[26] There have been at least 43 shipwrecks, but some accounts say that have been as many as 110. Add to ref https://teara.govt.nz/en/shipwrecks

The Kaipara is a bar harbour, the entrance a mass of sandbars and deep-water channels (Meares et al., 2018) described on the map as a “dangerous, confused sea except in very fine weather” (Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand, 2018). Crossing this “dangerous, confused sea” is not for the faint hearted, inexperienced or risk takers and even experienced skippers can be met with rapidly changing waters and ‘monster waves’ (Meares et al., 2018) and forced to turn back. The channels shift and change position and can’t be reliably charted, as noted on Kaipara Harbour land information map.

HABOUR ENTRANCE

> Depths on the bar and the entrance to the Kaipara Harbour are subject to frequent change and it is dangerous for mariners without recent local experience to attempt to enter the harbour (Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand, 2018).

The bar fizzes with broken water, aerated waves with hollow centres dangerous and destabilising for boats. The shallows propel large volumes of water to swell and thrash about in multi-directional ways. As noted in the Transport Accident Commission Report (2018) following the sinking of the vessel Francie in 2016 (with a loss of eight lives):

> Extreme caution must be exercised when crossing bars because sea conditions can change for the worse in a very short time. Waves can come from more than one direction and are usually larger and steeper than surrounding waters and often breaking (Meares et al., 2018).

They go on to note that, “all bars have areas of broken water containing air, which can severely reduce the stability and handling of a vessel” (2018: 11). Monster waves over shallow waters and quick changes in conditions require acting with care and caution not bravado and risk taking. Ivan talked about the decisions that needed to be made, sometimes at the last minute,

> (Ivan) But sometimes when you're venturing out here, I mean, you couldn't really make your mind up at 10 o'clock the day before and say that you were

> going out there tomorrow. Sometimes you'd be here at 10 o'clock at night, comparing notes with other people. And are we going we're not going we're going?
> And no, we're not going … Everything had to be ready to go. And you had to be in the frame of mind and if it was going to be iffy, it was going to be too iffy. That was it. Yep.

The accumulation of tacit knowledge within the collective of boat people shaped the decision making of the day. He went on to reminisce about trips across the bar:

> (Ivan) You would call it a group of people that were interested in doing that. Not everybody, some people wanted to—not everyone did. There were all sorts of things you had to learn about; the swell that would arrive before the actual storm. The swell would arrive a day before the storm. So, if you thought, oh, I'm going to go fishing, and because the storms not going to be here until tomorrow, well, that's silly, because it's just swell is going to arrive before the storm does.

He also talked about the day he couldn’t get back through:

> (Ivan) I have been caught out there. On the way out, they [the waves] were quite mountainous, but when we got out there at 10 o'clock in the morning and I radioed up another boat, and said, I think this is too much for us, we’ve got to go back in and they said, you are not gonna get back in. The coastguard actually closed the bar and advised boats not to go. They closed the bar around about eight o'clock in the morning. But we're already gone an hour before that.
> (Clare) So you are just stuck out there?
> (Ivan) Yep, so we are stuck out there. So, we had to stay out there until the change of the tide, which was lunchtime, or about 12.30. And then we made our way in. And you couldn't actually tell where there was a break or an entrance to the bar because it was just all churned up and you know really big stuff. You had to know where you're going and what you were doing.

Something alluded to in these conversations is a code of some sort; not always explicitly stated, a bit beneath the veil, known to skippers and intrinsic to being respected and trusted on the water, in particular when entrusted with the lives of others. Chryssanthi Papadopoulu refers to this when discussing mariners and their boats, "Mariners think that the ship educates them in particular codes of conduct and moral behaviour, which are unknown to people on land" (Papadopoulou, 2019: 6). I got a sense of this when discussing this with another fisherman, Victor. Victor is large and strong, the ruddiness of his Nordic ancestors coming through. A hunter, fisher, forester, ex-farmer—a non-sufferer of fools, economical with words, and likely to be able to survive in just about any wilderness he found himself in. We talked about his two thwarted trips across the bar in the boat of another. It struck me that Victor is one person who would not readily be inclined to turn back.

> (Clare) Did you ever cross the bar?
> (Victor) I've never been across the bar. I've had a couple of attempts but not in my boat. In a boat from Hoteo. I had two goes. That was not long after that boat rolled with those guys in it.
> (Clare) The Francie?[27]
> (Victor) Yeah
> (Clare) After reading about the Francie, I got kind of interested in crossing the bar because I realised it was this huge thing in and of itself, and some people do it and some people don't. Some people obviously wouldn't have the boat for it or the motor for it or the skills and I was talking to somebody about that, and they said that you could be all ready to go and then something will happen you know and then no, we're not going. Was that your experience?
> (Victor) Yeah, pretty much yeah
> (Clare) So what was happening, were the waves too big?
> (Victor) The waves were too big.
> (Clare) The waves were too big. They get huge!

[27] The Francie sank on the 26th of November 2016 with a skipper and ten passengers aboard. Eight people drowned and three survived with moderate injuries. (Marine Inquiry MO-2016-206:1)

> (Victor) You've got a 50-knot sou'wester. I'm standing on the gunwales and look up and the things are two metres higher than me.
> (Clare) Yeah nah that's no good, eh?
> (Victor) So yeah, he says we're not going out there, no, so that's fair enough yeah.
> (Clare) So it's like a code of behaviour or a sensible kind of like a moral code. I get a sense of both things. So, is there a code of behaviour?
> (Victor) If you want to survive, that's the way it's gotta be.

The 'way it's gotta be' was emphatically accepted in this situation by a skipper on the boat of another, turned back twice but knowing that restraint was called for, a measured approach in a potentially dangerous situation. To do the opposite can be a source of scorn. In discussing the bar crossing with another skipper, he argued against the idea of a treacherous bar and declared that "the bar is not dangerous; you just need a good boat, a well-maintained boat." I added that you also probably need to know what you are doing. He agreed and noted that the last tragedy at the bar was due to the skipper "working two steps ahead of himself." He also talked about taking time. "If he had just waited, he would have got through, but he was in too much of a hurry." Similarly, the Marine Report (MO-2016-206) into the accident noted in its findings,

> 5.4. The skipper had a propensity for crossing the Kaipara Harbour bar in high-risk conditions, which was known to but not reported by others in the industry and community (Meares et al., 2018).

Having certain risky propensities and being 'two steps ahead of yourself' neither garners respect nor augers well for crossing the bar. Readiness comes with experience, embodied knowledge, sensory attunement and knowing the waterway in multiple ways; currents, tides, depths, wind, and a multiplicity of factors that can't be easily explained to others. This could be called a feel for the bar; tacit knowledge not easily shared. When I had asked Ivan about my interest in the bar, and if we could talk more about that, he hesitated and expressed concern. "Not if when someone reads it, they

think that they will be able to cross the bar. I wouldn’t want to be responsible for that.” I remembered that he had pointed this out in an earlier interview:

> (Ivan) If somebody wanted to go [across the bar] actually, I wouldn't sit here until, okay, well, it can go like this you do this and do that. And I just wouldn't tell them because you wouldn't want to be responsible for that thing either, would you?

Gatekeeping of knowledge becomes apparent amongst these fisher folk, things kept to them-selves until the time is right, the receiver equipped to hear and take in that which is to be received. This skipper did not want his learning from across a lifetime to spill over into unsafe hands and lead to a misguided and potentially dangerous bar crossing. Similarly, Māori may take extraordinary care when sharing what they know, does not get mistranslated, badly interpreted, and left as some sort of watered-down legacy in print. Learning about what people know about a particular place is as much about what they know as it is about what they are willing to share; the ways in which parameters, censures, closures, and openings are entangled in those moments between people – like a dance in the ether, a sizing up of you, the researcher, while simultaneously letting the odd piece of information move between the two.

I look back at a previous interview and realise that there was an attempt to explain a crossing to me:

> (Ivan) If you were up here (pointing to the map) you can go on through. There’re some things through the banks that you sneak through. Yep. And come in come in on that (points to a channel). They call that the northern shoals. There're a lot of shoals there, a lot of shoals that [the sea] breaks on but you have got gaps between them. Yeah, yeah, although if you're on the move, and they are rolling in it doesn't matter too much because you're on the move with them here, but you don't want the wind coming from southwest because it will move those rollers and it'll cut the entrance off. If they roll across there (points to map) and you just won't get in there. Okay, but in that one, you can, when you think oh God; we'll get some mountains coming beyond us. But if you got these marks and you get inside here, hey boof, off you're inside the

> lighthouse and you're well in the harbour and you think, what is all the fuss about?

Some of the information I hear, problematically goes right over my head, my keenness to understand not up with the complexities of geophysics; currents, tides the pull of the moon, weather patterns and the impact of storms that move across the harbour. Oftentimes, in this research, it's easier to just watch what people do. The way they seem to feel the water and know the way to go, the way they understand what the moon is doing on a given day and how the river turns, the height of a tide and the perils of wind and current. The way they hear. Sound is wind, water, circling birds and listening out for trouble in a motor, any strange knock or whir, a portent of potential trouble. The way they see. All at once, eyes look ahead and glimpse down, keeping a watch on channels and dials below, the nerve-wracking flicker between a temperate motor and the red zone. The way they move. In a flash, a skipper may shift a motor into neutral and leap up the bow to drop the anchor into the moving sea then dash back again, down into the cabin to stop the motor and out again to fish the sea. Even more deftly, assess the current, point the boat in the right direction, adjust the motor to crawl speed, leap and run, grab the hook, and lift out a heavy mooring as the boat slides past, move quickly back to the cabin to turn the motor off and leave the boat buoyed and at rest. Masterful and dexterous, with instinct and experience these people on the water move through and become-*with* this watery world.

Becoming-*with* in the midst of the watery Kaipara may also move along a significant trajectory, that of being a skipper who makes it across the bar. As Deleuze argues, becomings "belong to geography, they are orientations, directions, entries and exits" (*Deleuze cited* in Biehl & Locke, 2017: 6). Biehl and Locke go on to add, "the very materialities of space affect and impinge on the subject, encouraging or constraining possibilities for movement and adding further texture to lived experiences" (Biehl & Locke, 2017: 6). Becoming a bar-skipper manifests within geography and as circular or spiral—knowledge, practise and space entangling and moving back towards the self, sweeping up atmosphere, wind, current, tide, sea, matter, histories, experience, and memory - laying down as visceral bodily knowing. This embodied knowing simultaneously spirals outward towards the world in more circular movements of

becoming and belonging. Textured, affective and underpinned by limits, potentialities, and desire, with movement shaped by particularities and materiality, a boat, and a skipper head down the river, across the harbour at large, over the graveyard, out towards the Kaipara bar with an eye to the open sea. The first time, a profound and transformative experience likened to a rite de passage.
A rite de passage requires a movement from the pre-liminal, through the liminal or the in-between, towards reintegration (Bowie, 2006), in this case, with a new status, as a navigator of the bar. In this context, this is a thing that happens in a wild place. Anthropologist Michael Jackson likens the wild with the bush away from an African village, "the domain of wild powers" the place of fright and fear, "witchcraft, sorcery, and the djinn" (Jackson, 2014), enclave of initiation ceremonies, where the children are not to roam. These places at the edges and beyond the ordinary may move with gravitas, offer portals into other worlds, destabilise, unsettle, and potentially shift people's lives towards something else. Alternatively, a wild place may become the place of dreams, a livener to modern malaise and wellspring of enchantment, leaving the novice awestruck and the tired and weary, emboldened, and full of life.

Simultaneously, a wild sea can turn you back; make you sick and afraid for your life, move you forward and around again, leaving a clear sense of having experienced something, something that transforms the self, something that moves you beyond that what it is to be you. Importantly, the bar crossing is a rite of passage firmly enmeshed in the material world; water, currents, flows, sandbanks, and weather as opposed to transcendent, metaphorical, ritualised, and symbolic. The boat is real, so too are the bodies within and surging water about, all caught up and coalesced within a transformative moment in time. A moment in time in which the embodied past, the deeply felt present and future potentialities enfold and unfold within an ongoing process of becoming and belonging. These deeply embodied encounters within the wild, all mixed up with wonder, fear, astonishment, and adventure, sit like lynchpins between embodied coming-to-know and the storying of a life. Akin to the hero-journeys and the epic—talking to riverside dweller John was like a fireside chat from times of old, gripping, enchanting and at times, very moving.

Boil-ups, Survival, Currents, Tides, the Moon & a Standing Sea

John, a friend of mine, is a person significantly shaped by his time at sea. As a young man, he was a commercial fisherman down the East Coast and musician in-between, a skipper of charter boats when he was older and now a dinghy owner who likes to row out with wife Josie, to fish near the blue buoy on the Ōruawharo. He likes to make it clear that it is Josie who does the rowing—tiny of stature but strong as an ox, our Josie. I asked if he had any special memories from his time at sea. He told me about a boil-up.

> (John) I can remember being out on the Pacific Ocean and seeing water boiling. And we turned the motor on got on top of the of the wheelhouse and there were two swordfish rounding the skipjack tuna into a great big ball and going in and cutting them out and eating the bits and then rounding them up again working like two dogs with cattle. That's one but there's many, many, many things.

Later I go to my journal and remember a smallish boil-up moment for me.
A splash
What was that!?
A school of kahawai
Feeding across the other side
The most magnificent
Splashing, fishing, & hunting
You ever did see!
Journal entry 1/8/2020 on board Rosemary

Another time, we were aboard Rosemary, tied to the mooring, as the tide slowly turned, and the boat changed direction with it. It's always mesmerising, to be right there at a turning tide or the top of the tide, as they call it, like catching a moment that millions miss while scurrying about in the everyday. The tide turned and the terns started to dive. It is hard to describe such a thing, both striking and pretty birds with

angular features, flitting like butterflies, catching the light on the wing, diving all around us, the splashes rise, the light dances and all I could write in my journal was, "It's like magic, it really is". John calls out, "the kahawai must be driving the whitebait, and the terns are diving!"

Figure 89
Caspian terns
Port Albert

"Local knowledge" I write, "water knowledge" from a life lived in amongst it all. I asked John about life on the water,

> (John) It was all things; the sea was always an adventure. Your life is in danger often in one way or another, when you're young, that adrenalin! You can't find that anywhere else.

Mainly he was a cray fisherman on the East Coast, beginning the season with the first snow on the mountains, the time when the crayfish had hardened up and shed their eggs. This was the time the fleets would head out to sea. This was a life of near-death experiences, and he told me the story of one of these, the detail of which he could recall moment by moment, feeling by feeling, the storm, the sunk boat, the freezing cold, the near drowning saved by getting off the too big clothing and sinking boots.

> (John) And I had what they call a smock, which is like an oil skin, but it pulls over you and goes right down over the hood. And I had thigh boots on, and I want to hit the rock I went over the side. And I was standing on the bottom in 20 feet of water, trying to get my gumboots off. But I was 16 or 17 I must have been very, very fit. And it was midwinter. And I, as I went down that the smock was too big for me. So, it came off over my head.

He talked of hauling the skipper ashore, him wounded by a shaft of wood, of hauling him ashore and making it to a bay with cliffs all around with a threatening incoming tide.

> (John) I pulled him ashore. I was freezing, and I was worried about exposure, you know, and he was unconscious, and I pulled him up. He had a Bic lighter in his pocket. He was a smoker. And I found a role of insulation tape as bits of the boat were coming ashore. So, I got the Bic lighter and taped it down, so it kept going … I built a huge fire. And that that hour and a half or whatever it was, was the loneliest hour and a half that I have had in my life.

Rescued by a helicopter, the skipper never returned to sea and after a few weeks, John made his way back to the wharf and into the pub where the fishermen drank, a teenager amid mainly old Scotsmen and Norwegians who frequented the bay. He walked in, they stood up and started to sing—to him, for him. They knew.

Later, gripped by this story, I write in my journal (31/1/2022)

Bodies and brute nature; feeling the wind, the oily air, noticing the strange lack of birds, under twenty feet of water trapped by boots, slipping out—a size too big saving a life—weighed down by clothes, fighting to get out of water, climbing through windows with a rope around the waist, sitting on a driftwood strewn shoreline warmed by a fire, the tide coming in towards unclimbable cliffs, waiting for rescue. Traveling blind, no depth sounder, no compass, the pitch black with only the wind indicating the direction. Walking into a pub as a teenager. The men standing and singing—a hero-young-man home from the sea. He said that the sinking was the worst experience.

Maybe it was both the worst and the best.

John's eyes welled up telling this story of the singing men and so did mine, the emotion of more than fifty years ago entering the room, settling in the tiny house off the grid, a paddock away from the Ōruawharo. I asked him about home.

Where do you call home?

(John) This is my home. This is the first home I've had in my life. This is home.
(Clare) What was your first impression?
(John) To me it [the Ōruawharo] was a lake, it's not like the sea.
(Clare) When you say lake, were you thinking about Hargreaves Basin?
(John) Yeah, I looked at it, it feels like a lake. Well, I did it an injustice by calling it a lake because it seems so safe to me after what I've been through. Like, you know, those guys don't know what the big sea is. But listen, when I started going out in the dinghy, and I thought about the guys [the early settlers] that came up in the down here, yeah, sure. They don't have 40-foot seas or anything, but they got massive tides. Yeah, I took my hat off to them.
(Clare) I remember when the sea turned on us [during a boating trip with my children when the river became very rough]. When the river turned, I call it turned on us because that's what it felt like. I mean, it was pretty bad. It came from nowhere. And it was scary. And it was big. And it, it had a power that I didn't notice. The unexpectedness, whereas other people that knew the river and the signs probably saw it coming. Yeah, but we didn't see it coming.

(John) I have the most the most amazing respect for the guys that came in and out of those heads on sailing boats with no weather forecasting, or anything else how they could come in and out of the under sail is extraordinary…to come in and out of there [the harbour entrance], that's just it's almost suicide, you know, and the winds get funneled here (points to the map).

Guided by a map, we talked some more about the Ōruawharo, her idiosyncrasies, wind funnels, whiteheads, and a standing sea.

(John) What happens sometimes is there'll be a north-easterly coming in, which over here is quite a breeze. But it funnels along here. So, it's coming here comes here, and the high land on either side makes a funnel. So, by the time it gets to here, it's twice or three times what it would have been generally out here, because the air is getting condensed and pushes along. And that's why you get that you're out here, would have got that chop,
(Clare) We were hitting it from here. And if you could see, the little white heads on the water. Next time if that happens, okay now we know, this is problematic. But I can't remember which way the wind was going, could you tell me about the wind and the currents because this is where I get confused?

John reaches for a pencil and paper.

(John) If the winds going that way and the tides going that way [in the opposite direction] … Wind in that direction. Yep. Sea in that direction, like that [draws] that comes along, and the wind hits it, it turns into that. See what I mean yeah, because you've got opposing energy. The wind is trying to push the top of it that way. And the sea wants to put the bottom of it that way. So, it stands up. This is what's called a standing sea.

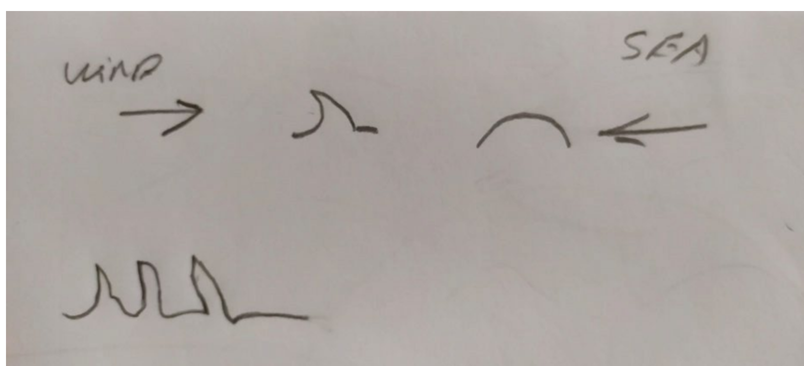


Figure 90
A Standing Sea by John

We talked about how he experienced this in the Cook Strait between the North and South Islands.

> (John) if you've got a strong current and a strong wind on the other side, you could have the waves not only standing but very close together. Yeah. And then you've got bang, bang, bang, bang,
> It's dangerous. It's a really dangerous sea.

Our talk turned to the tides, muddy banks, and the lurking possibility of going to ground.

> (John) Well, it's very tidal – it's a four-metre tide. So, you've got lots of dry land and the tides out so lots of areas you can run into lots of places to go a ground. It's much worse now than it was in the day.
> (Clare) So that's the silting up?
> (John) It's much worse. Look at the size of the boat that used to come in —they just wouldn't do it now.

We talked about the top of the tide and the bottom, and I asked him about the slack.

> (John) Slack water usually depends on the moon. You've usually got an hour on the top of the tide, three quarters an hour to an hour of very little movement. So that's the top of the tide.
> (Clare) And what's the moon doing?
> (John) Well, it depends on whether it's a full moon or whether it's lining up with the sun and getting a double pull. And that gives you your spring tides and your super high tides. The sun and the moon could be on the opposite sides of the planet. So, it pulls the water out both ways. So, you get a very low tide, then when it comes to your back, you get a very high tide. And when you've got full tides or spring tides, you only have twenty minutes or a quarter of an hour of still water at the top.

Figure 91
Top of the tide
Ōruawharo River
Aboard Rosemary
04/08/2020

Because it's moved so much water, it'll move it all out again. And the currents are always much stronger on a full moon or a big tide.
(Clare) Because of more water having to move?
(John) And it has to get through. It has to get through narrow areas like this (points to narrows necks along the river). So those guys in sailing ships had to deal with all that. Without forecasts without anything they'd have to deal with it just by experience and instinct. You know. I came up here feeling a little superior about the sea. When I looked at what they had to deal with, it was totally different to me.

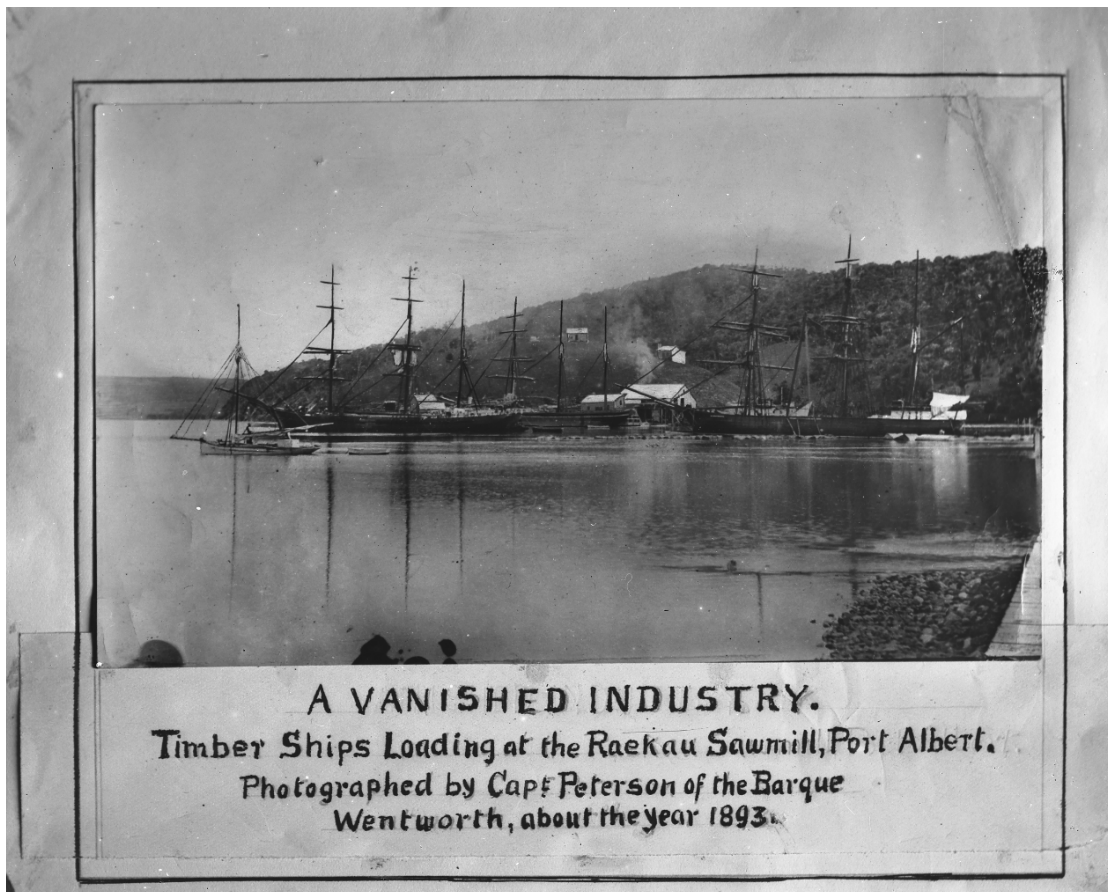


Figure 92
Large sailing ships on the Ōruawharo Port Albert, Raekau Sawmill approx. 1893. Photo Harold Marsh, used with permission Albertland Museum 2004.2.1995. 59

Elemental and atmospheric, we went on to talk about depressions, anticyclones, things that "swirl around the world like whirlpools," cold air coming up from Antarctica, warm air down from the tropics and the great eddies that form in their midst, currents that go under the sea, cold water from Antarctica which drops below, and in the Pacific flows along the bottom towards Antarctica. Above the trade winds go west to east in the northern hemisphere and east to west in the southern. The muddy Ōruawharo became infused with motion from within and without, narrow necks of funneling wind, and large masses of water moving through the tapers and out to the bays. Then came the moon and the sun, and great ocean currents moving, heating, and cooling, affecting the weather - everything connected, everything

moving, pushing, pulling, flowing, ebbing—a world of sea and air moving together in rhythm with my river, an expansion of space way beyond the abstraction of home.

Figure 923 Satellite image

We finished up thinking about the river, the atmosphere, the going to church-ness of it all.

> (John) Yeah, I go I go out on the boat. We go fishing … We go down there, and we like to go in the morning when the suns just getting up. The last trip we did,

it was foggy. Yeah, it was just beautiful. The river is so full of fish …Yeah, last time that we were there, and it was just on dawn and there's no wind and the tide was in, and we rode out and those mist just lifting off the water. And it is just magic… We just have a cup of tea, and we just lie back. And often we don't even say a word we just soaking up. Is it going fishing for me or going out of the dinghy is like, probably what some people might feel like if they go to church, you know? I don't know I've never felt that because I've never been religious but it's that sort of - we are all part of the same thing.

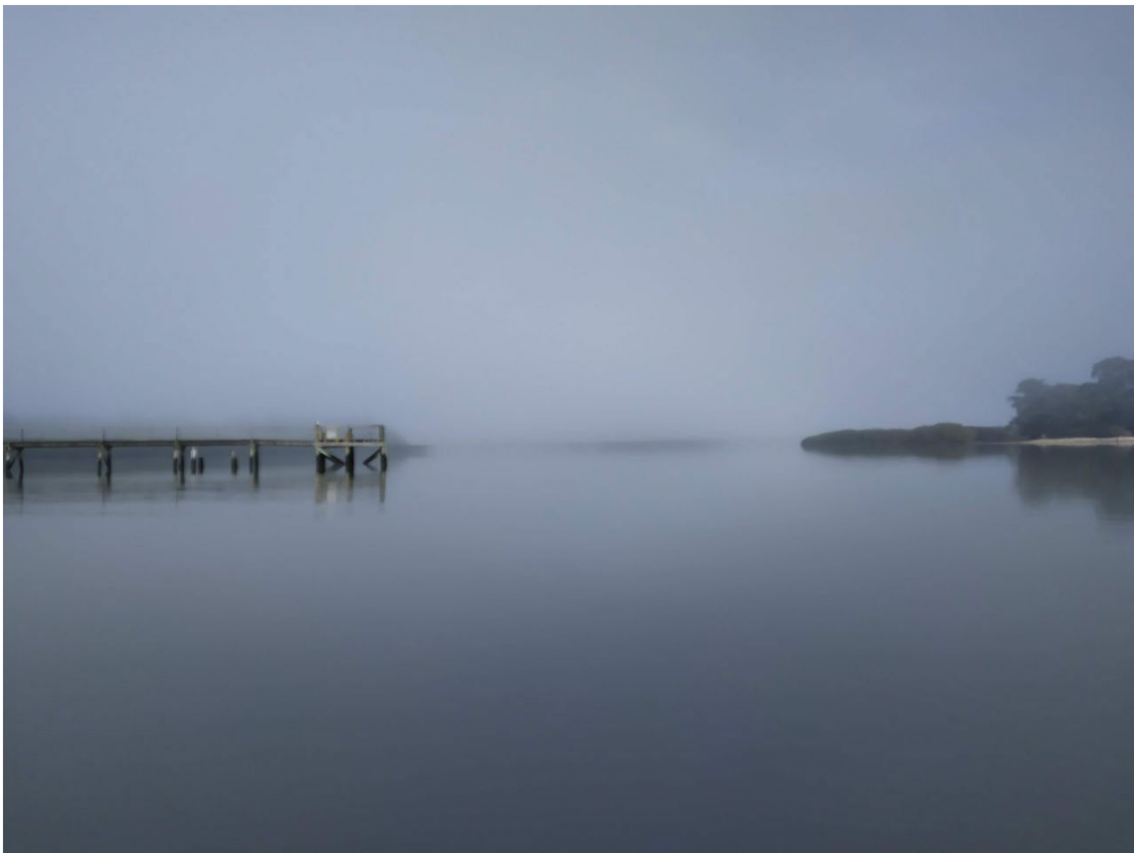


Figure 94
Mist, Ōruawharo River

For Victor, a retired commercial fisherman, the river meant knowing through work, the elements elemental to his livelihood and intrinsic to his working day. He started out on the Ōruawharo on an El Nino year.

(Victor) For the first couple of months, fishing was reasonable. Suddenly the water got very warm, and fishing became very hard and in fact up in February

that year the fish were dying in the water, and they would hit the net and die That's because it was so warm. No oxygen.
(Clare) Oh no oxygen, is that what happens when the waters warm?
(Victor) Forestry. Forestry will be the biggest culprit because they were still doing their firebreaks—pushing all the gorse and the rubbish into the gulley's and when it rained it all got washed into the harbour. It would sit on the bottom of the harbour. Hot weather would start to rot it and take all of the oxygen out of the water. I actually wrote a letter to the Minister telling him that.
(Clare) So what forestry are we talking about?
(Victor) Oh we've got Topuni [north of the Ōtamatea river], stuff just goes down into the Kaipara - too much in fact.
(Clare) I never thought about that. There are a lot of scraggly old pines out there.
(Victor) Biggest poisoner in this country! People blame dairy farms and everything else for polluting the harbour, but the forest is just as much to blame. Too right they are!
(Clare) So, all the stuff's going into the water?
(Victor) Yep, the climates of dry warm wind coming across so nothings cooling down. It just gets too warm.
(Clare) What's sort of fish are you talking about
(Victor) Flounder. Really it was big learning curve … The tide movements, moon phases, and all that sort of thing as much as he could have. Yeah, it's all a big learning curve. Yeah.

I asked him the best time to fish.

(Victor) More often than not the best fishing is three days before a moon change or if you go for a full moon or new moon, and particularly if you get a weather change, like we've had continuous sou'westers for a few weeks, and suddenly you're going to get one of those weather bombs that came through last night. You can guarantee the fishing will double if not triple. Just the day before that weather bomb hits, the fishing is phenomenal. Yeah, funnily

> enough yeah. If you're game enough to go fishing, you catch fish. Because they [the fish] know what's coming and they have to get out of it. Otherwise, they're gonna get [fresh] water you know? All the fresh water is going to kill them and things like that. So, if it's a strange flood. Yeah. They go up these little estuaries [where Victor can place his nets].

Like Ivan's oysters back in 1967, the flounder set out to survive, moving up the estuaries to avoid the influx of fresh water.

> (Victor) Yeah. Mullet can handle fresh water. So can flounder to a certain degree, but not too much.
> (Clare) So you got the full moon or the new moon?
> (Victor) Yeah, three days on either side.
> (Clare) What was your peak fishing?
> (Victor) Autumn and Spring, so yeah that's when you get your runs.

As with many people on the water, talk again turned to the moon. I asked Victor if he worked every day.

> (Victor) Not every day? If it was a new moon or a full moon Well, no, I take a few days off yeah. Yeah, you got to spring tide.
> (Clare) You see I know nothing, so you're talking to someone who knows nothing. So, when you have a new moon or a full moon, you've got no fish?
> (Victor) Yep so, every 14 days you get a new moon. And every 14 days, you get a full moon.
> (Clare) And that's a big tide. What's happening to the fish?
> (Victor) Oh, they're just gone.
> (Clare) What are they doing?
> (Victor) They're just go to ground for a few days. Yeah, for a few days to do something I don't know. They're not easy to catch, I'll tell ya that. So that's when you do other stuff.

As we talked, I suggested that the only way to really learn, is to be out there.

(Clare) The thing that's like you try to tell me something, but I probably am not going to get it unless I'm out there day after day – would that be right?
(Victor) Yeah, you put it down to experience, pretty much.
(Clare) It's gotta be experience, doesn't it? (agreeing)
(Victor) Yep instinct and experience, both
(Clare) Just from going out there.
(Victor) Yeah - Just from changing things around. Yeah.
(Clare) And when you say changing things, you mean changing which tides are going on? Can you tell me a bit about that.
(Victor) I introduced the twice a day fishing at Port Albert.
(Clare) What would what that entail?
(Victor) Everyone would go down in the morning and set their nets and that would be it for the day. Yeah. This is something I learned over that El Nino year, with the fish dying in the nets—they're no good to you if they are because they go off pretty quick. So, you're losing money. Yeah. So, you need to work your gear to make sure you don't lose fish.

Working the gear required working twice as hard as before.

(Victor) So you go straight back down. And then you go back out again. Yeah, in the afternoon, you're always guaranteed that the wind got up then.
(Clare) Why is that?
(Victor) You always get sea breezes, particularly out west. Because the land warms up and sucks the air off the sea—not like a front coming through—just a continuous breeze.

Victor talked about how the quality of his fish affected the quality of his life.

(Victor) Once I started supplying the market and the buyers recognise my fish as good quality fish and paid good money for it.
(Clare) So that upped your income?
(Victor) Yeah. And life became a bit easier in some ways. So, things started to tick along a bit better. I got a better class fish. And the less fish around, you got

> more money for them? Some of my fish was being exported to Hong Kong. Life got a bit easier.

Not only fish entangle in nets, and Victor expressed frustration at the 'rubbish' that goes down into the water after every storm.

> (Victor) You get a lot more rubbish in there particularly after last more after that big flood because—we haven't had one for a while. Every leaf and stick that fall on the ground last bloody two years is now suddenly out in the harbour. You get caught there. You're in big trouble and it's not many places you put nets in where the sticks don't come on. Yeah. So yeah,

I think about a recent trip to Rosemary after Cyclone Gabrielle, which made landfall in Aotearoa New Zealand on the 12th of February 2023 and lasted for four days causing havoc. Never had I seen so much debris in the river.

Figure 95
After the Storm

Other things got tangled in Victor's net, the most frustrating for him, baby sharks with the sharpest little teeth of all.

> (Victor) Every year just to be seen to be more and more and more, we read all these reports about sharks or endangered species. Who are they [the environmentalists] trying to kid? [laughs out loud]
> (Clare) Were they coming up in your net?
> (Victor) Hell yeah! Fishing up the top of the bay in the last year or two—it was unbelievable. Hammerheads and School sharks.
> (Clare) What do you put that down to?
> (Victor) Too many of the bloody things breeding! Not in danger. I can tell you that [laughs]. There's no way they're in danger! They bear their young live and bring them into the harbour because there's more protection for them, more food available for them. Yeah. So, they drop their pups in the harbour and then they leave again, they leave them behind. Survival of the fittest.
> (Clare) So they leave these up and it's all these little baby sharks that you're catching?
> (Victor) Yep, absolute pain in the butt.
> (Clare) Because they have teeth?

