FAMILY MYTHS IN ORAL HISTORY:

The unsettled narratives

of descendants of a missionary-settler family

in New Zealand

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Abstract

The ramifications of family myths used in the narrative construction of lives are explored in the light of Alistair Thomson's model of remembering and concept of composure. Just as public legends have been shown to shape the remembering of individual experience, so the myths of a family shape the narrative construction of lives of members of that family. Family myths may be seen as those beliefs that members of a family hold about themselves, their family, and the society in which they live, arising out of their shared history. The investigation focuses on members of one large extended family, the first of whom arrived in New Zealand in 1823 as missionaries to the Maori. Among their many children, several were involved in the Anglican Church and with Maori, while others became wealthy landowners. The life narratives of 52 descendants of these missionaries were recorded using an interactive interviewing technique. It is the first study of its kind in New Zealand, and possibly further afield, throwing light on the multitude of ways members of a particular family can create a usable past out of their common history

Family myths are shown to be fundamental in the construction of memory, and a powerful component in the process of negotiating narratives. The myths arising from the missionary-settler background of this family are multiple. They fall into four main groups: myths associated with land and landownership, those concerned with class and refinement; those concerned with religion and the family's dual tradition as Dissenters and as part of the Anglican hierarchy; and finally those concerned with the Williams family's special relationship with Maori arising from the missionary past. It is argued that family memory and myths are collective memory, the family a mnemonic community. Some of the ways in which family myths are formed and passed on are revealed in the testimonies.

It is also shown that the narratives in this cohort were lacking in composure. Within individual narratives there is considerable overlap and interaction between the many different family myths, and also between these and public ideologies such as egalitarianism and biculturalism. Some may interact synergetically, but often they are in conflict. In addition, myths are shown to be subject to gradual metamorphosis according to changing external circumstances. The construction of memory requires

constant adjustments to accommodate these conflicting and ever-changing myths. Life narrative remains always partial, provisional and open-ended. We may try to compose our memories in the sense of a process, but we cannot achieve composure, a product. It is suggested that oral historians should reconsider the concept of composure in the analysis of memory and narrative

Particular family myths may also allow narrators to embed themselves deeply into history, extending their links into both past and future well beyond the reach of their own life-spans. The use of myths in this way may also allow narrators to make claims to legitimacy, indigeneity and destiny.

What are you conscious of in yourself?....
However far back you go in your memory, it is always in some external, active manifestation of yourself that you come across your identity – in the work of your hands, in your family, in other people. And now look. You in others are yourself, your soul. This is what you are. This is what your consciousness has breathed and lived on and enjoyed throughout your life. – Your soul, your immortality, your life in others. And what now? You have always been in others and you will remain in others. And what does it matter if later on it is called your memory? This will be you – the you that enters the future and becomes a part of it.

Boris Pasternak
Doctor Zhivago (1958)

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Note to readers

Many of the Williams family in the past have been known by their initials. Thus James Nelson Williams, was known as JN, Heathcote Beetham Williams as HB. These are the forms used in the text.

The names of family stations or farms are given in inverted commas: 'Te Aute', 'Tupe Tupe', 'Te Parae', 'Taiamai'. They are thus distinguished from names of villages and districts which have no inverted commas. In some cases the actual names are identical; for instance, 'Te Aute' and 'Taiamai' are both family farms situated in districts with the same name. In these instances I have tried to decide which is the most appropriate form on the basis of the particular narrative context.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In 1998 the Williams family held a reunion to mark the 175th anniversary of the arrival in New Zealand of their ancestors, Henry Williams and his wife, Marianne. As a member of this family I received an invitation to the reunion. At first I was reluctant to attend the reunion since I knew only a few members of the family. However, I began to reflect on what motivated people to organize and attend such events and to question how the family's history, traditions and indeed myths might influence its members in the present. I therefore decided to go and see if I could interest people in being interviewed for an oral history project on the family. This thesis is the result of that decision.

Henry and Marianne Williams arrived in the Bay of Islands, in 1823, 17 years before British sovereignty was established. They came as missionaries to the indigenous inhabitants of New Zealand, the Maori, and were followed three years later by Henry's younger brother, William and his wife, Jane. Henry Williams is best known for his involvement in the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, which established British sovereignty. William Williams is most noted for having translated the New Testament into the Maori language and for compiling the first Maori-English dictionary. Both couples had large families. Some of their children and grandchildren continued to work in the Church and with Maori, while others bought large tracts of land in various parts of the North Island and began to farm. They became a wealthy and well-known family, and today are several thousand in number. Many members of the family have been influential both within the Anglican Church, and as landowning 'gentry' in local and sometimes central government, in business and in farming.

The 1998 reunion was held over four days, and was attended by about 800 people, most but not all from New Zealand. It was held on the National Marae at Waitangi, site of the signing of the Treaty, a choice which is perhaps symbolic of the family's view of its place in New Zealand history.[1] At the registration venue the organizers had set up a large family tree, a display of family memorabilia, and a stall selling books and a video dealing with family history. Several special events were organized.

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[1] Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating our pasts: The social construction of oral history* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 129. Tonkin discusses the symbolic power of place evoked in 'politico-sacred pilgrimage' and points to the close connection between time, place and identity.

A service was held at the Paihia Anglican Church (itself a family memorial to the missionary ancestors) at which a memorial window was unveiled. There were trips to sites of historical interest to the family, mainly churches and mission stations. There was a re-enactment of Henry, Marianne and their three older children landing on the beach at Waitangi, using two Maori canoes borrowed for the occasion.[2]

Less well attended was a session with a panel of speakers whose presentation was followed by an opportunity for family discussion. The composition of the panel was indicative of some of the beliefs the family appears to hold about itself. It included one family member, an Anglican deacon from South Auckland, who works with Maori and Pacific Islanders. It also included the Anglican Bishop of Auckland (who within a few days was to become Primate or Archbishop of New Zealand) and two Maori clergymen, one of whom was the Tai Tokerau (Northland) Maori Bishop.[3] The subsequent discussion reiterated the plea of the panel to remember the missionary traditions of the family, traditions with a two-fold focus on both Maori and the Anglican Church. One person spoke of her son as a 'missionary' to a poverty-stricken parish in Manchester, England, another made an impassioned speech in Maori appealing for more of the family to learn Te Reo Maori (the Maori language), and a third sought to inform the gathering about an important Maori taonga, an artefact which is regarded as a treasure. This taonga had been given to Henry Williams by Maori, and the speaker was anxious to enlist support in ensuring that it remained in family possession in New Zealand and was accorded the respect due to it by the family as a sign of the enduring relationship between themselves and Maori.[4]

This focus on celebrating the missionary tradition and links with Maori was in contrast to undercurrents of unease that swirled beneath the reunion. The family was

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[2] The re-enactment of the landing at Waitangi seems to suggest this as the place of the arrival of the family in New Zealand. In fact they had arrived by sailing ship to stay at the mission station at Kerikeri, moving by canoe a few months later to a new station at Paihia. The re-enactment below the Treaty ground, which is close to Paihia thus puts the emphasis on the start of their mission work, but also seems to conflate two events important to the family, their arrival in New Zealand and the signing of the Treaty.

[3] Tai Tokerau Maori Bishop was the Right Reverend Ben Te Haara, a descendant of Te Koki, an early chief of the Paihia area, who, with his wife Ana Hamu, placed Henry and Marianne on Paihia soil. The other Maori clergyman was Reverend Jacob (Hakopa) Hakaria, raised at nearby Ngawha. See Rex Evans (compiler), *Faith and Farming. Te Huarahi ki te Ora. The Legacy of Henry Williams and Williams Williams*, revised edition (Auckland, 1998), p. 708.

[4] Tape of the panel discussion at the 1998 Williams Family Reunion, Paihia.

supposed to have been welcomed first at the local Te Ti Marae, but at the last minute Maori called this off. The reason given was a tangi, or funeral, which by custom takes precedence over other events, but there seemed to be no sign of this. Instead a few Maori came to the Waitangi Marae for an opening ceremony. Also the canoes used for the landing were expected to have been ceremonial waka, but apparently a breakdown in communication between the family and local Maori obliged the organizers to resort to lesser craft. At the 150th reunion there had been a strong contingent of Maori clergy present, but on this occasion there were only a few. Comments were made by some of the family present concerning this absence. Finally the publication of an Historic Places Trust brochure for the Bay of Islands, portraying Henry Williams not as a hero but as a deceiver of Maori and a land grabber, coincided with the reunion and caused an upset among its organizers.[5] The conflicted nature of Williams history was evident from these controversies and difficulties, despite strenuous efforts by the organizers to keep them out of sight.

Before going to the reunion, I had phoned the organizer in Paihia to seek permission to enlist potential interviewees. I also asked her whether those in her district took any interest in their family history. To my surprise she answered most emphatically in the affirmative: 'Oh yes! We talk about it all the time.'[6] I was reminded of old soldiers and the Returned Servicemen's Association, and of Alistair Thomson's influential and important exploration of the memories of World War I soldiers in *Anzac Memories* (1994).[7] Was there, I wondered, a parallel between the relationship of digger memories and the Anzac legend on the one hand, and that of individual memories and the family myths of the Williamses on the other?