(Victor) Yep bloody sharp little teeth alright!

(Clare) So you have to get them out your net?

(Victor) I won't tell you what I used to do with them.

"Don't tell me that Victor" I reply with some trepidation. This fishing life is not for the feint-hearted nor the lily-livered. I attempt to get a sense of a day setting nets on the Ōruawharo. We spend some time looking at maps.

(Victor) I pretty much started fishing from the wharf down. I set nets below the wharf, I set nets up the river, up here all the way up to the river, [east of the wharf].

(Clare) Oh up the river? Is that good up the river?

(Victor) In the summertime, it is yeah. In wintertime it's not so good. Because the waters so warm, there'll still be fish up there. I can get fish everywhere.

(Clare) So you're how many nets are you putting out?

(Victor) I was entitled to run a kilometre of nets. My nets were 80 metres long. So that's 10-12 nets, in the end there were only ten.

(Clare) So you're heading out putting out that many nets in one day?

(Victor) Mainly you're working in the afternoon or evening, so you leave them overnight then back down in the morning and shift them out again.

We chat while following his main fishing spots on the map.

(Victor) Mostly all in the river system, occasionally I would fish out here in what we call the Port Albert spit. I fished anywhere around here. All the way down. All the way to there [points] pretty much yeah and all the way to here [out west]. Oh, there's the Island there so all the way to there and sometimes there and out here was good. But only on good weather and like I say there or four days before the new or full moon. You'd get a bigger drain, and fish would have to come off the flats and hopefully you'd catch them, also catch a lot of stingrays sometimes.

After talking and thinking about all he had to do on a given day, I asked him if he enjoyed his time on the river.

> (Victor) I did actually, when the weather was good, most of the time I enjoyed it, yeah. I've always been a bit of a loner. So yeah,
> (Clare) Oh yeah you do spend a lot of time on your own.
> (Victor) You're only on your own and no one can help you.

Alone and grappling with ten to twelve 80-metre-long nets twice a day, entangled in the material world as the material world tangled with him; debris, channels, muddy banks, pin pricked by baby shark-pups and caught up in weather, moon, tides, and currents. All in the hunt for those flat fish flounder that live along the bottom of the river. Flounder who can sense a weather bomb coming and scurry up the smaller estuaries to flee from a deluge of freshwater, but perhaps not escape the strategically placed nets of Victor, he too knowing that bad weather forebodes. Flounder which died and went off in the nets back when El Nino warmed the water, material on the riverbed rotted, over-oxygenating the water. Flounder, when in good shape, albeit dead, could make it all the way from the muddy waters of the Ōruawharo to dinner plates in Hong Kong. These are fragments of one man's story on the river or storying of the river: refracted through the arduous, relentless, and skill-full labour of his every day.

Concluding thoughts: Knowing & the Wild

This is a chapter full of utterances; a swathe of words of others and conversations between the twos of us, with the more-than-human rising-up through the dialogical and dialogue, shaping the narratives of river people as much as they shape river people's lives. These non-human things enmesh with talk of the talker as they do in life: like standing seas which frighten and unsettle; king tides offering a fisherperson a day off or two; moons which push and pull; astonishing boil-ups and scallops who up and move, leaving a father and son wondering what to do next. Akin to a boat adrift in changing tides and flowing currents; the telling moves about the place, showing knowing as they go through the pointing out the 'here and there' on maps and telling the stories of particular places within particular places. These places of knowing signify what matters to the teller, tales told via the mastery of embodied skills and through memories which either surge up with emotion from the past, or memories

that need to be recalled, like grasping at what mattered back then and in the doing so, signifying what matters now. All the while my own sense of knowing is becoming, in part, refracted through the perspectives of those who know more — those who live close to the river, their river-being infused with the salty waters of the Ōruawharo. As Biehl's (2017) interlocutor Catarina[28] noted, "It is only in my memory that I have the signification. And that is for me to untie" (Biehl & Locke, 2017: 64). In the untying and retying, knots of significance manifest along the stringy lines of a lifetime and memories become as much about the *who* - a *who,* which Ricoeur (2004) argues, is generated in the telling, remembering, and forgetting. Simultaneously, in the phenomenological sense, this *who* has a consciousness orientated towards something, or as noted, from Ricoeur, "consciousness is consciousness of something" (2004: 3).

The *something* in the case of these river people is a fingery tempestuous character—a salty, sea-like river, with surging currents, king tides, spring tides, the slack, standing seas, boil-ups, a present moon, gales and winds, funnels and bays, a bar across the harbour which beckons and a multitude of other more than human lives which entangle with theirs. Consciousness *in* something coupled with memories, knowing, and telling *of* something calibrates, recalibrates, and orientates the *who* in the *where* – like an undercurrent shaping and reshaping the becoming of lives lived along the Ōruawharo River. The *who* in the *where* also necessitates thinking about the multiplicities of the *who,* about what, aside from fisher peoples and contemporary ways of knowing and being, echoes and reverberates from the deep past in the Ōruawharo present. This Pākehā researcher, with caution, turns the research boat towards to Te Ao Māori, whakapatu, olden times, and I attempt to glean a little of what matters to the people who have been there the longest, Te Uri O Hau hapu of iwi Ngati Whatua. But first a day out reminded me that I may well be heading into a stormy sea.

[28] In *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment* (Biehl, 2005)

Chapter 5, Tua Whakarere, Olden times

Turning of the Sod and the Tohunga: A Prologue

In late August 2022, I spent a day at a sod turning at a development site close to the Massey University campus in Albany, Tāmaki Makarau. What caught my attention was the invite email, stating that Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara will be bringing back the name Ōkahukura. This was a name that was known to me, the place of Rongomai, the name of the loop road where my children went to school, the name that used to name the peninsula, now called Tapora, a bastardisation of Taporapora—the place of sacred learning. The day was about the joint venture between Fletcher Building and Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara with Massey having divested a bit of land to them between the Albany Campus and the old Albany Highway. Land with a gulley and a promising wetland, bush, hill—a site for a community pinned between the institutes of education, the mock Italian Campus on the hill towards the southeast and Albany High School across the road and plans for a new primary school next door. This is an envisioned place for whānau to grow, minds to expand, and the fauna and flora to resettle in the gulley below. The event was to pōwhiri manuhiri, introduce the history, turn the sod, bless the land, return for more formal speeches, expressions of gratitude, and finish with the sharing of kai. Mainly, I was interested in the name, Ōkahukura.

There he was that man there, standing aside in the carpark, a full fierce facial tā moko, the most striking I'd ever seen, in one hand a long-curved stick, like a strip of flax frozen in time, with a carved bone handle. He held a kete in the other. I approached him and feeling awkwardly Pākehā I asked, "Would it be possible to hear the story of the name?" "It's very complicated" he said and added that there would be more kōrero about that later. I bumbled on and talked about pā and how I knew so little having lived in the Kaipara so long. I told him about the pā I could see from my window and how I didn't realise it was a pā. He said, "Well, we like to keep some of these things to ourselves" —a sentence so full of trouble for me. I talked again about how it worried me that the school children knew so little and suggested that perhaps the Māori children would have their own ways of finding things out and he said, "We sometimes like to keep stuff from them also." I fumbled on and said I understood how in the

telling how so much could get mistranslated and misunderstood and how something could be lost in the process. As we talk, I think about the draft writing I had done so far. My future chapter started to feel like an exposé, potentially revealing too much. A seeping form of dread started to settle in, panic almost. He told me the story of a documentary about First Nation peoples in America made in the late 1800's, in which the producers were allowed to film a secret sacred ritual for the first time ever, no sound, just a showing of movement and practise. Across 100 years this film was studied, noting all the movement, dance, and detail. It was then discovered the Indigenous Americans had fudged this ritual dance to keep what was theirs close, to give nothing away. The kaumatua used this as an example to me, the one asking questions, the one writing stuff and the one already perhaps in way too deep. Dread turned to creeping despair. Here I find myself again, in the troubling waters between Māori and Pākehā worlds. We chatted amiably after that, and I apologised for my dumb questions. He was very friendly and said, "No worries."

As manuhiri, we were called up the hill, the karanga moving through the blue-skied beautiful spring day—a blessing of course, particularly so for Māori speakers, noting the sunshine as a sign of sorts, a portent for what was to come. Kaumātua Haahi led the proceedings followed by my new acquaintance. He stepped forward and introduced the ancestors clutched in either hand, firstly the talking stick from the male line and then introduced an ancestor from the female line, a large pounamu mere drawn from the kete, two persons of old, precious beyond belief. He started on a note of infectious optimism, the sunshine aiding his appeal. He recalled the Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, earlier in the year, standing humbly alongside the tohunga at the predawn whāngai i te hautapu matariki[29] ceremony in Wellington. As the tohunga called, through rhythmic incantations, the rising of the stars and the beginning of the first ever national celebration of matariki, he felt a moment of great pride and deep significance for Māori.

[29] *Whāngai i te hautapu matariki* translates to 'feed the stars with a sacred offering'. The speaker here is referring to the dawn ceremony for Matariki enacted on this annual public holiday for this event. This annual holiday for the constellation Matariki was legislated by the then Labour Government under Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern.

He went on to talk about the name Ōkahukura. He said it represented a double rainbow with one end in the sea and the other on land, indicating to all where a waka should berth and where the first kūmara should be planted. Likewise, the housing development, to be named Ōkahukura, represented home and future prosperity. He made connections to the ancient past and the ancestors. My thoughts drift to 'my river' which runs along what once was called the Ōkahukura peninsula and I wonder about the hard-to-conceptualise link from that place almost 100 kms away, to here, from the slow-moving murky waters of the Kaipara to this shiny new development on the edges of our biggest metropolis, Auckland. He then evoked the ancestors. I try to remember all he has to say, but without an adequate memory, some words stay and many leave. On completion, he asks that we now move as one, up the ridge, tangata whenua and manuhiri together, over the hill, now exposed to a brisk wind and a view across to the campus. Another kaumātua tells the story of the turning of the sod as one of procreation, the conception within mother earth with the eventual progeny being houses for families to live their lives in. He makes a joke about expecting the gift of a free house and there's laughter all round. Corporate Ngāti Whātua and corporate Fletchers took to a spade and turned the sod.

Figure 96
Representatives from Ngāti Whātua right and Fletchers Corp, left. Turning the sod

I looked across to the tā moko man, he held the ancestors tight. His wife clutched the taonga around her neck and laid one hand over his hand which rested on the talking stick. I got a sense he was evoking the somewhere else, like a priest of old, a tohunga perhaps. Later, post the formal speeches, we stood about in the carpark aside the

marquee and I got talking to a Massey lecturer I knew, explaining what the speaker had said and my creeping misgivings over the chapter I was writing on history and pā sites, of perhaps over stepping and revealing too much. He sensed my anguish and said that perhaps this topic can become methodological, on the *how* to do research as Pākehā with Māori. "Besides" he said, "You were talking to a Tohunga."[30] My gaze lifted and there he was, the man living between realms, keeping the sacred safe.

I approach the following chapter with the tohunga near, tapping me on the shoulder, saying do not overstep. I am not entirely sure however, somewhat worryingly, what this overstepping is. With some assurance I reflect on how most of the history I write is in the public domain—libraries and museum archives—and how other material comes via the experiences and stories of myself and others. I also think about the way in which the Tohunga came up to me after the ceremony and asked me amiably if I was able to hear his korero ok. I said I could and that I hung off his every word and thanked him dearly. Clearly there is some stuff I am allowed to know. So, I approach the writing of Māori history and contemporary understandings with tentativeness - telling stories that have been told to me, leaving some out and accounting for my own experiences throughout this process. All the while, I feel I occupy the in-between, a place of porous borders and precarity, troubles and unsurety. In the spirit of Donna Harraway however, I elect to "stay with the trouble" in the "thick present" (Harraway, 2016: 4); this being an in-between mixed-up place in which new understandings may well unfold and enfold—such as the double rainbow along the Ōruawharo now stirring up for me, the ancestors of the old.

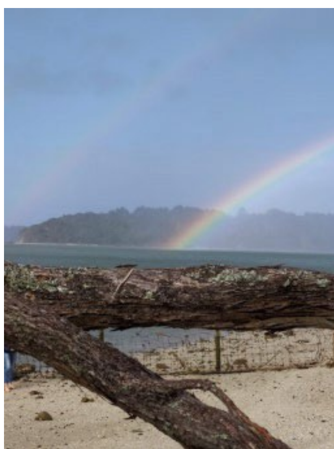


Figure 97
Double rainbow
Ōruawharo River

[30] Tohunga – a priest or expert in sacred lore (maoridictionary.co.nz)

Te Ringo O te Kaipara: The Hand of the Kaipara

> It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories (ref Strathern[1991] in Harraway, 2016: 12).

What matters, said a kaumātua, a man from whom I sought advice, is that you understand the rise and fall of empires such as told through the stories of Rongomai, his drowning and the subsequent movement of his people and much later on, the betrothal of Te Hana to Rangiwhapapa. He added that I also needed to know about Haumoewaarangi and Waihekeao and their seven children through which the hapu of Ngati Whatua were developed: Makawe, Mauku, Whiti, Weka, Ruinga, Rongo and Hakiputatmori. Without this he added, "You *won't* have *any* idea what people are talking about." Stories such as these were to unravel the knots that I thought with, the descriptions that I described with and changed the way I look at things. The river for me became layered with multiple timescapes, fragments and echoes from tua whakarere—olden times or the distant past. What follows are mere sketches of the stories above and fragments of a complex history; one of which is, as Pākehā, arguably not my place to tell. Nevertheless, some telling must be done as to leave it out is to (re)silence aspects of this place—an antithesis to the intention of this thesis. This storying of place requires knowing both through the olden times, tua whakarere, and through whakapapa, the complex matrix of being that enlivens the Māori world.

At its simplest, whakapapa can be understood as a genealogy which includes both the human and nonhuman. When spoken, whakapapa becomes perlocutionary, a speech act. In the telling, the teller becomes *em*placed, reconnected, including potentially re-establishing old and remembered familial bonds with the listeners. Simultaneously the listener gleans acquaintance with a host of ancestors including people, mountains, rivers, and places that matter. Expansively, whakapapa maps the relational ties between myriad things such as waka, ancestors, rivers, mountains, land, sea, and connections to the natural world. Deities, mauri, mana and origin stories move

through whakapapa as does the primeval bonds to Papatūānuku (Earth Mother, the land) and Ranginui (Sky Father) (Makey, 2020:27). Meanings, knowing and understandings emerge in the relationships between things, both the human and non-human (Grauer, 2020: 76) and for Māori, across large tracts of time. Moreover, whakapapa korero, as a form of identity narrative, are also political, as along with bonds being reestablished, the mana of a group is upheld and the knowledge base reaffirmed (Stewart, 2021: 2,3). As whakapapa is recounted or reestablished, these relational bonds and flows mingle in the present and time takes on the nature of a cosmological whole. What was then is also now and in the now, stories of the past entwined in whakapapa orientate Māori into place and towards place in particular ways. As my visitor noted, some stories take on significance, embed in whakapapa as shaping identity and such is the story of Rongomai and Taporapora.

Gone now, but once there was a place called Taporapora at the farthest western reaches of the Ōkahukura peninsula (now called Tapora). What is left of this spit is an Island called Manukapua (also known as the Sand Island). It is believed that at low tide you can still see remnants of Taporapora off the edges of Manukapua. This was initially home of the Toi (Ngāti Awa) people including the chief Toko-o-te-rangi. Either, accounts differ, Toko-o-te-rangi or the people of the Māhūhū or both built the wharekura also known as a whare wananga, or temple of learning at Taporapora. As noted by Geo Graham,[31] this was "where the chiefs from many districts round about resorted to recite ancient knowledge" (1939: 188). Another account notes that the people of Māhūhū, "installed their sacred relics from Hawaiiki in a newly built meeting house and named the settlement Taporapora after a remembered place in the homeland" (Sheffield, 2011 [1963]: 23). This was a place of learning —so sacred and esoteric was this knowledge, my companion tells me, that the learning had to be done at night, in the dark— "so as to not be distracted by your eyes." This temple of learning is gone but for those who know, the sacred is still there, both atmospherically infused within the air, water, wind and current and inwardly, deeply imagined, and

[31] Geo Graham is relating accounts as told to him by Te Manihera, Reihana, Mihaka-makaore and others of Te Uri o Hau in 1887-1889 (Graham, 1939:186)

revered. We sit and think about the whare wananga. “In the old days” he says, “these things were done in the dark.” He talks and the hairs on my arms stand on end.

Figure 98
Manuakapua Island, Kaipara Harbour

Around 1225 AD, the ocean voyaging waka Māhūhū ki te rangi[32] (Māhūhū) of Rongomai and his people, turned its tauihu into the Kaipara and made landfall at Taporapora finding the people of Toi already there. While other waka also matter to the people of the Kaipara and as with most iwi, the people of this area “can claim descent from the crew of more than one canoe” (Wright, 1996: 7), for the moment, I stay with the Māhūhū, the importance of which is noted by Wiremu Wright,

> The Mahuhu canoe is described as being *“the canoe of Ngati Whatua”* because of the strong genealogical ties to this Waka through settlements and

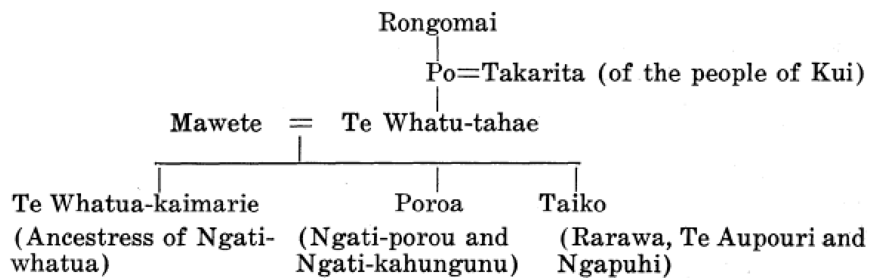
[32] Also known as Māhūhū and Māhūhū nui te rangi (Wright, 1996:8). It is also noted that many on the voyage of Māhūhū had settle in other parts of North Island so this waka can be included in the whakapapa of another iwi.

> intermarriages with the people known many generations ago as the *Mahuhu people.* The crew of the Mahuhu waka intermarried and settled with the *"descendants of Toi"* before dispersing into the other regions of the north... (emphasis in original, citations referencing Ani Pihema [1966] Wright, 1996).

Plants came too. On board were the, "seed of the *hue*, and tubers of the *uwhi*, the *hoia* (a taro), and several varieties of the *kumara* – and also plants of the *aute* (or cloth bark and the edible *ti* (a species of cordyline)" (Graham, 1939: 187). Eventually Rongomai took a wife from the people of Taporapora, and later moved on to nearby Manukapua and then to Okahukura (Graham, 1939; Wright, 1996).

The arrival of the Māhūhū, Rongomai and his peoples in the Kaipara marks a beginning point for Te Uri O Hau and for the wider iwi, Ngāti Whatua. So too, is his death also of significance. His passing preempted an exodus of people and, it is believed, the end of Taporapora and the sacred temple of learning. Rongomai drowned on a fishing trip, "his body was gnawed at by *araara* (trevally) and *tamure* (snapper)" (Graham, 1939:188) and was eventually cast on the rocks at the other side of the harbour between Poutu and Waikāretu, a place now known as Te Akitanga-o-Rongomai. "His death was attributed to an act of witchcraft by his jealous brother-in-law and his failure to perform the appropriate karakia (uru whenua) before setting off to fish" (Wright, 1996: 13). After this tragedy, and because of it, many of the people of Rongomai, including his son Po, left on Māhūhū for her last journey north. On leaving, they raised a great storm (tupuhi) through "witchcraft" which subsequently moved a tsunami of water across the harbour washing Taporapora, including the temple, the people and their taonga away. This is known as the shaving off—Te Taraitanga (1996:14). This story that matters emerges in my conversation with the kaumatua, can be gleaned from the old history books, is known about and most often deeply felt by Ngāti Whatua. But for many Pākehā, this is a story that is not known or barely known, invisible in the classrooms of previous decades. The water beyond Manukapua not-remembered or venerated, but rather, just a stretch of water on route to somewhere else.

The tupuhi and following destruction of Taporapora in their wake, Po, son of Rongomai and many of their people moved north to the Kaitaia area to live amongst the people of Kui. Through the progeny of Po's daughter Te Whatu-tahae and her husband Mawete, came lines of ancestresses including their eldest daughter Whatua kai Marie who became known as the ancestress of Ngāti Whātua (Wright, 1996: 14). Having consulted with Māori between 1887-89 Geo Graham supplied the following whakapapa (1939: 190):



Graham goes on to add, "Thus from these people of Mahuhu, and through these famous women, is traced the *whaka-torunga* (spreading or ramification) of the Rongomai of the Mahuhu canoe" (1939: 190). In the north, the people of the Māhūhū intermarried with the people of the Takitimu waka.

The Takitimu waka captained by Tamatea is also an important waka to the people of Te Uri o Hau as a link to these ancestors. As with the Māhūhū, it is believed that the Takitimu travelled extensively and is claimed as the canoe of Ngāpuhi (in the far north). The grandson of Tamatea, Tamatea the second, also known as Tamatea-pōkai-whenua (Tamatea who circled the land) for his navigational skills and the distances he travelled, made his way into the Kaipara and named the Otamatea River in honour of his grandfather Tamatea (there may be more generations) and the Ōruawharo in honour of the tohunga Ruawharo who travelled to Aotearoa on the Takitimu waka (Martin, n.d.-a). Importantly for many in Te Uri o Hau, ancestral ties are made to the Takitimu waka including the following: Paikea, Ruawharo, Maraeo, Tangaroa, and Tua. Significantly for the many descendants alive today, it was Paikea Te Hekeua who maintained ahi kā after the battle at Te Ika-a-Ranginui in 1825. In this battle it is believed that up to 1000 Ngati Whatua were killed by an onslaught of musket wielding

Ngāpuhi led by Hongi Hika from the far north. The wharenui at Otamatea was established around 1946, having been moved from another location, to honour the tupuna who lost their lives in this battle. As ever, the names, places and events from the past (while often invisible in maps and standard texts) emerge in the present and for many Māori, become embodied through whakapapa, shaping lives, perceptions, becoming and belonging to the Ōruawharo and broader Kaipara.

Back to the people of the Māhūhū waka (aka Ngāti Whatua). It is not known how long they resided in the north, but some estimates suggest it was for at least 350 years. Those who stayed behind, continued to live amongst Ngati Awa, as noted by Harold Mabbett (1977:251).

> In the 16th century the Ngati-Awa were in possession of Okahukura, living peacefully with Ngati-Whatua. Many Okahukura hills showed traces of Ngati-Awa fortifications once trenched, terraced and palisaded. Between these two people the historical legend of Te Hana arose.

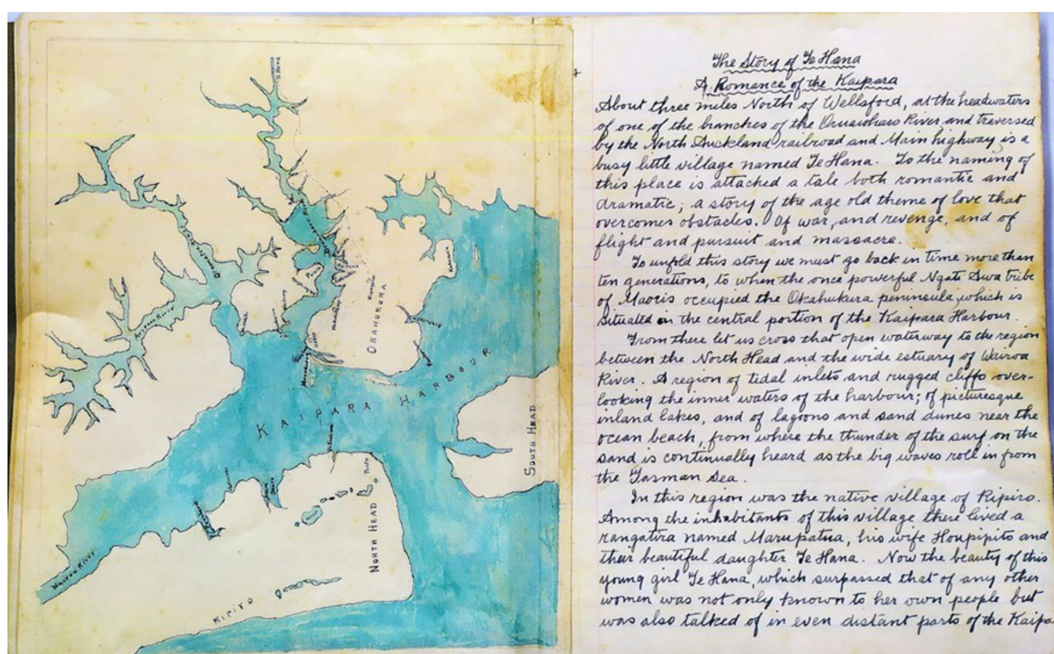
The story of Te Hana (also known as Princess Te Hana) is a story that matters, a story that endures and a story that is more widely known. This could be because of the town named in her honour, Te Hana, on State Highway 1, on the main road north. This could also be because the story has drama, magic, love and lost love, perilous journeying, war, and conquest. Moreover, for Te Uri o Hau, this story sits in the background of their Waitangi claim,[33] as the point at which their peoples, post conquest of Ngāti Awa, became the dominant iwi in the Kaipara. Furthermore, the retelling of the story of Te Hana across time is an example of a telling between peoples— Pākēhā and Māori—a sort-of reworlding of worlds through the stories of old. Pākehā, I argue, are not passive recipients but absorb narratives, create memory, and potentially shift perceptions. This can be noted in the loquacious 19th century language of Percy Smith, who learnt from Māori in the 1850's.

> Memory carries me back to many a long evening spent over the campfire, when some grey-headed old warrior would relate with pride the doings of his tribe.

[33] See the Manawhenua Report, Te Uri O Hau O Te Wahapu O Kaipara, The Evidence of Wiremu Wright (1996) pp.46-49

Surely few races are so gifted with the power of narrative as the Maori! The euphonious language, uttered with that perfect attention to grammar which distinguish them, the expressive gesticulation, the illustrative poetry, all combined to keep their hearers enthralled and intensely interested in the subject matter of the relation. Alas! not one of those narrators is left; they have wended their way along the dreary beach, by the "spirits' road," that leads to the Reinga. Let us hope that they have bathed in the saving waters of the Wai-ora-o-Tane! Wellington NZ, 1896 (Smith, 1897: n.p.n).

Smith was clearly captivated in those atmospherically camp-fire moments, the telling as significant as the stories themselves. Written accounts can also become lively agentic artefacts, and this is the case with the journal recounting the history of Te Hana located in a box out the back of a museum. With enthusiasm, my (late) museum friend Lyn handed me the story of Te Hana as written-up by her grandfather Harold Marsh and recounted by Brown (known by Māori as Parone) Kena as remembered from an account by Hemi Parata Raukatauri (which includes the date October 29th 1892). Out of the box came the extraordinary little book with Te Reo on one side and English text on the other and beginning with a hand drawn map of the Kaipara Harbour



The Story of Te Hana
A Romance of the Kaipara

About three miles North of Wellsford, at the headwaters of one of the branches of the Oruawharo River and traversed by the North Auckland railroad and Main highway is a busy little village named Te Hana. To the naming of this place is attached a tale both romantic and dramatic; a story of the age old theme of love that overcomes obstacles. Of war, and revenge, and of flight and pursuit and massacre.

To unfold this story we must go back in time more than ten generations, to when the once powerful Ngati Awa tribe of Maoris occupied the Okahukura peninsula, which is situated in the central portion of the Kaipara Harbour.

From there let us cross that open waterway to the region between the North Head and the wide estuary of Wairoa River. A region of tidal inlets and rugged cliffs overlooking the inner waters of the harbour; of picturesque inland lakes, and of lagoons and sand dunes near the ocean beach, from where the thunder of the surf on the sand is continually heard as the big waves roll in from the Tasman Sea.

In this region was the native village of Ripiro. Among the inhabitants of this village there lived a rangatira named Marupatua, his wife Houpipito and their beautiful daughter Te Hana. Now the beauty of this young girl Te Hana, which surpassed that of any other women was not only known to her own people but was also talked of in even distant parts of the Kaipara

Figure 99
The Story of Te Hana: A Romance of the Kaipara. Written by Harold Marsh in collaboration with Parone (Brown Kena) mid 1920's. Used with permission, Albertland Museum

Princess Te Hana

As artefact, this journal is more than just the story of Te Hana, it also tells the story of the meeting of two men, Māori and Pākehā in a lighthouse in Pouto nearly 100 years ago. I wondered about how this came about and contacted the grandson of Harold Marsh now in his eightieth year. He said that Harold Marsh and others made a trip by boat and horse to Pouto at the Northern head of the peninsula in 1925 and visited Brown Kena, the lighthouse keeper, and his whānau.

Figure 100
Visit to Pouto Lighthouse
April 1925.
The entrance to the Kaipara Harbour above
Parone Kena and family on the left
Photos by Harold Marsh
Used with permission
Albertland Museum
2004.2.2007.955
2004.2.2007.888

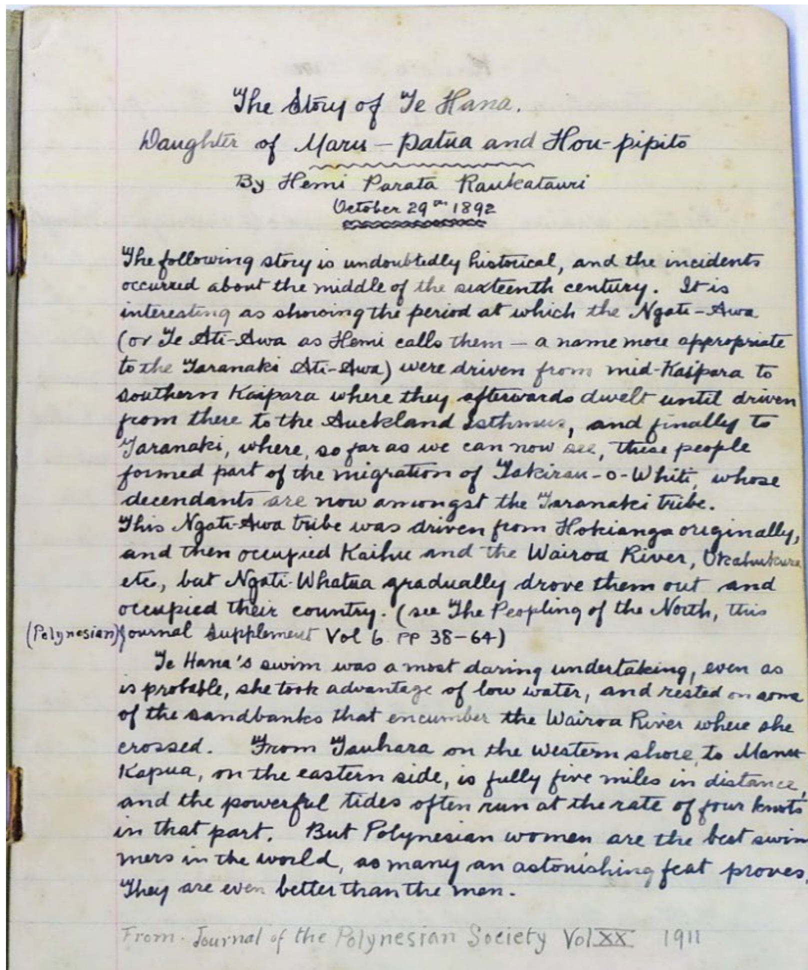
It was then that Kena dictated the account to Marsh, and Marsh, fluent in Te Reo wrote down the story which he later translated into English. Over time, they continued to communicate by letter to clarify any details. Along with taking down the story, Marsh photographed this trip and the combination of photos, and the journal take on an agency in the present; that of keeping alive that which could so easily be forgotten or more disturbingly, cast aside as incorrect. On one occasion, for example, I talked to a lay historian who was emphatic that no one called Kena (or did he mean, no one Māori?) was ever a lighthouse keeper at Pouto and mentioned a prominent settler lighthouse keeper family. I witnessed the story of Brown Kena being erased before my eyes. I got a sense of the multiple erasures of Māori histories within the micro-moments of the everyday. Fortunately, the journal and photos tell a different story, see below, Parone Kena: historian, friend of Marsh, interlocutor, lighthouse keeper and keeper of stories.

Figure 101

Light keepers Pouto, Messrs Brown and Brown (Parone) Kena.
Photo by Harold Marsh used permission Albertland Museum 2004.2.2007.957

Figure 102
Brown(Parone) Kena Lighthouse keeper. Phot by Harold Marsh 2004.2.2007.960

Figure 103
Pouto Lighthouse Used with permission, Albertland Museum Photo by Harold Marsh, 2004.2.2007.956



The Story of Te Hana.
Daughter of Maru-Patua and Hou-pipito
By Hemi Parata Raukatauri
October 29th 1892

The following story is undoubtedly historical, and the incidents occurred about the middle of the sixteenth century. It is interesting as showing the period at which the Ngati-Awa (or Te Ati-Awa as Hemi calls them – a name more appropriate to the Taranaki Ati-Awa) were driven from mid-Kaipara to southern Kaipara where they afterwards dwelt until driven from there to the Auckland Isthmus, and finally to Taranaki, where, so far as we can now see, these people formed part of the migration of Takirau-o-Whiti, whose decendants are now amongst the Taranaki tribe.
This Ngati-Awa tribe was driven from Hokianga originally, and then occupied Kaihu and the Wairoa River, Okahukura etc, but Ngati-Whatua gradually drove them out and occupied their country. (see The Peopling of the North, this (Polynesian) Journal Supplement Vol 6. pp 38–64)

Te Hana's swim was a most daring undertaking, even as is probable, she took advantage of low water, and rested on some of the sandbanks that encumber the Wairoa River where she crossed. From Tauhara on the western shore, to Manu-Kapua, on the eastern side, is fully five miles in distance, and the powerful tides often run at the rate of four knots in that part. But Polynesian women are the best swimmers in the world, as many an astonishing feat proves; They are even better than the men.

From. Journal of the Polynesian Society Vol XX 1911

Figure 104
The Story of Te Hana: A Romance of the Kaipara
Here and the following excerpts below Written by Harold Marsh in collaboration with Parone (Brown) Kena mid 1920's. Used with permission, Albertland Museum

The story of Te Hana beginning with titles from the Journal of Harold Marsh as dictated to him by Parone Kena 1925

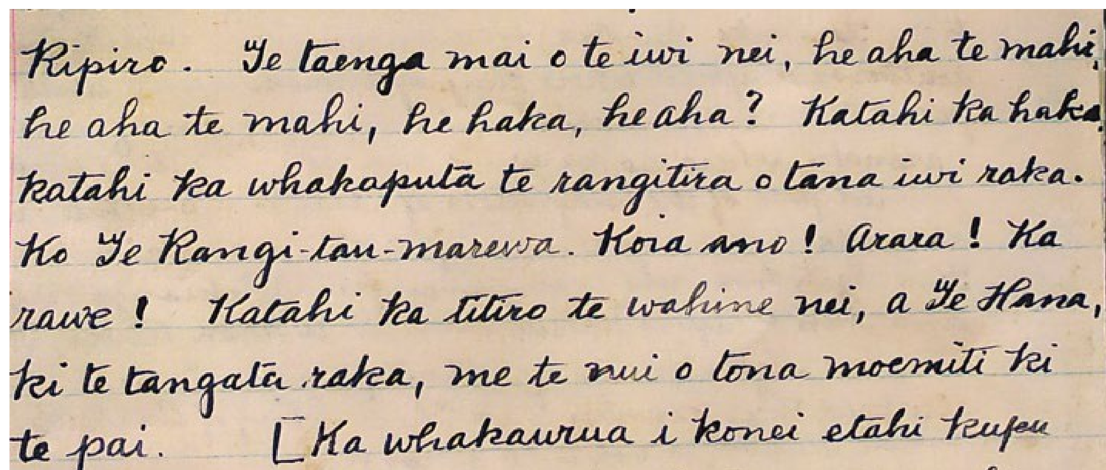
Nga Korero o Te Hana,
Tamahine o Maru- Patua, rauau ko Hou-pipito
Na Hemi Parata Raukatauri October 29th 1892

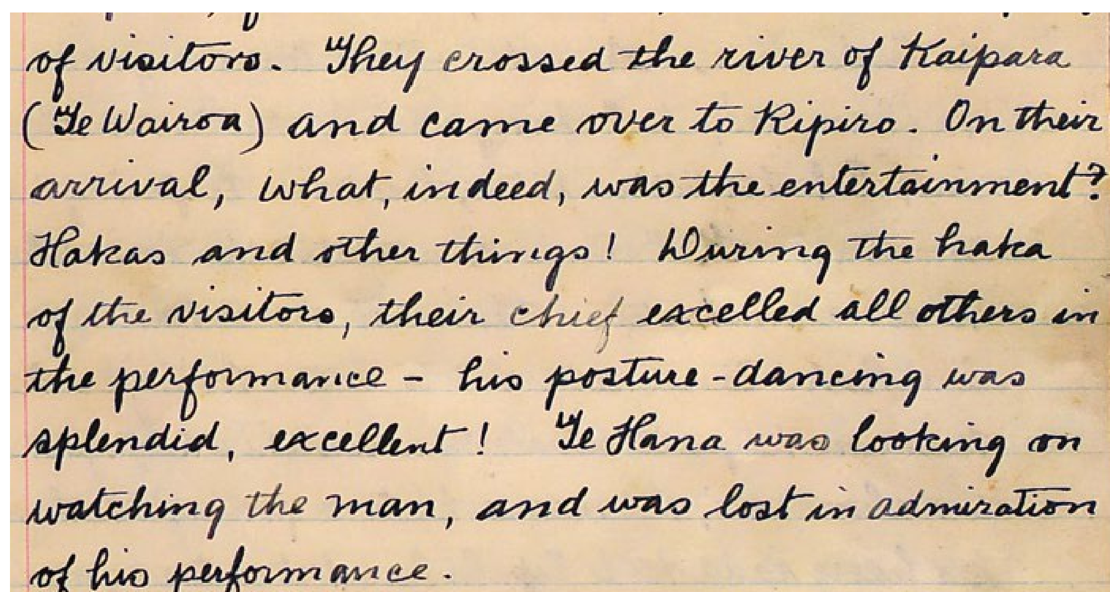
The Story of Te Hana,
Daughter of Maru-Patua and Hou-pipito
By Hemi Parata Raukatauri October 29th 1892

The Story of Te Hana,
A Romance in the Kaipara

The young chieftainess Te Hana, descendant of Te Arawa and Ngāti Awa, lived on the Pouto peninsula, around the mid-17th century (Wright, 1996: 45). Reputed to be of great beauty, she was sought after by all the young chiefs in the area but was the

betrothed virgin (puhi) to Rangiwhapapa, the elder brother of Haumoewaarangi. Across the harbour at Ōkahukura lived Rangikahui (or Rangi-tau-marewa as referred to in the journal)[34] and hearing of the beauty of Te Hana, went across the water, along with some of his men and paid her a visit. Entertainment followed, “Hakas and other things” and Te Hana, who was in “a state of tapu” (Wright, 1996:46) , watched from afar was “lost in admiration” – see below.


Ripiro. Te taenga mai o te iwi nei, he aha te mahi, he aha te mahi, he haka, he aha? Katahi ka haka katahi ka whakaputa te rangitira o tana iwi raka. Ko Te Rangi-tau-marewa. Koia ano! Arara! Ka rawe! Katahi ka titiro te wahine nei, a Te Hana, ki te tangata raka, me te nui o tona moemiti ki te pai. [Ka whakaurua i konei etahi kupu


of visitors. They crossed the river of Kaipara (Te Wairoa) and came over to Ripiro. On their arrival, what, indeed, was the entertainment? Hakas and other things! During the haka of the visitors, their chief excelled all others in the performance – his posture-dancing was splendid, excellent! Te Hana was looking on watching the man, and was lost in admiration of his performance.

[34] I use the name Rangikahui as known in the Manawhenua claim (Wright, 1996), firstly to keep it consistent with the Manawhenua report and secondly, Kena himself, said in a correspondence to Marsh (dated 1930, Held at the Albertland Museum) that he may have mixed up some names.

Having been entranced by the beauty of Te Hana, Rangikahui enkindled her love by using a karakia umu-ātahu (a spell to cause a woman to love a man) before leaving the peninsula.

tau-marewa i muri a, ka tutaki ki a Te Hana
e haere mai ana. No te pahuretanga i a ia ka
totoro atu tona ringa a, ka mau ki te huka o
te kakahu o Te Hana, ka motu mai i tona ringa
te huka na. Ano ka oti ta tona ngakau i
mahara ai, te hokinga mai, ka mea atu ki tona
iwi, "E! ka haere tatou, heoi ano te painga o te
moana" Kahore? kua matau ke tona whakaaro
ki tona makutu. Heoi ano ko te haerenga o te
iwi hoki tonu atu ki to ratou kainga. I muri

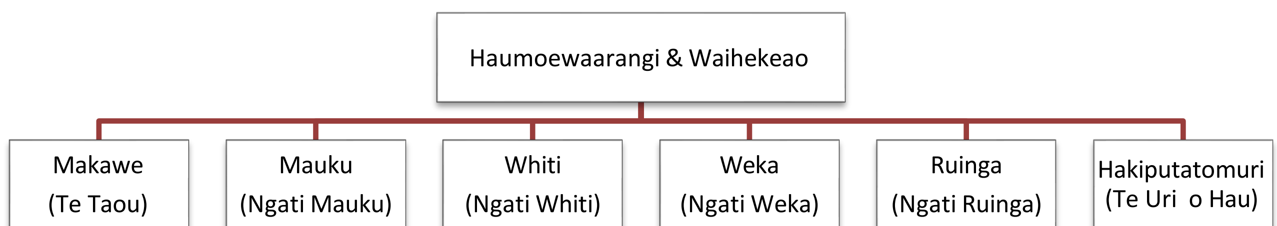
after her and met her coming back, and as
she passed him he stretched forth his hand and
pulled off one of the thrumbs of her cloak (over
which to say his spell). After he had finished
what he considered necessary in the spell, on his
return he said to his people, "Let us be gone;
now is the time when the sea will be smooth"
But really he now knew that his spell would be
effective. So the people left for their own homes.

With the spell taking effect, Te Hana was only able to think of Rangikahui. Along with her maid Pononga and her pet dog, she set off to cross the Kaipara to be with him. Pononga, on not following the instruction of Te Hana, was to drown on the crossing along with the dog, but Te Hana made it across to the shores of Manukapua on Ōkahukura. Back home, realising that Te Hana was missing, a large war party or taua gathered at Waikeretu and Tauhara. Rangikahui saw the taua — "the water was black

with canoes" (citing letter from C.J. Halfpenny to Geo Graham, narrated by Parone Kena [1926], Wright 1996).

The battle that ensued is pivotal to Te Uri o Hau in establishing manawhenua over the Kaipara as per their claim to the Waitangi Tribunal[35] as this was to mark the end of the settlements of Ngāti Awa. Rangikahui was killed along with many Ngāti Awa and Ngati Whatua but essentially this battle "ended the occupation of Okahukura, Oruawharo, Topuni, Kaiwaka and through to the East Coast of Mangawhai by the Ngati Awa tribe" (Wright, 1996:4). Te Hana was married to Rangiwhapapa, and the descendants are also known as Ngati Te Hana and number many in the Northern Kaipara.

Rangiwhapapa's younger brother Haumoewaarangi, born approximately 1620 (Wright, 1996:36), married Waihekeao and had seven offspring. To many, these are the seven children of significance; Makawe, Mauku, Whiti, Weka, Ruinga, Rongo and Hakiputatomori - who are recognised as the founding hapū of Ngāti Whātua as shown below:



As noted in the above chart, the predominant hapu covered in this thesis – Te Uri o Hau regard Hakiputatomori as their eponymous ancestor. This is also illustrated in the following pepeha from Waikāretu Marae on the Pouto peninsula.

Ko Muarangi te maunga
Ko Te Wairoa te awa
Ko Kaipara te moana
Ko Waikāretu re marae
Ko Māhūhū ki te Rangi te waka

[35] The Waitangi Tribunal Te Uri o Hau claim (Wai 271) was heard as part of the wider Kaipara claim (Wai 674)

Ko Ngāti Whātua ti iwi
Ko Hakiputatomuri te tangata
Muarangi our mountain
Te Wairoa is our river
Kaipara is our sea
Māhūhū ki te Rangi is our vessel
Waikāretu is our gathering place
Te Uri o Hau is our sub-tribe
Ngāti Whātua is our tribe
Descendants of Hakiputatomuri
(*Waikaretu Marae*, n.d.)

Hakiputatomuri married the daughter of Te Hana and Rangiwhapapa, Kuiateao and they had two sons, Whitirawatea and Pokopoko (also known as Pokopoko-whiti-te-ra) to which many Te Uri o Hau chiefs establish their lineage to (Wright, 1996:64), then to Hakiputatomori and then to Haumoewaarangi—the name which they uphold as a hapū—'the kin of Hau'. Another child of Haumoewaarangi and Waihekeao settled in the Ōruawharo area, and her kin are known as Ngāti Mauku.

Whakapapa & Connecting Beyond the Kaipara

What also matters to Ngāti Whātua and locally to Te Uri o Hau is that iwi can whakapapa to these eponymous ancestors, but also more widely to other tribes. The land and harbour area (rohe) of the tribe is vast and so too is the net cast widely to others and Ngāti Whātua emerges as a sort of confederation of tribes with wider relationships to other iwi. Some of the connections made so far are to Te Arawa, Ngāti Awa, Nga Puhi, and the people of Takitimu. Another tie that is important to people along the river is the connection to the Tainui waka. It is believed that the Tainui waka berthed near Whangārei in the 1300s and on board were three brothers, Tāhuhu, Tahinga and Kura. Around the 15 – 1600s, the uri of these brothers settled in the Kaipara and formed Ngai Tāhuhu, Ngāti Tahinga and Ngāti Kura. The Ngai Tāhuhu settled at Otamatea, Ngāti Tahinga at Ōruawharo and Ngāti Kura at Komiti further up the Otamatea River. In the late 1700s, Te Uri o Hau infiltrate into these areas and all these connections remain across time (Martin, n.d.-b) and throughout the Kaipara as illustrated in the map of settlements below.

The Land and People of Kaipara

2.7

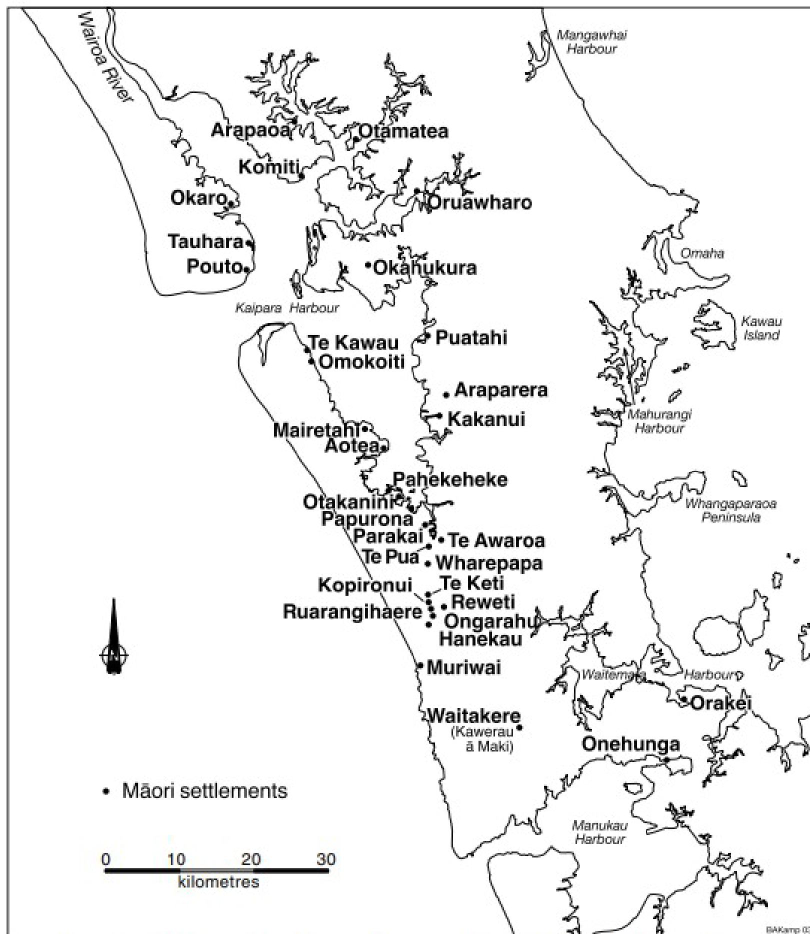


Figure 8: Te Uri o Hau and Ngāti Whātua settlements in Kaipara and Tamaki Makaurau, 1840–1921.
Source: document 05.

Figure 105
Te Uri o Hau and Ngāti Whatua settlements from 1840-1921 (Waitangi Report 674, 2006:33)

Ngāti Whātua are dispersed throughout the Kaipara, and the remnants of older times are harder to see and know but can be imagined through the archaeological map shown overpage. This following map shows pā sites and illustrates how widespread settlement was along the waterways including along the Ōruawharo River. Many of these historic sites are barely visible amidst the agriculture and immensely altered environment of the present day.

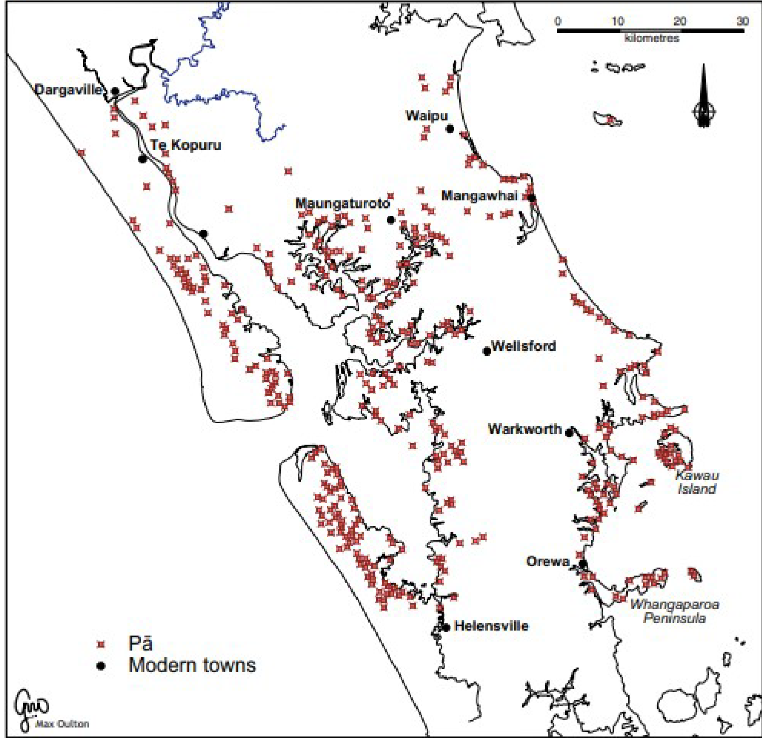


Figure 106
Distribution of pā sites in the Kaipara
(Waitangi Report 674, 2006:14)

Similarly, and more shockingly the next map shows what is left of Māori land along the river and in the broader Kaipara.

This is a visual representation of what happened between then and now.

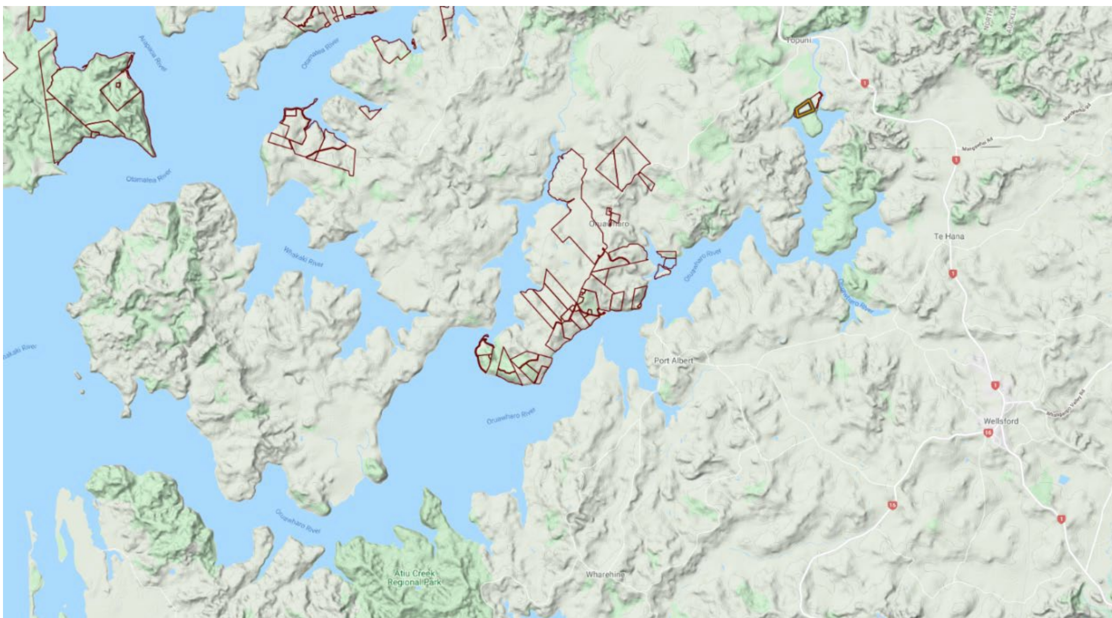


Figure 107
The blocks in red outline the remnants of Māori Land in the Ōruawharo and Ōtamatea areas

Between Then & Now

What follows on from the tua whakarere – olden times – is 'I muri I te taenga mai o te Pākehā' – the time after the arrival of Pākehā. This period manifests as a confluence of multiplicities surging with inequities resulting in extraordinary change. Complex, at times devastating and most certainly a reconfiguring force-to-be-reckoned-with which comes via the multiple flows of missionaries, religion, law, settlers, land grabbers, imperialism, colonisation, technologies, materialities, idealogues, disease, weaponry, tools, animals, plants, people, capital, and capitalism. Amidst this, Māori remain steeped in tikanga and mātauranga Māori, imbued with mana, mauri, kin connections to a multitude of the human and the non-human along with a physicality and survival capacity wrought under sky and within place. The latter being doubly important for early settlers as it is widely believed that without the assistance of Te Uri o Hau, the early settlers, called the Albertlanders would not have survived. The early settler story begins with being housed in Raupō whare and fed by Māori at Potaka as illustrated below.

Figure 108
George Dilly print 'Camp at Albertland' (date unknown) depicting the arrival of the Albertlanders at Patoka (Port Albert) and the visit from Te Uri o Hau who supplied food and helped to build Raupō whare.
Auckland Art Gallery Accession No.1970/20/5 Print Authors own

Simply put, Māori had capacity, strategy, contingency, agency and an eye for the opportunities that Pākehā brought, coupled with a level of resistance (Belgrave 2014: 145) necessitated by the tsunami of change that moved through the late 18th century, the 19th century and still contended with up until today.

Figure 109
Kio Manihera.
To me this photograph represents relationships between Māori and Pākehā as Manihera was a good friend of the photographer Harold Marsh, this was taken in his backyard.
The photo also signifies agency – Manihera is not passive but reflects strength and intellect through meeting the Pākehā lens square on.
Date unknown, Used with permission Albertland Museum.2004.2.97.136

Although Māori are resurgent, these tumultuous times, are strewn with inequalities and embedded in injustices, most markedly resulting in the colossal loss of Māori lands, as shown in the previous map, and devastating loss of lives.[36] As noted by Tim McCreanor and Helen Moewaka Barnes,

> The period between 1860 and 1890 was one of extreme trauma, loss and hardship for tangata whenua, especially those directly affected by the material, cultural and psychological ravages of war and the consolidation of the colonial state (Moewaka Barnes & McCreanor, 2019:22).

The harbour did not get off lightly too. The imperial project, colonisation, and the expansion of capitalism wreaking havoc on the forests and waterways in the north. The river now flows through a drastically altered time and space, with minimal bush, paddocks to the river's edge, silted up waterways, vast mangrove forests, great stands of Kauri long gone and foreigner-trees such as granddaddy macrocarpa silhouetting the evening sky.

Figure 110
Nightfall, Ōruawharo River

[36] From 1840 to the end of the 19th century the Māori population fell to approximately 42,000 (Moewaka Barnes & McCreanor, 2019: 22).

But along the river, more often beneath the trees and out on high points, manifestations of yesteryear remain; river pā, sites for remembering and sites of belonging.

Figure 111
Oneriri Pā, northern side of the Ōruawharo River

River Pā

It's hard to put a beginning and end on the Ōruawharo. Eastward it divides into three; the Topuni River, the Maeneena and Whakapirau creeks. Westward, it widens and transitions from a river back to harbour as you go; Tapora peninsula on the south and Puketotara peninsula to the north, with Motukumara Point signaling movement towards more open waters. Three creeks/river meeting of waters to the Motukumara point produce the parameters of this discussion, a sort of arbitrary beginning and end in a fluid and hard to pin down river-scape/harbour environment. Within this enclave, water shapes land, land shapes water and both shape lives across time. In the past, sites of significance emerged as points, headlands, steep drops to river edges - vantage points with limited access - were grafted through hard labour, song,

ceremony, tikanga, and flows of mana and mauri into fortified pā or hill forts. These pā rest along this river, hugely important for some and unseen or ignored by others.

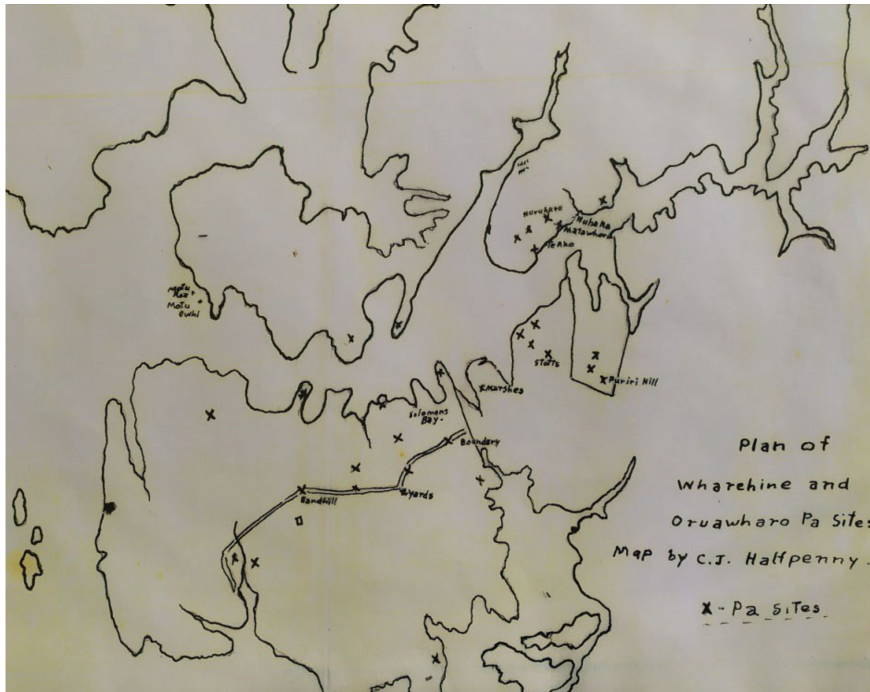


Figure 112
Map of pā sites on the Ōruawharo River drawn by Cyril Halfpenny, 1920s.
Used with permission, Albertland Museum

Archaeologists work with pā in order to both catalogue, archive and protect these historic sites and develop broader understandings of settlement patterns, polity, the relationship to others and indicate the need to defend community in the face of danger (Irwin, 1985, 2013). For example, archaeologist Geoffrey Irwin observes that, "when whole landscapes were fortified, social organisation and modes of integration such as leadership level were operating at a landscape level as well as a communal one" (2013: 313). He goes on to note that it seems that the "pattern of relations was dynamic and fluid" and sedentary settlement atypical in the North Island (2013: 313). It is also believed that "pā were widespread after 1500 AD" (2013: 328). Fluid and dynamic, people moved, populations swelled and declined, the river flowed and all the while along the passing of time, pā, like nodes on a network of a differing cosmological ontology, sit along the river as still and silent monuments of the distant past.

Figure 113
Heretoka Pā 1929.
Photo by Harold Marsh
Used with permission
Albertland Museum
2004.2.2007.1006

Pitched, dug, hewn, and hauled to life; the multiple incantations, tools, toolmaking, methods, tikanga and considerations deployed in the building of pā are beyond the scope of this thesis. Understanding Pā however, as infused with mana, mauri, tapu and more often sung into being (Best, 1927: 20, 67, 83-86) gleans both an animic ontology[37] and the potentiality for pā to have potency in the present. Furthermore, pā-being manifests as not built upon land but dwelt-within; a co-mingling of people, plant, birds, fishes, soil, wood, forest, water, earth and sky, gods, spirits and importantly - tapu. Nineteenth and early twentieth century ethnologist Elsdon Best described the building of pā in the East Coast district:

> Both the place and the workmen were under *tapu*, and the women were not allowed in the *pa* until it was finished and the *tapu* was lifted therefrom. Food was not allowed to be brought near the scene of the labour. The workmen only wore rough *pureke* garments while at work, and these were special working

[37] Kathryn Rountree (2012: 131) notes that for Māori, "animism is not a principle of faith or ideological position, but an orientation to the world and specific tracts of land, which systematically determines every aspect of daily living."

> garments, donned when commencing work, and taken off and left at the place when the work ceased, when the worker put on his usual garments and returned to his home (emphasis in original Best, 1927: 106).

Wood, soil, labour, sweat, atmospherically diffuse with tapu, and shaped through the material world; a stone then becomes integral as it is imbued with protective power over the pā. A stone in place, the posts were lifted and *en*placed through toil, voice and early morning light. "The first post erected in the defenses of such a *pa* must be set up early in the morning. While the workmen were so engaged in erecting the first post, which stood on the *whatu* or *mauri* of the pa, one of their number possessing a good voice was selected to chant the following tau or song: -

> Moe araara, ka tau te mana ki te pae
> Koheri, kohere, ka tiritiri, ka rearea tama ki tona hiwa
> Hiwa! Hiwa!
> (Best, 1927: 106)

Silence followed song, posts were hoisted, more song then silence, and all the while protocols were enacted to ensure that the mana of pā were upheld and not trampled upon, "koi takahia te mana o te pa" (1927: 106). Best cites Te Whatahoro who describes the building of pā in the Hawkes Bay district in 1852 and introduces another stone, this time a pounamu patu named Hine-pare: "It was Paora who chanted the *tau* when the corner posts were erected … Paora was quite naked as he stood to chant the song, and had in his hand a greenstone *patu* (weapon) named Hine-pare" (*Te Whataroa in* Best, 1927: 106). Upon completion, tapu was lifted by selecting more often a young unmarried woman to "tread or takahia the forbidden place" (1927: 111) and at the completion of ceremony, all the people entered.

Hine-pare and Paora, stone and flesh, call from the past and leave a faint echo amidst the imaginings of the silent monuments in the present. Monument, however, becomes a problematic term as Tim Ingold notes when discussing the Danish mounds; ancient, mystifying and a source of intrigue to archaeologists across time,

> Impressive in their permanence and solidity, monumental structures intended by their makers to confer everlasting life provide irrefutable evidence, to those who subsequently come across them, that the past is dead, over and done with … To visit a monument is to eavesdrop on past conversations that we can no longer fully understand, or that are comprehensible only to specialist antiquarians. They were then, we are now (Ingold, 2013: 78,79).

To make a mound a monument is to close it off to its past whereas Ingold argues, a "mound keeps mounding" (2013: 82). Under sky and of the world, mounds germinate, propagate, layer-up with plant and soil, inhabit and are inhabited. Likewise, mounds are the sites of work and memory, as archaeologists take to their trowels and story tellers tell their stories. Furthermore, mounds are makers of place and generative of meanings as people's lives proximate and encircle these things from the past and (simultaneously) things in the present. As Ingold notes that, "while the architectural monument, originally designed and built to last for all eternity, eventually sinks into the sands of time, the round mound—quietly and inconspicuously—just carries on mounding. That is to say, it *perdures"* (Ingold, 2013: 80). So too, I argue, do pā. Pā keep on pā-ing, pā *perdure*. With this in mind I remembered George. I had asked him about the pā site on his sister's land. He said he likes to go and just sit there and see what he feels. I asked him if he feels stuff and he said, "Yes, I do." He also took me straight to some of the things he has found, the objects pictured overpage. Georges sitting and feeling in the present and the taonga calling from the past indicated that I needed to learn from pā. As fate would have it, someone I had met was turning her attention to a river pā[38] too. We agreed to meet.

[38] My companion asked that themselves and this pā be anonymised.

Figure 114
Sinker stones found by George at Whangaroa Pā

Two Pākehā out Walking

The two of us went walking, to visit an old Pā, a large previously fortified site on a headland along the river. A friendly dog from nearby also followed us; there was no keeping him away. On my mind, was the pā that perdures and the pā-ing of pā—on what they do in the present. I was also keen to meet the old hill fort, of becoming familiar with this close compadre of the river below. Up the hill and first and foremost, I was struck with the magnificence of the place. Much bigger than I imagined, with sweeping inclines down to the mangrove estuaries where the river once flowed and mounded hills with expansive views across the Ōruawharo, to the now forested pā on the other side. What a sight it once must have been and what a site it is now, hidden beneath the immense karaka and pururi trees and a lush green blanket underfoot.

As we went, all the while, a voice whispered, "it's too tapu to walk." We talked about a Māori person we knew, who left the district a decade ago who said she would never walk up there as it was too tapu.
Somehow, as Pākehā, we gave ourselves permission to move through the tapu, not overtly or explicitly, just in the doing of the walking we did, but still tried to be respectful, stopping often to just look and feel.

Zig zagging down the steep slopes, we made our way to the bottom and thought about the waka that would berth up there when the inlet was not so silted up. Homeward bound, feeling enamoured and adventurous now, we made our way criss-crossing again, taking care of my older knees and chatting about this and that. We came across a patch of dirt, down a slope not covered with greenery like everywhere else, made our way through a fence and stopped for breath.

It was there that everything shifted. It was there that which I believed to be known becomes unknown and the unknown is sensed and felt but simultaneously, unable to be understood. What happened is all to do with that small dog that followed us that day. He stopped and started and ran and ran and threw his head from side to side, looking up and across, running in maddening circles from down the hill around the dirt and back again. The moment in time expanded and we were as caught up as the dog; the swirling, whirling strangeness of it all, hard to write down and even harder to believe. Whatever sent the dog into this turmoil spooked us too. At some point in the middle of all of this, we had to stop and calm the dog and gather our senses and move on but move we did, as deeply moved and frightened like that little dog. This felt like a breech, a forewarning or even an opening, a something from somewhere else and everything that I ever thought to know about tapu shifted to a palpable, visceral thing but somehow more un-known.

Two Pākehā left the old Pā lost for words. We made our way home and stopped on my doorstep flicking water from our bottles here and there—handfuls of droplets across the threshold—to lift the tapu[39] and transition indoors for a badly needed cup of tea. Two almost strangers now entangled in a deeply experienced moment in time; she went home, and I stayed on, thinking about pā, knowing less than before, but feeling more. I opened up the images from the day and a strange blur appeared in photo near the spot where the dog simply went crazy, and I really did feel that anything is now possible – an opening or a shifting of the sands towards the possibilities of the new.

[39]Water is used by Māori to remove tapu.

Setting Free the Spirits at Oneriri Pā

“Don’t be afraid of tapu Clare,” a neighbour said, when I recounted the tale of the visit to the Pā. “You are a good person and have nothing to fear, and like a (late) kaumatua used to say, just take a moment and say a little karakia.” “And just be open and see what comes in” he added. This farmer, a Pākehā brought up Māori, as he likes to say, then told me about a visit to Oneriri Pā he once did with a group of people.

Figure 115
Oneriri pā, photo taken from Atiu Creek Regional Park

Oneriri Pā sits across on the northern side of the Ōruawharo as forested headland at the end of Hargreaves Bay. Substantial and able to be seen from many vantage points including Atiu Creek Regional Park in the above photo and my own office window, I suspect however, many look across to there with no awareness of the pā that shapes the forest floor, I know this was the case for me. I have boated past, picnicked in the bay, lived here for nearly 30 years and until recently, did not know what lay in our

midst. This, I believe, is the story of many Kaipara pā; silent and forgotten or never known by so many Pākehā but hugely significant for many Māori.

Sometime ago my neighbour and others went on a boat trip across the river to Hargreaves Bay. These are Pākehā with deep connection with local Māori who, unlike many others, knew about the pā and had also heard about a settler baby who was believed to be buried there. With an awareness of tapu, they walked up the hill and into the forest. At first, he says, he was being quite clinical about it all, looking at the ditches and inclines. Then it changed. A whooshing happened all around and above his head, like magpies flying close by, but there were no such birds. Around and around it went. He turned to see another huddled and in distress, "they're all on me, they're crawling on me." She said it felt like women and children. He focused on getting them out of there and stopped often to brush down her shoulders to attempt to clear the crawling sensation and reassure her as they moved down through the trees. They reached the beach and boarded the boat.

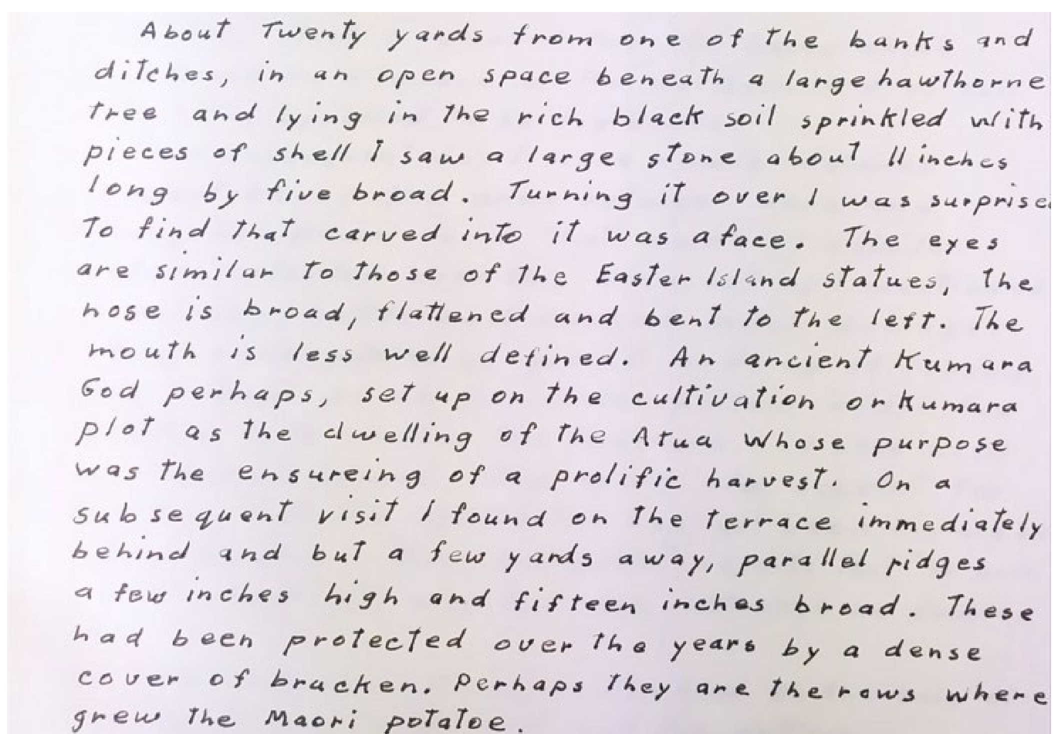
Shook up now, the river and wind then came into play. A howling gale blew up whipping the water rough. The boat would not start, and they were being pushed back towards the bay, generating a sense of panic and, as ever on the water, a need for calm. More composed, he found the cap was off the battery, fixed this and started the motor. They set off in the blowing wind and rough sea towards home across a large and somewhat perilous of stretch of water. As they approached the Takapau creek near home they turned to see the expanse of the Ōruawharo now tranquil, the river a plane of dead calm and the wind no more. He says that you could explain this in many ways; the rising of a wind in a turning tide, or something else – you could look at it in any way you choose. "It's up to you."