Thomson formulated a working model of remembering and the relationship between public legends and personal memory, which focuses on the idea of composure:

> We compose our memories to make sense of our past and present lives. 'Composure' is an aptly ambiguous term to describe the process of memory making. In one sense we compose or construct memories using the public languages and meanings of our culture. In another sense we compose

[5] Fergus Clunie, *Historic Bay of Islands: A Driving Tour. New Zealand Historic Places Trust Register Series 3* (Auckland, 1998).
[6] Conversation with Elisabeth Ludbrook.
[7] Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories. Living with the Legend* (Melbourne, 1994).

memories that help us feel relatively comfortable with our lives and identities, that give us a feeling of composure. In practice the two processes of composure are inseparable....[8]

According to this model, oral narrative is composed so as to highlight those experiences which fit the public myths and current personal identity, and to select out other experiences which may conflict with public myth or threaten the coherence of the constructed identity. However, composure is never complete. There are always contradictions and tensions within the narrative, and it changes in response to shifts in public meaning and personal identity.[9]

Thomson does not deal with family memory and myths, which would fall within the ambit of personal memory in his model. Nevertheless, it seemed to me that one might be able to apply Thomson's model to an investigation of the relationship between family history and myths and personal or individual remembering in the life narratives of members of a family. The myths of a family, it seemed clear, would be in some sense a collective memory, and although Thomson does not speak of collective memory, it is implicit in his model when he describes the role of particular social groups in helping to form and affirm public remembering.[10] A major focus of this thesis, therefore, is the application of Thomson's model of remembering and concept of composure to family life narratives, and the exploration of the relationship between individual memory, family myths and public meanings. It examines the ways in which the Williams family history and the myths that arise from that history influence the construction of oral life narrative among present-day descendants, and how these interact with some of the public meanings and ideologies in New Zealand. These inquiries will in turn suggest revisions to the model of remembering and to the concept of composure.

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[8] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 8.
[9] Thomson *Anzac Memories*, pp. 8-11.
[10] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 9

Theoretical issues

Thomson's theory of composure is situated within a broader framework of theoretical analysis in oral history, that is of 'oral history in the interpretive mode'.[11] There are three main strands of enquiry, all of which are based on the acceptance that there is no 'simple equation' between experience and memory. They may be characterized as the sociological or anthropological, having a primary concern with the social context of remembering; the literary or linguistic approach which is particularly attentive to the narrative and linguistic structures which influence oral testimony; and the psychological or psychoanalytical which emphasizes the subjective nature of oral testimony. Despite these different emphases, all three are concerned with the cultural matrix within which the individual constructs memory, and in reality most oral historians employ all three approaches in analysis.

The sociological strand of theory identifies the social context as an important influence in the shaping of memory. In the long term it draws on the work of Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (published in English 1980, first published as *La Memoire collective* in 1950).[12] Halbwachs argued that all memory is collective memory. From childhood the mind is organized by social process, and remembering always occurs within social groups which shape our memory, 'not just facts but attitudes and ways of thinking about the past'.[13] Individual memory is seen as the 'intersection of collective influences' arising from the various different social groups to which each of us belongs, and each individual memory is a 'viewpoint' on the

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[11] Michael Roper, in *The Contemporary History Handbook*, edited by Brian Brivati, Julia Buxton and Anthony Seldon (Manchester, 1996), p. 347. From the 1960s there was a revival of interest in oral history, which grew out of the politics of the New Left, civil rights and feminism. The approach was empirical/empiricist. Oral testimony, like documentary sources, was treated as factual evidence. Roper calls this 'oral history in the reconstructive mode', p. 346. However there was criticism from some historians that oral testimony was too subjective to be reliable as historical evidence. In the 1970s oral historians began to develop a more sophisticated approach to the interpretation of testimony, turning this apparent weakness into a strength and seeing oral history as being 'less about *events* than about their *meaning*'. See Alessandro Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different' in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany, NY, 1990), p.50. First published in Italian in 1979, and in English as 'On the peculiarities of oral history', *History Workshop Journal* 12 (Spring, 1981), pp. 96-107. See also Ronald J. Grele, 'A Surmisable Variety: Interdisciplinarity and Oral Testimony' in *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History*, 2nd edition (New York, 1991), p.p. 156-95. This was first published in a slightly different form as 'A Surmisable Variety: Oral History and Interdisciplinarity', *American Quarterly* 27, 3 (August, 1975), pp. 275-95.

[12] Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, translated from the French by Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter , with an introduction by Mary Douglas (New York and Toronto, 1980). First published in French under the title, *La Memoire collective* (1950).

[13] Halbwachs, p. 63.

collective memory and subject to change according to changes in our 'relationships to various collective milieus'.[14] The social milieu may even include the books we read.[15] More recently, in the early 1980s, members of the Popular Memory Group explored ways in which public representations of the past, from the media, from books and films, from the social groups of which we are part, shape private memory, providing forms and interpretative categories within which individuals can locate and make sense of their own experiences. There is a dialectical relationship between individual and particular experience, and public representations of the past. Certain experiences may not fit or may even contradict the public sense and these tend to remain incoherent in memory. At the same time however, new experiences constantly challenge old forms of public articulation and eventually generate new ones. Thomson was particularly influenced by this work of the Popular Memory Group.[16]

Others have suggested that the social context in which the story is actually told is also important in shaping the story. In this connection anthropologist Elizabeth Tonkin has emphasized the need to consider the performative and rhetorical aspects of oral testimony as clues to its meaning.[17] Julie Cruikshank draws attention to the occasion of the story-telling and its particular purpose, noting that among Athapaskan women, whose society is undergoing radical change, '[g]ood stories from the past continue to provide legitimate insights about contemporary events. What appears to be the "same" story, even in the repertoire of one individual, has multiple meanings depending on location, circumstances, audience and stage of life of narrator and listener.'[18] Cruikshank here identifies an important element in the social context of story-telling, the audience, noting that effective oral performance 'demands an expressive community sharing similar expectations'. This has implications for oral

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[14] Halbwachs, pp. 44-9.
[15] Halbwachs, p. 23.
[16] These works include: Graham Dawson and Bob West, ' "Our Finest Hour"? The Popular Memory of World War Two and the Struggles over National Identity', in *National Fictions: World War Two in British Film and Television*, edited by Geoff Hurd, (London, 1984), pp. 10-11. See also Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: Britishness, Colonial Adventure and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London 1994), and Popular Memory Group, 'Popular Memory; Theory, Politics, Method,' in *Making Histories: Studies in History Writing and Politics* edited by Richard Johnson et al (London, 1982). All are cited by Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 9, footnotes 7, 8 and 9, and p. 228, footnote 3.
[17] Tonkin, *Narrating our pasts*, pp. 53-4.
[18] Julie Cruikshank, *Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1998), p 43.

history interviewing, the nature of the relationship between interviewer and narrator(s) inevitably affecting the nature of the narrative.[19]

The second strand of theory has attended more to the narrative, linguistic and textual structures in oral testimony. Thus genre, narrative form, plot and chronology, the use of metaphor and anecdote all become clues to social consciousness, enabling an understanding of how individuals construct their life stories into a meaningful and 'usable past'.[20] For instance, narrative models such as the epic, the romanesque and the picaresque, borrowed from literary forms and 'disseminated in social discourse', may be employed in the oral life story. Marie-Francoise Chanfrault-Duchet suggests that each is a manifestation of a particular quest for values, a quest which 'gives an axis of meaning and coherence to the life experience and to the self'.[21] Similarly Timothy Ashplant has explored the use of anecdote in oral life narrative to show the importance of understanding particular genre, the cues that introduce them and the codes that govern their use.[22]

The way time is structured in oral narratives has also been shown to be important in interpreting meaning. Chronology may be manipulated in many different ways to suit the meaning of the narrative. For instance, narrators may shuttle between past and present as they make comparisons between the two; or they may, for various reasons to be determined only by listening carefully to each particular narrative, pass rapidly over certain periods and dwell on others (altered narrative velocity); or they may even displace events to a different time (altered chronology), not because of faulty recall,

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[19] See for instance Alessandro Portelli, 'Oral History as Genre', pp. 3-4, and 'There's Gonna Always Be a Line: History-Telling as a Multivocal Art', pp. 24-6, 34-9, in *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1997).

[20] Ronald J. Grele, 'Listen to their Voices: Two Case Studies in the Interpretation of Oral Interviews', in *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History*, 2nd edition (New York, 1991), p. 236. This was first published in *Oral History* 7, 1 (Spring 1975), pp. 33-42. The concept of a 'usable past' is very similar to Thomson's theory of composure.

[21] Marie-Francoise Chanfrault-Duchet, 'Narrative Structures, Social Models, and Symbolic Representation in the Life Story', in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, edited by Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (New York and London, 1991), pp.80-1, 85-7. See also Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different' in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, p. 53, for a discussion of epic and ironic narrative modes which distinguish different historical perspectives.

[22] Timothy Ashplant, 'Anecdote as Narrative Resource in Working-Class Life Stories: Parody, Dramatization and Sequence', in *Narrative and Genre* edited by Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thompson (London and New York, 1998), pp.109-10.

but in order to meet the symbolic and/or psychological meaning of the event.[23] All such manipulations are clues to the significance of events to the teller. In fact, time in oral narrative is seldom linear and chronological, as speakers are more concerned with paradigms, following mental associations, 'gathering together bundles of meaning' into a more or less coherent whole, rather than attending to a linear syntagmatic sequence.[24] Identifying these paradigms and their related narrative point of view is also important in understanding the cultural meaning of events or episodes described in oral testimony. For instance, Alessandro Portelli identifies three 'levels' of events: the institutional, involving politics and government; the collective, involving the life of the community; and the personal, involving private and family life. A narrator usually selects one level as dominant and evolves a pattern or mode of narration to interweave events from all three levels. The choice of mode depends on the narrator's perspective, and determines which events are meaningful.[25] Finally the orality of sources is also a salient consideration in analysis. The fluidity of meaning in the spoken language, its rhythm, tone, volume, velocity of speech, the length and significance of pauses, repetition, the use of different accents or dialects, are all seen as bearers of meaning, having social connotations and revealing emotion.[26]

A third strand is the psychological approach to the understanding of the construction of memory.[27] In an influential article, published in 1979 when many oral historians still treated oral testimony as a source of factual evidence, Luisa Passerini argues that oral historians should recognise that oral testimony 'is pre-eminently an expression and representation of culture, and therefore includes not only literal narrations but also the dimensions of memory, ideology and subconscious desires'.[28] She uses the term 'subjectivity' to connote 'that area of symbolic activity which includes cognitive, cultural and psychological aspects', and embraces attitude, emotion, behaviour and

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[23] Alessandro Portelli, ' "The Time of My Life": Functions of Time in Oral History', pp. 63, 65, and 'The Death of Luigi Trastulli: Memory and the Event', pp. 1-2, 13-16, 20-6, in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany, NY, 1990).
[24] Portelli, ' "The Time of My Life" ', in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli,* p. 63.
[25] Alessandro Portelli, 'Form and Meaning of Historical Representation: The Battle of Evarts and the Battle of Crummies (Kentucky: 1931, 1941), in *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1997), pp. 101-2, 104-6, 113; ' "The Time of My Life" ', in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli,* pp. 63, 69-73.
[26] Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different', in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli,* p. 46-8.
[27] For a discussion of this see Paul Thompson, Chapter 5, 'Memory and the Self', in *The Voice of the Past: Oral History,* 2nd edition (Oxford, 1988), pp. 150-165.
[28] Luisa Passerini, 'Work Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism', *History Workshop Journal,* 8 (1979), p. 84.

language, self-identity, ideology and myth.[29] In her later work she employed more specifically psychoanalytical theories to draw attention to the sexual connotations of imagery in women's oral testimony, which suggested the subconscious transgression of culturally defined gender boundaries. Most importantly, she pointed to the significance of what remains unspoken in oral testimony, of silences in memory as evidence of a 'scar ... a profound wound in daily experience'.[30] The psychological approach allows the oral historian to dissect the layers of memory as Ronald Fraser does in reconstructing the upper-class world of his 1930s childhood, juxtaposing and weaving together the testimony of his family's servants, his father, and his own memories uncovered in psychoanalysis.[31] In his study of Anzac memories, Thomson was influenced by the work of both Passerini and Fraser on the broader subjective processes of memory.[32] He considered private remembering and identity, while remaining strongly focused on their relationship to public myths.

The psychological approach calls for sensitivity to the role of feelings and emotion in oral testimony, and to that which remains unspoken, the presence of the repressed. It also calls for sensitivity to the pervasiveness of unconscious symbolism in the form of myths in the shaping of a meaningful life story.[33] Myths may be identified in oral narrative by the use of certain stereotyped images, and the connotations of particular words, as well as by attitudes and behaviours. They refer to symbolic systems, to 'ideological and axiological frameworks of meaning', which reveal narrators' value-judgments of their life experience.[34] Jean Peneff and Ron Grele have both argued that these myths must be identified and elucidated before the life story can be properly understood.[35] Since myth, and particularly family myth, is an important category in the present study it will shortly be addressed more fully.

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[29] Passerini, 'Work Ideology', p. 85.
[30] Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory*, translated by Robert Lumley and Jude Bloomfield (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 20-1, and 'Work Ideology', p. 92.
[31] Ronald Fraser, *A Sense of the Past: The Manor House, Amnersfield, 1933-45* (London, 1984).
[32] In connection with the subjective processes of memory Thomson cites Passerini, 'Work Ideology', and Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: The Experience of Civil War 1936-1939* (London, 1979). See *Anzac Memories*, p. 228.
[33] See 'Introduction', in *The Myths We Live By*, edited by Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (London and New York, 1990), pp. 1-22.
[34] Chanfrault-Duchet, p. 81.
[35] Jean Peneff, 'Myth in life stories', in *The Myths We Live By*, edited by Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (London and New York, 1990), p. 45; Ronald J. Grele, 'A Surmisable Variety', pp. 171-2, and 'Listen to their Voices', pp. 233-6, in *Envelopes of Sound*.

In reality of course there is a considerable degree of overlap between these categories, all of which are concerned with cultural influences on memory. Most oral historians draw on all three streams of theoretical analysis, as I have done in this present study. As has been noted Thomson acknowledges in particular the influence of the sociological and the psychological approaches, although he also draws on questions of narrative form as well.[36] His theory of composure incorporates two approaches to remembering which he calls public or cultural and private, psychological or subjective. The theory is also closely allied to the concept of a 'usable past'. Two points about Thomson's theory, which have already been mentioned, should be emphasized here because they are particularly relevant to the present study. The first is that although he uses the word 'composure', he acknowledges that this is seldom achieved. He suggests that we construct our identities through the stories we tell ourselves and others about 'what we think we have been, who we think we are now and what we want to become'. The stories we remember are shaped to 'fit' our current identities and aspirations. Thomson speaks not of a single identity but of identities, multifaceted, fragmented and often contradictory. Disturbing memories of painful, threatening or merely frustrating experiences are composed to give our identities greater coherence. This process involves repression and exclusion of memories, which may be revealed in oral narrative by the 'hidden texts' of silence, laughter, jokes and physical symptoms. In fact composure is never achieved, but constantly threatened, undermined and disrupted.[37] The unsettled nature of oral narrative and its implications are important aspects of the current study. None of the narrators fully achieves composure and the reasons for this will be explored.

Thomson also distinguishes between ' "general" and "particular" publics within which we articulate and remember experience'. The 'general public', which includes various media, provides interpretative categories which are widely available. 'Particular publics' are those groups to which we belong and on which we rely for social acceptance and affirmation, our fellow workers, the wartime platoon, and of course, importantly for this study, the (extended) family. Because of their importance to our own sense of identity, or identities, these particular publics are especially

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[36] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, pp. 13-22.
[37] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, pp. 9-11.

influential in the formation and maintenance of meaning, particularly of 'alternative or oppositional' meanings which 'contest more general meanings'.[38] These particular publics seem similar to, if not the same as, the social groups which Halbwachs identifies as crucial to the formation of memory, and to the mnemonic communities whose collective memories are the subject of Eviatar Zerubavel's study, *Time Maps* (2003).[39] Like Halbwachs, Zerubavel stresses the social structuring of memory, not only in terms of its contents but also in terms of the cultural 'mental schemata', the 'formulaic plot structures' we use to narrate the past.[40] Both stress the importance of family in mnemonic socialization, a process occurring through daily exchanges between grandparents, parents and children, as well as more formal family gatherings such as reunions. Here we learn what is memorable, and how we should remember it, and also what should be 'relegated to oblivion'.[41]

The difference between Halbwachs and Zerubavel appears to lie in the fact that while the former insists that all memory is collective, individual memory being the intersection of different collective influences, the latter speaks of both 'personal recollections' and social or collective memory. Clearly then, collective memory is a somewhat confused concept, but Paula Hamilton provides a useful definition: ' "Collective memory"... usually refers to the making of a group memory so that it becomes an expression of identity, and accepted by that group as the "truth" of experience.' She maintains that although collective memory may be 'set in stone as unquestioned myth' it may also be 'continually renegotiated across time in accordance with external circumstances and generational shifts'.[42] Although Thomson does not appear to use the term 'collective memory', he refers to servicemen's reunions where 'social remembering provided collective validation of the pasts that were easiest to live with'.[43] Evidence of the transmission of family memory by various means will be noted throughout the thesis, so that the concepts of collective memory and of the family as a mnemonic community may be explored.

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[38] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 9.
[39] Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago and London, 2003).
[40] Zerubavel, p. 4.
[41] Zerubavel, p. 5.
[42] Paula Hamilton, 'Memory studies and cultural history', in *Cultural History in Australia*, edited by Hsu-Ming Teo and Richard White (Sydney, 2003), p. 90.
[43] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 165.

A further major concern of this thesis is the use of time in remembering as a means of resisting both oblivion and alienation. Zerubavel has argued that family myths of ancestry and descent, of place and of 'passing the torch' or, as the Williams family prefer, of 'taking on the mantle' of the ancestors, are 'mnemonic strategies' used to construct historical continuity, allowing people to extend the trajectory of their narratives into past generations, to embed themselves deeply into history, and also to project the meaning of their lives into the future.[44] As Tonkin suggests, oral history is not just about the flow of events, *histoire evenementielle,* but about trends, *conjonctures,* and structural change in the *longue duree.*[45] There is nothing rigid about the units of time involved in these concepts.[46] Indeed Portelli maintains that they 'appear to be more a matter of how we look at (and narrate) history, than something inscribed into "objective reality",' and he argues that the 'act of remembering is, itself, a historical fact operating in the *longue duree* dimension.'[47] Portelli writes: 'To tell a story is to take up arms against the threat of time .... The telling of a story preserves the teller from oblivion; the story builds the identity of the teller and the legacy which he or she leaves for the future.'[48] The mnemonic strategies used to create historical continuity may constitute an attempt by narrators to situate themselves in the *longue duree* of history, and thus be seen partly as an attempt to answer questions of mortality and immortality which lie at the heart of the search for meaning and identity.[49]

The desire to situate oneself in the *longue duree* may also suit another narrative purpose, and that is to establish a claim of legitimacy and belonging. Zerubavel also examines the way in which mnemonic communities construct their origins and thus their identity, and try to establish territorial and political rights.[50] They do this in two ways: firstly by claims of 'antiquity', assuming that having 'deeper' historical roots

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[44] Zerubavel,, chapter 2, 'Historical Continuity', and chapter 3, 'Ancestry and Descent', pp. 37-81, also pp. 7-8.