On another day, they talked to a local kaumatua about what happened on the pā. He told them that that is because the spirits have not been set free, the place had never been blessed. It is also believed that the men, women and children on at this pā were killed by their own—a fleet of waka coming from elsewhere but with members of the same iwi. After this discussion a decision was made to bless the site. Many turned up

that day including the Pākehā farmer who had recently bought the land. My neighbour said they had a great day. It was beautiful. After my encounter, hearing about his, *knowing* more and *seeing* anew, I knew my view of the river would never be the same; those old pā, portal-like, disrupting the temporal and hosting the past, guardians on river turns and custodians of pā-things.

Pā Things

River pā beget myriad things; trees with glory and shadow, insects and birds, portals through which the spirits may haunt and unsettle, and the things that get dug up, poke through or slip from the earth. Patu, adzes, old sinkers, anchors, jewelry, shell remnants of feasts, bones, the unrecognisable and awe-inspiring including what is believed to be a Taumata Atua or Crop God (but this has not been verified) pictured on the next page, found in the soil at Takapau Pā and recounted in the journal of Ted Halfpenny below (covering trips to pā in the mid-1960s).



About Twenty yards from one of the banks and ditches, in an open space beneath a large hawthorne tree and lying in the rich black soil sprinkled with pieces of shell I saw a large stone about 11 inches long by five broad. Turning it over I was surprise
To find that carved into it was a face. The eyes are similar to those of the Easter Island statues, the nose is broad, flattened and bent to the left. The mouth is less well defined. An ancient Kumara God perhaps, set up on the cultivation or kumara plot as the dwelling of the Atua whose purpose was the ensureing of a prolific harvest. On a subsequent visit I found on the terrace immediately behind and but a few yards away, parallel ridges a few inches high and fifteen inches broad. These had been protected over the years by a dense cover of bracken. Perhaps they are the rows where grew the Maori potatoe.

Figure 116
Location of Taumata Atua noted in the bottom centre of map below.
Wharehine Pa Sites Journal of Ted Halfpenny used with permission, Albertland Museum

Figure 117
Taumata Atua or Crop God drawn by Ted Halfpenny Used with permission Albertland Museum

Taumata Atua stares back from the page with the deep black of eternity eyes and resists representation—what thing is this; an ancestor for Māori, an enigma for Pākehā and/or a collector's object of desire. As noted by Amiria Salmond such "uncommon things" unsettle, provoke and defy appropriation (2017: 251). Māori may well hold close as an ancestor and weep through the deepest of connections in a heartfelt moment in time and then step back, deploy a storyteller/archaeologist eye and explain the object in another. Salmond adds that these, "unexpected things—not-quite subjects, not-quite objects—keep appearing via processes that are recursive rather than dialectical: open-ended double spirals, not closed loops" (2017: 263).

I suggest that Salmond's recursive open-ended double spiral is analogous with the metaphysical and literal movement of pā-things. Out of earth they come and move to other almost-homes— some, at times, controversial[40] (including such places as museums and window ledges) and simultaneously remain tethered with a significant pull to from whence they came. This is not linear back and forth movement but rather a sort of, spiraling through and entangling with, differing ways of knowing. Subsequently a pā-thing can become a potential site of micro-politics (Bennett, 2010) as contested ways of relating to the objects-subjects manifest. Significantly, a mother tongue shapes these differing relationships and understandings. For example, Native American Robin Wall Kimmerer (2020 [2013]), when discussing Potawatomi, notes that it is a language of verbs categorised with animacy or non-animacy. A hill is, "to be a hill,'" a bay, "to be a bay". Personhood is attributed to the non-human world, and the 'it' becomes "someone not something" (2020 [2013]:56). For Māori, so too does Taumata Atua. As "someone not something" he/she holds your gaze, provokes, unsettles, while connections are made to his/her whakapapa; a meshwork that situates him/her back at the site of revelation—the Takapau pā, alongside the Ōruawharo river.

[40] There is long history in NZ Aotearoa and other past settler colonies of the taking, placing, naming and storing of artefacts. In Aotearoa, Māori artefacts are considered taonga (treasures) and as embodying ancestors.

What is harder to pin down is Pākehā-ness in relationship to such pā-things. They are neither *the* ancestors of Pākehā nor *of* the ancestors but there is however, a long history along the river and in the Kaipara of looking out for, perhaps caring-for, feeling-for and gifting or collecting these object/subjects – see examples below.

Figure 118
Fern root beater, flax beater, stone fern root pounder, found in Wharehine, by Edwin Stanley Brookes Jnr and his son Archie. Held at the Albertland Museum Wellsford

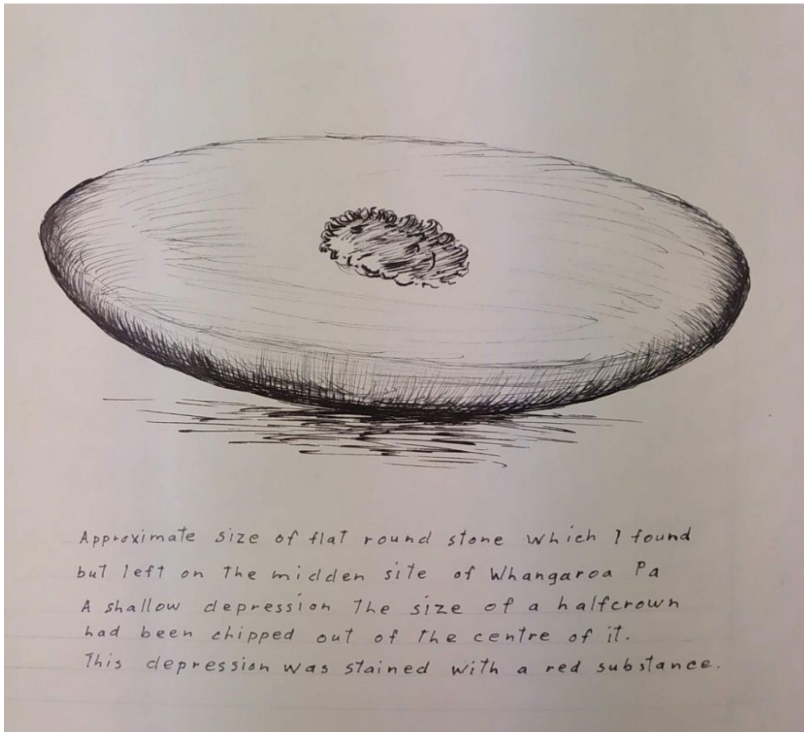
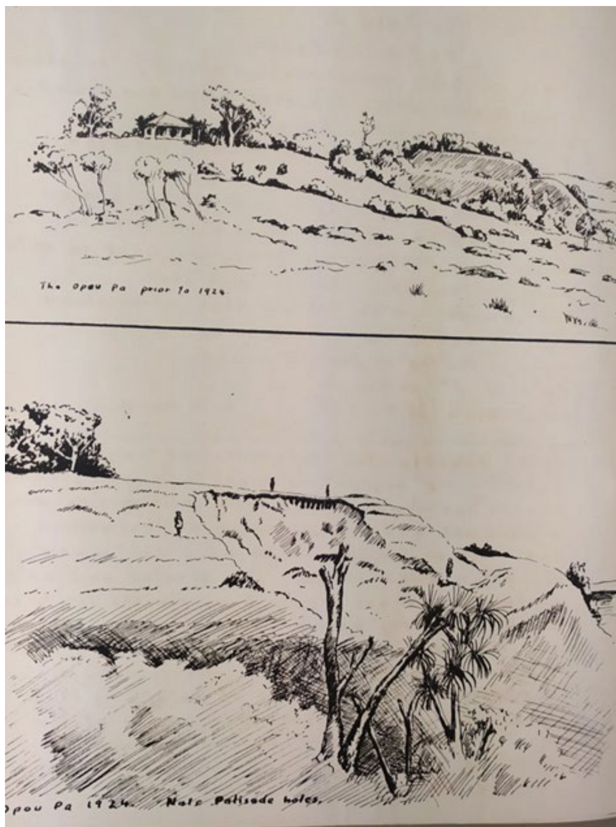
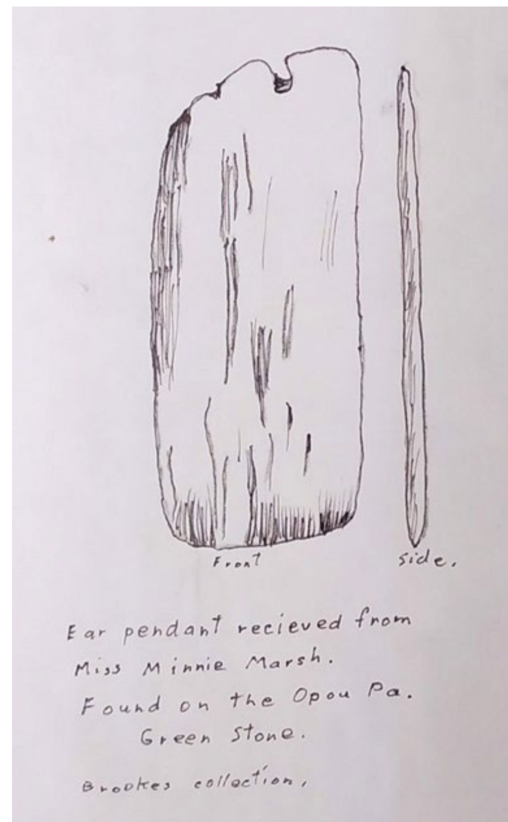


Figure 119
Flat Round Stone from the journal of Ted Halfpenny - *Wharehine Pa Sites*
Used with permission. Albertland Museum

Figure 120
Left and below, cataloguing pā sites and pā things. From Journal *Wharehine Pa Sites* by Ted Halfpenny - used with permission Albertland Museum





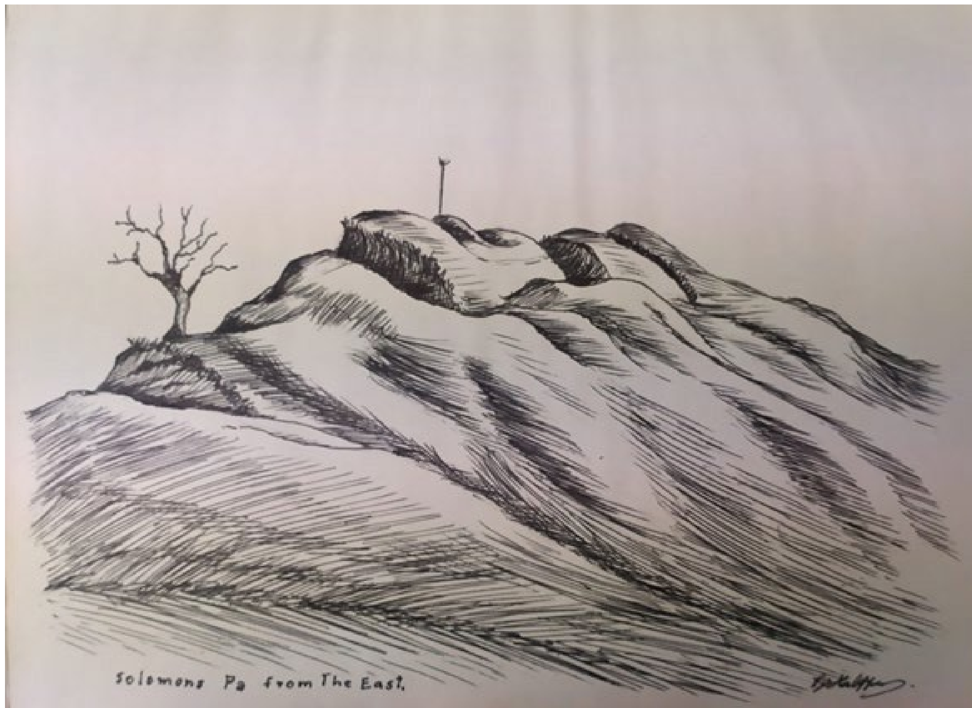


Figure 121
Solomon's Pā from the east
Ted Halfpenny
Used with permission,
Albertland Museum

Although this could be just as awareness of the value of the old, something else emerges in discussions with people along the river. A Māori man George, in discussing the sinkers he found at Whangaroa pā (see page 207), told me the story of his Pākehā brother-in-law who found a stone adze at the pā. "Of course, he re-buried it," he said, of *course*. Small snippets of conversation like this, point to both the complexities and particularities of belonging and knowing as Pākehā in Aotearoa New Zealand.

As noted, a pā-thing may well move back down the spiral from where they came and be re-interred, as with George's brother-in-law's adze; a practice that is not uncommon. I would argue that it is also not uncommon for a Pākehā to know that this is the right thing to do. This knowing may feel intuitive but is likely an intuition born of Māori and Pākehā living lives within the same geographies for a long stretch of time. As noted by historian Angela Ballara, "for over 200 years each set of cultural influences [Māori and Pākehā], introduced or already present in New Zealand, in all its variety of manifestations, has profoundly influenced the others" (2000: 25). More often, these cultural influences encapsulate practises and ways in which peoples perceive of the world. Entangled with practise and perception, are the "uncommon things" (Salmond, 2017) that are harder to account for. These, I argue, potentially draw

Pākehā towards a sense of knowing that feels near to Māori, almost spiritual, close to earth and deeply entangled with place. This is not appropriation but rather a stirring that happens just below perception, a knowing that is hard to grasp and even harder, as Pākehā, to articulate. In making sense of Pākehā-ness, pā-things can also help to illustrate what it is to belong, to be *home* in such a place as along the edges of the Ōruawharo River. A local story comes to mind that started with a landslide at Opou Pā in 1924.

After a long dry summer, heavy rain fell causing a "massive slip" on Opou Pā on the Marsh farm (sourced from display material at the Albertland museum). Out of the disturbed ground emerged a process locked in time, two adzes being formed from a single rock.

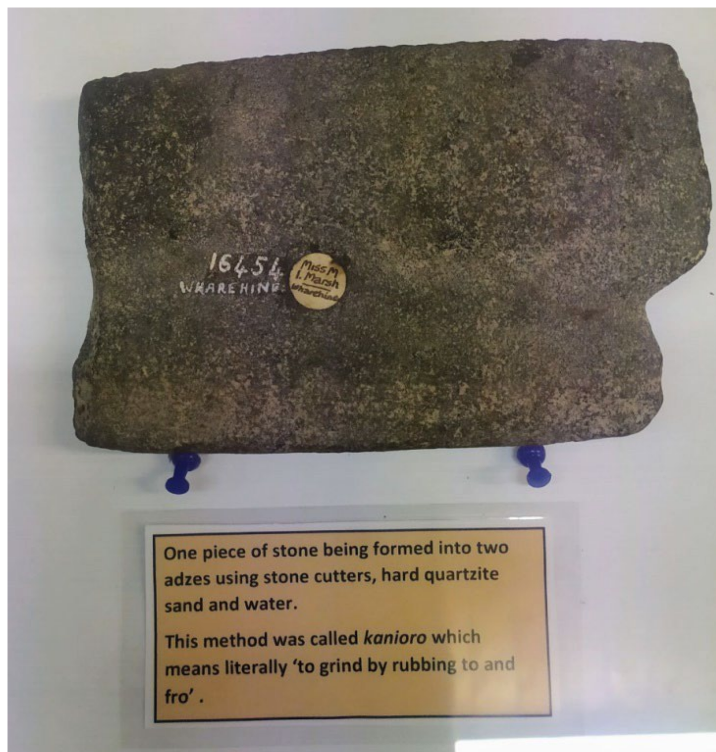


Figure 122
Photos from exhibit, Albertland Museum, here and overpage

This adze/rock was found by a 12-year-old girl called Isabelle (Belle) Marsh and her discovery was to become a significant story in the history of her family – see story from the display museum display below.

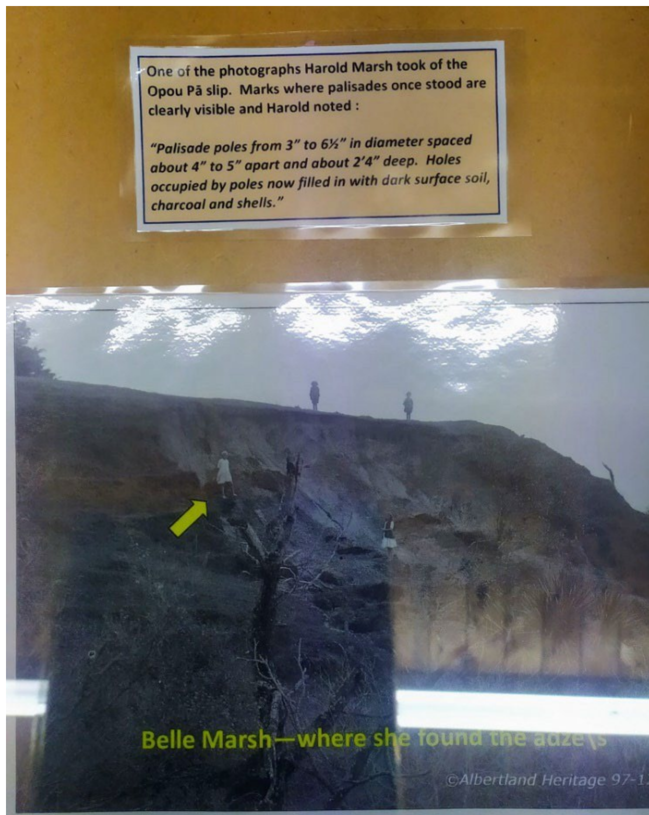
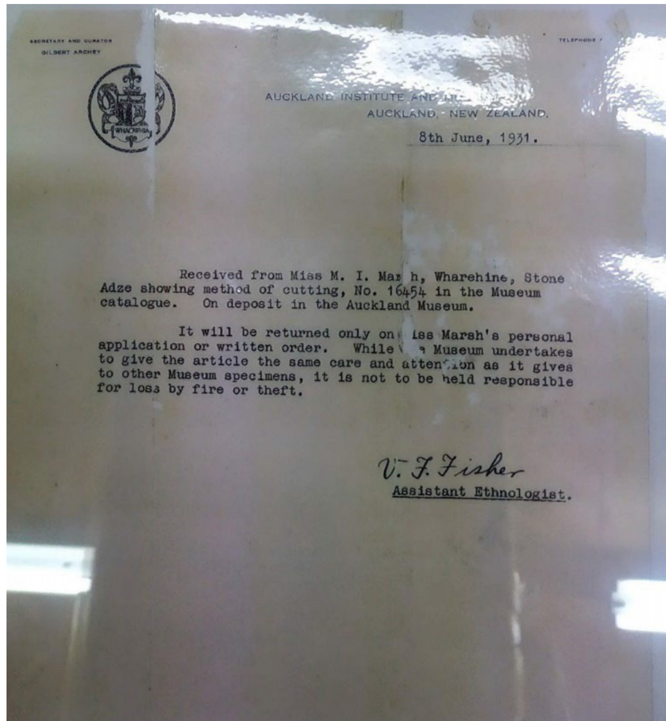


Figure 123
Photo left and below of where Belle Marsh found the adze at Opou Pā. Photo by Harold Marsh, 1924 Used with permission Albertland Museum 2004.2.97.1214

In 1931, an assistant ethnologist, Mr V F Fisher, from the Auckland War Memorial Museum visited Wharehine and Belle Marsh donated this piece to the museum – see letter of receipt below.



AUCKLAND INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM
AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND.
8th June, 1931.

Received from Miss M. I. Marsh, Wharehine, Stone Adze showing method of cutting, No. 16454 in the Museum catalogue. On deposit in the Auckland Museum.

It will be returned only on Miss Marsh's personal application or written order. While the Museum undertakes to give the article the same care and attention as it gives to other Museum specimens, it is not to be held responsible for loss by fire or theft.

V. F. Fisher
Assistant Ethnologist.

Figure 124
Letter from assistant ethnologist V.J Fisher dated 8th June 1931, From display – Albertland Museum

Later in life, Belle expressed "the wish that it would come home" (sourced from display at Albertland Museum) and a lengthy process ensued with Belle and her daughter Lyn Johnston[41] and the Auckland Museum to have this taonga returned 'home' - the success of this venture noted in the display case below.

Figure 125
A taonga comes home.
From display, Albertland Museum

[41] Sadly, Lyn Johnston passed away unexpectedly two weeks after telling me about this process, so I am unable to recall or clarify all of the details of our conversation. I do remember however, her framing it as a long and lengthy battle with the large powerful institute that is the Auckland Museum.

This story also troubles the notion of home as how at *home* the double-adze-stone is, looked down on by the settlers in a settler's museum, is contentious, such spaces more often sources of pain for Māori (Huawai 2007; Te Papa 2018; Tolia and Raymond 2020). What is important is that this Pākehā woman, towards the end of her life wanted the taonga to come *home* and so did her daughter. This was something worth fighting for and fight they did. The stone connected them to their family history and importantly, to their own home; a farm that hosts a pā site along the banks of the Ōruawharo. Becoming Pākehā manifests as both, becoming-with Māori and becoming-within place.

Concluding thoughts: Seeing Silences & Knowing Differently

This chapter spiraled out from the middle in unexpected and unplanned ways and began with pā. "Aren't you straying from the river?" people would say. But up pā came in conversations and into view—literally. I remember being with George and moving outdoors and there was the top of Whangaroa Pā, off to the left, only 50 metres away. I was transfixed. Furthermore, archaeological maps revealed hundreds of pā across the Kaipara including along the Ōruawharo, information which inextricably broadened my understandings and re-orientated my perception as I moved along the river. Similarly, Ted Halfpenny's old pā journal came out of a box, stored in the back of the museum and there they were - copious pā accounted for, measured, and mapped, taonga drawn up to scale followed by detailed tales of journey and discovery. From pā came the pā-things, provocative and unsettling and pointing towards the intermingling's and becoming-with of Māori and Pākehā. The window ledges of neighbours turned up pā-things and the museum had exhibits in glass boxes awkwardly stored below the settler gaze. Never have I felt the pull of such things. Spiralling out again, the context needed to be understood, and I was swept up in trying to write 'a particular history of' as framed by a local kaumatua. Then, on an early spring day, a tohunga stopped me in my tracks, I reflected, panicked a little and stumbled forward.

This is a process that has unsettled me for two reasons. Firstly, as Pākehā, I have struggled with the line between telling stories that may not be mine to tell and/or

saying nothing and in doing so, reproducing the erasure of Māori in local history. I see these troubling junctures or potential ethical turning points as pivotal for Pākehā ethnographers in Aotearoa NZ. Every instance different, needed to be slowly thought through, then decisions made within the context of all of it—the histories, the past silences, the past hurts and possibilities of newness. Secondly, disturbance comes from a level of incredulity. As someone who has lived here for nearly 30 years, I felt uncomfortable about how little I knew of what sat silently in our midst. Now I can't un-see what I know now, and in the seeing-knowing recognise the resounding absence of the unremembered and the left behind. The pā and pā things emerged from the silence and nudged their way forward to find a home in my thesis, albeit in a small way. This silence and silencing of pā also speaks to the way in which some history narratives dominate, especially for this area—settler narratives— and in the doing so, submerge others. Silencing, however, is an attribute cast from a human-centric and Eurocentric point of view. Moving away from the politics of histories towards the agency of the non-human turned my attention to what pā do.

Thinking with Ingold (2013: 80), I suggest that pā go on pā-ing and so do their things. This is particularly so with fighting pā which mark bends in rivers, headlands, and command expansive views. Mainly forested now, the grounds below are shaped with dips, trenches and sheer drops and hold the stories of people now gone, replaced by a multitude of plant and birdlife. Up-close, pā stir feelings and evoke the imaginings of the past. Up-close, tapu and disturbed, pā may also whip up some ancestors to deeply unsettle an unsuspecting visitor, or maybe unwelcome intruder.

Furthermore, both the ongoing-ness of time and timelessness converge at these sites and amongst these things. Change has occurred; occupation gone, the river silted up below, mangrove forests have taken over inlet routes to pā, cattle and sheep roam on some and great stands of forest grow on others. These are all signs of the passing of time but through chronocracy — which shows the Imperial project of mapping clock time and accompanying routines, values and judgement across the colonies— temporalities can be seen to be differently known and experienced. In Aotearoa, the differently experienced can be understood through the Māori concept of time wā. In referencing Patu Hohepa, Anne Salmond points out that "space-time"— (wā) 'swirls

like koru patterns, three dimensional spirals', so that one faces the future (mua) and now the past (mua)" (Salmond, 2017: 408). Furthermore, "Wā 'unfreezes' the ancestors from the 'times before' and gives them entry into places and spaces in the present" (Kidman et al., 2021:33). Through wā we see the swirling 'three dimensional spirals' that encapsulate time as a cosmological whole and this can be felt and experienced at pā sites and through pā-things. There is a pull that draws you towards the staring eyes of Taumata Atua; a fright and shiver down the spine as pā tapu is felt to be breached; and a knowing that feels the past in the present while not necessarily understanding how this could be so. While pā are not known to all, those who are connected to pā and pā-things experience their generative capacity. This generative capacity influences Pākehā *becoming-with* Māori across time and the knowing and becoming of Māori in time. Simultaneously, a deepening sense of belonging coalesces with the land – in this case the summits and ridges along the banks of the Ōruawharo. But belonging manifests in multiple ways and amongst this riverine environment a communal sense of belonging resonates and reiterates from the colonial past into the colonising present as an identity infused with pioneer pride—that is of being an Albertlander.

Chapter 6 Albertland & Albertlanders

A Prologue: Entanglements & Disquiet

Donna Haraway, in her lecture entitled *Making Oddkin: Telling Stories for Earthly Survival* (2017), encourages 'staying with the trouble' and "making unexpected collaborations or combinations" (2017: 4). This may well be all manner of tangled up subjectivities and vitalities which meet, mingle and unsettle in contact zones. Staying with the trouble may also mean belonging to groups in which different perspectives and points of view swirl about. She conceptualises this kind of thinking within mixed-up encounters as moments of 'yes but', 'no and' and 'but not only' — a process of staying with complexities even if they remain unresolved. These ideas can also be used to decolonise contact zones. These words resonate with me as during the course of my research, as noted, I found myself becoming part of a settler museum and of late, voted in as chairperson/president. I signed up to see if there were ways of opening up conversations that were more inclusive, more specifically, the telling of stories about the people who were here first— ancestors of local iwi—while still telling the Albertlander story. This has been troubling for me as a researcher. On one hand I am critical about the singular settler narrative and on the other, I participate in a broad range of activities as a committee member that follow and reproduce this narrative. This is complicated for me and sits as unresolved. What matters is that I be open with my committee colleagues, we talk about the trouble, unsettle the taken-for-grantedness of a settler museum and engage in the 'yes but 'and I find that other colleagues now feel the time is ripe for change.

In the museum, important friendships have formed, we edge forward and the will is there for change, albeit at a slow pace, for telling tangata whenua stories. This requires collaboration with iwi, which hasn't been established. I have also learnt that there have been many attempts across ten or so years to engage with iwi in an attempt to bring in pre-European histories into the museum—so I am but a newcomer to a old game. It's complicated, it's troubling, and I am still there, around people who do way more work than me, and we talk in angst ridden ways about how to progress other narratives which need to be framed by others. The pace is slow. As an insider/outsider

my own feelings have shifted. Now I see a group of people, a large extended Albertlander family, who are protecting their artifacts and transmitting stories within a place they call their own. Their intentions spring from this matrix of connectedness. This is a complex place to do decolonising work in as there are layers and layers of practices carried out by hard working volunteers (of which I am not—I turn up in the evenings to committee meeting) to preserve and conserve artifacts, taonga and document archives and any critique feels like undermining the very foundations of the place in which people do such work. What I can do is talk about the stories of iwi and Albertlanders including the ways these stories can be brought into the museum and used in school programmes. I can suggest word changes to public documents, labels and correspondence. I can tell people about old names and the power of people who get to name. I can tell people about loss. I think hopefully about these things as small decolonising acts that may sow the seeds for bigger changes.

Furthermore, I get the sense that local Māori are engaged in their own ways of history telling and world making and are not particularly interested in the local museum. Sensing this reluctance, I am reminded of Māori filmmaker Taika Waititi's comments while attending a panel on decolonising the screen. He likened the exhausting discussions around inclusivity and diversity in Hollywood as "coming into your house, stealing all of your shit, and burning your house down and then saying, 'OK, we need to talk about this.'" He adds with intense frustration, "you fucking broke it, you fix it" (*Waititi cited* in Bergeson, 2023). There is copious fixing still to do in history telling places in Aotearoa NZ. In the meantime I approach this following chapter teetering on the edges of contact zones. From with-in and with-out, from both precarity and stance making, from critical storytelling to worrying that I am doing exactly the same as what went before— making *more* of the 'pioneer' story and *less* of tangata whenua.
One attempt at 'fixing' is to expand the lens and start the Albertlander story prior to their arrival—local history does not start with their landfall—and end with the 'what happened next' for Māori. I follow with another chapter (written late in the research) in which I recount how I found myself in the thick of it, curating an exhibit through a 'Missionary for Māori' archive as a way of opening possibilities for different stories. I tell this curatorial story in full to *show* the unsteadiness of doing ethnography and

representation in the in-between. In all, these are just slithers of stories which I hope can become portals for others, small attempts to decolonise contact zones and stay with the sometimes troubling and complex entanglements along the waters of the Ōruawharo. In part, this requires knowing about the discourse that dominates, Albertlanders as pioneers, a becoming that that endures, Albertlanderness. Let the rambling tale begin.

Albertland Belonging

Amongst many local Pākehā, a particular way of knowing, becoming and belonging is that of being an Albertlander. The historical kin-connections of this group stem from the first arrivals of Albertland settlers in the 1860s and map back geographically to their place of origin, London, and the English Midlands and in part, form out of their belonging in the 19th century, to the Nonconformist church. Assemblage-like, and lively still, the Albertland of old manifests in the present as signifiers and materialities which simultaneously history-tell and shape becoming and belonging for those who are a part of that history while pushing others to the margins of historical narratives, who are not Albertlanders. Local halls, all manner of churches, wharfs both used and memorialised as landing places, copious books, historic homes, place names, road names, school groups named after settler ships, remnants of industry, and a central story telling hub, the Albertland Heritage Museum, all form the matrix of what matters for the people to whom this story matters—the Albertlanders. Alternatively, there are Pākehā who are not Albertlanders, and this distinction is often made. Historical authority may be prefixed by saying "I am not an Albertlander but…". Family connections may be explained by, "I am not an Albertlander, but my husband is…". A museum member may say, "I'm on this committee and I'm not even an Albertlander!", the latter applying to me, a long term local with no kinship connection to the Albertlander past.

Communities however, as multiplicities, house many who do not fit into the Albertlander and ('I' in reflection of the 'Other') not-Albertlander categories but this way of knowing and belonging (or not) dominates the Ōruawharo for all, Māori, Pākehā Albertlander or not, so needs to be attended to. In attending to, I look at: the

Albertlander story itself; how stories settle in the material world; how stories are storied; what stories do. And I go looking for power in amongst all of this. What will emerge is a matrix of pluralities, commonalities, entanglements, separations, and different ways of claiming identity and constructing narratives within the same settler society place and geographical space.

Additionally, I argue that the efficacy of overt and dominant settler narratives to recolonise is not as clear as first meets the eye. On one hand such discourses embolden processes that continue to colonise.[42] On the other, to situate Māori in a non-nuanced and unequivocal way as only being marginalised by dominant discourses belies iwi agency. I suggest that Māori have an ability to both deeply embody belonging *personally* and to claim belonging *politically*, (Kidman, 2012) regardless of what others say, while all the while, keeping an eye on institutional power.

On the Ōruawharo, the complexities of this web of entanglements can be seen to begin in earnest with the planned settlement at Port Albert, once known as Patoka, in the 1860s. In order to write this story, I delve into the texts Albertlanders and Albertlander friends/historians have written about themselves. In the delving, I acknowledge the lengths people have gone to preserve the Albertlander story but also wish to pause to tangi those crushing sentences— written in the colonial vernacular— which jar and shock through belittling tangata whenua, surely a source of pain from one generation to the next. With this awareness, I focus on the unravelling of events which led to entanglements along the Ōruawharo. A story which begins with the surveying and selling of Māori land to the Crown post the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840.

[42] For example, there is currently an anti-governance group led by evangelist Julian Batchelor in NZ, touring the country. Batchelor promotes colonisation as beneficial for all and rejects biculturalism. This movement is fuelling racism towards Māori see https://stopcogovernance.kiwi/.

Land Sold, Bought & Surveyed for Settlement.

The Treaty of Waitangi or Te Tiriti O Waitangi[43] was signed by Chiefs and the Crown on February 6th, 1840, and has complexly underpinned the contestations and attempts at biculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand ever since. In the preamble to the English version of the Treaty of Waitangi (1840), the intentions of the act were outlined:

- to protect Māori interest from the encroaching British settlement,
- to provide for settlement and to establish government to
- to establish law and order (*Waitangi Tribunal*, n.d.)

Article two of the English version[44] then gave pre-emptive rights to the Crown to purchase Māori Land. While the notion of 'protection for Māori' was stipulated in the above preamble, this clause was repeatedly violated with many of these Crown purchases, along with other forms of land alienation, have been the basis of claims for compensation and a Crown apology across decades at the Waitangi Tribunal.[45] These contestations are beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is noted that the "sale" of vast acreages Māori land in the 19th century continues to be experienced by tangata whenua as a deeply felt sense of loss and injustice in contemporary times.

Crucial to the Albertland narrative is the sale of 30,000 acres (12,140 hectares) called the Ōruawharo Block. This is a lynchpin moment in the origin story: a moment narrated as Te Uri o Hau wanting to sell land in order to provide for a Pākehā settlement close by. Thematically, this connects to another important part of the storying of the area, that being Māori as close friends and helpers of Albertlanders. A picture of Chief Paikea Te Hekeua, for example, in the *Albertland* book (Borrows, 1969) has the caption, "The great Kaipara Chief, Paikea. He proved himself a true friend of the Albertland pioneers" (1969: 49). Similarly, in 1862, at what became known as 'The

[43] These terms can be used interchangeably, as a personal or political preference or more specifically, *The Treaty of Waitangi* is used to denote the English version and *Te Tiriti O Waitangi* to denote the Māori version
[44] I am making the distinction between the English and Te Reo version as it argued that mistranslations or poor transliterations from English to Māori led to the intentions of the Crown being misrepresented to the detriment of Māori.
[45] The Waitangi Tribunal was formed in 1975 as a permanent commission of inquiry to investigate claims made against the Crown of potential breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi. In 1985, after many protests, a law change meant that claim could be heard retrospectively, dating back from the signing of the treaty in 1840.