[45] Tonkin, *Narrating our pasts*, p. 72-5. These terms are drawn from the French historian, Ferdinand Braudel, and the *Annales* school of thought, which argued that historians should distinguish between rates of change. The flow of events occurs in short units of time, trends may take half a century or more to run their course, while structural change developing over very long periods alters the identity of societies and cultures and may be difficult to discern.

[46] See Jan Vansina, *The Children of Woot* (Madison and folkestone, 19780 pp. 10-11, cited in Tonkin, *Narrating our pasts,* p. 73.

[47] Portelli, ' "The Time of My Life" ', in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, p. 73.

[48] Portelli, ' "The Time of My Life" ', in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, p. 59.

[49] Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago,* translated from the Russian by Max Hayward and Manya Harari, 3rd edition (London, 1966), p. 68. First published in 1958. See quotation at the beginning of this thesis.

[50] Zerubavel, p. 8.

'solidifies' both identity and legitimacy; and secondly by claims of 'priority', of having been there 'first'.[51] In post-colonial societies one might expect these to be the strategies of the indigenous people, but as Zerubavel demonstrates they are also employed in certain circumstances by white settler societies. Claims to legitimacy and belonging are also made in white settler societies by assertions of 'native status'.[52] Terry Goldie has called this process 'indigenization', suggesting the 'impossible necessity of becoming indigenous', attempting to erase the separation between being 'native' and being a 'native New Zealander'.[53] He and others write of the pervasive desire of the non-indigene to incorporate indigenous knowledge as the antithesis of and antidote to a sense of dislocation and alienation.[54] For instance, Peter Read has investigated the sense of belonging of some Australians. In conversation with the environmental historian, Tom Griffiths, he explores ideas of 'connecting to deep time, that symbiotic relationship between human and environment which recognises no formal point of beginning'. All who inhabit the land share in its past immemorial and provide for its future. For the non-indigenous, it is argued, this 'surely means *embracing Aboriginal history as part of our own history* as Australians' (italics are mine), although such belonging can only be legitimate when the historical wrongs which dispossessed the indigenous owners of the land have been righted, and the Aboriginal reconciled with the newcomer. True belonging means 'acknowledging the past, reconciling the present and nurturing the future'. Read describes this as belonging to 'deep time'.[55] With its connotations of Aboriginal 'dream time', the term 'deep time' seems to me inappropriate for the New Zealand context, and hence I will use the term 'deep belonging' for this concept in dealing with the Williams narratives.

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[51] Zerubavel, pp. 102-5.
[52] Michele D. Dominy, *Calling the Station Home: Place and Identity in New Zealand's High Country* (Lanham, Maryland, 2001), chapter 7, 'Asserting Native Status', pp. 207-32.
[53] Terry Goldie, *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Literatures* (Kingston, Montreal and London, 1989), pp. 13, 223.
[54] See for example John Moreton and Nicholas Smith, 'Planting indigenous species: A subversion of Australian eco-nationalism' in *Quicksands: Foundational Histories in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand* edited by Klaus Neumann, Nicholas Thomas and Hilary Ericksen (Sydney, 1999), pp. 166 – 175. Peter Gibbons sees this phenomenon as 'cultural colonization', part of the on-going process of colonization in white settler societies. Peter Gibbons, 'Culture, Colonization and National Identity', *New Zealand Journal of History* 36, 1 (April, 2002), pp. 5-17.
[55] Peter Read, *Belonging. Australians, Place and Aboriginal Ownership* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 181, 184.

The final theoretical concept which is central to this thesis is that of myth as it used by oral historians. Myth is a fundamental and universal component of human thought. I use the concept of myth here as it was defined by Raphael Samuel for those involved in memory studies: myth is 'a metaphor for the symbolic order, or for the relationship between the imaginary and the real.' Such a broad definition was intended to dissolve the dichotomy between the imaginary and the real, and 'to show for personal life narratives as anywhere else, that no statement that is made about one's past individually, is in any way innocent of ideology or of imaginative complexes'.[56] Myth is a means of structuring memory, of explaining life experience, and unifying and shaping narrative. Many different levels of meaning may be linked to myth.[57] They may be national myths, as was the Anzac legend which engaged the Australian diggers, or myths of political ideology. Ideas of progress or the nostalgia for a former golden age are both commonly encountered but opposing myths, in which past or present serves as benchmark for the other. There may be religious myths, conversion narratives and stories of rebirth, or myths that draw on ancient archetypes such as that of the eternal child.[58] Myth may be a form of legitimation, a charter for the present. It may pass from generation to generation as a bridge between past and present, resisting change.[59] Or it may be reinvented as it is passed down, adapting to changing conditions.[60] Many of these examples of myths and others will be evident in the Williams family narratives, either arising from or intersecting with the family's own history and myths.

Another question to address is the relationship between history and myth in the context of this study. Raphael Samuel has argued that myth is 'immanent in any historical work'. He writes: 'Typically we conflate a great mass of evidence to illustrate or to exemplify relatively simple truths – the classical procedure of the

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[56] Raphael Samuel, 'Myth and History: A First Reading' in *Oral History*, 16, 1 (1988), p. 15. Elizabeth Tonkin, 'History and the myth of realism', in Samuel and Thompson, (editors), *The Myths We Live By*, pp. 25-35, also points to this false dichotomy, and argues that rationalistic realism is itself a myth of Western culture.

[57] The examples which follow are taken mainly from Samuel and Thompson (editors), *The Myths We Live By*, pp. 1-22.

[58] Luisa Passerini, 'Mythbiography in oral history' in Samuel and Thompson (editors), *The Myths We Live By*, pp. 55-9.

[59] Julie Cruikshank, 'Myth as a framework for life stories: Athapaskan women making sense of social change in northern Canada', in Samuel and Thompson (editors), *The Myths We Live By*, pp. 174-83.

[60] Rosalind Thomas, 'Ancient Greek family tradition and democracy: From oral history to myth', in Samuel and Thompson (editors), *The Myths We Live By*, pp. 203-15

allegorist. Our whole effort is to discover a logic or a pattern in seemingly fortuitous associations; to give meaning and draw lessons from what might otherwise be a quite random sequence of events.' Historical narrative then conforms to the 'tale-types' found in folk-lore.[61] One or two of the missionary ancestors of the Williamses have become New Zealand legends, based on stories and images drawn from the written record, from oral transmission and from the pictorial record. Likewise, some of their descendants and their deeds have become part of family lore or myth, as detailed in the paragraph below. As Zerubavel says, significance lies 'not in what actually happened in history but in how we *remember* it', not in what men and women of history actually did, but 'their roles as "figures of memory" '.[62]

The stories and images of the Williamses portray them as Dissenters of deep religious conviction, high moral rectitude, dedicated, self-sacrificing and brave. They include tales such as that of Henry and Marianne Williams and three small children embarking on a convict ship bound for New Zealand, never to return; of Henry, unarmed, fearlessly confronting threatening tohunga and Maori warriors; ensuring the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi by labouring all night over its translation and negotiating its signing with Maori; stubbornly defending his honour and integrity against the calumnies of the Governor and settlers; enduring an unjust dismissal from the Church Missionary Society [CMS]; and of Maori abandoning their battle on the news of Henry's death. Stories and images of other members of the family are less numerous. They include images of William Williams walking great distances to visit parts of his enormous diocese, or the scholar labouring over the Maori dictionary; stories of Samuel Williams struggling to establish Te Aute College for Maori boys and to maintain the highest educational standards, defending his integrity to repeated official inquiries, and making provision for his extended family; stories of the land and business dealings of Samuel, J.N. and T.C. Williams and their ability to break in land for farming; and images of grand homes and gentrified life styles.[63] All these

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[61] Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory. Volume 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London, 1994), p. 442. Samuel goes on to give many examples of how 'scientific' history has been a 'prolific source of new historical legends'.

[62] Zerubavel, p. 2. The expression, 'figures of memory', is taken from Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 11

[63] These stories are to be found throughout the following books: Hugh Carleton, *The Life of Henry Williams, Archdeacon of Waimate*, edited by James Elliott, (Wellington, 1948), first published in two volumes, vol I in 1874 and vol II in 1877; Rex Evans (compiler), *Faith and Farming. Te Huarahi ki te Ora. The Legacy of Henry Williams and William Williams*, revised edition (Auckland 1998); Phyllis L.

stories and images have moral meaning, which shape the family's image of itself and are sometimes acted out in their lives.

The influence of myths pertaining to family has been addressed in some of the essays in *The Myths We Live By* (1990), edited by Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson.[64] Two of the essays in particular have relevance for the present study, since they examine the power of family myth across several generations. Rosalind Thomas, a student of ancient history, shows how family oral traditions of Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries BC were modified by the influence of Athenian democracy, which encouraged certain memories and discouraged others, so that towards the end of this period the different family traditions had been simplified and even falsified until they 'presented a seamless democratic past which conformed exactly to the conventional and orthodox view of Athens' history'.[65] Even aristocratic families whose traditions had been more concerned with their distant legendary ancestors, gradually adopted more democratic family tradition from the recent past.[66] Such transformations of tradition reflect what is relevant to the present.

Looking from the other end of the telescope, John Byng-Hall, a psychiatrist, shows how powerful family legends are in 'shaping the family's mythology, its image of itself'.[67] His own 225-year-old family legend concerning the supposed cowardice of Admiral Byng infected various members of his family with anxiety about being cowards. Encountering a different version of this myth with different moral implications profoundly challenged his image of himself and his family.[68] Byng-Hall also discusses the power of myths to be re-

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Garlick, *Peacemaker of the Tribes. Henry Williams of New Zealand*, (London, 1941); Iain and John Gillies, *East Coast Pioneers. A Williams Family Portrait. A Legacy of Land, Love and Partnership* (Gisborne, 1990); Frances Porter (editor), *The Turanga Journals. 1840-1850. Letters and Journals of Willliam and Jane Williams, Missionaries to Poverty Bay* (Wellington, 1974; Lawrence M. Rogers, *Te Wiremu. A Biography of Henry Williams* (Christchurch, 1973; Sybil Woods, *Marianne Williams. A study of life in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand 1823-1879*, 4th edition (Christchurch, 1997), first published in 1977; Sybil M.Woods, *Samuel Williams of Te Aute* (Christchurch, 1981); David Yerex, *They came to Wydrop. The Beetham and Williams families of Brancepath and Te Parae, Wairarapa 1856-1990* (Wellington, 1991).

[64] Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (editors), *The Myths We Live By* (London and New York, 1990).

[65] Thomas, p. 205.

[66] Thomas, pp. 206-8.

[67] John Byng-Hall interviewed by Paul Thompson, 'The power of family myths', in Samuel and Thompson (editors), *The Myths We Live By*, p. 221.

[68] Byng-Hall, pp. 217-8. Returning to England after an inconclusive encounter between the French and English fleets, Admiral Byng was court-martialled and shot. At the time he was thought to have suffered a defeat because of his incompetence and cowardice, although it seems more likely that he was simply scape-goated for political reasons.

enacted in family life even when they are kept secret because they are too shameful to speak about.[69] While these two articles demonstrate the power of family myth, they also encapsulate two opposing responses to change: in the former the ability of family myth to adapt to changing public meanings; and in the latter the resistance of the individual to changing self-image.

In a study examining social mobility, Daniel Bertaux and Paul Thompson looked at the age-old role of family in intergenerational transmission of culture.[70] Their study showed that although people may no longer bring their children up to worship at the shrines of family ancestors, the family remains the main channel for the transmission of language, names, land and housing, local social standing and religion, and beyond that also of social values, of aspirations and fears, of particular world views and 'taken-for-granted ways of behaving'. But transmission is a complex process. In the first place it is simultaneously a collective and an individual process. Family is a 'cultural image constructed out of real individuals, and also, sometimes, mythical ancestry', but 'individuality shapes not only what the family offers [in the way of culture], but also what is taken up'. Secondly the family shares the role of intergenerational transmission with other channels, with the peer group and with specific social institutions. It holds no monopoly on what is handed down. Bertaux and Thompson also point to the 'modern tendency' to undervalue and 'delegitimize' the family as a channel of transmission, from the educational theories of Emile Durkheim to the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century. More recently, and partly as a consequence of the collapse of these regimes, there has been renewed interest in the significance of family history. In his conclusion to his own chapter in this book Thompson writes:

> Family stories are the grist of social description, the raw material for both history and social change; but we need to listen to them more attentively than that. They are also the symbolic coinage of exchange between the generations, of family transmission. They may haunt, or inspire, or be taken as commonplace. But the way in which they are told, the stories and images which are chosen and put together, and the matters on which silence is kept provides part of the mental map of family members. Each of these members has, at the same time, a place in their own particular family socio-emotional structure, their family system of relationships. Family myths, models, and denials, transmitted within a

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[69] Byng-Hall, p. 223.

[70] See the introduction to Daniel Bertaux and Paul Thompson (editors), *Between Generations: Family Models, Myths and Memories. International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories, Vol II*, (New York, 1993), pp. 1-11. For more recent work in this field see Daniel Bertaux and Paul Thompson, *Pathways to Social Class: A Qualitative Approach to Social Mobility* (Oxford and New York, 1997).

family system, provide for most people part of the context in which their crucial life choices must be made, propelling them into their own individual life paths .... [Family stories] are not only remembered fragments of a real past, not only clues to collective consciousness and personal identity, but also a form of the past still active in the present: signposts.[71]

Such views are consistent with the theory that memory is socially constructed, that nobody's recall is independent of the social milieu in which cognitive ability and memory are forged.[72] As both Halbwachs and Zerubavel also insist, the social milieu must include first and foremost the family as a mnemonic community invoking a common past, sharing not only the content of the recollections but also the form that remembering takes.[73]

This study will draw on the sociological, the narrative and the psychological strands of theory to examine the life narratives of some of the Williams family. It will illuminate the myths around which their memories are structured and with which they attempt to unify their narratives and give coherence to their identities. This will include not only family myths, but also some wider cultural myths and public ideologies. While this will reaffirm earlier studies which have demonstrated the strength of family myth and the importance of the family as a mnemonic community, it will go further: it will show the multiplicity of myths that are formed within the family context and available as a resource to narrators; it will demonstrate some of the ways in which family memory and myth is formed and passed on; and it will show that these myths, like public ideologies, are mutable, subject to gradual change as they adjust to new circumstances.

The study will also examine these family narratives and myths in the light of Thomson's model of remembering, asking first how family myths fit into this model. Revisiting

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[71] Paul Thompson, 'Family Myth, Models and Denials in the Shaping of Individual Life Paths' in Bertaux and Thompson (editors), *Between Generations*, p. 36.
[72] Tonkin, *Narrating our pasts*, p. 105.
[73] Zerubavel, pp. 4-5. The importance of the family in the construction of memory is also indicated by the work of Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen. Enquiring by survey into popular uses of history in the everyday life of Americans they found that almost every person surveyed 'deeply engages the past', and 'the past that engages them most deeply is that of their [extended] family.' 'Encountering the past, examining it, interpreting it, living and reliving it, they root themselves in families ... and root their families in the world'. Families were the 'starting places in [their] quests for identity', most choosing family members as inspirational models, teaching moral lessons. Most sought patterns from the past that could help them shape their own lives and futures, often facing the conflict between family obligation and honour and their own need for self-fulfilment. They saw their families and themselves as either exemplifying or resisting larger historical trajectories, thus emphasising change and continuity. Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past. Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York, 1998), pp. 9, 36, 67, 77, 127, 135, 198.

Halbwachs's theory of collective memory, it will be argued that family myths, though largely 'private inner stories', are, like public legends, a form of collective memory. The ramifications of this for Thomson's model of remembering will be explored. Secondly it will test the utility of the concept of composure, viewing composure as both narrative process and narrative product. In this connection, it will consider the implications of the fluidity of myth and the intersection of multiple myths in life narrative. It will also take into account the arguments of Tonkin, Portelli, Zerubavel and others that drawing on certain myths narrators attempt to embed their lives in the *longue duree* of history, to establish legitimacy and to overcome alienation.

Methodology

The cohort

The cohort consists of 52 interviewees. It was gathered together in three ways, so as to encompass a wide range of family members. The organisers of the reunion were contacted for permission to approach family members attending the event, and in this way 30 members of the family were enlisted. At this stage the only requirement was that they should be older than about 50, this being taken as an age by which many people have begun to look back and review their lives. This group forms the basis of the cohort, and includes both those whose presence at the reunion arose out of a sense of family solidarity, and those less knowledgeable about the family and less embedded in it, many of whom had come out of curiosity.

The cohort was later extended in two ways. From the initial group there were some word-of-mouth recommendations of 'people you should talk to'. These were often older members of the family whose memories were thought to reach further back in history, or those who are seen as 'core' members of the family, sometimes because they are involved in the various family charitable trusts. Six interviewees were added in this way.

The remainder were selected from the 'family tree', *Faith and Farming*, in such a way as to give a cohort that was balanced in five respects.[74] I tried firstly to ensure that there was a balance between the descendants of Henry and William Williams. In the final cohort 33 were descendants of Henry Williams, 13 were descendants of William Williams, and six were descended from both Henry and William [see Appendices 2 and 3]. While I would prefer to have interviewed more of William's descendants, this distribution reflects the situation that Henry's descendants greatly outnumber those of William.

Within these two primary groups I aimed to encompass the many different branches of the family, distinguished by descent from the various children of Henry and William Williams. I also tried to take into account the related regional distribution. Different branches of the family have tended to group into one of four regions of the North Island: the Bay of Islands, the East Coast, Hawkes Bay, particularly the Te Aute area, and the Wairarapa [see Appendix 4, map 2]. These regional bases have been described by one interviewee as 'Williams hatcheries'. Sometimes these groupings are the result of descent from one particular member of the family. This applies for instance to the Wairarapa where the descendants of Thomas Coldham Williams are based. Sometimes such groups centre around a particular family activity. On the East Coast descendants of both Henry and William have been involved in pioneering, farming and philanthropy for several generations, while at Te Aute the descendants of both have been strongly focused on the work of the Henry and William Williams Memorial Trust, Te Aute College for Maori boys, and farming, thus carrying on the work of Samuel Williams. Of course over the years there has been a continual flow between these different groupings, and also a tendency for the family to move outside these areas altogether. However it seemed likely that the narrators' current interests and beliefs about the family would be strongly influenced by their place of origin or upbringing, modified perhaps by their experience in subsequent places of abode. Those born and living outside these areas might be less bonded to the family and aware of its ethos, unless a parent has been particularly diligent in inculcating family stories and values.

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[74] Rex Evans (compiler), *Faith and Farming. Te Huarahi ki te Ora. The Legacy of Henry Williams and William Williams*, revised edition (Auckland, 1998).

Since each branch and each regional group has a somewhat different history and culture it was necessary to assemble a cohort that could reflect this. All but one branch of the family is represented, while analysis of the regional distribution based on where interviewees were raised shows 35 of the 52 coming from these four areas. Five were from Northland, nine from the East Coast, 13 from the Hawkes Bay and Te Aute area, and eight from the Wairarapa. The remainder (17) grew up in other parts of New Zealand or overseas. Just over half of those raised in traditional Williams strongholds have continued to live there as adults, while the rest have moved to other parts of New Zealand or overseas. On the other hand one man raised in England has returned to family land at Te Aute.