Great Feast' hosted for Albertlanders at Ōtamatea by Te Uri o Hau, Chief Paikea makes the following declaration to his visitors, the Albertlander,

I now have my heart's desire.
I have sold large blocks of land to the government
so that my Pakeha brothers can live by me in good friendship and peace.
We are all children of the great Queen Victoria.
You are my Pakehas [sic] and I, and my tribe will be ever ready to protect you with our bodies.
You have much to teach us, and you may learn many things from us that will be useful to you.
May we be brothers forever.
That is the wish of Paikea (Cited in the Deed of Settlement Te Uri o Hau, n.d.: 7).

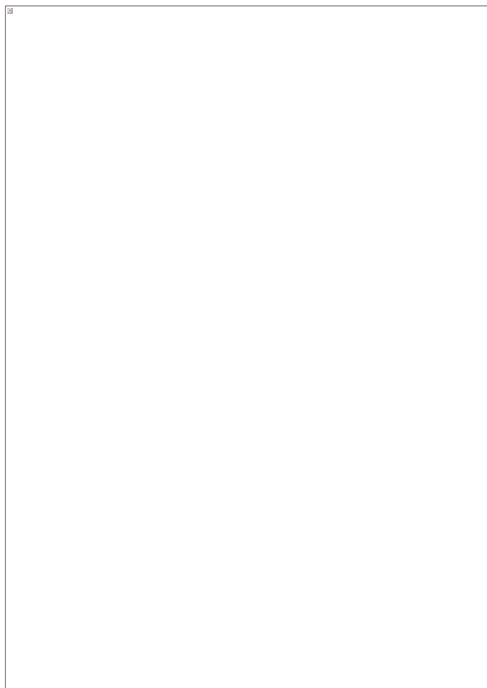


Figure 126
Chief Paikea Te Hekeua
Used with permission
Albertland Museum
2004.2.95.250

This storying, however, also feels problematic as it portrays one settler-side of a story while also inferring to a degree, that the same level of friendship and cooperation shape relations between Māori and Pākehā communities in the present day. With certain pride, these friendship-threads entwine with Albertlander narratives and are reiterated as a point of difference from other places in Aotearoa; a particular settler colonial place within which Māori and Albertlanders lived peacefully and importantly, as communities in which the first arrivals of European settlers relied heavily on Māori for help. While this may be the case for particular people in particular context and in amongst the everyday work, social and public life, more broadly, what happened back

then is not what happened thereafter evident in the inequities that permeate and devastate across Aotearoa evident in Māori outcomes across a range of statistics, statistics which in turn, re-stigmatise Māori (Tamanui, 2013; Rahiri *et al.*, 2018) as a people in need of help. Consequently, the Albertlander narrative threads— infused with power— stories of friendship and cooperation also tangle-up with the strands of the unsaid— the things that Māori tell themselves; stories that are for them (perhaps not this Pākehā researcher) to tell. In the unsaid, within unequal flows of power and ongoing colonising processes, the tension lies and other ways of storying this place sit in the silence waiting for when the time is ripe.

What to do with history? When looking for history and context to seek answers for *why* particular decisions were made - such as deciding to sell large tracks of ancestral land—runs the risk of steering the research ship towards determinism as noted in the following quote by Locke and Biehl.

> An anthropology of becoming demands more than the flat realism that comes with standard practices of contextualization and historicization, and it must not simply echo the dark determinisms that mark much of social theory (Biehl & Locke, 2017: xi).

So rather than say— this is how it was therefore this is what happened next — as in simple cause and effect, I attempt to *show* the Kaipara as very different from today in order to add a substratum to the Albertland story, a before, before the beginning, a prior-to the origin story, made up of fragments of remembering pre-arrival of the Albertlanders in 1862. In order to do so, the lens shifts back in time to the early 1800s specifically to the battle at Te-Ika-a-ranganui; the scene of devastation for Ngati Whatua but a story barely known by local Pākehā today.

Te Ika-a-ranganui

This battle took place in 1825 near to the settlement now known as Kaiwaka at Te Ika-a-ranganui. A Ngāpuhi taua came down from the north led by chief Hongi Hika and Whare-umu to wage war on Ngāti Whātua, Hongi resplendent in his helmet and "famous coat of mail given him by His Majesty King George IV on his visit to England

in 1820" (Butler, 1963: 21). Hongi Hika sought redress—more complexly known by Māori as utu—for a battle years earlier at Moremonui north of Dargaville around 1807 or 1808 in which his family members were killed. Some seventeen years later, equipped with around 500 muskets, Hongi and his men went down the east coast to Mangawhai then west by land and river to Te Ika-a-ranganui. A large war party of around 1000 Ngati Whatua fought, it is said valiantly, with many charges (Butler, 1963: 21-23) but their few muskets were no match to the weaponry of Ngāpuhi. Hongi Hika and the taua then travelled further up rivers and into villagers shooting, it is said, everyone they saw. Those who survived on the whole fled, north to the mountains of Tangihua and over to Whangārei, south east to Mahurangi and south to the Waikato "and others to the wilds of the northern forests. Wherever they went, they lived in a state of constant fear and alarm" (Byrne, 2002: 28). The landscape was left empty and quiet as described by historian Brian Byrne,

> Vast areas were left almost completely uninhabited for many years, and there descended upon the landscape an eerie silence – a silence spoken about time and again by early European travellers over the ensuing years...The social effects were catastrophic. All forms of settled life were virtually non-existent due to the dread of Ngapuhi muskets (2002:28).

Similarly, the trader and writer Samuel Polack, addressing a House of Commons Select Committee in August 1838, stated: "In the whole of the Kaipara, and various other parts, there was not a soul that I could see on the land" (Byrne, 2002: 35). At the same hearing, another witness, the Rev. Frederick Wilkinson added that the population "at Kaipara is very trifling, for 100 miles there are not more than 100 people" (2002:35). Importantly chiefs Paikea Te Hekeua and Te Otene and a small band of warriors remained and kept the home fires burning, known by Māori as ahi kaa (2002:28) and in doing so, maintained rights of occupancy and mana over the land. Byrne goes on to say, "the legacy of Te-Ika-a-ranganui cast a long shadow" (2002: 40). A long shadow over a vast geographical area, the harbour itself covering approximately 947 square kilometres. A long shadow deeply experienced by Māori but not known about by many Pākehā. Something perhaps needing to be memorialised with something elementary; a settling of a story and a storying of a place. Perhaps a some-thing that starts with Ah!

Ah!
Te-Ika-a-ranganui
Those Ngāpuhi
Didn't stop there.
Up rivers, they moved
With muskets firing
Blood streaming
Through villages, they strode
With muskets firing
Blood streaming
Survivors fled into
Hiding places
For years to come
Ah!
Those oh so desolate pā
With whispers of the past
Moving along Kaipara wind
And ghosts hiding in shadows of day
Furtive scragglers here and there
Musket scared and settling nowhere
But ah! E Hoa!
Chiefs Paikea and Otene, ahi kaa
The fires of home silently burning
And later
Those remnant bones
Stories about the bones found everywhere
Photos of bones, I saw one once,
A skull and crossbones laid out on the beach
A photo now hidden in a box
Worse still
That winemaker Jackman
Who stole Mausoleum Bones
To crush and fertilise his dying vines
Bone dust on Kaipara hills forever now
With the ancestors crying in pain
I heard about another
With a skull in his bar room
As decoration for piss drinkers
In a 1970s basement
With the ancestors screaming in pain
Ah!

Those Pākehā
Being in and knowing less
Thrashing like bulls in china shops
Amidst the deafening silence of
Te Ika-a-ranganui

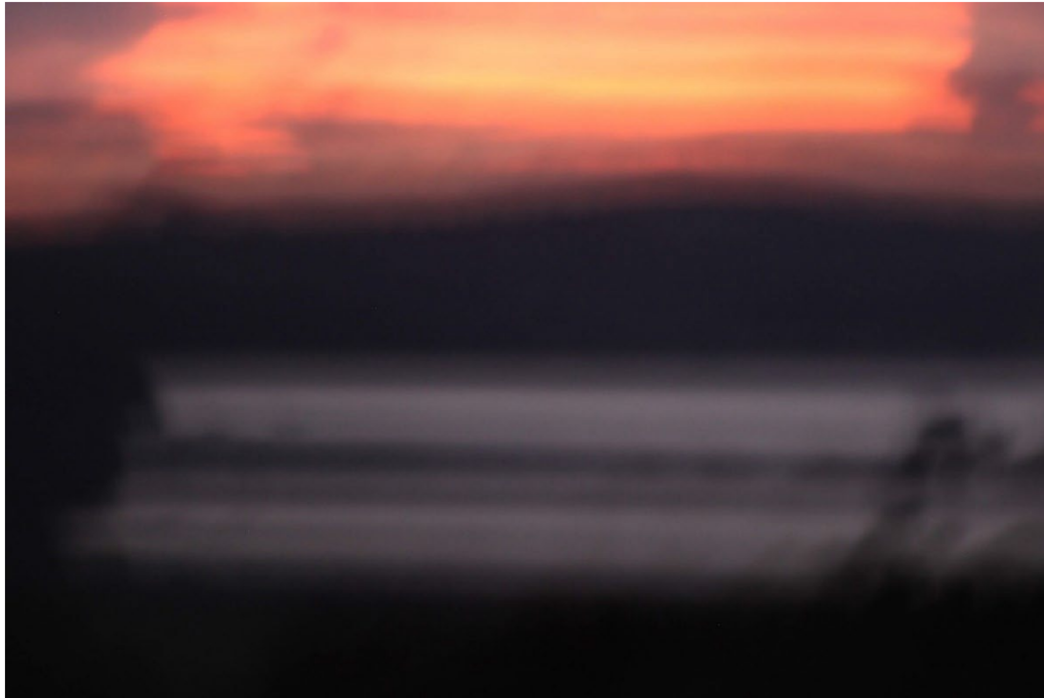


Figure 127
Kaipara Shadows

Eventually there was a gradual return. The 1830s saw a more equal distribution of muskets, which acted to restore the balance of power and eventually end the period now known as the Musket Wars (1818 - 1840). Bryne (2002: 28) argues that another reason for Ngati Whātua to feel some confidence in returning was the presence of more Europeans in the area and by 1845 Te Uri o Hau had mostly resettled in the Ōtamatea and Ōruawharo district (2002: 28). Byrne also argues that the legacy of the battle also contributed to the willingness of Ngāti Whātua to sell their land. He backs this claim by citing a comment by Judge John Rogan in a September 1861 in a report to Sir George Grey:

> The reason given by the chiefs [of Ngati Whatua] for consenting for the sale of their land is, that they were slain by Ngapuhi and eaten by Waikato, and the white man is their only friend; they take a particular pride in seeing settlers on

land disposed of by them (sourced from AJHOR, 1862, E-No. 7, p.5 in Byrne, 2002:28).

As a Pākehā, framing the Māori position is fraught, with me not privy to the histories Māori tell themselves or in a position to speak for them. From this level of uncertainty, differing possibilities emerge; Māori as victims, vulnerable so desperate to improve their lot. Or Māori, through selling large tracts of land, as having significant agency, strategy, and pragmatism intrinsic to the drawing of peoples from afar to live on the land of their ancestors, Europeans who become both a form of protection and a vital source of trade. This sale of land is contemporaneously experienced as a *loss* of land, as being *bereft*, a source of pain thereafter. Māori certainly had agency, to take that away is to strip them of their intellect, contingency and ultimately, their mana. But this is contingency enacted within the context of extremely difficult times: the ongoing ramifications of Te Ika-a-ranganui; a fear of warring Ngāpuhi parties from the north; trouble brewing in the Waikato;[46] population decline[47] and financial hardship. Furthermore, decisions were made in the face of a future that no one could have predicted - the onslaught; the organised, strategised, legalised, and systematic colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand. For Te Uri o Hau and later for the Albertlanders, this began in part with the signing of Deeds, No.161 in 1860 and the sale of the Ōruawharo block to the Crown.

Land Sale

1860

Deeds – No. 161

THIS DEED written on this twenty seventh 27 day of January in the Year of our Lord 1860. 27 January 1860 is a full and final sale conveyance and surrender by us the Chiefs and People of the Tribe Ngatiwhatua whose names are hereunto subscribed And Witnesseth that on behalf of ourselves our relatives and descendants we have by signing this Deed under the shining sun of this day parted with and for ever transferred unto Victoria Queen of England

[46] The Waikato Wars were to see the displacement of peoples and the confiscation of 1.2 million hectares of land in the Waikato, Taranaki, and some of the Bay of Plenty (Walker, 2004.)

[47] It is estimated that Māori population declined from approximately 86,000 in 1769 to 42,000 un 1872 (Belich, 1996).

Her Heirs the Kings and Queens who may succeed Her and Her and Their Assigns for ever in consideration of the Sum of Five hundred Pounds and £700 for Te Uriohau (£500 . 0. 0) to us paid by John Rogan District Commr. on behalf of the Queen Victoria (and we hereby acknowledge the receipt of the said monies) all that piece of our Land situated at Kaipara and named Oruawharo the boundaries whereof are set forth at the foot of this Deed and a plan of which Land is annexed thereto with its trees minerals waters rivers lakes streams and all appertaining to the said Land or beneath the surface of the said Land and all our right title claim and interest whatsoever thereon To Hold to Queen Victoria Her Heirs and Assigns as a lasting possession absolutely for ever and ever.

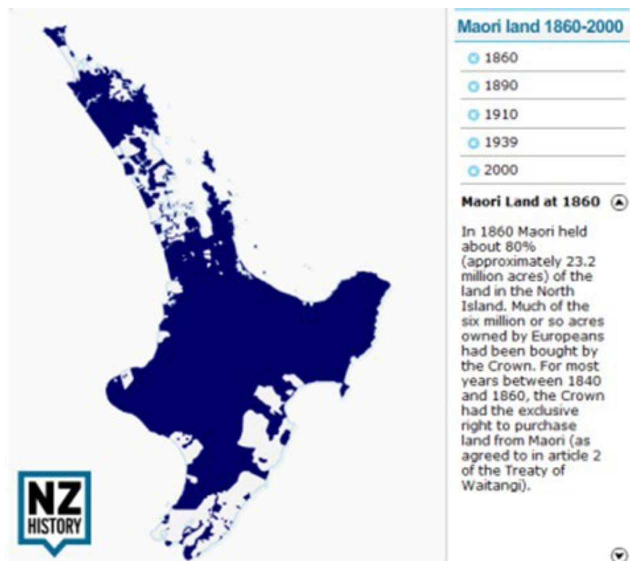
(*Victoria University Te Herenga Waka,* n.d.)

The specifics in the above Deed, two dimensional and list-like on paper - "trees minerals waters rivers lakes streams and all appertaining to the said Land or beneath the surface of the said Land" - are now experienced as multi-layered in the present, evoking pain and loss. I wonder also about shame. Richard Shaw in his book about the devastating land confiscations in the Taranaki notes that, "to this day there are Taranaki Māori who will not set foot on their maunga for shame they feel at its loss, as well as their land, leaders and language in the 1860s" (*ref Rachel Buchanan* in Shaw, 2021: 89). Alarmingly, in writing the story of Te Ika-a-ranganui, and the diminishing of ancestral land, I hadn't considered shame. As Pākehā, is telling this story an act of uncovering and re-shaming, of revisiting past hurt, hurt entangled with loss? Or is it a political act which reminds people today that setter colonialism in the Kaipara was not all about friendship and cooperation? I'm hoping that it is the latter but now realise that I need to be aware of the former. The political quite simply permeates the poignant and runs deep like a lamentation through the troubled waters of the Ōruawharo. Stories then may not need to be shouted from rooftops reminding people of pain and loss, but rather, quietly acknowledged and settled in place in order to not do more hurt by not acknowledging or even knowing them at all.

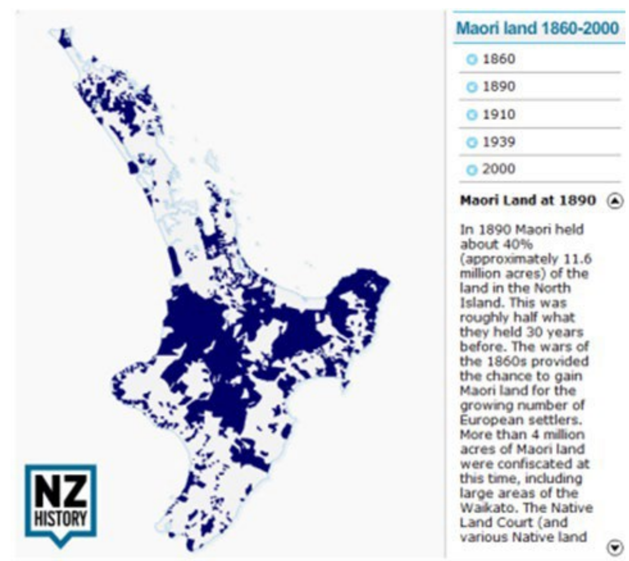
Deed – No. 161, from Te Uri O Hau to Queen Victoria, "under the shining sun of this day parted with and for ever… all that piece of our Land situated at Kaipara… To Hold to Queen Victoria Her Heirs and Assigns as a lasting possession absolutely for ever

and ever”; 30,000 acres (12,140 hectares) of land surveyed and sold, known from then on as the Oruawharo Block. “Absolutely for ever and ever” and ever. And ever. Alienation[48] of Māori land, whether it be via confiscation or sale or whatever else, underwrites the inequalities throughout the social fabric of Aotearoa New Zealand. There’s no getting away from this grim reality as shown in the following maps of the North Island (*Māori Land Loss, 1860-2001*, n.d.).

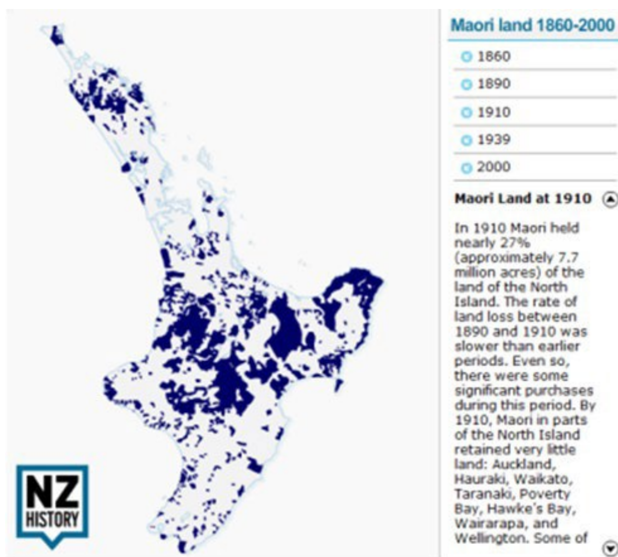
Māori Land 1860



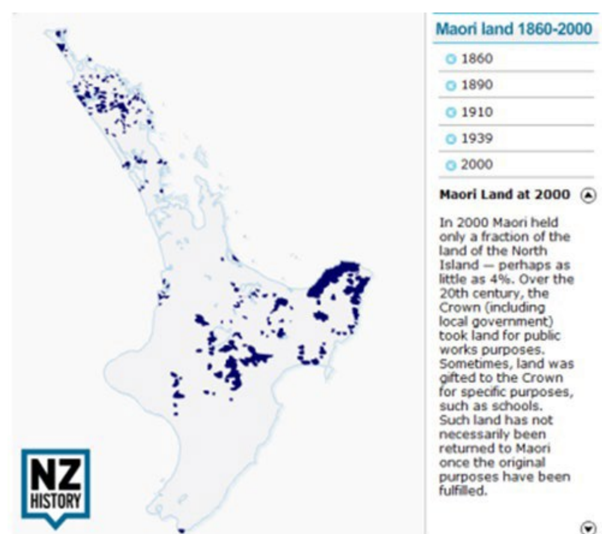
Māori Land 1890



Māori Land 1910



Māori Land 2000



[48] Richard Shaw, in discussing dispossession, notes that he does not use the term alienation (and Europeanisation) deliberately to provoke. He adds that these terms “were formal descriptions used by the Native Land Court to describe the process which West Coast reserve land [his research area] ceased to be Māori land” (Shaw, 2021: 39).

While land was being steadfastly alienated from Māori, something else was afoot, a hustle of sorts, oceans away in England in the wintry north. A feverous whipping up of Nonconformists, people who wanted to break free from the 'Old World,' were drawn to the colonial outpost like a great North-magnet finding its South. The pull of the river currents entangled with the flow of colonisation and a surge of people who desperately wanted to be freed from there and 'settled' elsewhere, immigrants eventually known as the Albertlanders. To fashion this story, I move, in a sort of flight of fancy way - along the imaginings of the long ago to conjure up disparate groups whose future generations were to become entwined.

The Nonconformists: Momentum and Migration

While the Middle Ages in Britain are way beyond the scope of this thesis, as with Te Ao Māori, the happenings of the deep past flow, like a quiet current, through identity narratives into the present. In the 1600s along the Ōruawharo, tangata whenua lived in communities infused with wairua, tapu, noa, mana, and spirited by Atua. Whakapapa was perpetually enlivened, claimed and contested with remembered connections reiterated across marae throughout the Kaipara until today, shaping the way people view themselves and their orientation towards the places in which they live. Simultaneously, another form of claiming, shaping, and stance-making was occurring in the 1600s in England with a great swathe of people both leaving and being forced out of the strictures of the Church of England, a group known as the Nonconformists (Mabbett, 1968). The narrative of the Nonconformists underpins the Albertland story in multiple ways: as a crucial event, that being the Nonconformist bi-centenary, which propelled migration; as Nonconformist characteristics which manifest as desirable in Albertlander-ness today, mainly amongst the older generation, and as shaping the early Christian religious geographies throughout the Kaipara.

Beginning in England with the bicentenary planned for May 1862, events around the country were to be held to both memorialise the tragic consequences of the Act of Uniformity passed in 1662 and to commemorate the expulsion of Nonconformists from the Church of England. An expulsion noted by past Wellsford resident H. Mabbet notes when referring to the passing of the Act of Uniformity 1662,

> Thus the storm broke again on those who had forgotten the perfidy of the Stuarts. Over 2500 clergy were expelled and silenced. The folly of the deed was exceeded only by its cruelty (Mabbett, 1968: 157).

The planning for the Nonconformist bicentenary in 1862, coincided with legislative processes and plans of action deployed in both Britain and the colonial outpost, that being the planned colonisation of New Zealand.[49] In New Zealand in 1854, the newly formed Provisional Councils were tasked with the responsibility of the disposal of land previously acquired by the Crown for the purpose of settlement (Mabbett, 1968: 153). Further, the Waste Land Act of 1858 allowed for the grant of blocks to settlers, 40 acres per adult, and 20 acres for each child between the ages of 5 and 18 (1968: 153) with freehold title issued if the settlers remained on the land for five years. In the NZ history books, these settlers are commonly known as *The Forty Acre Men*. Within the provinces, blocks were also designated for 'Special Settlement.' Into that milieu, the networks required for settlement were being assembled back in England, driven by a desire for change and the ability to leave the dire conditions of Europe.

This surge of interest in emigration in England in the 1860s coincided with the Civil War in America which turned attention to the colonial outposts, Australia, and New Zealand (Borrows, 1969: 16). For the young entrepreneur, William Rawson Brame (1833-1863) son of a Baptist preacher, the timing was ripe, and he envisioned a land full of promise for the Nonconformist community. The upcoming bicentenary fuelled Nonconformists ideals and the quest for a new life and the name 'Albertland' connected the populace in support of the newly bereaved Queen Victoria (Mabbett, 1968: 154). This confluence of factors catalysed intense and widespread interest in Brame's scheme. As noted by Mabbett,

> "Albertland" caught the public imagination…but Brame must have been somewhat overwhelmed when thousand upon thousand of applications began

[49] In academia, 'Aotearoa New Zealand' is used as an attempt to decolonise and as an imagined or hoped for world (Campbell 2020). Similarly, 'Aotearoa' is used to foreground New Zealander-ness and acknowledge Tangata whenua. In the historical colonial context, I use 'New Zealand' as this is appropriate for the history writing of that period.

> to pour in – when meetings were packed to the doors…it is quite probable that William Rawson Brame had started something which was beyond his ability to successfully handle (1968: 154).

The émigré zeitgeist: a fusion of ambition, hope, energy, promise, aspiration, entitlement, and religious affiliation, was harnessed and transmitted along the winds of 19th century change. Settlement societies of all sorts were established, with colonising processes embedded through the seemingly banal but all-powerful practises of 'decision by committee.' *A National Association for Promoting Special Settlements in New Zealand* was formed in 1861, and in this spirit, Brame founded the *Association for the Establishment a Colony of Nonconformists in New Zealand* and as noted, proposed the name Albertland for this settlement (Borrows, 1969). Energised by the upcoming bicentenary celebrations, this association advertised widely and formed multiple organisations throughout London and the provinces in order to find the "right type of colonist" (Brett & Hook, 1927: 19), colonists who were to align to the vision as stated below.

> The model "colony" or settlement which the promoters had in their vision was to comprise a large farming community, who would naturally employ a certain amount of agricultural labour. To cater for town and country life a list of trades and occupations likely to be useful in the project was advertised, so that the right types of colonist both to work the farms lands and equip the township should be attracted (Brett & Hook, 1927: 19).

In order to provision and shape multiple aspects of the planned settlement, subcommittees were formed to attend to such things as: establishing a library and sourcing books, appointing a minister and starting a chapel building fund; finding medical professionals, appointing a schoolmaster, establishing a temperance society with connections to the *Sons of Temperance,* establishing a sawmill and flourmill partnership and raising capital, planning an Albertland Gazette and finding an editor; forming a plan to become a part of local body politics in the new colony and establishing a comprehensive Agricultural cooperative (Brett & Hook, 1927: 18-21). Logistically, ships needed to be chartered, hall meetings had, people selected for

passage, provisions such as tents and food bought and leaders to be appointed to oversee the groups of settlers (known as *The Thousand*) as they made their way north after arriving in the New Country. The Settlement Association back in England was offered a choice of areas and a party were delegated authority to travel to New Zealand to inspect and select the appropriate place for the new settlement (Borrows, 1969: 25). This group was to comprise of 'Pioneers' Jones and Newman, representing the Albertland Association, the NZ surveyor George Heaphy and five men to cart provisions and row the boat (Borrows, 1969: 22).

In January 1862, the exploration party set out, like the surveyors of earlier years, into the traces and echoes of past conquests, through forests, along roads that weren't roads at all but mud tracks and oftentimes turned back by supplejack entangling in the undergrowth (Brett & Hook, 1927: 26). As they headed north, more often thwarted this way and that, they came upon abandoned settlements, as a member of this party, Jones, noted,

> On our way we passed acres and acres of native settlements, by them abandoned or only frequented once now and then to retain their rights of possession over them. It seemed quite sad to see groves of peach trees breaking down with fruit, which only ripened to drop off the trees and become food for wild pigs, and to find beautiful land neglected and only growing enormous crops of dock and weed (Brett & Hook, 1927: 28).

A combination of particular people and whereabouts shape so much of what happens next. A mixture of happenstance and contingency, a natural world that lets you through and another, gripped by supplejack says, turn back, waterways with promise and others which sound alarms. Fertile soil, tilt of land, tidal ebb and flow, prevailing wind and path of sunshine configure the twists and turns of settlement. In amongst it all moves people and for this story, people of significance who steer the course of change. As the explorers struggled north, they turned down a settlement in the Puhoi district called Omokoriki and went on further to meet with a man who previously communicated with the Albertland association, the Rev. William Gittos.

Gittos lived with his wife Marianne (née Hobbs), and family initially at Waingohi on the Ōruawharo near the mouth of the Kaira Creek, then later over the other side at Rangiora opposite Tanoa on the Ōtamatea River. He joins other actants that move about in this slipstream of change. In England, as noted, William Rawson Brame (1833-1863), a young man with a vision for what turned out to be an overly ambitious scheme, the settlement of an almost mythic place Albertland (Borrows, 1969). In New Zealand, the Crown appointed land commissioner John Rogan (1823-1899) was negotiating the alienation of Māori land throughout the Kaipara and was the key negotiator in the sale of the Ōruawharo block. In the Ōruawharo and Ōtamatea district, across the river from Potaka (Port Albert) lived chiefs Paikea Te Hekeua and Arama Karaka (aka Adam Clarke) and in amongst their community lived the Reverend William Gittos and his family. Gittos was appointed by the Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMS) as the Methodist Missionary for Māori and through his relationship with the chiefs, became intimately involved in the sale of Te Uri o Hau land.

Positioning Gittos in the history of the Ōruawharo exemplifies the power of story to render a particular trace of a life and dis-appear others. Contradictions abound. Historian Dick Scott, writing in the highly politicised decolonising history narratives of the 1980s,[50] portrays Gittos as a coloniser and theocratic ruler. Scott notes Gittos,

> could speak the language fluently (learned as a boy in the Hokianga) and only 26, he was powerfully built, intolerant, certain of his superiority: his first mission station on the Oruawharo River, near Waingohi, near the future Port Albert, became not a spiritual centre but a command post (Scott, 1987: 12).

He then backs this claim by citing another historian, Mabbett (1968),

> Gittos was more than guide, philosopher and friend; he was a builder and boatman…interpreter and diplomat…doctor and surgeon…financial advisor and unpaid trustee (Mabbett cited in Scott 1987: 12). And adds from another history book *The Albertlanders* by Brett and Hook (1927) that “His [Gittos]advice and

[50] Prof. Michael Belgrave writes about this in the article entitled *The Politics of History in the Age of Protest* (2015) in which he argues that history written from the 1960s – 1980s was heavily influenced by the politics of protest.

word were law among the Oruawharo Maoris [sic]" (Brett and Hook cited in Scott 1987: 12)

I argue that the evidence in the latter quote does not necessarily support the prior, especially that of him being intolerant and certain of his superiority. The storying of Gittos takes other turns. A kaumatua from Ōruawharo recently told me that Gittos brainwashed the Māori and then, alongside his friend [land commissioner] John Rogan, talked the people in to selling their land. But other material points to friendships such as an excerpt from the newspaper clip below dated April 1873 reporting on the death of Chief Paikea ("Death of Paikea Te Hekeua Chief of Kaipara," 1873).

DEATH OF PAIKEA TE HEKEUA, CHIEF OF KAIPARA.

MANY who are interested in the welfare of the Maori race will have seen with regret the announcement, in our Saturday's issue, of the death of the venerable chief Paikea, so well known as the friend of the European settlers of the Kaipara district. This melancholy event took place at Pouto, on the 11th March. It had been evident for some months past that the health of the old rangatira was failing; and, seeming to be aware of his approaching end, he was anxious to pay a last visit to his friends at the various kaingas on the river. During the last few weeks of his life he took up his residence at the mission station (the Rev. W. Gittos'), where he had the necessary attention in medicine and food. A few days before his decease he requested to be taken to Pouto, where his father and forefathers had died, in order to see their last resting-place again. To his friend, the missionary, expressing his full trust in the mercy of God, through the Incarnate, and declaring his hope of future blessedness. To his people,

Figure 128
Marianne & William Gittos cared for Paikea before he left for Pouto for his last days
NZ Herald Volume x Issue 2867, 7 1873, 3

Figure 129
Rev William Gittos visiting friends at Ōruawharo 1909,
Photo taken by Harold Marsh, used with Permission, Albertland Museum

Here we see friends of the ailing chief, Gittos and his wife Marianne, caring for Paikea in his last days. Is it appropriate to think of Paikea as brainwashed, dictated to or colonised in the Gramscian sense of the word, within the context of enduring friendships between people who lived side by side for decades? Friends who Gittos went back to visit in 1908 having left the district years before as in the following photo (also used in the exhibit recounted at the end of the chapter). Additionally, I wonder about the creep of my own bias into this story. I live in the *Reverend Gittos Memorial Church* built with gratitude by Albertlanders in 1922. Furthermore, I know his great granddaughter Margaret, 88 now, a friend of my late mothers, whose eyes shine with the intelligence I recognise in the eyes of her forbearer.

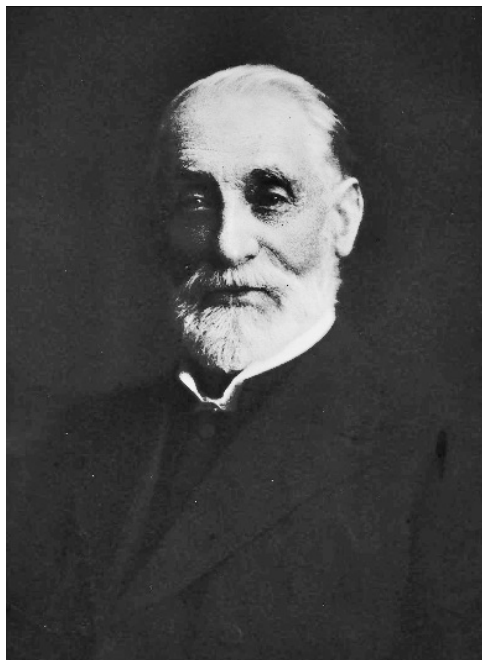


Figure 130
Rev, William Gittos
Photo, author's own

Then there are the things that stir up feelings. On a recent trip to visit Margaret, feeling her mortality, she reached into her lower bedroom drawer to retrieve and hand over some of her most precious items, family treasures, Gittos-things, including the most strangely moving objects of them all, his gold cufflinks. “Would you like Willy’s cufflinks?” she said. Astonished I drove home with what felt like a calling, those cufflinks saying something – I’m not sure what.

Figure 131
Reverend Gittos' cufflinks

Is this all it takes to shift a story a little one way or the other? A nudge here, a feeling there, some little gold things in a box which once he held so close. A slide here, a slant there, the writer-*I* reveals that there’s a little more going on in the spinning of this particular tale. And I wonder about the spins and twists amongst all of the telling’s. In the storying of Margaret’s family history, Gittos is remembered and narrated as a great friend of Māori and not particularly on the side of settlers. In the Albertland narrative, Gittos is remembered as ‘a friend of the Albertlanders’ in a heartfelt way – believing that those early settlement years would have been very difficult without him. In the decolonising history text (Scott, 1987), he is remembered as a progenitor of land loss and indoctrinator of Māori through fervent religiosity, and my Māori interlocutor indicated the same. To many Māori he is fondly remembered as Father Kitohi and to others he is an actor in a moment in time in which loss was piled upon loss. The previous photo at Ōruawharo shows him de-centred (not all-powerful) amongst

friends. Did he wear his cufflinks that day? The objects from that bottom drawer whisper totem-like saying be careful to respect the old man who rode and strode throughout the Kaipara, as his old-man-things are now yours. Such are the complexities of history-telling. Like undercurrents a bit below consciousness whispering here and there, moving you this way and that.

Figure 132
Rev Gittos addresses the tangi of King Tāwhiao 1894. National Library NZPAColl-1893-07

Back to the party approaching the Ōruawharo River in January 1862; Gittos becomes intrinsic to this story. Having shown a keen interest in the scheme and the potential for the settlement to be nearby, Gittos had been in communication with the Albertland Association, offering advice and discussing the "type of settler he would like to see brought out" (Borrows, 1969: 26). He suggested that when the exploration party arrive, that they light a fire and this they did, but initially in the wrong place as noted by one of the party,

> We were obliged to camp on the side of the river, and, notwithstanding it was raining fast, managed to sleep very well after a supper of tea, damper, potatoes,

> ripe peaches stewed ditto, roast oysters fresh from the river, and one or two of other varieties of shellfish (Jones cited in Borrows, 1969: 26).

They moved closer to the Māori settlement on the opposite side of the river, lit a fire and were soon meet by a welcoming committee.