Two further concerns were gender and ethnicity. There is a gender balance within the total cohort, with 25 male and 27 female interviewees. This balance was also applied where possible to each broad family group, in order to study the different constructions that men and women put on their particular family history. Finally, there are two interviewees of Maori descent. It is important in a New Zealand study, and having regard to the nature of Williams history, to include Maori perspectives. However, there are very few Williamses of Maori descent, particularly in this older age group, and one of those whom I approached was reluctant to be interviewed. The two included in the cohort are from the same family, and their mother is a member of the Tainui iwi.

Together this cohort represents a very diverse group. Not only do they come from different parts of New Zealand and the world, from branches of the Williams family with their own specific histories, and to a limited extent from different ethnicities, but also their occupations range from slaughterman to diplomat, shop assistant to university lecturer, and hence their socio-economic and class status is diverse. The one thing they share in common is their descent from the Williams missionaries. This is not a search for the statistical average, for 'oral history does not cultivate the average, but often perceives the exceptional and the unique to be more *representative*'.[75] Instead the aim has been to achieve a comprehensive range of

[75] Alessandro Portelli, 'Tryin' to Gather a Little Knowledge. Some Thoughts on the Ethics of Oral History' in *The Battle for Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1997), p. 58.

expressive and imagined possibilities. As Portelli says, the 'horizon of possibilities defines the range of a socially shared subjectivity'.[76]

The interview

The interview focused on life narrative using an interactive technique. In theory an interactive interview is one in which the interviewer attends more to the narrator than to her own agenda, becoming immersed in the narrative of the interviewee, and trying to understand the story from the narrator's point of view without imposing her own interpretations. Rather than working through a topic list the interviewer is listening for moral language and self-evaluative statements, for 'meta-statements' where people spontaneously stop and comment on what they have just said. She should also note the 'logic of the narrative', that is to say, the internal consistency or contradictions in the narrator's statements about recurring themes, and how these themes relate to one another. The researcher can then begin to understand the assumptions and beliefs that determine the narrator's interpretation of his or her life experience. Through listening and responding appropriately, a dialogue develops which allows opportunities to draw out the narrator's experience and to explore meaning. A topic list can deafen the interviewer to these opportunities. In general there is a shift from information gathering to interactive process.[77] This methodology elicits a life narrative which is valid for the type of analysis suggested by Chanfrault-Duchet.[78]

Constraints of time and distance meant that usually interviews needed to be complete in one session, or at least in one day. The intention was to begin by allowing people to tell their own life stories, focusing on what was important to them in a more or less free narrative. I tried to keep interruptions to a minimum, using nonverbal or minimal verbal encouragement where possible, while noting any ambiguous terms, internal

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[76] Alessandro Portelli, 'Philosophy and the Facts' in *The Battle for Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1997), pp. 86-7. See also Samuel and Thompson (editors) *The Myths We Live By*, p. 2: 'the individuality of each life story ...[becomes] a vital document of the construction of consciousness, emphasizing both the variety of experience in any social group, and also how each individual story draws on a common culture.'

[77] For discussions of oral history interviewing see Kristina Minster, 'A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview', in Gluck and Patai (editors), *Women's Words*, pp. 27-41; Kathryn Andersen and Dana C. Jack, 'Learning to Listen: Interview techniques and analyses' in Gluck and Patai (editors), *Women's Words*, pp. 11-25; Ronald J. Grele, 'History and the Languages of History in the Oral History Interview: Who answers Whose Questions and Why?' in *Interactive Oral History Interviewing*, edited by Eva M. McMahan and Kim Lacy Rogers (Hillsdale,New Jersey, 1994), pp. 1-18.

[78] Chanfrault-Duchet, pp. 77-8.

contradictions, reflections, self-evaluations, gaps in the story and enthusiasms. These then became the focus of my questions and of the dialogue which developed subsequently, with the aim of trying to encourage further exploration of meaning and values in a way that would reveal myths and ideologies.

I also had a number of questions I wanted to raise with interviewees if they did not arise spontaneously during the interview. These related to three main areas. The first question concerned family books and family memorabilia. As well as a Williams genealogy containing detail on the lives of family members, a number of books have been written about prominent individual members and certain branches of the family. Some of these have been written by members of the family. I wanted to know what books and memorabilia they possessed, where they were kept in the home and what books they had actually read. This was intended to give an indication of some of the influences on their remembering. For the same reason I asked whether they had been to the family reunions in 1973 and 1998, and tried to ascertain what their memories of these events were. Thirdly I asked their views on the role of Henry Williams in the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, and their attitudes to current Treaty settlements.[79] Often this gave rise to lengthy and impassioned discussion on Maori-Pakeha relationships. Sometimes, in order to finish on a less controversial note and complete the interview with a sense of calm, it was necessary to return to memories of grandparents and great grandparents.

If the interviewees had photos and documents they wished to discuss these were kept until last if possible, in order to avoid having the initial narration constructed around these artefacts.[80] I also made notes after the interview, recording matters of relevance in the interview environment, such as the presence of other family members, evidence of nervousness, off-tape remarks perhaps made over lunch or before the recorder was turned on, which might influence the interpretation of the taped interview. As well as

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[79] The Treaty of Waitangi Act in 1975 established the Waitangi Tribunal to hear current Maori grievances under the terms of the Treaty. The Treaty of Waitangi Amendment Act 1985 enabled the Tribunal to hear grievances dating back to 1840. Since then a number of grievances have been settled. These mainly concerned loss of land or other valuable assets, and settlement has usually involved monetary compensation and the return of particular sacred sites. The process still continues.

[80] For a discussion of interactive interviewing using photographs see Judith Modell and Charlee Brodsky, 'Envisioning Homestead: Using Photographs in Interviewing (Homestead, Pennsylvania)', in McMahan and Rogers (editors), *Interactive Oral History Interviewing*, pp. 141-61.

this I noted evidence of family portraits and their placement in the home. Many seemed to have prepared for the interview by getting out some of their books about the family, which were occasionally referred to during the interview. The most frequently used was *Faith and Farming,* which is a fund of information on the Williams family beyond mere genealogy, and was also referred to by some to check my own place within the family.

Most of the interviews were at least three hours in duration and some were over six hours. Usually an interview would be spread over a day, beginning at about 10 am, stopping for lunch and then continuing in the afternoon. This enabled the interviewees to have a break, but represented something of a hazard for me, since after two hours or so many were caught up in their story and wanting to continue it or enlarge on matters I would have liked to record. I found myself making mental notes to return to these matters, while trying to steer conversation in other directions. These interviews may seem inordinately long, but many narrators, once into their stride, seemed to relish the opportunity to talk about themselves and their family.

Factors which influenced the interview

When I initially approached the interviewees I explained that the purpose of the project was to understand how the family history, traditions and myths had influenced the lives of present day members of the family, and that in order to do this I wished to record their own life stories which might also include memories of parents and grandparents and the stories they had heard about them. I emphasized that this did not need to necessarily be only memories of the Williams ancestors, since for many of them other ancestors may have been more significant. It was necessary to explain the purpose of the project as fully as possible, since most of the family members I approached initially assumed that my interest was simply to hear a genealogical recitation from them. When I rang to make an appointment for the interview, I explained again the life story aspect of the interview, answering any questions they had concerning it.

The fact that I was a member of the family is a question that should be explored.[81] In one sense this made me an insider. I could be 'placed' and I could be expected to understand certain family concerns. But because the family is so large I could not possibly know these many distant relatives, and because I approached the project as an academic study with a critical perspective I was also an outsider. In the first place as an 'insider' I gained privileged access. In my initial approach to prospective interviewees I made a point of mentioning this because it was important to state my position from the outset. I also hoped that it would encourage them to accede to my request for an interview, and in this I believe I was correct. Rather than being seen as an academic conducting a sociological study, many may have perceived me as a middle-aged woman member of the family simply talking to them about the family, wanting to hear the family stories.[82] Only a few whom I contacted seemed to interpret the fact that I was doing this project as a member of the family, to be a sign that I was perhaps an over-enthusiastic 'paid-up party member', a view which made them wary of me but nevertheless did not always lead to a refusal.

Being an insider was also usually helpful in quickly establishing a positive relationship with the interviewees. Often the interview began with questions about my 'place' in the family, and a discussion about family members we might know in common, thus helping to break the ice. It was helpful in other ways as well, enabling me to understand many references to people, places and events without having to constantly interrupt the narrative for clarification, and allowing for more commentary and evaluation in the narratives. As Portelli has observed, '[N]arrators will assume that a "native" historian already knows the fact, and will furnish explanations, theories and judgments instead'.[83] However, there were also many occasions when too much

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[81] Akemi Kikumura, 'Family life histories: A collaborative venture,' in *The Oral History Reader*, edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, (London, 1998), pp. 140-4. First published in *Oral History Review*, 14, (1986) pp. 1-7. See also Katherine Borland, '"That's Not What I Said": Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research', in Gluck and Patai (editors), *Women's Words*, pp. 63-76. Both have been helpful in that they refer to the access afforded by the insider status of being one of the family, and explore the extent to which they are simultaneously outsiders, different from the generation of mother or grandmother. However both differ from my own experience in that they were interviewing one very close and well-known family member, and were able to return repeatedly to adjust their understanding.

[82] I was, I think, in a similar position to that experienced by Mary Chamberlain interviewing Fen women. Mary Chamberlain, *Fenwomen. A Portrait of Women in an English Village*, (London, 1975), p. 23.

[83] Alessandro Portelli, 'Oral History as Genre,' in *Narrative and Genre*, edited by Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thompson, (London, 1998), p. 30.

knowledge was assumed by the narrators. Each of my requests for clarification emphasised my outsider status. In a family of several thousand, insider status is of limited value, especially when my own family had had little close contact with other members. Of the 52 people I interviewed I had previously met only three. There was much that I did not know, and thus for some purposes I was in effect still an 'outsider'.