> We were received on the beach by the chief and the villagers. They welcomed us most heartily, feasting up on the most magnificent specimens of peaches and figs I have ever seen. We left our men in these good quarters and went to the house of Mr Gittos, who had come to meet us … Mr and Mrs Gittos treated us with the most generous hospitality and also gave us a great deal of most valuable information respecting the different blocks of land on the Kaipara, most of which he had personally gone over, and all of them well known to his villagers (Borrows, 1969: 26).

After extensive examination the group decided on the Ōruawharo and two blocks further north at Paparoa and Matakohe, delineated by flows of Kaipara waterways including the Ōruawharo, for the new Albertland Settlement. The extraordinarily detailed report back to the Albertland Association included the following,

> Briefly, the Oruawharo Block contains 30,000 acres of land, eight miles of water frontage to the river, one third, or nearly, of fern land of fair quality, one third poor fern, and one third of forest land, some portion of the forest of good valuable timber with water frontage; about 70 or 80 miles from Auckland (when the North Road is run into a block) by land, and by this road giving access for horses, cattle or sheep; by the East coast from Mangawai [sic] about 10 miles over a passable dray road and 40 or 50 by water; by the Waitemata about 80 miles, viz., 16 miles of portage (dray road), 12 miles on the Waitemata River, the remainder on the Kaipara. But by far the easiest and cheapest access will be by large vessels entering the Kaipara from the West Coast (Newman cited in Borrows, 1969: 27).

William Brame, back in England replied to this report with unfettered enthusiasm noting that,

> Unmistakable proofs are given in every paragraph of the zeal and devotedness of these honoured men … Truly they have been faithful spies … for while they do not fail to describe the beauty and luxuriance of the land – and the very grapes of Eshcol seem to have hung around their path – still they do not shrink from the recital of what might deter minds lest earnest than those who have who have counted upon these things (Brame cited in Borrows, 1969: 28).

Most importantly, in terms of what happened next, he added,

> It will be a source of satisfaction, however, to the thousand to learn that the grand drawbacks found by the pioneers – the impenetrability of the Omokoriki district… appear to have given place to the very opposite characteristics on the Oruawharo, where the destination of the outgoers is now fixed. (Brame cited in Borrows, 1969: 28).

The Crossing

Destination now fixed. The Ōruawharo Block was set aside for Special Settlement for the Nonconformist Association along with the Paparoa and Matakohe Blocks further north (Brett & Hook, 1927: 31). The current of change in England merged with the flowing waters of the Ōruawharo. Planning took on a flurry of activity, with town sections and farm blocks being marked out to be allocated by ballot at a later date. People thought to be appropriate, including those whot could take on important community roles in Albertland, were selected. Boats were chartered and prepared for sail. Farewell parties and a large temperance gathering were held, along with bicentenary celebrations (Mabbett, 1968: 158). All of this culminated on a pivotal day in the Albertland narrative, the 29th of May 1862, on the London Docks. It is estimated that 15,000 people gathered to say goodbye to the emigrants aboard the first two ships to set sail – the *Hanover* and the *Matilda Wattenbach*.

Figure 133
Photo of an oil painting of the Matilda Wattenbach supplied to the Albertland Museum by the Watttenbach family of London
Used with permission

This is the point in which this 'pioneer' exceptionalism story could hitch a ride on copious others as cliché abounds; emigrants leaving behind hardship, crossing oceans in the search of a better life and new beginnings. But I choose to stay with cliché and make more of this (rather than less) as I argue that the sailing ships and surging oceans set in motion monumental elemental embodied change. Bodies released from the ordinary and mundane, becoming-*with* sea, air, current, storm and others who will always be connected via those motherships. Others who made landfall together, a communal point of entry into the *new*, the sort of movement and moment in time which endures, stays in the memory to be told and retold. Moreover, with ocean crossings and sailing ships, the Albertlander story becomes easily animated, infused with epic and transformational trajectories; voyage, danger, storms and becalm, love, death, birth, sickness, suffering and friendship and a fair dose of discomfort as noted in the following diary entry by James Morris in 1862 aboard the *William Miles* after a storm in the Bay of Biscay,

> August 6th. In the Bay of Biscay and well we know it – the wind very ruff with a heavy sea, all of us are so sick, and feel so bad that we are all glad enough to lay in our beds without dressing like so many pigs … In the darkness of night a ship nearly ran into us. If she had it would have been goodbye for at that time we

were sailing at 11 knots an hour and in a fearful sea (Morris cited in Borrows, 1969: 42).

Another aboard the *Gertrude* wrote,

> We now loathe our food. Provisions are scarce among the passengers, they having generally consumed those they have bought with them … The deprivation is hard to bear, but we must learn to submit and fight through it; our present discipline is a capital introduction to future trials and hardships (Borrows, 1969: 44).

As bodies flail against hardship so too do moments of awe turn attention towards the natural world, the likes of which hitherto experienced by few. From the diary of Henry Brett aboard the *Hanover*, seeing things, perhaps for the first time,

> July 19: We are now out of the tropics. The passengers were much gratified by the sight of a prettily-marked bird called the Cape pigeon. The noble albatross is also an object of admiration and wonder to those of us that had not seen it before … Then came the graceful flying fish (Brett & Hook, 1927: 17).

In the same diary, Henry Brett writes with excitement,

> August 15: Rose, and beheld for the first time in my life one of those seas so often spoken of as 'running mountains high.' Truly it was an awe-inspiring sight. At one time we appeared to be rushing into a fathomless abyss of waters, and the next we rose majestically on the seething crest of the billows. And yet the sea was with us, and not against us, we were said to be in no danger (Brett & Hook, 1927: 47).

The sea was with him, majestically so. The surging sea: upwelling, terrifying, terrifyingly deep, awe-inspiring, majestic, and mystifying. Bodies-in-motion: sick, being-alive, full-of-fear, discombobulated, cast from the ordinary, expansively re-orientated towards the natural world by day and cramped up in tight spaces by night. Sailing ships: creaking, groaning, rocking, swaying, thrashing, and throwing, 'running mountains high' and saying, "I am your *mother*ship now." And in the middle of all of

this a crossing of the line happens, in part ritually, but more so, literally, physical, viscerally, and watery – that being the crossing of equator. Those sailing ships then became strange platforms for the carnivalesque: transgressions, cross dressing, Gods, mixed-up roles, and initiation ceremonies that seem close to hazing, as recounted by Henry Brett, June 1862 (abridged) aboard the *Hanover*.

> Neptune paid us a visit on July 9. He had the previous evening announced his intention of coming aboard, and we were all on the qui vive. We had not long to wait, for he soon made his appearance, accompanied by his wife and officers … First came Neptune and his wife, next the barber and the clerk (the latter with a book and pen of enormous size), eight constables and two sergeants. Of course they were all dressed in appropriate costumes. The wife of his godship, although clothed in female fashion, was, without doubt, a very masculine goddess … one of the sailors was introduced to Mr and Mrs Neptune, the latter graciously smiling and bestowing on the bashful Jack Tar – no, not a smack, but a kiss … The sailor was placed blindfolded on a piece of wood … he was examined by a doctor, who prescribed a couple of pills, the medicine being to all appearance the reverse of agreeable … Being blindfolded, his sense of feeling was, of course, more acute than his sense of vision, but a significant nod told us that he had had enough of that portion of the ceremony. The barber then called for razor No. 1, a piece of tin, half a yard long, and having lathered his customer with tar and grease, he dexterously performed the first part of the operation, the barber every now and then filling the man's mouth with the tar and grease mixture. Razor No.2, a more refined instrument, was used in the finishing process. The victim then tipped over in his seat into a sail filled with water, his baptism and purification being assisted by two men jumping in with him to keep him under water. He was then taken out and declared a 'son of Neptune!' (Brett & Hook, 1927: 45-46).

The writer goes on to say that many others were baptised including himself noting, "for I thought that as the Equator was not crossed every day there ought to be some memento of the incident" (Brett & Hook, 1926: 46) but does not go on the say what this 'memento' meant to him. Son of Neptune! Good heavens: a ritual manifesting on

the cusp of the liminal, moving people from the past-North to the future-South, across the threshold, shifting the internal compass as to *be* differently orientated now. I wonder about the children. Geographer Robin Kearns (2019) recounts his witnessing of the Neptune ceremony as a child on his immigration voyage in 1963 as deeply unsettling and notes that somehow the frightening ritual embedded in him as an intense fear of the deep ocean and concludes by quoting Symes (2012:59) "a journey begins before it actually begins and continues long after it ends" (Symes cited in Kearns 2019: 221)

The boat journeys of the Albertlanders continue on long after they end. The visceral origin-come *rite de passage* stories – atmospherically enlivened, are both fraught with precarity and infused with vitality. Stories such as these take on a life of their own and become generative of identity (still) within the Albertlander context. Coming from a particular ship means something and these meanings are reiterated and re-established through artefacts and practises. The voyage of the *Matilda Wattenbach*, for example, is an origin story infused with pride in overcoming odds. The sailing vessel was the first to limp into the Waitemata Harbour, having suffered substantial damage in a storm off the Cape of Good Hope. As the Reverend Edgar recalled July 1862 in a letter home in which he described the storm and the scene the morning after,

> We had got half through a hymn when the ship gave a big lurch, and down crashed one hundred human beings, men, women, and children, pots and pans, innumerable kettles and crockery ware … Roll, roll, lurch, crash, crash! … The majority of the passengers were calm, but some of the ladies were pale and trembling; a few tears … Fortunately the danger passed away about eleven p.m. But the night! Howling winds, deluging rain, such a creaking and groaning and banging! Then there was the hurried tramp of feet and the shouting of voices (Brett & Hook, 1927: 40,41).

And in the morning,

> Poor Matilda, forlorn and dreary; no mainmast and no mizzen mast, except two pitiful stumps and two sails alone, one on the foremast, still stripping themselves to the fury of the blast blowing dead in our teeth. Altogether the

ship was one confused mass of broken masts and yards, torn and tangled ropes (Brett & Hook, 1927: 41).

Rather than stop for repairs at Cape Town, they sailed on, beating the Hanover by nine days. Moving into the present, the local college for decades has used names of the four main ships as intergenerational house groups. If a parent came from Wattenbach house group, you will be allocated to the same. My daughter (not an Albertlander) in Wattenbach (like her father, also not an Albertlander) and was encouraged by her house leader (a Māori teacher—definitely not an Albertlander), with him saying that beating Hanover was easy just like it was back then, even with broken masts.

Figure 134 Sports day, Rodney College

Similarly, replica ships are stored with great care in the museum under the watchful eye of ship-descendants in framed photos above.

Figure 135 Immigrants Ships Albertland Museum

And country halls and history books are adorned with photo montages and genealogical ties to origin ships, showing the importance of these early beginnings.

Figure 136
Immigrants from the Matilda Wattenbach and Tyburnia
Used with permission, Albertland Museum 2004.2.2007.1996

Landfall

The ship stories settle deep and endure. And so too does landfall, not simply a matter of stepping off and stepping into, but rather a movement towards the next phase of the *rite de passage* – reintegration - with a differently configured sense of the settler-self. Bodies reset by ships and oceans full of sea stories, and the knowing of near death. Bodies that felt hunger, extreme discomfort and remember the stench of sewerage when muck from animal pens breached borders in stormy seas; bodies shook-up and moved from the ordinary into the extraordinary; bodies which fell in love, mourned death, gave birth and forged deep connections; bodies which laid in close quarters, for nigh on 100 nights and in the doing so, some (but not all) of the vestiges of class slipping away in their wake. These were the differently orientated people that stepped into the fledgling town of Auckland around September 1862. The Albertlander narrative then becomes a story of what didn't happen next.

But first, the wonder of it all. Many of the new immigrants were housed in the Government immigration barracks with piles in the sand at Freemans Bay so when the tide came in, it felt like they were still at sea (Brett & Hook, 1927: 56). The roads were rudimentary, made of rough scoria and "few of the houses in Auckland had any modern conveniences - no gas, no stoves, a poor water supply, no baths, and no coal. Most of the women had to cook in camp ovens" (Borrows, 1969: 50).

Albertlander Mr Cooper noted in his diary on the 12th of February 1863, after arriving on the Gertrude,

> Got up very early this morning and while dressing the door opened, and in walked two natives, man and wife, their faces tattooed all over. The man had a pot of honey he wanted us to buy. We gave the lady an old skirt, and received a lot of honey in exchange (Brett & Hook, 1927: 56).

On the 17th of February 1863, Mr Cooper writes,

> This is a day of mourning, on account of the wreck of the Orpheus ... A great number of canoes anchor under our window, loaded with peaches and potatoes. Will and others bargained for four peaches for a pin. I drew a likeness

> of one of the natives. This made him laugh heartily. He took the pencil out of my hand and tried to draw one himself but made a funny mess of it (Brett & Hook, 1927: 56).

Four peaches for a pin, an old skirt for a lot of honey. This beginning of exchange balanced or not is up for grabs, but for the immigrants, those baskets of food from Māori were the nexus of early encounter. So often including peaches or 'Māori peaches'[51] as they were known then, amongst an array of food supplies, the bodies from the 'Old World' were now absorbing nutrients via the sun and soil of the South Pacific.

Māori traded for the things that had value for them, and what seems almost symbiotic for a while at least; a dependence from one to the other. But what of the Orpheus in the previous quote by Mr Cooper. The sinking of the Orpheus is known as the worst New Zealand shipwreck but in the context of this story, points to something that was going to shift any, albeit tenuous, balance of power in Aotearoa New Zealand from that time after, that being the invasion of Waikato in 1863.

The Orpheus, a Royal Naval steam-corvette serving as a flagship for the Australian squadron was deployed to New Zealand to bring provisions for the upcoming invasion of the Waikato (Callan, 2000). Calamity struck when the ship came upon a sandbar, the Commodore Burnett relying on an out-of-date survey map. Alike the Kaipara Harbour in the north, the Manukau Bar's shifting sandbars proved treacherous. Local Māori saw another reason for this; a breach of tapu, their attention on the western end of nearby Puketutu Island on which a Pākehā had felled a sacred ancient puriri tree for fence posts (*HMS Orpheus (1860)*, n.d.) Ultimately, of a crew of 259, 189 lives were lost (Callan, 2000: 37).

[51] It is not known who introduced the peaches to New Zealand, perhaps James Cook, sealing or whalers or the early missionaries. They were to thrive in the north, with many early settlers coming across groves along rivers and in the wild (Dawkins, 2008). These peaches were wiped by disease in the 1860s to 1890s (Cunningham, 1946).

Figure 137
The Orpheus, ran aground 7th February
Nzhistory.govt.nz PIBL-0033-1863-427

Those early Albertlanders must have heard the news as they awoke to 'a day of mourning' down in the barracks at Freemans Bay. It's easy to read past this and other titbits in the Albertland books about trouble brewing in the Waikato. But what needs to be understood is that the trouble in the Waikato was in fact an organising and strategising for a systematic invasion including the building of war roads - the Great South Road and the Raglan Road. The gathering of more Imperial troops within the rohe of Aotearoa than anywhere else in the world at that stage including approximately 12,000 British and Irish soldiers (O'Malley, 2016: 16). The securing of food supplies and commandeering of steamboats to take supplies down the Waikato River, the then commander Lieutenant-General Duncan Cameron not wishing to repeat the mistake of the Crimea in which his troops perished in the cold and of starvation. It is said that the Waikato War was the most logistically thought through invasion in the history of the Empire. Acts of parliament waited in the wing. *The New Zealand Settlements Act* (1863) supported by *The Suppression of Rebellion Act* (1863) enabled the confiscation of land by those who fought against the Crown. Ultimately Tainui and Taranaki (and a small number in the Bay of Plenty) iwi were to have 1.2 million hectares of their land confiscated for protecting themselves from the invasion or for supporting Tainui and resisting (Walker, 2004).[52]

[52] Significantly, Queen Elizabeth made an apology in person for the illegal invasion of the Waikato when visiting NZ in 2002, as part of signing into law the Waikato Claims Settlement Act in 1995 (O'Malley, 2016: 10).

This trouble in the Waikato was in fact the beginning of travesty upon travesty suffered by Māori with tremendous devastating power now surging through the colonisation, accelerating Pākehā settlement, and pushing Māori into the margins. In late 1862 or early 1863, Te Uri O Hau and the Albertlanders trickling north were not to know any of that, aside from murmurings of trouble. However, as time went on the Albertlanders feared attack from Māori and to allay these anxieties, a letter acknowledged by 'all the chiefs of the Kaipara' was published in the Albertland Gazette, 1st October 1863.

LETTER FROM THE MAORIS TO THE PAKEHAS.

We have received the following letter from our friends whose names are attached thereto, the chiefs of the district, we publish it with great pleasure, the more so as so many of our friends in England will see what little ground for fear exists with us.

Oruawharo, Kaipara, Sept. 18, 1863.

This is a word to our beloved friends, the Pakehas of Mangawai, Oruawharo, Paparoa, Matakohe, and all in Kaipara. Some of you may have heard false reports concerning the Maoris and their plans for the future. Do not think we have forgotten our promises made to you in the beginning at the feast of Otamatea. We have united ourselves to you with feelings of love and good faith desiring that justice and truth should over-rule all our transactions, and discouraging anything like oppression either on the part of the Maori or the white man. We wish to live at peace with all men. We do not share the feelings of those foolish tribes who are sending away their Pakehas and with them all wisdom and useful knowledge. We do not wish to return to those customs of ignorance and and darkness which we have left far behind, but rather to reach to those heights of knowledge which our friends the Pakehas point out to us. If there be confusion in the North or South of this island, we have no sympathy with these things, but desire to live as in the days that are past, that is, in the light. It causes us sorrow that some tribes will walk in the darkness of war, but our determination is to keep this trouble far from the people of Kaipara. In the days of the first Gov. Hobson, we took the Queen of England as our parent and protector and have always remembered our word. In the days of Gov. Fitzroy, Gov. Grey, Gov. Browne, and now in the days of Gov. Grey, who rules over us, we remember them still, and take refuge in the name of Victoria, and always do we pray that she may have wisdom given to her to govern us according to the law of God.

This is all we have to say to our friends the Pakehas, let us dwell in peace.

From your loving friends,

PAIKEA TE HEKEUA,
ARAMA KARAKA,
PAIRAMA TE RORU,
MATIKIKUHA TAIKI,
HEMANA WHITI,
HEPANA,
WIREMU TIPENE,
PARETENE TAUPUHI,
RUPUHA TAHUKAI,
MANUKA,
TAMATI REWETI.
AND ALL THE
CHIEFS OF KAIPARA.

Figure 138
Albertland Gazette 1/10/1863
https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/ALG18631001.2.10

his letter stands as testimony of the spirit of generosity from the Kaipara tribes towards 'their Pākehā' and this is central to the Albertland narrative. Most of the storying of these early encounters focuses on cooperation and those particular exchanges between people along a rivers edge — peaches, honey, potatoes, kūmara, pork, implements, blankets, pins, and old skirts — evoking a sort of an equilibrium of and equality. But beyond the local scale of dealings in the ordinary and the everyday, and peoples who were getting to know each other, the 'trouble' in the Waikato, the ensuing New Zealand Wars, confiscations, alienation of Māori land through the Native Land Court, and the mass flow of immigrants meant that whatever precarious beginnings those Albertlanders had, they were always going to have the upper hand.

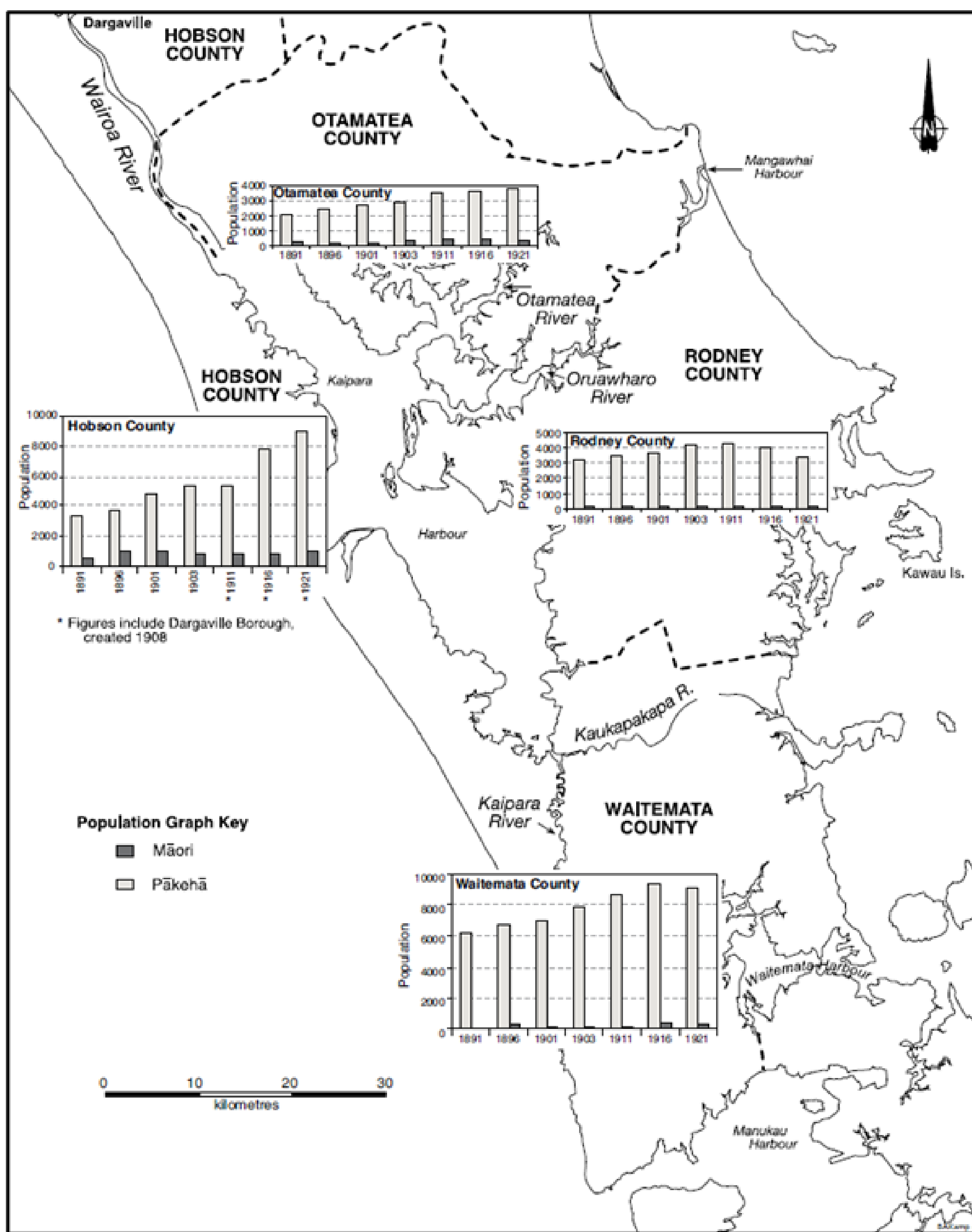


Figure 139
Map showing the differences in Māori and Pākehā population 1891 - 1921, From the Kaipara Report 2006:38

The Trek

Back to the Albertland beginnings in the 1860s, a fledgling town called Auckland, and the tide coming in below the immigration barracks at Freemans Bay. From here on in, the Albertland story becomes a chronicle of the things that didn't happen and those that did, being fraught with difficulty and disappointment. Many Auckland residents were bemused at suggestions from Albertlanders that they would soon be heading north on various routes, along non-existent roads and difficult water crossing. Information gleaned from locals convinced many of the Albertlanders to stay on in Auckland. Of those who did make it north, many left after finding life up there too difficult. It is believed that only half of the original Albertlanders made it to Albertland and of them, only half stayed (Borrows, 1969: 63). Those who did leave Auckland faced immense difficulty, this march north narrated over and over again as extraordinary and harrowing as Borrows writes in 1969,

> A century ago, somewhere among the steep hills and the southern side of the Dome, several groups of settlers made their way on foot or on bullock drays along the mythical "Great North Road" toward an equally mythical "town" of Port Albert. Their journey was one of unimaginable difficulty and discomfort. Slow progress through heavy bush and swamp forced them to spend several nights in the open in Northlands wettest season. They carried their worldly possessions, the tools of their trade, and who knows what burdens of apprehension, bewilderment, and faltering courage (1969: 13-14).

Immigrants in clothes and bodies not fit for purpose, weighed down by belongings and lacking any local knowledge whatsoever conjure the dire, the epic and the heroic. It also needs to be remembered however, that tangata whenua had been traversing great stretches of this terrain and waterways across hundreds of years in Aotearoa with little acknowledgement. Foregrounding stories of 'great' settler treks typically dis-appears tangata whenua and in my own writing, I run the risk of doing the same. This sits unresolved for me.

Stories of the treks and boat trips north become about the disappointment on arrival, no settlement but a bunch of tents, no roads but survey lines and land desolate, as Mrs Judson writes,

> The country round us was barren and desolate in the extreme. Moreover, heavy rain fell, and it was sometimes a difficult matter even for those under tents to keep dry, while at times we could hear stray pigs rooting up the ground in attempts to get at our potatoes. It was here that we made our first acquaintance with the Maoris [sic], who were very friendly and kindly disposed (Brett & Hook, 1927: 83).

She goes on talk about making their way to the land allotted to her family,

> The rain having ceased, we started to walk to our own land, a distance of some two miles, over hills, on a slippery clay path not more than a foot wide, with wet scrub on either side, then across a creek was some felled bush, over which we had to scramble as best we could for a distance of about a furlong. Here a spot had been cleared for our tent, but the ground was soaking wet with recent rain, and there was nothing to do but sit on a damp log watching the firelight, and waiting until it was possible to pitch our tent. Such was our arrival at our new home. Romance had faded into reality (Brett & Hook, 1927:83).

Figure 140
Painting by George Dilly of early arrivals at Port Albert, date unknown.
Original at the Auckland Art Gallery, Accession No. 1970/20/5

Romance faded into reality, and this led to recriminations and William Brame accused of misleading the settlers. He only ever visited the settlement twice and was met with angry Albertlanders who felt that they had been duped. Brame died in Auckland from a brain hemorrhage at the age of 29 on the 21/3/1893 a few weeks after writing to his brother in England,

> Albertland still lives, but it has nearly killed me. I have been very ill indeed since the last mail – bad weather, late season, exposure in feeble state of health, worry, anxiety, increasing responsibilities, increased tenfold because of the men who were my co-leaders have everyone looked to themselves, and left me to stand the whole brunt singlehanded. There have been lies and calumnies of the wicked and the treacherous, a host of foes to get through to get along at all, but thank God I shall get through the victory if they multiply a thousandfold" (Brame in Borrows, 1969: 67).

The Albertland settlement may not have eventuated as planned but did 'multiply a thousandfold' through a threefold way. Albertlander families did settle – how many is difficult to determine - intermarry and form the complex and ongoing genealogical matrix that signifies and produces Albertlanderness to the present day. Secondly, complex webs of civic apparatus – committees, churches, clubs of every form, halls, organisations, schools, sports groups, memorials, nomenclature, associations, and businesses[53] – mapped over the district. These structures and practises imprinted an Albertland sense of place and shored up settler-British as being central to municipal affairs; a status held mainly by Pākehā today. Contemporaneously, this Albertlanderness reappears in local talk, in the landscape, in becoming-*with* people who identify as so, in shaping place, and as still *becoming*, a narrative which has 'settled' as fact and hegemonic. Thirdly, Albertlanderness multiplied a 'thousandfold' via the 'pioneer' storying of place, this being a story framed through a particular lens – those who came via a Special Settlement.[54] Positioning Albertlanders within an

[53] See Mabbet (1968) for a detailed overview of the complex institutions and organisations that populate the Wellsford district.
[54] Some other examples in Aotearoa New Zealand being the Nova Scotians in Waipu, the Bohemians in Puhoi and the Military Settlements in the Waikato (Hargreaves and Hearn 1981: 67).

Albertland material world concretely establishes and reiterates the origin story and ensures a collective identity that has endured and dominated for over 160 years - despite the precarious beginnings.

Figure 141
Memorial at Port Albert

Figure 142
Albertland Heritage Museum, Wellsford

ALBERTLAND HERITAGE MUSEUM

Programme 26TH TO 28TH MAY 2023

Tickets available at I Ticket or contact Albertland Museum on 09 423 8181

Free

MAY 27th

WORKSHOP - Learn how to research your family history with Marjorie Prictor at the Wellsford Library, Library Plaza, Port Albert Road, Wellsford Saturday 27th May 11am - 12pm Museum open 10 am to 4pm (beside library)

MAY 27th

$20

Historical mini bus tour of Albertland district with Peter Marsh. Leaves Wellsford Train Station on Saturday 27th May at 10.30am. Duration 2 1/2 hours with stops at Wharehine Hall for morning tea (koha donation) and Druids Hall, Port Albert. Bookings essential at I Ticket or tickets available at Albertland Museum

Free

MAY 27th

Druids Hall open to Public 10 am - 4 pm Saturday 27th May Everyone welcome to view this lovely historical hall.

MAY 26th to 28th

$20

Keep to thy First Wife by Wellsford Drama Club at Wellsford Community Centre Friday 26th 7 - 9 pm, Saturday 27th 7 - 9 pm and Sunday 28th 2 pm onwards Bookings at I Ticket or available at door

MAY 27th

Albertland Heritage Museum Pre-Show Dinner at Wellsford RSA Saturday 27th - 5 - 7 pm Bookings essential at I Ticket or Albertland Heritage Museum

$37

May 28th

Lunch $15

Port Albert Hall Car Boot sale 10.30 am and Lunch - Bookings essential

Figure 143
Flyer for anniversary celebrations hosted by the Albertland Heritage Museum, May 2023. These celebrations occur every year and include tours and events around the district

Furthermore, identity is shored up and local social capital enhanced through remembering and claiming Albertlanderness. “First and foremost,” a neighbours (late) father used to say to her “don’t forget that you are an Albertlander.” This not a just a ‘where you come from’ statement, but also an identity marker and sense of selfhood in the present. Additionally, this neighbour may just have a single line of Albertlanderness, coming from a host of others, but this is the chosen line as it

continues to carry a certain kudos locally. The 'right type of settler' manifests as 'the right type of identity' or Albertlander becoming in an area in which many celebrate this origin story and in which this origin story stays dominant. Albertlander becoming and belonging is also bolstered and imaginations infused by the copious written material, paintings, photos, journals, letters, memorials, published books (Brett and Hook 2001; Hames 1960; Borrows 1969; Byrne 2002; Scott 1987) that came to proliferate from this origin story along with the settler-nomenclature of the material world.

Finding and establishing Albertlander identity and identity work also requires a certain sort of memory making akin to those of Māori who seek to establish and reaffirm whakapapa. One Albertlander I spoke to situated himself as a 'Kaipara person' coming from two rivers.

> I see myself as a Kaipara person…two legs, two feet and they are in two different rivers. The Marsh [Albertland] side of the family is the Ōruawharo River and on my maternal side, is the Ōtamatea River.

He then goes into the complex marrying into a local Māori family of which he is also a part. All of these strand's matter to him, with Albertlanderness coming to the fore in history making sessions (as a lay historian) and in-amongst Albertlander kin. Such is the nature of identity making within 'Special Settlements.' Kinship which began with boat ties which then, across time, became blood ties infused with a migration story. A migration story given capacity and momentum to endure (and silence others) via all of the elements of colonisation, past and present. A story that begins with a collective (as with the Nova Scotians in Waipu and Bohemians in Puhoi) which then makes belonging easier in many ways. Rather than searching here and there for relatives from over there, identity starts with Albertlanderness which then becomes almost "tribal", an unusual position for Pākehā in Aotearoa New Zealand— a sort of surefooted-ness and ability to stake a claim potentially at the risk of others. But it is important to remember that there are others, others, Māori and non-Albertland Pākehā, who risk becoming bit-players in local narratives and with it, feelings of being excluded within colonising structures and practises.

As I head towards the end of this chapter, I am aware that as I tell the Albertland story, I slippery-slope towards going with the one version of events and while doing so, Māori again quietly disappear into the sidelines. When Māori do appear, they are like props or extras in the colonial drama; helpers of Albertlanders, food providers, whare builders, guides, boat swains, and traders. Mostly this is because this is how the history books, on the whole, are written and this framing makes it's way into my own storying repeating the pattern centralising pioneering Pākehā narratives and marginalising Māori. In an awareness of this, what follows is a Pākehā attempt to flip the lens, draw Māori back to the centre and see what turns up. I do this by concentrating on one strand of a story within a much larger story, the claim for recompence by Te Uri o Hau, the *Te Uri o Hau Claims Settlement Act 2002* and a concept called legislatively known as a *Kirihipi Overlay Area*.

Kirihipi Te Tiriti o Ngāti Whatua

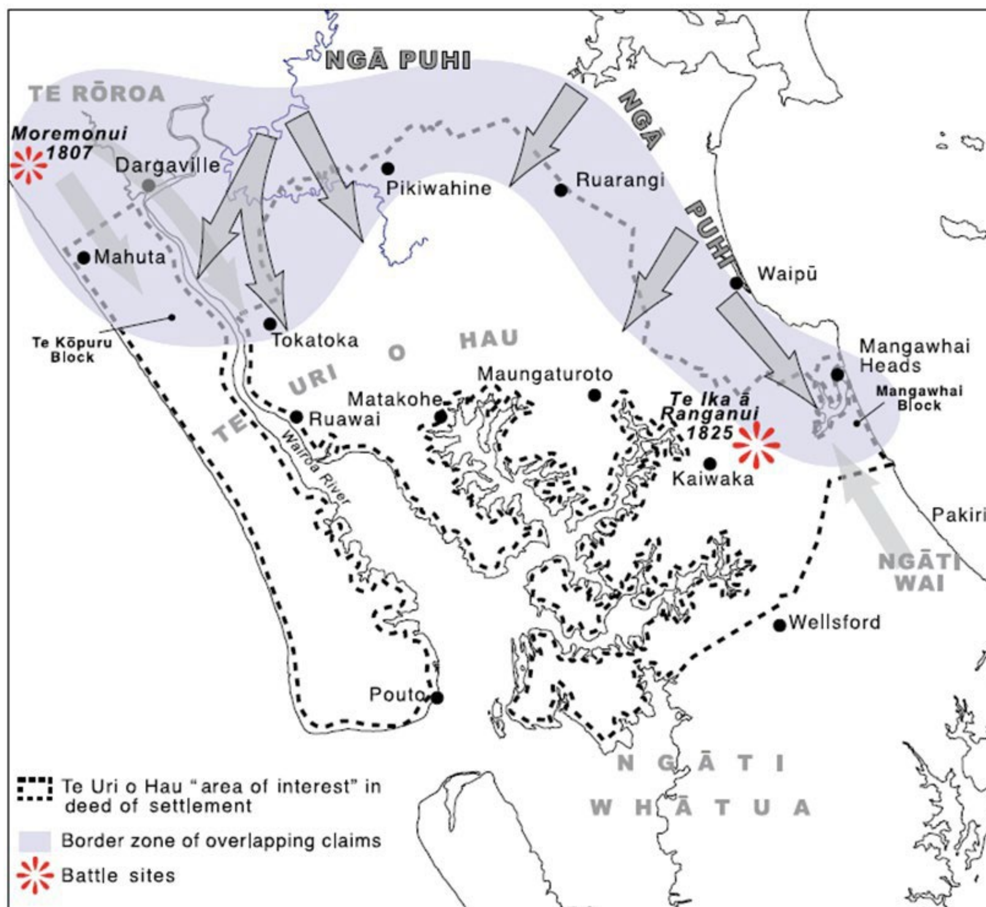


Figure 144
Te Uri o Hau areas of interest in the deed of settlement
(Kaipara Report Wai 674, 2006: 42)

Māori have been compelled to engage with Pākehā systems of law and governance in order to contest land sales and loss of land stretching back over 180 years including: the Land Claims Commission 1841 and 1844; the Bell Commission in the 1850s and eventually, the enactment of the *Treaty of Waitangi Amendment Act* 1985 made it possible for historic claims to be heard for grievances arising after the 6 February 1840 (*Waitangi Tribunal*, n.d.) Te Uri o Hau lodged their claim with the Waitangi Tribunal in 1991 (WAI 229 and WAI 271).

While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into the detail of this claim process, the key acknowledgements by the Crown in the *Deed of Settlement to Settle Te Uri o Hau Historical Claims* (2000) outline the specificities of the grievances covered so are included below:

(a) The Crown recognises that Te Uri o Hau endeavoured to preserve and strengthen their relationship with the Crown. In particular, the early land transactions for settlement purposes contributed to development of New Zealand and affirmed the loyalty of Te Uri o Hau to the Crown;

(b) The Crown acknowledges that the benefits that Te Uri o Hau expected to flow from this relationship were not always realised. Early land transactions and twentieth century land development, including the Tai Tokerau Maori District Land Board and the Maori Affairs development schemes initiated in the 1930s, did not provide the economic opportunities and benefits that Te Uri o Hau expected;

(c) The Crown acknowledges that the process used to determine the reparation for the plunder of a store, which led Te Uri o Hau chiefs and others to cede land at Te Kopuru as punishment for the plunder, was prejudicial to Te Uri o Hau. The Crown acknowledges that its actions may have caused Te Uri o Hau to alienate lands that they wished to retain and that this was a breach of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi and its principles;

(d) The Crown acknowledges that a large amount of Te Uri o Hau land has been alienated since 1840 and that it failed to provide adequate reserves for the people of Te Uri o Hau. The Crown also acknowledges that it did not ensure that there was sufficient protection from alienation for the few reserves that were provided. This failure by the Crown to set aside reserves and protect lands for the future use of Te Uri o Hau was a breach of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi and its principles.

(e) The Crown acknowledges that the operation and impact of the Native land laws … had a prejudicial effect on those of Te Uri o Hau who wished to retain their land and that that this was a breach of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi and its principles. The Crown also acknowledges that the awarding of reserves exclusively to individual Te Uri o Hau made those reserves subject to partition, succession and fragmentation, which had a prejudicial effect on Te Uri o Hau; and

(f) The Crown acknowledges that this loss of control over land has prejudiced Te Uri o Hau and hindered the economic, social, and cultural development of Te Uri o Hau. It has also impeded their ability to exercise control over their taonga and wahi tapu and maintain and foster spiritual connections to their ancestral lands (Deed of Settlement to Settle Te Uri o Hau Historical Claims, 2000: 28,29).

Furthermore, Te Uri o Hau received a Crown Apology or *Te Tukuhe a Te Karauna* as part of the final settlement as follows.

> E tapae ana te Karauna i tona he ki nga tupuna o Te Uri o Hau me o ratou uri mo enei takahinga i Te Tiriti o Waitangi me ona matapono i tirohia i runga ake nei. E tino whakamomori ake ana te Karauna ki te tapae i tona he me te kaniawhea tonu ki ana mahi ki te kore e tohu kia tau nga whenua mo Te Uri o Hau, i pa ai teawenga me te tukunga iho waroa, ko te huanga mai ki te rarutanga o te mana whakahaere a Te Uri o Hau mo te nuinga o ona whenua.

The Crown apologises to the ancestors of Te Uri o Hau and to their descendants for the breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi and its principles acknowledged above.

The Crown unreservedly apologises and profoundly regrets that its actions, in failing to preserve sufficient lands for Te Uri o Hau, have had pervasive and enduring consequences, resulting in Te Uri o Hau losing control over the majority of their lands (Deed of Settlement to Settle Te Uri o Hau Historical Claims, 2000: 29,30).

Within the context of the claim there is an emphasis on establishing Te Uri o Hau's special relationship with the Crown. Paikea's speech to the Albertland settlers is quoted (see page 219), it is noted that a bust of Queen Victoria was given to Ōtamatea marae and thirdly, significance is given to the separate treaty signed between Ngāti Whātua (of which Te Uri o Hau are a part of), and the Crown, written on a sheepskin parchment known as *Kirihipi Te Tiriti o Ngāti Whātua* (Settlement Deed, 2000:7). From this framing – kirihipi as sheepskin/parchment/written agreement/pledge - stems a conceptual paradigm which then embeds into the *Te Uri o Hau Claims Settlement Act 2002* known as a 'Kirihipi Overlay Area'. A Kirihipi Overlay Area is described as having "cultural, spiritual, historic, and traditional association" (Sect 39) for Te Uri o Hau. Further, the Crown, through the act acknowledge the values of Te Uri o Hau value and agree to under Sect 43,

(a) avoiding harm to Te Uri o Hau values in relation to each Kirihipi overlay area; or

(b) avoiding the diminishing of Te Uri o Hau values in relation to each Kirihipi overlay area. Additionally, the NZ Conservation Authority must consult with Te Uri o Hau and include Kirihipi Overlay Areas in all conservation plans, strategies and National Park management plans in areas affected (sect 46).

(c) avoiding the diminishing of Te Uri o Hau values in relation to each Kirihipi overlay area. Additionally, the NZ Conservation Authority must consult with Te Uri o Hau and include Kirihipi Overlay Areas in all conservation plans, strategies and National Park management plans in areas affected (sect 46).

In researching the detail, staggeringly, I click on a link annotating a Kirihipi Overlay Area in the online legislation and up pops the story of Rongomai and the cultural importance of Taporapora and Manukapua as touched on in chapter five of this thesis. There, on one hand, deep in the bowels of legislation lies a story of significance, known, I would argue, by so few Pākehā in this area, and there, on the other, lies a Te Uri o Hau story as enshrined in law. A story embedded in the shadows of legislation where few go while also not to be gotten rid of - concretised through the legislative process sought while also not to be gotten rid of - concretised through the legislative process sought over decades (*Deed of Settlement to Settle Te Uri o Hau Historical Claims*, n.d.)

Description of area

The area to which this schedule applies is the area known as the Manukapua Government Purpose (Wildlife Management) Reserve, as shown on SO Plan 70052.

Preamble

Under section 42 of Te Uri o Hau Claims Settlement Act 2002 (clause 5.1.3 of the deed of settlement), the Crown acknowledges the statement by Te Uri o Hau of the cultural, spiritual, historic, and traditional values of Te Uri o Hau relating to Manukapua Government Purposes (Wildlife Management) Reserve, as set out below.

Statement of values by Te Uri o Hau relating to Manukapua

Manukapua (cloud of birds) is extremely significant to Te Uri o Hau because it is the remains of Taporapora, the tauranga waka (landing place) of our ancestral waka (canoe), the Mahuhu ki te Rangi.

When the Mahuhu ki te Rangi and its crew arrived in the Kaipara region from Hawaiki, they named the tauranga waka Taporapora after a remembered place in Hawaiki. Te Uri o Hau traditional history recalled by our kaumatua and kuia states that Taporapora was then a peninsula that extended from the present day location of Manukapua out to the Tasman sea creating a north and south channel at the mouth of the Kaipara Harbour.

Rongomai (Ariki of the Mahuhu ki te Rangi) and some crew members settled and built their wharenui (meeting house) on Taporapora. The tupuna (ancestors) used the wharenui to recite ancient knowledge, karakia (incantation), waiata (songs) and whakapapa (genealogy) with rangatira (chiefs) from around the region. This wharenui housed their taonga (treasures) brought with them from Hawaiki.

Rongomai married a wahine (woman) from the surrounding area and relocated his kainga (village) from Taporapora to Manukapua and the Okahukura peninsula. From this kainga he used the surrounding land and water to gather kai (food) for the people. Te Uri o Hau whaikorero (oration) passed down from generation to generation talks of Rongomai's drowning and of a great tempest that washed away Taporapora because Rongomai did not perform the appropriate karakia before he went fishing.

For Te Uri o Hau, histories such as these represent the links and the continuity between past and present generations. They reinforce tribal identity and solidarity, and document the events that shaped Te Uri o Hau as a people.

It is only evident at high tide that Manukapua is an island. At low tide one is able to walk from the Okahukura peninsula to Manukapua. One can also see the remains of the whenua (land) of Taporapora at low tide.

For many generations and still today the waters surrounding Manukapua provide kaimoana (seafood) such as patiki (flounder), kanae (mullet), pioke (shark), tamure (snapper), kuakua (scallop), pipi, and kutae (mussel) for Te Uri o Hau. The shifting sandbars of the Kaipara Harbour protect this source of kai for Te Uri o Hau. The whenua of Manukapua and the surrounding area provided manu (birds) of many species and many of those species still nest and roost here today.

The mauri (life force) of Manukapua represents the essence that binds the physical and spiritual elements of all things together, generating and upholding life. All elements of the natural environment possess a life force and all forms of life are related. Mauri is a critical element of the spiritual relationship for Te Uri o Hau.

With agency and vitality, the mauri of Manukapua re-establishes the kaitiaki status of Te Uri o Hau in law. It needs to be stressed however, that this is a legislative process which takes a toll as noted by Margaret Kawharu in *The Unsettledness of Treaty Claim Settlements* (2018).

> What is little understood is how exhausting the Treaty claim settlement process can be for the claimant group. Most Treaty claims take one to two decades to achieve settlement. It is a very convoluted process, involving many issues and turning points to navigate and negotiate over an uneven and uncertain timeframe, which makes the inclusion of the whole claimant group almost impossible. Criticism is rife both internally and externally, from both Māori and non-Māori. For example, academics such as Poata-Smith (2004) have argued that these claims are divisive and force iwi to compete with one another for resources within a Eurocentric capitalist economic framework, which by its very nature requires inequality for its survival (Kawharu, 2018: 484).

Through these struggles Māhuhu-ki-te-rangi and Rongomai have made their way into legislation via the concept of the Kirihipi Overlay Area. The Kirihipi Overlay Area has not been just placed upon the land for the people of the land - tangata whenua – like a cloak or korowai but rather has been overlayed atop layers and layers of sediment, the dense and powerful remnants of colonisation. A long and circuitous route has got Te Uri o Hau there. From the manaakitanga towards Albertlanders and other settlers by chiefs like Paikea to fighting for compensation, including monetary recompence, the recognition of Te Uri o Hau values, the return of pockets of land and the right to co-govern small areas of cultural significance. This I argue is a very different process of establishing both political and personal belonging than that of being an Albertlander. While Te Uri o Hau have other ways of knowing and reiterating stories outside of the Waitangi Tribunal process, wrongdoings and a lack of acknowledgement have forced their hand through a legislative process, including enshrining origin stories in acts of law. Paradoxically, Albertlander origin stories and Albertlanderness have moved, formed and reformed unchallenged through space, within the civic, in place and across time with ease and infused with power. This can be seen in place names, country halls, memorials, road names and such like, and with it, a firming up of the

surefootedness of those who call themselves Albertlanders today, naming as being dynamic and suffused with colonising power across great stretches of time. Knowing, becoming, belonging then, does not only occur at the level of the personal but also within the political, a political which is not an even playing field in which all get to fit and belong with ease into the nomenclature of the colonial past. A political in which systems, institutes, laws, narratives, public spaces, settler remembering and histories include and exclude. Inclusivity comes with exclusivity and contestedness more often the norm, like trouble moving below as a strong current beneath the turbulent waters of Aotearoa. The storying of any particular place is both felt in the personal as reenactments of belonging, ways of knowing, shaping becoming and as entangled with power, political acts with consequences. I too found myself enmeshed in a political act with potential consequences that being my foray into designing an exhibit centring on a Missionary, the aforementioned Rev. William Gittos, within the four walls of a settler museum.

An Exhibition in A Settler Museum

The Albertland Heritage Museum stands high above a parking lot with too steep stairs for some and a ramp zigzagging up the side. Pitchfork carrying settlers, bullock drays, industry and religion stare down from murals, and terraced gardens down to the square below. This is a place of pride for Albertlanders, filled to the brim with their stories, artefacts, a mish mash of myriad things, and an extraordinary document archive out back and online, photos, letters, journals, hand drawn maps and the like. And at the very back, in a temperature-controlled room, lie the taonga that no one is sure what to do with — for now, it's easier and more appropriate to keep that back door shut and leave them to rest. This is a settler museum, unashamedly so, a provincial museum run by volunteers, some of them Albertlanders, and the only local museum.

Clearly Albertlanders past and present have set about gathering and collecting and in doing so, formed a crucial node for transmitting and refracting Albertlander-ness to themselves and the wider community across time. Additionally, the museum sits as an extended family storehouse for the matrix of Albertland descendants, many of whom visit during annual commemoration events and on their trips up north. In casual discussions with a couple of historians and museum professionals, the conclusion is that settler-ness is unproblematic; it is what it is and serves a purpose. As someone now on the inside of this museum where I work as a volunteer, oftentimes I meet Albertlanders, enjoy their interest and feel the same. However, the honest work of anthropology requires looking for more; what do museums do, what is instituted through museums and how does power flow? Examining what such a place does, also requires consideration of how narratives iterate and reiterate, then map across the local as 'the remembered', settling deep, whilst much is suppressed or forgotten.

A critique of the settler museum is deeply challenging for me personally as I don't like to be rude and want others to like me. In an attempt to bring new (hopefully decolonising) stories into the museum, I have become a member, president even– friendships have formed, and I see the work that people do, with good heart and enthusiasm. Critiquing also feels inappropriate as I too play a part in reproducing

settler stories and silences. As noted in the prologue, I turn to Harraway (2016) for guidance through this sticky place I find myself in which regularly brings my thesis writing to a halt. “Stay with the trouble” she says in these “mixed-up times” (2016:1). “Staying with the trouble is both more serious and more lively” adding, “become with each other or not at all” (2016:4). But still, discomfort prevails, the theoretical does not play out as so lively in the actual. Becoming-with an exhibition is as prickly as every other cross-cultural encounter I have had in this research including making decisions around what to leave in and leave out in an exhibit. With angst, and lots of discussions with my museum colleagues, we edge towards the new.

What is the new? The ‘new’ is asking what Māori may think when they come into our museum (and perhaps read my eventual thesis). The ‘new’ is also me appreciating the work that others do; their enthusiasm for things, understanding their intent and their care of things; white gloved and skilled alike. And ultimately, the ‘new’ is establishing that, in order to tell the story of the Albertlanders, Te Uri o Hau have to be remembered too. There is now no turning back. All the while, the trouble ‘stayed-with’ is a foot deeply embedded in the museum and the other, in my research. From the latter, the straddling also demands listening to Māori. Māori like Moana Jackson (*Ngāti Kahungungu, Rongomaiwahine, Ngāti Porou*) who stated at a hui at Te Papa[55] hui in 2018 that, “Museums are dangerous places because they control the storytelling” and went on to say, “they are the namers of names” (Te Papa, 2018). To this Puawai Cairns adds that, “museums have the power to define and confine knowledge, and for indigenous people, this can amount to complete erasure of their own narratives or even complete silencing” (Te Papa 2018). Into this troubling power-full space with an ability to silence rides the third horseman of the apocalypse for an anthropologist/museum worker like myself, that being the politics of who gets to tell what story.

Pākehā academics in Aotearoa NZ most often adopt the decolonising position, rightly so, that on the whole, Māori stories are for Māori to tell (for example see Shaw 2021a). Similarly, museum professionals, in my experience, will say the same within the

[55] National Museum of Aotearoa New Zealand.

context of a settler museum when considering bringing in Māori history. I've heard, "that is not your story to tell"[56] many times. As someone concerned about the silencing of Māori history instituted in white spaces and the potential for ongoing harm, this positioning - while acting as a very helpful guiding light in some ways — also feels very much like being stuck between a rock and a hard place. How do you *un*silence without telling stories here and there? Who else is going to tell some of these stories in the meantime? And how can the telling of *joint* stories unfold? Further, always at the front of my thoughts, how do tamariki feel when they come into our museum? "What can we do for them?" becomes a foci that moves beyond, with some urgency, the politics of story reverberating in the adult world. "What we can do for them" is to show people the complexities of entanglements, Māori and Pākehā alike, that lived in close proximity mid 19th century along the Ōruawharo and tell a story or two. We can spark imaginations, enliven narratives, show encounters and introduce protagonists with agency from both worlds. We can take care not to overstep, be explicit that what is being told is from a Pākehā point of view and be open to criticism. In the meantime, or within a "thick present" (Harraway, 2016:1) this is maybe all that can be done, small decolonising acts which bring Māori stories in; stories which may well have agency — like cats let out of the proverbial bag. From here, I tell the story of me being in the thick of all of this, unexpectedly so, a turning point in my research in which I spent many days and weeks across months within the four walls of the museum curating an exhibit.

Four walls

Everything is written from some*where*. I was drawn to the somewhere-ness of my moving surging tidal, out to the harbour and open-sea-river as it optimised opportunities for the expansive and adventurous, in an 'Ancient Mariner' sort of way; endless possibilities of fantastically being taken towards the new. I've had moments like that, but mainly I've staggered along the rutted paths of what has gone before, the social, political, cultural, and discursive flows which move through place and bodies influencing becoming and belonging. Consequently, the riverness of my river research

[56] I have been undertaking training with museum professionals during my time as a volunteer.

does not always hold true. I am caught up in the milieu as ever with the research eye rarely lifting toward a far horizon with boundless currents flowing underneath. I experienced this being caught-up viscerally when my research field contracted to within the fixed four walls—two concrete-block— of a back gallery in a settler museum. This field became twofold, a place of research and a place in which I became in the thick of it, that is, at the centre of storytelling within a history telling hub; from ethnographer to ethnography, from participant observer to participant, a merging of insider and outsider, me now implicit and complicit in the storying of place through the curation of an exhibit.

The gallery became so familiar, my senses would register the smell and feel as I entered the door. Almost nostalgic, like memory that settles for the long term, but also fraught, as the possibilities of me getting things wrong troubled my every other move. The exhibit focused on Pākehā encounters with Māori, and working without iwi collaboration felt like skating on very thin ice. Vulnerable now, within this gallery, my thoughts and words were stripped and exposed via a guillotine, laminator, and large amounts of Blu Tack — stuck to walls for all to see. “What would people think?” I thought and as usual, expected trouble. But the somewhere-ness of this contracted field also had moments of triumph when things just felt right. Like ethnography as a moving feast up on the wall for all to see and stories spiraling out which may well serve to rehumanise rather than recolonise, I hope.[57]

What follows is the story of this exhibition in narrative form, like small vignettes, showing the personal and the process, photos of the exhibit and photos used in the exhibit. Stories of encounters and entanglements and the way in which particular histories can be assembled in particular ways. Ultimately, I suggest that the storying of place is like a weaver’s loom of old, threads are selected, colours used to light the way, shapes are formed shaped by the shaper, influenced by taste, research and objects

[57] Hyland and Rand (2024) use the thinking of Moana Jackson to argue that decolonization can be “a process of restoring relationships” and cite Jackson who notes that decolonisation is “part political judgement and partly an expression of aroha — only through mutual respect and affection could balance and whakapapa be maintained"(Jackson 2020: 141).

which lead the way. Leaving in and leaving out twist and turn the weaver's way and viewers are drawn to what matters to them, an interplay between the curator, past lives, objects, and the pull of story and viewpoint of the viewer. Anthropologically, this can be thought of as a recursive process in which "ethnographic knowledge is relationally constituted (rather than *extracted* or *appropriated* from interlocuters)" (*emphasis in original*, Salmond, 2017:253). "Relationally constituted artifacts" are "*anything at all subjected to ethnographic scrutiny*" (*emphasis in original*, Salmond, 2017:252). So, in the seemingly casual selecting and placing of things, ethnography-as exhibit-as artefact emerges transmitting particular ways of knowing as curated through objects, taste, emphasis, what matters, stories, ideas and the like.

I begin with how I became part of such a thing – a small attempt at decolonising through the storying of place refracted, somewhat unexpectantly, through a Wesleyan Methodist missionary archive within the four walls of a settler museum. I begin with Margaret Buchanan and the gift.

The Gift

Figure 145
Margaret Buchanan 2024.
Age 89

Margaret is 89 years old, tiny, at the low end of five foot with a sweet bob of grey hair she cuts herself as she has done for decades. A medical scientist in her prime, her blue eyes shine with intelligence and I remember the long conversations she would have with my late mother Una, her lifelong friend, a person she misses to this day. The pace of change around Margaret unsettles and encloses her world. Her residential village is in-filling with rows of townhouses in places gardens used to be and she feels both duped and discombobulated. The bank no longer allows cheques; she has no online banking and can no longer park near her bank as the parking technology has left her behind. Thankfully she has found a way to do transactions by ringing the bank on her landline.

As her health declines and the rapidly changing world around her institutes realities[58] she struggles to understand, she is pushed to the margins and spends most her time at home alone. As such, with no descendants, she grapples with what to do with all that surrounds her, a lifetime of things, a flow of histories that settle in boxes, on shelves and under beds. As she looks and sorts, the bits and bobs in her retirement unit stretch into a very different distant past.

Early to mid-19th century missionaries people Margaret's ancestral line, significantly so, beginning with her great great grandfather the Rev John Hobbs and his wife Jane. The Hobbs were far flung in the north at the Hokianga Māngungu Mission Station in the time of very few Europeans being resident in Aotearoa NZ. Their daughter, Margaret's great grandmother Marianne, born at the Māngungu in 1830, was 10 years old when the third and largest signing of the Treaty of Waitangi happened at the mission station on the 12th of February 1840. Sixty four chiefs signed the treaty at Māngungu and around 3000 visitors were fed.[59] What did that young girl see that day? Marianne, I suggest, is becoming-Pākehā, shaped by her British heritage socially, culturally and religiously but born in the wilds of the north surrounded by Māori Pā.

[58] Ghassan Hage, in discussing symbolic violence notes that instituted realities which naturalise dominant ways of being, simultaneously marginalise others - deepening their struggles to augment viable lives (Hage, 2022:1).
[59] Te Tiriti of Waitangi was fist signed at Waitangi on the 6th of February 1840. Over the next seven months it was transported around the country for signing on nine separate sheets (https://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/treaty/nga-wahi-signing-occasions).

In the photo below we see the sensibilities of a Victorian woman, but I wonder what lies below the frame, a different way of knowing perhaps, as Pākehā acculturated in a Māori world.

Figure 146
Marianne Gittos née Hobbs date unknown. Photo used in exhibit. Author's own

Figure 147
An unexpected donation of clothes, bags, gloves and scarfs from a Gittos descendant, Noeline Fairchild, was used to enliven museum walls

Another of Margarets ancestors William Gittos, arrived in the Hokianga in 1840 as a ten year old boy along with his family from Durham England. William, a future Wesleyan missionary, became Mariannes husband in 1857. As a missionary for the Methodist Māori Mission, his first assignment was the Ōruawharo River, the beginning of a line of entanglement that mapped with happenstance and potentialities towards the future me.

Figure 148
Above map drawn by Harold Marsh, date approx. 1920s. Waingohi, shown on top right-hand corner of map at the Kaira creek is the first place that the Gittos' lived in the Kaipara, from 1856 – 1862. Map used in exhibit. Used with permission Albertland Museum

Back to the callings of the distant past in a unit in a retirement village on Auckland's North Shore. Margaret, in her high eighties, feels the need to gather up histories and move things on and this troubles her. Here, my home, the research-I and a confluence of flows becomes relevant. Serendipitously, my husband and I bought an old church off the Methodists in 1991, now our home of 25 years. A chipped old sign out front said *The Rev. William Gittos Memorial Church built in 1918*. When catching up with Margaret in the early '90s, she said that was the church built in my great grandfathers honour. Not knowing the family history, I was astonished. Gittos-things have been slowly making their way home to my home ever since, bits of furniture and so forth as Margaret endlessly declutters her vast family archive.

Figure 149
Exhibit photo by Harold Marsh entitled "Working Bee", Building the new Methodist Church at Wharehine Dec 22nd 1917. Back row, from left, W.H Witheford, Rev. Cummings. Front row, from left, E Marcroft, T Inger, T Witheford, C Halfpenny, G Witheford & Les.
The church is known as the 'Rev. Gittos Memorial Church' and is owned by me and my husband. Used with permission Albertland Museum

Figure 150
Painting interior of the Rev. Gittos Memorial Church - now my lounge. Exhibition photo by Harold Marsh 1924, used with permission, Albertland Museum

In mid-2023, a conversation precipitated a large flow of treasured things, objects from the deep past that Margaret had held close, a gift that threw me into the middle of my research in an unexpected way. This began with a visit, a cup of tea and looking through old photos. One of Gittos' daughters looked up from an old sepia print, I saw a striking broach and admired it. Ever practical Margaret said, "I've got that broach, now would you wear it?"

Figure 151
From glass cabinet in the Marianne display – encountering the coral and gold broach in the photo and then in hand was a moment of feeling-more and thinking-less, wonderment perhaps, with a time-gone-by folding into the present.

Astonished that she had the piece of jewelry, I said I was interested in its history and off down the hallway we went, her in front, tiny and determined. In her bedroom now, she reached below copious woolen cardigans in the bottom drawer and out came the coral and gold broach along with all manner of hidden treasures; fob watches, jewelry and the like.

Figure 152
A box of things to take home. This box unsettled my office and came with a creeping sense of responsibility.

Then she paused and the most extraordinary thing of all happened. “would you like Willy’s cufflinks?” she said, Willy being William Gittos of course. Never have I felt the

pull of such a thing, all the way home, reeling in my thoughts, “I have the Reverend’s cufflinks.” Was it because he wore them close to his body as he walked, rode and rowed miles all across the Kaipara? Those old man things were calling me so, and with that came a creeping sense of responsibility.

Figure 153
Cufflinks & the Reverend Gittos now under glass at the exhibit – no longer roaming the Kaipara

The Worry

The archive took on a life of its own. Clearly it needed putting on show, the museum wanted a new exhibit and the job at hand was laid at my feet through the responsibility of the gift. I worried so. I worried that I was now complicit in drifting from the river into a practise that recolonised with the framework being a settler museum and a missionary archive; missionaries being the very people who were sent to Aotearoa to *change* Māori. I was most worried because I would be bringing in Māori stories without collaboration or permission. I had tried to establish collaboration without success, limited to the odd chat in the street, a troubling talk across a clothes rack in a musty second hand shop, and brief conversations had with Māori people who came into the museum while I was working there. I got the sense that many local Māori were busy with their own stuff and not particularly interested in the museum, understandably so. I was deeply worried when I felt like I was crossing a line, when Māori stories became ones I had no right to tell. I had to listen to my gut and pull

back. Who am I to unsettle the ghosts of the past? And I was worried that the methodists would be framed in the museum as saviours and heroes, a re-colonising act in and of itself. Never have I been so worried. I seemed to be on the edge of a slippery slope from PhD researcher looking for the new, towards doing something in the way things have always been done. In amongst it all however, through research and remembering, opportunities arose.

Figure 154
A corner of exhibition; the 'land sale/loss' display is on the left wall and the Marianne exhibit on the right. Under the Perspex on the table is a homage to Margaret and her history telling – notes, photos, transcriptions and newspaper clippings. Narrating histories is a process of assembling bits and pieces in particular ways.

Remembering

Remembering and forgetting happen simultaneously (Campbell 2020; Morris 2022; Shaw 2021a, 2021b). As the remembering layers down like a new horizon front of view, the nearly forgotten moves to the margins, now known by few. In the case of a museum, the sedimentation of remembering forms materially and substantively so, with consequences. Recently a neighbour said to me, emphatically and unprompted, "the problem with that museum is that it has had a memory blank, it has forgotten about Te Uri o Hau!" This is not new news to some members of the museum

committee, as how to bring Māori into the displays is often talked about. The time is ripe for change. I wondered about remembering. Is it simply a matter of taste, like an opportunistic raconteur wanting to spin a good yarn? Or is remembering simply being drawn or swayed by what takes your fancy in a 'what matters' sort of way in the Donna Haraway sense of the word? What mattered to me was the inbetween, the inter-subjective, the place of interminglings between Māori and Pākehā worlds. The Gittos story gave me an 'in' and an 'out'. An 'in' because the narrative could be shaped in terms of relationships, opening up encounters between Māori and Pākehā who peopled each-others world within the milieu of the Ōruawharo. An 'in' because, via the missionaries, Te Uri O Hau could be brought back into the museum. In terms of the 'out' the story was not specifically a Māori one, in some ways a bit of a personal one, therefore an easier positioning for a Pākehā curator treading close to the Māori world. Close to the Māori world as he was their missionary after all but on the whole, this had been erased

Figure 155
The Methodist Māori Mission cabinet, including Hoani Waiti in front his colleague in the Kaipara. This photo represents an exciting 'find' found in a 120 yearbook out back of the museum, 'The History of Methodism in New Zealand' (1900) by William Morley.

Instead Gittos had long been remembered as a friend of the Albertlanders and clearly this was so, they built a church in the Reverends honour. But in the remembering, it seems his life's work locally has been largely overlooked by Pākehā (Māori will have their own view of the man), that being the Methodist Missionary for Māori, a role he undertook for over 50 years, 29 of which were in the Kaipara. He moved amongst Albertlanders on the south side of the Ōruawharo River and in the wider district but William and Marianne lived in Māori communities in Waingohi, Ōruawharo and Rangiora across from Ōtamatea. He spoke Te Reo like his mother tongue as did his wife Marianne, born in the Hokianga.

Figure 556
Exhibition photo by Harold Marsh entitled 'Reverend Gittos visiting friends at Ōruawharo 1909.' This photo has become a centre piece in the exhibit, properly printed and framed and to me, represents future possibilities for newness in the museum. Used with permission Albertland Museum.

They *were* friends of the settlers, but they were also British-Pākehā, embedded in the Maori world but it is not likely they used the word Pākehā. This is a view I take from the present looking back, being Pākehā, I argue, a particular way of being-in-the-world, near-native and imbued with some Māori spirit from lives lived close by. In remembering the Māori Mission work, via the exhibit, the Museum now features Te Uri o Hau alongside Gittos and stories of what they did together, how they greeted the settlers when they arrived, fed them at the great feast in Tanoa in 1863 and how friendships formed between peoples.

Figure 157
Above and left - George Dilly print 'Albertland' (date unknown) used to tell the story of the arrival of the Albertlanders at Patoka (Port Albert) and the visit from Te Uri o Hau who supplied food and helped to build Raupō whare.
This is a narrative node in the exhibit in which school programs will be developed – a focus on entanglements between people along with objects that can be handled by children.

This remembering may go some way to restoring relationships through simply acknowledging the presence of people other than settlers along the banks of the river in the 1860s. But of course, all was not sweetness and light in a settler colony in full thrust, alienating Maori land and inviting immigrants to come in their thousands. The issue of land seems to be quickly forgotten by Albertlanders.

Forgetting

Worried still, Gittos sits in a vexing position in terms of the sale of land. What to do with him and the land sale in the context of the four walls of my story-telling space? In the conversation I mentioned before, across the secondhand clothes, I asked a local Māori man I know quite well what he thought of Gittos. He replied, "Oh he's the one who forced the bible down our throats and, along with his friend John Rogan [land agent], forced us to sell our land". My heart sank but later I looked at the picture of Chief Paikea Te Hekeua, now on the exhibition wall and wondered if he could be forced to do anything.

Figure 158
Te Uri o Hau Chief Paikea Te Hekeua died 11th March 1873. "In the last weeks of his life he took up residence at the mission station [with the Rev William & Marianne Gittos]" – excerpt from the NZ Herald April 1873, pg.3. He later died at Pouto and is thought to have been around 100 years old. Paikea is framed in the museum through a Pākehā point of view. I am unsure of how he is viewed by Māori or what stories are told.

Ultimately, what needed to be known was that the Albertlanders and their descendants lived lives across one hundred and sixty two years on the ancestral land of Te Uri o Hau. This land sale needed to be housed within the four walls and in the doing, I simply said that Gittos encouraged the sale and displayed the replica Deeds with the signatures of the chiefs involved. 'This is what happened' simply put and I leave it to the viewers to grapple with the 'good' and the 'bad'. Importantly, an old map is used in this display, and within it the marking out of a wahi tapu site designated as a Paraheke Native Reserve.

Figure 159
A portion of map of the Wharehine district (artist unknown). This map shows the Paraheke Native Reserve which, as alienated from Māori, no longer appears on modern maps. Used with permission Albertland Museum.

This reserve was eventually lost to iwi—able to be sold as it did not have the proper adequate protections in place (*for discussion on alienation of Kaipara land* see The

Kaipara Report 2006). Wharehine residents, where the reserve was allocated, were asked at the opening of the exhibit whether they knew about the reserve. Aside from two farmers present on whose land it straddles, no one had heard of such a thing. More forgetting. Deep in the maps of old, the secrets lie. And in the maps of old, tapu lies.

Tapu

Tapu is easy to read past. The map shows the long lost wahi tapu site Paraheke. William Gittos built his rather grand chapel at Ōtamatea on a tapu site. Small pieces of information to some but for me as curator, the signifier of the sacred and the otherworldly, in which kēhua can be stirred up, secrets spilled and copious Pākehā misunderstandings and mistellings unravel. In the exhibit, I stayed with the barest of facts. The Native Reserve was wahi tapu but even in acknowledging this, the unravelling of secrets in wrong places could eventuate. This is troubling as I'm fairly sure Māori do not want all and sundry to know about places where the bodies lie. In discussing the wahi tapu Native Reserve at the exhibit opening, the farmer who owned part of the land said he had a story to tell if we were interested.

"Of course", I said, but my nerves were rattled as the narrative had the potential to spin towards the unseemly. He talked of a burial mound that used to be in a hay paddock, and of an uncle who went against the family rules and mowed through it. Of bones and pounamu then falling out (people in the audience gasped!) and the adze that sat on a mantelpiece until a disgruntled aunt said that it must be taken back and reburied. She knew back then that tapu had been breached and I too, felt creeping misgivings, the stir of the ancestors and the need to close down this portal to the past in that particular place – a room filled with Pākehā. Opening up this conversation was clearly not mine to do.This is not forgetting but rather a form of attempting to keep the sacred safe.

Back to the Gittos Church on tapu land. I skimmed over this too as the details of why the tapu was out in place relates to painful memories connected to the slaughter of Te Uri o Hau at the battle of Te Ika-a ranganui. The titillating details did not belong on the wall of a settler museum and again, were not mine to tell. The tapu however, does matter in the Gittos narrative because here we see a missionary wishing to dispel

notions of tapu in the Christianising of Māori by stamping a church on top of sacred ground. It is told that Māori would not enter his church but eventually he made the chief Arama Karaka walk through and others followed (a neighbour said he was pushed through the door).

Figure 160
Kakaraea Church also known as the Cathedral Church of Gittos (photo not dated). This exhibit photo was another 'find' from the old Methodist book out back, having not being able to find a photo up until that point. Initially excited, I realised I had looked past the tapu. I find the photo haunting now, ghostly figures out front and a church built on deeply tapu land (Photo from Morley 1900).

The tapu in this story is contextualised through a missionary account and leaves out the meaning and feelings associated with sacred ground to Māori. In curating moments like this I realise my emotion, gut or feelings were leading the way. I decide to take notice. Feeling this, tapu unsettled in the settler museum, signifying a need to take care, and untrample – again, this is different than forgetting.