I am also both insider and outsider in the sense that while to some extent I share the conflicted nature of the family's self-image, I am able to bring the critical perspective of the historian to it. On the one hand I know and understand both the 'pious' view of our ancestors and the underlying anxiety regarding more critical assessments with regard to land, class and the relationship with Maori, allowing me to tap into this fairly easily. On the other hand a more critical perspective allowed me to challenge these cultural beliefs sympathetically, and thus 'open up and reveal less easily accessible layers of personal knowledge, belief and experience'.[84]

Transcription

Interviews were listened to several times. They were indexed, with care to preserve the logic of the narrative, and selected parts were then fully transcribed. The transcription process is a valuable one for the researcher since it involves repeated and careful listening to the tapes. This allows changes in volume, tone, velocity of speech, hesitations and so on to be picked up, and nuances of meaning become clearer with each hearing, while the sounds to some extent become etched on the memory.

Since the 'voice contains so much subliminal information', the spoken word is fluid in meaning.[85] Inevitably much of this fluidity is lost in transcription even when care is taken to note in the transcripts the features such as rhythm, pauses and changes in velocity, tone and volume which convey nuances of meaning.[86] As Michael Frisch

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[84] Portelli, 'Oral History as Genre', in Chamberlain and Thompson (editors), *Narrative and Genre*, p. 31.

[85] Francis Good, 'Voice, ear and text. Words and meaning', *Oral History Association of Australia Journal*, 22 (2000), p. 104.

[86] For discussions on the problems of transcription see Michael Frisch, 'Preparing Interview Transcripts for Documentary Publication: A Line-by-Line Illustration of the Editing process' in *A Shared Authority. Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History*, (Albany, NY, 1990), pp. 81-146; Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different,' in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, pp. 46-8; Good, pp. 102-9.

argues: 'The problem with orality ... is that it can never be adequately captured in print, no matter how elaborate the notation....'[87] Francis Good concludes: 'In the end we must learn to live with the fact that transcription of the spoken word is more of an art than an exact science.... The best we can do is to carefully consider the options, and which may be suitable for any given set of objectives, and then follow this up with a systematic and consistent editing style.'[88]

The transcripts in this text have been punctuated according to the meaning as I have discerned the intention of the narrator. I have used commas and full stops where these seem most clearly indicated, but have retained dashes (–) to indicate what seem to be mid-sentence pauses, in order to retain some of the fluidity of meaning. Longer pauses and the more obvious changes in tone, volume and velocity are indicated in square brackets with some attempt to interpret this, thus – [pause - uncertain], [whisper - emphasis], [slow and deliberate].[89] In the memory biographies especially, I have tried to retain the subtlety of orality by using quotations in their context and as fully as possible. However, I have edited some sections of transcript in the interests of brevity, but have tried to avoid editing out significant repetitions and mistakes. So for instance, where words are repeated several times they remain, and where a word or name has been used where another seems to be intended the 'correct' one is included in square brackets. I am aware however, that this process can never capture the full meaning of the narrator's voice and also must of necessity confine the meaning of the spoken word [90] I have also edited some of the longer of my own questions as interviewer for greater brevity. Finally and importantly, in analysing these interviews I have often returned to the recording rather than relying on transcripts.

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[87] Michael Frisch, 'Of Slippery Slopes and Misplaced Hopes: A Comment on Kate Moore, "Perversion of the Word: The Role of Transcripts in Oral History"' in *Words and Silences. Bulletin of the International Oral History Association*, 1, 1, (June 1997), p.27. Kate Moore's article appears in the same issue pp. 14-25. See also Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different', in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, p. 47.

[88] Good, p.104. See also Portelli, 'Oral History as Genre,' in Chamberlain and Thompson (editors), *Narrative and Genre*, p. 34, on the 'creative job' of transcribing.

[89] Portelli, 'Tryin' to Gather a Little Knowledge', in *The Battle of Valle Giulia*, p. 65.

[90] For discussion on editing see Carl Wilmsen, 'For the Record: Editing and the Production of Meaning in Oral History', *Oral History Review*, 28, 1 (2001), pp. 65-85.

The Williamses in New Zealand historiography – books and beliefs

Books 'constitute "sites" of social memory', and the memories of the Williams family have undoubtedly been influenced by the books at their disposal.[91] There are a number of books specifically about the family, quite a few of them written by family members, which provide a 'pious' view of the Williamses and their history.[92] At many of the interviews one or two of these books would be close to hand, most commonly the Williams genealogy, *Faith and Farming,* and the most recent biography of Henry Williams, Lawrence M. Rogers's *Te Wiremu.* Although these were not often referred to during the interview itself, it was clear that they were frequently used by their owners. Besides these books, most general histories of New Zealand mention the Williams family. Henry Williams is frequently referred to, especially his strong leadership of the CMS mission and his involvement in the Treaty of Waitangi. William and Samuel Williams and occasionally other members of the family also feature. Like the books about the family, earlier histories are generally favourable in their assessments of the Williamses. However, in the last half century many historians have become increasingly critical of them, although a few writers have continued to adopt a more nuanced approach.

In 'pious' histories the Williamses are seen as examples of genteel muscular Christianity, strong leaders, well-educated, upper-middle class, humanitarian and self-sacrificing. Henry Williams is praised for his success in peacemaking among Maori,

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[91] Zerubavel, p. 6. Zerubavel draws the term 'sites' from Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire,' *Representations* 26 (1989), pp. 7-25.

[92] These include Hugh Carleton, *The Life of Henry Williams, Archdeacon of Waimate,* edited by James Elliott, (Wellington, 1948), first published in two volumes, vol I in 1874 and vol II in 1877; Rex Evans (compiler), *Faith and Farming. Te Huarahi ki te Ora. The Legacy of Henry Williams and William Williams,* revised edition (Auckland 1998); Phyllis L. Garlick, *Peacemaker of the Tribes. Henry Williams of New Zealand,* (London, 1941); Iain and John Gillies, *East Coast Pioneers. A Williams Family Portrait. A Legacy of Land, Love and Partnership* (Gisborne,); Frances Porter (editor), *The Turanga Journals. 1840-1850. Letters and Journals of Willliam and Jane Williams, Missionaries to Poverty Bay* (Wellington, 1974); Lawrence Rogers (editor), *The Early Journals of Henry Williams, Senior Missionary in New Zealand of the Church Missionary Society, 1826-40* (Christchurch, 1961); Lawrence M. Rogers, *Te Wiremu. A Biography of Henry Williams* (Christchurch, 1973); F. W.. Williams, *Through Ninety Years 1826-1916. Life and work among the Maoris in New Zealand. Notes of the Lives of William and William Leonard Williams* (Auckland and Wellington, 1938); W. T. Williams, *Pioneering in New Zealand. Life of the Venerable Archdeacon Samuel Williams,*(privately published, 1929); Sybil Woods, *Marianne Williams. A study of life in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand 1823-1879,* 4th edition (Christchurch, 1997), first published in 1977; Sybil M.Woods, *Samuel Williams of Te Aute* (Christchurch, 1981); David Yerex,*They came to Wydrop. The Beetham and Williams families of Brancepath and Te Parae, Wairarapa 1856-1990* (Wellington, 1991). NB Woods is a member of the Williams family, and Hugh Carleton married a daughter of Henry Williams.

and his part in the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.[93] Several writers recall the words of the monument erected by Maori outside the Paihia church. Translated from the Maori they would read: 'He was a father indeed to all the tribes, a courageous man who made peace in the Maori wars.'[94] Among the family books controversial matters, such as family land dealings, Henry's feud with Governor Grey and dismissal by the CMS, are either passed over without mention, or else very carefully detailed accounts are provided to justify Henry's actions.[95] Honour and integrity are important values emerging from these accounts. None challenges the validity or effectiveness of the missionary endeavour. It is these views which inform the opinions of most of the family, although it is clear from the defensiveness, avoidance and confusion in some testimony that the more negative views have also made their impact.

More critical assessments of the Williamses are found for instance in the work of Keith Sinclair and James Belich. The missionaries appear as 'joyless, humourless and sometimes hypocritical', preaching a form of Christianity in which 'the love of God was often dwarfed by the fear of sin'.[96] The ideas of the missionaries are seen by Sinclair as destructive of Maori society, while Belich writes with sarcasm of the 'great missionary peacemaker'.[97] There is criticism too of Henry Williams's involvement in the Treaty of Waitangi. Sinclair claims that although Henry may have wanted British 'protection' for the mission, he was strongly opposed to extensive colonisation and like others in the CMS, may have 'secretly dreamed that [New Zealand] would be a theocracy', a missionary preserve. He suggests that Henry acted out of self-interest.[98] Belich goes further, claiming that the Maori translation of the Treaty by Henry

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[93] For instance Rogers, *Te Wiremu*, pp, 70-80; Garlick p.51-3, 28-35, 56-9.
[94] For instance Rogers, *Te Wiremu*, p. 305; Garlick p. 58 gives a slightly different translation
[95] For instance Garlick makes no mention of these matters, while Rogers, *Te Wiremu*, pp. 218-82, constructs a careful justification of Henry's actions. Carleton devotes much of the second volume of his work to a defence of Henry Williams, including in the appendix as many documents as possible which prove the untruthfulness of the assertions made against Henry Williams. Woods, *Samuel Williams*, pp. 215-8, also justifies the land acquisition of Samuel Williams of Te Aute, and of J.N., T.S. and A.B. Williams.
[96] James Belich, *Making Peoples. The History of the New Zealanders. From Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Auckland 1996), p. 135.
[97] Keith Sinclair, *The History of New Zealand*, 1st edition (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1959), pp. 41-3; Belich, *Making Peoples*, p. 168. Belich writes with sarcasm; 'When Henry Williams died in 1867, a tribal war was stopped in honour of the great missionary peacemaker who had ended tribal war.'
[98] Sinclair, *History* (1959), p. 61; Judith Bassett, Keith Sinclair and Marcia Stenson, *The Story of New Zealand* (Auckland 1985), pp. 45-7.