Remembering Women

On a hot humid day in the busy week pre-Christmas, a Māori teacher in search of a photo walked into the museum. Knowing him from my involvement in schools, I asked if he could come and look at what I was doing behind the curtain. We sat in the sweaty heat looking at the wall with Gittos, and the two chiefs Arama Karaka and

Paikea Te Hekeua and I asked to tell me honestly what Maori might think when they came into the exhibit. He looked and paused and said the old ones would be sad but the younger generation understood why what happened had to happen. What happened? I wasn't seeing what he saw and then I realised in whatever context, these three individuals, represented land loss (not just Gittos). Land loss was front and centre to him but not to me, it was just one of many stories running through the exhibit. Feeling troubled, again, I proceeded to do that annoying Pākehā thing of over-talking and over-sharing, and loading my insecurities on him about the exhibit. The Māori man in a hurry three days out from Christmas, politely listened.

We turned towards the Marianne exhibit and I said with palpable relief that curating this part of the display had been so straightforward compared to all of the rest. He stood up with outstretched hands over the cabinet, and a wide smile said "yes, I can see this is much more settled'. We laughed, Māori and Pākehā knowing in the moment that very tricky ground has to be traversed in the in-between. Something else stirred, a coming together, a conviviality born of that rich lively spirited space between Māori and Pākehā worlds. We smiled and said goodbye.

Figure 161
The Marianne Gittos cabinet containing items that Margaret considered being of the most value. These included a Marianne's journal dating back to the 1830s – embossed book bottom right corner -and two daguerreotypes from the Hobbs family – top row with gold frames.

Less troubled, remembering women, as a woman, became about remembering Marianne and for me, paying homage to my friend Margaret, her great granddaughter. I look at one and see the other. In other places in the museum, settler women stare down from portrait walls with the names of their husbands in front the of the 'Mrs'. There they are bounded in not fit for purpose clothes, high collared and corseted, bearers of children in hazardous times; the slow shutter of cameras only allowing for stiff faces and rarely a smile. How unappealing they often look, grim faces with missing biographies on museum walls. Marianne Gittos ran the risk of being the same, a woman remembered in the shadow of her husband, a Reverend of some repute. For me, Marianne needed to be brought alive, taken from the shadows and given luminosity and capacity.

Figure 162
Marianne Gittos née Hobbs born 31 July 1830 died 24th January 1908. Photo author's own

Through research, we discover so much. We, being myself and curators Jenny and Rose who helped me with this part of the exhibit, learnt about a woman who was a renowned apiarist believed to have used the frame in Aotearoa NZ that became widely used by commercial beekeepers in hives. Some say she may have invented this. We find a woman who spent great stretches of time living initially in a raupo whare,[60] as the only European in Māori communities, administering medical help and teaching children while her husband left for weeks on end to mission the Kaipara (Gittos 1992). We see a woman who had seven children and fed them out her garden and on meagre supplies and who, as a trained teacher, wrote most of the Reverend's sermons. We read about a woman educated and wise (Gittos 1992) and I think of Margaret. I look at Marianne and see Margaret, both scholarly women not given an equal footing in life. In a small attempt to ameliorate, Marianne, her family and the material objects of women are given substantive space on the exhibition walls.

Figure 163
Marianne & family wall including items clothing and accessories donated by Gittos descendant, Noeline Fairchild

[60] Raupo, a wetland plant commonly used to thatch walls of huts in colonial New Zealand

Similarly, the exhibition takes a playful turn and a next generation Gittos woman, Clara Buchanan (Margarets grandmother) is released from the upright stiff-posture framing of the the years before and shown, along with her friends in the early 1900's, in the water and on boats. Boats move, women move and imaginings are stirred of the embodied capacities of those raised in the road-less days of the Kaipara of old

Figure 164
The Gittos family in Devonport display (left and below), featuring Marianne's daughter Clara, and friends boating, swimming and picnicking.
For me, this display became about women and movement.

In remembering a woman of significance present at pivotal historic moments in Aotearoa, I decided to give Marianne an equal footing in the last version (of many) of

the title. The 'missionary' was removed and changed it to the more diversly applicable 'mission' and 'Reverend' dropped and Marianne included.[61] The exhibit was eventually named the following in the following format,

A Mission on the Kaipara
William & Marianne Gittos

Marianne is not to be forgotten and her great granddaughter Margaret, reaching the far end of own life, is particularly pleased about this. Seeing Marianne's photo in the paper tickled her so. In retrospect, I realise that doing this gender representation of a woman as a woman within the domestic space, one which did not include such vexing issues as land loss, was so much easier for me. At no point did I feel lines were being crossed or controversies stirred up. This was not the case with going public.

Going Public

One aspect of going public involved me being interviewed by a journalist from a widely read local paper, the museum wanting to attract visitors. This unnerved me as I had heard about people being misquoted and through all the care taken in telling the Gittos story, there was a chance that the exhibit would be misrepresented. We met in the museum, the interviewer and I, she in a hurry with a deadline to meet. Rose the curator, joined us in the gallery room and the sparring began. "Could you give me what you wrote for your opening and I could make it into an article?" she said. "No, that's not going to happen" I thought, but politely said that I didn't think that was a good idea, as the words were written to be spoken not read. I thought of the hours I worked on that speech taking care to acknowledge mana whenua and bring Te Uri o Hau respectfully into the room along with the nuanced and complex story of missionaries in a 19th century settler colony. There would be no handing over a speech to be turned into who knows what. After some back and forth, Rose chipped in and said that after the opening a visitor had said that the exhibit was "a story only Clare

[61] I must give full credit to my husband Tony Hayward for this title as this was his idea while being caught up in title brainstorming sessions across dinner. What to call it? As I grappled, he understood what needed to be done. He also made the signs in the exhibit.

could tell”. This changed the conversation in the room from the political to the personal and it became simpler from there on. We stopped, slowed things down and I explained to the reporter, who was Māori, that I was didn’t want Gittos to be portrayed in the paper as some sort of white saviour, that is not what the exhibition is about. She understood. She also agreed that I go home and write 500 words before the 12pm deadline which I did. From there she wove in the personal and days later I was very relieved to see the article appropriately representing the exhibit.

The exhibition was led by Clare Joensen, who has a personal connection with the Gittos family story.

Gittos treasures shed light on Kaipara history

The latest exhibition at the Albertland Heritage Museum in Wellsford takes a closer look at one of the region's pioneering families through family letters, photographs and memorabilia.

A Mission on the Kaipara – William and Marianne Gittos officially opened on February 11.

A large part of the exhibition is from a collection donated by Gittos descendant Margaret Buchanan, which has never been on public display before.

It was curated by Rose Reid and Jenny Driskel, led by museum vice-chair Clare Joensen, who has a special connection with the Gittos family.

She and her family have lived in the Gittos Memorial Church in Wharehine, built by Albertlanders in 1918, for the past 25 years. She is also friends with Margaret, but did not know of her connection to the church until after it was bought.

“The museum is very grateful to Margaret for this contribution,” Joensen says.

The exhibition also includes clothes, scarfs, and bags from the Gittos family hand delivered to the museum by another descendant, Nolene Fairchild.

“It all makes for a very rich and varied display,” she says.

Joensen says the Gittos' story is an entry point to much of the history of the area around the 1860s, a time of considerable change.

Gittos was a key figure, alongside local chiefs, in facilitating the arrival of the Albertlanders. This included being involved in the sale of the 30,000 acre Oruawharo block, the eventual site for the Albertland settlement.

Primarily, Gittos was a minister for the Methodist Māori Mission, a programme of work which he undertook throughout the Kaipara.

His wife Marianne also spent most of her life living among Māori communities. She was the daughter of the Rev John Hobbs and Jane Hobbs and grew up at the Māngungu Mission station in Horeke, in the Hokianga, the site of the third and largest signing of te Tiriti o Waitangi. Fluent in te reo Māori, she was respected for her intelligence and kindness towards the people in her community including providing medical care.

“Together, the Reverend and Marianne were present and part of some of the most pivotal events in the region's history,” Joensen says.

“This exhibit moves across their lifetimes and opens up conversations about some of these events. The hope is that this will help to develop local understanding about the complexities of encounters within the context of 1860s Aotearoa New Zealand.”

The museum hopes the exhibition will encourage other Gittos family members to come forward, as well as people interested in a history of the Kaipara and the Methodist community.

The museum is open Wednesday to Saturday, from 11am to 3pm, and on Sunday from 1pm to 3pm.

Reverend William Gittos.

As the daughter of Hokianga missionary John Hobbs, Marianne Gittos was no stranger to the demands of missionary life.

Figure 165
Article in Local Matters 19th February 2024

Taking a stance mattered as I needed to protect the work and avoid harm. By harm I mean, the sort of symbolic violence that comes with our history telling hubs reproducing a particular colonising version of events while marginalising others.

Stance taking also anchored me at the opening of the exhibit, but it took research and the curation of the display to get me to that point. By the time of the opening, I felt emphatically that you can't tell the story of the Albertlanders and leave out Te Uri o Hau. Telling 19th century history in Aotearoa NZ and leaving out Maori is rude and disrespectful, like having a piece of paper, cutting them out and leaving them on the floor. Thinking with respect and restoring some memories, albeit still from a Pākehā point of view, meant that I could stand there and take what came. What came was a genuine interest from people who seemed to be drawn to stories that they hadn't heard before. Weeks after the exhibition opened, I saw the following in the bottom line of the visitor's book,

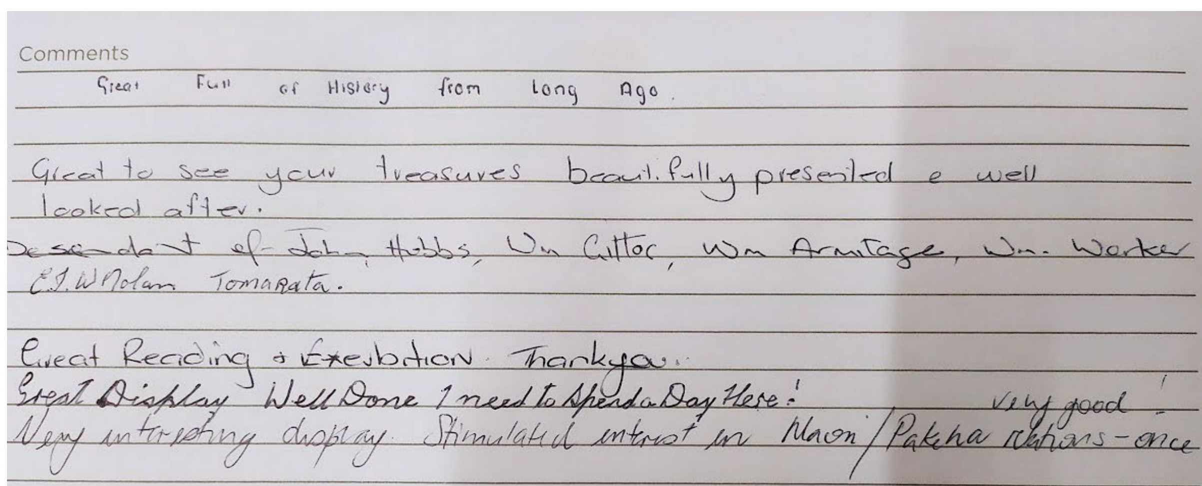

Comments
Great Full of History from Long Ago.
Great to see your treasures beautifully presented & well looked after.
Descendant of John Hobbs, Wm Cutter, Wm Armitage, Wm. Worker
E.J. W Nolan Tomarata.
Great Reading & Exebition. Thankyou.
Great Display Well Done I need to Spend a Day Here! Very good!
Very interesting display. Stimulated interest in Maori/Pakeha relations - once

Figure 166
Except from Visitors Book Albertland Heritage Museum

'Stimulated interest in Maori and Pakeha relations', as noted on the bottom line above, made months of work and worry worthwhile.

Concluding Thoughts: Aroha & Conviviality

Colonisation settles and unsettles deep along the banks of the Ōruawharo and with it comes prestige and pain. Prestige from those who feel emboldened and assured by the adventurous spirit of their settler-ancestors, claiming and reclaiming the stories as

signifiers of their own capacities and local embeddedness, belonging felt by their long standing connection to the place. Pain felt by tangata whenua, who grapple through processes and systems for recognition, recompence and respect; a placename fought for through legislation, an ability to co-govern by laying over kirihipi, a seeing only one side of stories being told and retold and watching generations of Pākehā making lives on what was once their land. But also, a deep sense of belonging from feeling-for and knowing-of their own stories which predate Pākehā by a thousand or so years and with it, a capacity to move with the ancestors amidst a fraught world, with deep pride and dignity intact, knowing more. It's in the middle that the trouble begins.

In the middle is where I found myself, throughout the reading, writing, researching and doing of this chapter. I watched people filled with awe telling the stories of settler ships and sea journeys and enjoyed their company and enthusiasm for the past. I've watched a formidable Māori man, stand in my office with his hand pointing to my map telling a story of three brothers, his ancestors, who walked an extraordinary journey to eventually settle in Ōruawharo. I was as much swept up in the story as I was swept up by him, an orator of repute evoking the times of old, twenty minutes of life I'll never forget. I've grappled with how to bring in a bit of both into the museum without offending the other. In the middle opportunities arose, albeit in a small way and still framed through a settler story from a Pākehā point of view.

Middling and less dichotomous than the coloniser and colonised binary, more nuanced and perhaps more fitting for future thinking, I turn again to the late scholar Moana Jackson (Ngāti Kahungungu, Ngāti Porou and Rongomaiwahine) to shed some light on these troubles. Through aroha, he argues, respect is shown, understandings developed, relationships restored and some balance achieved. Similarly, through an 'ethic of love', bell hooks (2006 [1994]) argued that change can happen and to make this point she states that a, "a culture of domination is anti-love. It requires violence to sustain itself" (2006: 293). This feeling-for the other happens within a space of respectful enquiry through an ethic of care with ears attuned and eyes wide open. This feeling-for the other also happens when interest is sparked and stories unravel the complexities of encounters and meetings between people. This knowing-with happens when you cast eyes riverward and imagine a different way of knowing enlivened with

bustling Māori river edge communities. Feeling-for and knowing-with respect and curiosity, aroha and conviviality opens up possibilities for the new, goes a small way to shifting power and allows for other stories to flow with ease along the banks of the Ōruawharo. That is the hope. Now it is time to go back down onto the river on Rosemary to think about what I know now that I didn't know then.

Chapter 7, Conclusion: After Images

Thinglyness & an Ethnography of Vital materialisms

That last ride in the last line of the previous chapter didn't quite turn as expected, more metaphorical than actual, Rosemary still marooned in the driveway as she has been for over a year, every single thing getting in the way of her refit/fix up and hauling back to the river. Time poor and overwhelmed with the task of fixing what needs fixing, one small job turned into numerous others at every turn — a hatch that needs painting with split wood that needs fixing with metal that needs making before a lick of paint can go on. Surfaces that look clean-able, but things so fixed to her no scrubbing will suffice.

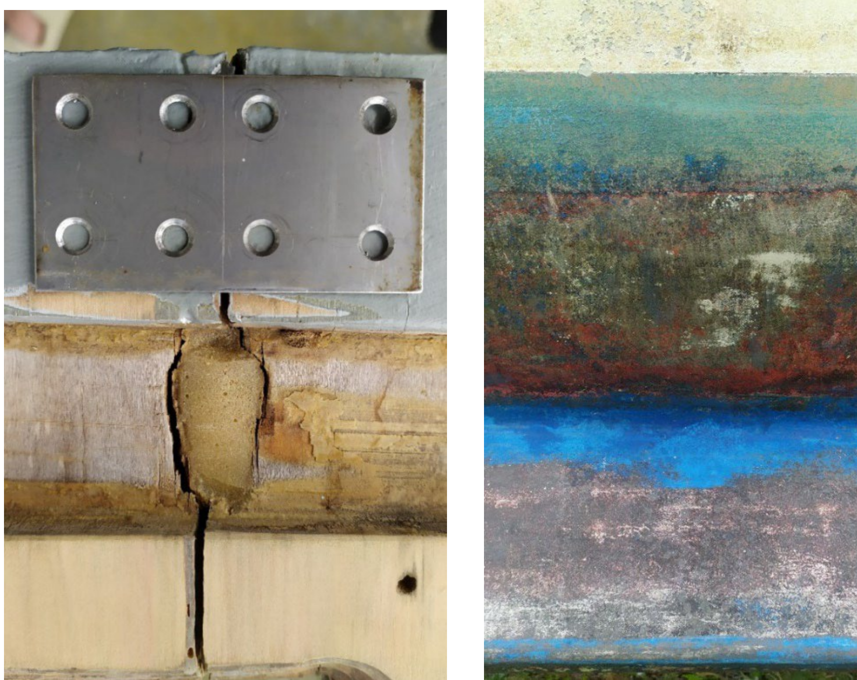


Figure 167
Fixing Rosemary

Try we did, to get her river-worthy again as my PhD clock ticked down and never had I felt so thwarted with the enormity of it all, Tony and I weighed down with so much to do, so many decisions needing to be made. But as we tackled this and that, I realised that this *is* the interface of entangled boat-becoming: bodies at the ready grappling with the material world— rotting and splitting wood, lichen covered paint, mould everywhere and the alarming peeling off of paint. As we struggled to get Rosemary

from here (the driveway) to there (the river), in order to abstract bigger ideas emergent from this thesis, a central idea was right before my eyes and right below my aching knees as I scrubbed the deck, and that was both the importance of Jane Bennett's idea of the thinglyness or thing power of things (Bennett 2010) and the ways in which this thwarting and reshaping of my final plan to go on the river and write my conclusion is befitting of this thesis, not a neat and tidy summing up but rather open and unpredictable, pushing me to think critically again through unexpected outcomes. This untidiness or grappling-*with* is also akin to boat becoming, which is inextricably entwined with the thinglyness of the material world, the intermingling's of wood, brass, copper, paint, lichen, mould, skin, bone, muscle, breath, feelings, and thoughts. And embodied knowing and physical labour are what it takes to do the thing. These materialities are not distant, docile and passive but proximate and potent.

Bennett (2010) calls the work of acknowledging these vital materialisms both a political and philosophical project. By philosophical, she means the need to, "think slowly an idea that runs fast through modern heads: the idea of matter as passive stiff, as raw, brute or inert" (2010: i). Through this thinking through slowly she shows what things do, matter that enters bodies, chemistries in rubbish tips, and such like, and in the doing so, forces attention towards capacities, vitalities, vivacities and the widely taken for granted, in the hope that as more is noticed, less is rode ram shod over. This is an insight this thesis foregrounds, an almost childlike awakening to the things in our midst with the notion that events would be considered differently "if we gave the force of things more due" (2010: vii). With that, she suggests ways in which public health, environmental policies and the like, be shaped, avoidant of "earth destroying fantasies of conquest and consumption" (2101: ix). An ethnographic contribution this thesis makes is to thickly describe becomings-*with* replete with vital materialisms within a plane of immanence and shifting intensities. One such intensity that can spiral out of this form of ethnography is the political, the ways in which knowing more can abet action or activism, from the unsilencing of histories to thinking with environmental care and attunement to the non-human in our midst.

Politically, encounters and acknowledgments of vital materialisms take on differing swerves in this thesis. Firstly, I can't choose to look elsewhere, the potency of things

shapes so much of what I do. From these experiences, the lives of others come with more clarity into view. I see the fisherperson and know that every aspect of his/her being on and becoming-*with* the River is similarly entangled with embodied knowing in which water, grease, smell, wind, diesel, fish, wood, fishing line, rope, that sharp knife there, emerges as a continuum of the bodily becoming-with things which shape and reshape the intricacies of knowing and on the river. Similarly, boat-becoming manifests as adroit, adept, skillful, tacit and immersive and at the level of the up-close, these are people who cannot be explained away through theories which focus primarily on power. Doing as such, obliterates agency and specificities. People need to be known through what they know and what they do, these things not glanced past. This is an insight which contributes to literature on an anthropology of becoming, a practise which requires looking up close at the trajectories for living and opportunities for difference of actual lives (Biehl 2005; Biehl & Locke 2010, 2017).

This thesis (mainly) of the up-close and the ordinary does not ignore power altogether as power always infiltrates. For example, the river can be seen, on one hand, with copious vitality and capacity, as if having a mind and will of its own, a shaper of things, lively, story-filled, both dangerous and mellow, shifting from still water in the quiet of the morning and to thunderous and foreboding on a stormy day. On the other hand, the river is grappling with the past and present projects of denudation, grassland to river edges, pollutants from agriculture, the debris of pine forests, and the never-ending creep of vast swathes of sediment. She cannot escape resource grab power-filled economics and in the spirit of Jane Bennet's slow-thinking through vital materialisms, knowing her better could help her so. Knowing her could help build affinities-with, senses of belonging-in, becoming-with feelings for, a relationship-with and a knowing-in. From there, attention is focused and resolve to do better within these watery worlds firmed up. Simply put, while, at times, we need protection from her, most significantly, she too, needs protection from us. This requires insight, appreciation of her rivery ways and a curiosity sparked through knowing and knowing that there is more to know. And much of this requires the work of representation, a sort of conjuring up ways of knowing in differing forms evoking slithers of river stories refracted through open imaginations and alternative ways of delivering ideas.

Storying & Representation

In this thesis, differing ways of knowing and doing, emerge within the particularities of a swampy tidal river tendril like emerging from the Kaipara, the Ōruawharo. These particularities matter as materialities, and situated stories of a place, show place isn't simply a field but is actively taken up and made in knowing, remembering, forgetting, becoming, seeing and experiencing differently. This is something I believe this thesis contributes, an anthropology which attends to more and in doing so generates transformative ways of representing place. As noted, this includes opening up theoretical and ethnographic space for the non-human, responding to and encountering the after images of photography and art, experimenting with poetic elemental form to express what has been impressed or experienced and using story to story. This process of revealing knowings in tangential ways opens up other intellectual and creative pathways and transformational possibilities. Further, as knowing shapes becoming-*with*, possibilities for difference occur, for the unseen and erased to reemerge, feelings unleashed and for knowing differently-in generating different ways of becoming and experiencing place. This thesis then, through multiple ways of knowing, experiencing, understanding and becoming-in place then shapes and reshapes 'place' in it's creative, productive and generative wake. I believe these practises could be replicated elsewhere and that this is a particular and hopeful offering of the thesis. This approach also shapes the political as knowing differently can then shift the flow of power, the way things are thought about, policies and plans written and enacted, the delivery of school history programs and the storying of public spaces.

Having spent several years thinking with the Ōruawharo, my own imagination more often gets the better of me and there is something about the process of conjuring that helps to see the unseen,

That River There

See that river over there!
Not just a swampy tidal estuarine thing
But strewn with stories river deep
Connected to
Geo-physics, moon, tide, wind

She moves amongst it all
A current of multiplicities
A waterway to fear
A marker of time
A boundary of place
Turbulent and treacherous
Calm and sensuous
A tributary of histories
And teller of tales
Home to taniwha and taken lives
And funereal route for the dead
From those towering forests of old
A mover of waka, settler boats,
Bibles, lore and law
An arterial route for colonials
And home for many more
Birds and fishes and mangroves and mud
See that river there and know her so!

And the ways in which all is socially constructed, the river flipping in my mind from *She* to *He*, character-filled, curmudgeon and long lived, tired from all the moving in and out, a flow of memories and a tale or two to tell. A stretching of things evoking a river voice from Old Man River — suddenly a He!

Old Man River

Still, I surge in and out and feel the people nearby, the way they are together in some ways but others, not. There's conviviality for sure, those Te Uri o Hau and Pākehā, saying sidewalk kia ora-hellos, but down in my muddiness I sense a stirring of the unsaid. An unsettling of the settled in the sediment below.

Really, I've seen it all! The great battle of 1825 when my sister river Ōtamatea flowed red with warrior blood. Bone dust down in my riverbanks. The people fled and I felt fear. I smelt the smoke too, in the shadows of that war, Otene and Paikea saying, Ahi Kaa! – we're here still! Way further back, in the dark of night, the spirit world sent chills as I surged into my mother harbour Kaipara, while tohunga gathered nearby. I remember it so.

Then a thing called Christianity flowed through my salty veins, the missionaries with fervidity stridently afoot. Oh, that old Methodist Gittos, I remember him well! On the wings of angels, he rowed, sailed, and used my waterways to spread the word of his God. Later the prophet Rātana boarded a boat called Ivy and lit the paths of his people with a star and crescent moon. These peoples from here

and there filled my waterways with gods, atua, spirits, kēhua, ghosts, wairua, taniwha, enchantment, and bedevilment. Now awash with religiosity am I.

Still, I feel the bodily grasp for belonging from those people nearby. The shallow beat of competing drums thump through my riverbed. Ancestral beginnings from far away are conjured and settler frontiers claimed. Others beat for tīpuna close by and turn their dead back into whenua from whence they came. For both, I know this place is home. But ah! Belonging is so diversely entwined and so differently enshrined. This also I know! Something calling them home, just calling them home. Home along my salty waters, known to all peoples as the Ōruawharo.

Through the sensory simple encounters can be known through simple words. Today, I smelt Kaipara mud.

Mud

Mud
Black
Slimy
Swallowing
Sharp Shells
Below
Stinking Black Shining Sharp Sucking Mud
A river boundary that says
No Go

Flights of fancy take hold in this thesis, purposefully so. I argue that only following one form of more traditional academic writing misses things. Such as the blurry edges of entanglements between human and non-human worlds, between clarity and the harder to get to know, between the whiff that is salt air and the ways in which a story can settle deep in a river flow. And the fickleness of it all. The way in which one story is told for its vitality, high drama even, and another dropped. Through storying and showing multiple ways of knowing, this thesis contributes to existing literature on alternative ways of representing or writing stories or ethnographies (Bennett 2010, 2020, Haraway 2016; Ingold 2011, 2013, 2021, Ingold, T., & Vergunst, 2008, Marcus 2012; Stoller 2004). Additionally, this thesis shows that some ways of knowing, particularly within settler societies, have power-full tendencies, the power to diminish, marginalise or silence. Ultimately place is never one thing with one tidy narrative, and this thesis shows this in form and through analysis, with both an eye for the unsaid and for the

endless ways of constructing the 'said'. And through all of this, a person such as myself knows more than known before and in the doing so, both demonstrates the usefulness of following multiple lines of inquiry and the ways in which so much has been ignored, hidden, silenced, or not, accounted for in past narratives.

This fickleness also applies to history telling, particularly in the past, awash with the whitewashing of history (Shaw 2022) on one hand and the silencing other histories on the other. This thesis spends some time both doing histories and thinking about histories and in the doing so, shows both how multiple narratives can coexist and what these histories can do.

Histories of & the Inbetween

Histories of the Ōruawharo infiltrate this thesis curated through the priorities of others, the things people have written about, words from journals, history books, the things that matter to people, and the stories that get handed on. Interestingly, as I have progressed this research this is what most local people seem interested in, seeing me as an historian, few knowing what anthropology is. I get asked about Māori history often as little is known amongst Pākehā. As Pākehā, I find myself regularly in treacherous waters when these questions are asked of me, knowing full well that there are stories that are not mine to tell. I aim for the inbetween, stories of encounters between Māori and Pākehā worlds. All of this has caused me a lot of stress in the doing of this research, but importantly, adopting Haraway's (2016) stance of staying with the trouble has borne fruit as she suggests, the trouble is a place in which newness can emerge, a sort of discomfort that forces things/issues into the frame. I have witnessed shifts occurring, a desire to tell more inclusive stories and to learn more about differing ways of knowing, and with the museum, the focus on delivering as such to school students has spurred this on. In many ways the cat is out of the bag and there is no turning back. The museum committee is, on the whole, determined on making changes and confronting the problems inherent in a 'settler' museum. One longstanding member said, as the year ended, "we need to get these white men (referring to a mural) off the front of this museum". I was simply astonished. This

thesis has been, in part, a small project of decolonisation, with knowing more leading to people realising the work that needs to be done.

Being Pākehā & Becoming a Researcher

Being Pākehā runs like a deep current through this thesis. For me, being Pākehā means knowing Māori, as stated in the introduction, from 'over the fence' as I argued in my master's thesis (Joensen 2019). 'Over the fence' refers to being brought up next to or alongside Māori, the formative years forming as so, knowing no difference. Through this, my Pākehā being is infused with Māori-ness—emotions sparked in similar (but not the same) ways, the spirit world felt similarly so, seeing the mana, knowing how to observe tapu, slipping those shoes off at the door of the wharenui. And ultimately coming from and belonging to the same place in the world and, having this unarguably and deeply in common, at a personal level, a sense of nativeness. When I am in amongst Māori, the research feels both like coming home and a dance in the inbetween, a place of both precarity and richness, of coming together and pulling apart. A dynamic place—albeit precarious—with wonder, enchantment, political intensities, contested ideas, fraught histories, shared histories, great stories to be told and listened to, alarming accounts of loss, laughter, good company, silences and in the silence profound moments of togetherness in amongst the complexities of it all. A sort of Pākehā – Māori knowing, belonging and becoming-*with* that is unique to Aotearoa New Zealand, present in moments beyond the trouble, embodied and deeply felt and with it, it is hoped, comes research sensitivities and an ethic of care.

Being in these spaces also requires taking paths less travelled in a 'trying to decolonise' (rightly-so) academic milieu in which researching Pākehā learning from Māori is not often encouraged. I argue that too much steering clear of in Aotearoa NZ negates opportunities for research within in-between spaces—opportunities with the capacity to intellectually enliven and with it, the ability to unleash creative capacities for thinking differently-*in*, like seeing with travelers' eyes-wide-open in amongst the *new*. This is not about stepping back into the past when Indigenous and minority groups were Othered by others, but rather, stepping into the present, a time in which so much work has been done to keep people safe. Ethics committees sit and scrutinise,

within Aotearoa Māori epistemologies have enriched and strengthened research codes, decolonisation is a priority, and colonising processes looked out for at every turn and supervisors and examiners very clear about when lines are being crossed. Within this context, researchers (and institutes) in Aotearoa NZ are differently attuned and ready to more cross-cultural research-with-care, particularly within in-between spaces. Spaces in which becoming-*with* elucidates the entwining and entanglements of lives lived amongst multiple ontologies and within materialities infused with agency, vibrancy and replete with meaning. This thesis is an account of the in-between and becoming-*with* and with it, offers a way of doing research, experimenting methodologically and compiling ethnography for future scholars of anthropology.

A methodology for Understanding Place.

In many ways this is a thesis of methodological experimentation. Firstly, while some chapters in this thesis are autoethnographic by design, in reality it was hard at any point to extract myself from the narrative as I could not distance myself from the place in which I live and write about. This created some ethical and research limits such as the need keep relationships intact, take extra care and at times, simply leave material out, complex decisions that came with associated anxieties. An insider view can also limit research as the taken-for-granted is simply looked past. That said, what predominated during the course of the research was a generative frictive tension and deep reflexivity that came with being immersed in the local, becoming-with, and embodying knowing as I go. Knowing-with as dynamic, responsive, lively, and troubling — enabled a nuanced, evocative, provocative and multi-layered articulation of place. Importantly, although this specific story of the Ōruawharo is not generalisable, a relational, embedded and embodied approach to the research is something that could be taken up by other researchers. Methodological decisions also enabled the eliding of human exceptionalism and the foregrounding of vital materialisms or the thinglyness of things (Bennett 2010). Additionally, experimental writing and thinking with images, added layers to the layers of overlapping ways of knowing and understanding place. Experimentation then came to the fore when light

needed to be shone in obscure, shadowy places, at the edges of thinking and knowing, the hard to grasp, such as the things in nature that seemed to speak yet couldn't speak for themselves and experiences that were more felt than known. In trying to articulate phenomena at the far reaches of abstraction and imagination, like knowing a thing but only just, required simply trying out new methods, dabbling, imagining and throwing words to paper in elemental ways (Bennett 2020). I believe the dabblings, experiments and enmeshment of practices in this thesis are a generalisable offering of the research. Further, this thesis contributes methodologically by showing how flexible and responsive methods unfurl ways of knowing that could be missed through orthodoxy.

These practises of knowing, reflexive being and experimenting can also be applied to understanding any place in Aotearoa New Zealand. And what a place this is! Māori, Pākehā, non-Māori, mixed up in rural and urban areas, people with colliding ontologies, fraught histories but not always fraught when togetherness prevails, and a physical environment in which many generate identity amongst the magnificience of it all. A place with waterways, long stretches of coast, boat cultures, clashes, togetherness and collective identities. A place with kaumatua, kuia, tohunga, and knowings from differing worlds. A place where Pākehā recognise themselves in relation to Māori (Jones 2020) and, while struggling with the politics of belonging, belong nowhere else. A place with revered native species and weediness of every kind, a expanding morass of troublesome invaders. A place with people who spend lives within the materilialities of the great outdoors and others who city dwell and mainly stay indoors. This place, Aotearoa New Zealand, needs to be understood through an abundance of ways of knowing put together with methodological dexterity, flourish and an openness to difference. Through deploying these practises and generating multiplicities, this thesis offers a contribution to understanding place in Aotearoa New Zealand

Knowing, Becoming and Belonging

Embodied knowing, becoming and belonging are ever in motion, shaping lives and reshaping place including the ways in which place is seen, imagined, known, felt, experienced and remade. And in this thesis the becomings-*with* matter, generating

knowledge, ways of knowing and senses of belonging. Implicit in becoming, as articulated by Locke & Biehl (2017), is the unfinishedness or ongoing-ness of actual lives. Both limits and opportunities for difference then spiral out of each fulsome moment in time— moments which encompass the past, present and future. Becoming-*with* takes this further by thinking with the-all and sundry which shapes lives and understandings, ways of knowing and ways of becoming. This includes such things as the microscopic and tiny—a virus that reshapes boundaries and diesel bug which stops motors and confounds mechanics; the material world— wind, rain, moon, water, the twist and turns of a river, sandbanks, mud and mangrove; the embodied and proliferating milieu of ideas coupled with the experiential—narratives, histories, stories, culture, beliefs, religions, spirituality, emotions, feelings, knowing and tacit knowledge; experiences of and relationships with—friendships, neighbours, boating mates, adversaries , people brought together within space and place. Becoming-*with* forces attention towards things easily looked past and in the doing so, sees the capacities and vitality of the potentially unnoticed. Attunement, I argue, is something needed by researchers in order to do this work. Attunement to the possibilities of the hitherto ignored escaping from view, this practise being a methodological offering of the thesis

Becoming-*with* also accounts for power. Thinking about power is how this research started—I live in the midst of a dominating narrative, the Albertlander story which maps across historical accounts and concretely onto the nomenclature of the material world. I was curious about the unsaid, the silencing of Māori knowing and the quietness of nature within the noise of human life. My attention was drawn towards a sleepy old ordinary tidal river which permeated my view. I looked and wondered more. The river then entangled with notions of power, how is it known and not known? And why is this so? This thesis demonstrates that it all depends on who is doing the telling and what telling's gets to make it into centre court. The story of the river then becomes about the *storying* of the river or any place at all, disabusing the notion that any one account, particularly an historical account, could be the lynchpin for all others. Having spent these last few years thinking about a river or with a river has led me to see, in the spirit of Deleuze and Guattari (*discussed in* Singh 2014), an

immanent plane of multiplicities, with differing intensities spiraling out and shrinking back. From there, multiple ways of experiencing time—imbued with mana, memories, nostalgia and ancestors echoing in the present—flow along the Ōruawharo along with multiple ways of knowing. So too do contested ways of belonging spring forth from this watery place, spanning from the weedy and not always welcome to the sure footedness of the *native*. Additionally, the vestiges of colonisation rear spikey heads with the resource rich more often unaware of both the struggles of the resource poor and all that has gone on before. And the stories go on and on and so too may the thesis past its end, as other intensities spiral out with new ways of knowing unfolding. And still the river flows. Away from the noise of people, places and the rattle of woes, contestedness, politics and frivolities of humankind. Nations rise and fall, wars are won and lost, people come and go, and still the river flows. And still the river flows, long after the end of this, leaving after images in her wake. A thesis written in a mere slither of river time, turning up a tale or two and leaving others behind, fragments of river stories, opening up possibilities for more. That is the hope.
And still the river flows.

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