Williams and his son Edward, was 'a deliberate or semi-deliberate act of deceit'.[99] The Williams name also appears with negative connotations in connection with the question of land acquisition and associated gentrification. Land purchases by generations of the Williams family are seen as cheating Maori while elevating the purchasers to a middle class, or even a 'mercantile-pastoral gentry', who exercised a 'grossly disproportionate influence'.[100] Images of muscular, Christian gentility, seen in a positive light in earlier histories, become linked in Belich's view to undesirable beliefs about 'racial vigour' and 'imperial greatness'.[101]

A more nuanced view of the CMS missionaries in general and the Williams missionaries in particular is offered by other historians, such as contributors to *The Oxford History of New Zealand.* J.M.R. Owens attributes the survival and eventual success of the mission to changing methods under Henry's 'courageous and determined' leadership, the impact of William's skill with the Maori language, and also a changing social situation for Maori. In Owens's view, however, 'missionaries have been credited with more influence than they exerted and blamed for more harm than they caused.'[102] Addressing the irreconcilable differences between the Treaty text in English and in Maori, he suggests that Henry was trying to rewrite the Treaty

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[99] Belich, *Making Peoples*, p. 194. Most recently Paul Moon, a Maori historian, has written of Henry's 'deliberate mistranslation of the Treaty', claiming it was done not only for 'patriotic and political motives' but 'specifically to protect his land holdings.' Paul Moon, *Te Ara Ki Te Tiriti. The Path to the Treaty of Waitangi* (Auckland, 2002), pp. 139, 142. Moon goes to some lengths to try to prove Henry Williams's fluency in Maori (contrary to most commentators) in order to support his argument that 'far from "... preserving the entire spirit and tenor of the treaty" ', Henry 'succeeded in the opposite; carefully mutating the Maori version to make it palatable to the Maori chiefs, and at the same time, appear as a reasonable translation of the English version .... This delicate task could only have been accomplished by someone who was highly competent in Maori'. p. 147.

[100] Belich, *Making Peoples*, p. 407; Sinclair, *History* (1959), p. 46. Of pre-1840 purchases Sinclair writes: ' Some of the missionaries, if not as prosperous as the merchants, had excellent prospects. Twelve of them were said to have eighty-four children – and the Church Missionary Society had authorized the expenditure of [fifty pounds] from its funds on land as a provision for the maintenance of each child. No modern system of social security will ever rival this. Since land was to be bought for a few axes and blankets, fifty pounds would purchase a large farm, while a large family was security for an estate.' Elsewhere he writes of post-1840 purchases: 'There was in Hawkes Bay a 'land ring', the so-called 'Apostles', who had accumulated vast estates. They included Ormond, the Superintendent, and Donald McLean .... Another was the Reverend Samuel Williams, one of the missionary family. Some of this group had originally leased land illegally, and later acquired legal leases or freehold .... Under the 1865 Native Land Act nearly 400,000 acres of Maori land had been purchased by individuals, almost all of it by less than fifty individuals in total. Williams, McLean and a few others had acquired 30,000 or 40,000 acres each' Keith Sinclair, *Kinds of Peace. Maori People after the Wars 1870-85,* (Auckland, 1991), p. 112.

[101] James Belich, *Paradise Reforged. A History of the New Zealanders From the 1880s to the Year 2000,* (Auckland, 2001), pp. 372-3.

[102] J.M.R.Owens, 'New Zealand before Annexation', in *The Oxford History of New Zealand,* 2nd edition, edited by Geoffrey W. Rice (Auckland, 1992), pp. 36-8.

in a form that would be acceptable to Maori, and that his blunders in translation 'can more properly be attributed to haste and inexperience than to deliberate deception'.[103] M. P. K. Sorrenson believes that the missionaries tried to protect Maori interests, both in its signing and afterwards, against the threat of settler demands.[104] Of the early land claims Sorrenson notes that missionary claims were 'seldom excessive' and were 'undisputed by the Maori', and that Governor Grey was largely responsible for inflating this issue out of proportion.[105]

In the last fifty years the writing of Sinclair, Belich and others have done little to engender Williams pride in family, rather more perhaps to make them defensive.[106] Historical issues to do with the family are alive in the present, both in a general sense in the on-going debates on Treaty rights, and in a specific sense directly involving family.[107] All these different debates have influenced the images that the Williamses have of their family.

Arrangement of the thesis

For the majority of the narrators, being part of the Williams family gave them a sense of being part of history, lending depth and meaning to their present. While some

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[103] Owens, pp. 51, 52.

[104] M. P. K. Sorrenson, 'Maori and Pakeha', in *The Oxford History of New Zealand,* 2nd edition, edited by Geoffrey W. Rice (Auckland, 1992), p. 144. Sorrenson also mentions Samuel Williams as the founder of Te Aute College for Maori boys, which he says was part of an attempt to encourage Maori assimilation through education in English.

[105] Sorrenson, p. 146. He cites here the letter of Governor Grey to Earl Grey, 25 June 1846. The dispute between Grey and Henry Williams eventually resulted in Henry's dismissal from the CMS in 1849. He refused to back down from his position, believing his honour to have been impugned. He was reinstated in 1854.

[106] Tonkin, *Narrating our pasts,* pp. 13-16, discusses the interconnections between oracy and literacy. See also Jack Goody, *The Interface between the Written and the Oral,* (Cambridge, 1987).

[107] In a general sense there is constant discussion in the media regarding Treaty claims, and the way in which the Treaty should be enshrined in legislation on health and education - see Mark Revington, 'Culture of complaint' in *New Zealand Listener,* Oct 28-Nov 3, 2000, pp. 19-22, which starts with the statement: 'The government's 'Closing the Gaps' policy might backfire if white New Zealand becomes any more disenchanted with perceived special treatment for Maori and the extension of the Treaty of Waitangi into all areas of national life.' Each year as Waitangi Day comes and goes there is additional debate on the Treaty - see for example Jane Clifton, 'A day at the races. Waitangi Day brings out the yogic exercises of Helen Clark and Jenny Shipley' in *New Zealand Listener,* Feb 17-23, 2001, pp. 14-15. Specific issues involving the Williams family also arise from time to time. For instance in 1998 some members of Nga Puhi sought to bring a claim on land bought by missionaries before 1840 and subsequently approved by a commission of enquiry - see *New Zealand Herald,* October 12 1998, p. A5. A year later a carving of Henry Williams became the centre of controversy - see *New Zealand Herald* October 8 1999, p. A10 – the report begins: 'The chairman of the Waitangi Marae (Te Tii), Kingi Taurua, had ordered the removal of an "insulting" large carving, depicting a missionary, from its meeting house'. On both occasions local members of the family responded in the media.

actively and positively engaged with particular aspects of the family history in their own lives, a number appeared to reject various aspects of the Williams family traditions. For some of the narrators other ancestors appeared more important, and perhaps more comfortable, than the Williamses. A few knew little about their Williams ancestors, although it was still evident that particular aspects of the Williams story had influenced their narratives in subtle ways. The narratives of one or two were driven by completely different imperatives, determined by particularly significant events that had occurred in their own lives. However, no one whom I interviewed completely discounted the Williams connection, nor was any narrative innocent of the family myths.

There were four main aspects of family history and myth which appeared in the testimony. These were the relationship with land, class, religion and the family relationship with Maori. Each forms the theme of a chapter in the thesis, and each chapter is arranged in three parts:

1. There is an introductory section, which backgrounds the theme and briefly outlines the findings. This is intended to contextualize the oral testimony.
2. Three memory biographies follow. These explore how interviewees compose their memories in relation to family myth, changing public perceptions and their own experiences and identity.[108] They are intended to demonstrate ways in which the particular theme is woven into a full life narrative. There is often considerable overlap between the four themes within any one testimony. For instance one person who speaks about 'living in the Maori world', also has much to say about class, while the relationship with Maori is an important part of another's story about land. The way in which different themes interact in any one narrative is explored to some extent in the memory biographies.
3. The final section draws upon the narratives of all interviewees, and outlines the wide variety of experience within the cohort, and how this may be affected by gender, generational, and geographical differences.

The oral testimony is printed in ***Arial Bold Italics*** font, my own comments and analysis in Times New Roman. This presentation is based on a scheme used by Richard Price in *Alabi's World*, a study in the form of a narrative with four

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[108] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, pp.12, 238-9.

interwoven voices, represented by four different typefaces. Price adopted this device to preserve the distinctive tones and allow opposing and varied voices to be heard.[109] The presentation chosen for the current study is intended not only to differentiate the oral testimony from my own analysis, but to project it and to convey an impression of the active process of oral testimony.

Chapter Two of this study concerns the myths of family and land. It will be seen that Williams oral testimony about land and place is a gendered discourse which often overlaps into class and race. Common features of men's narratives are the linking of land and genealogy, the question of maintaining family ownership of land and the performance of public and family duties. The expectation that men would inherit land and remain while women would marry and leave for other places, means that women's memories of Williams family land are usually those of childhood. They express nostalgia for landscape and people, focusing on both the security of 'homestead' and the freedom and adventure of remote country living. Narratives of land lost often throw these myths into stark relief. Narratives of land anchor the Williamses in place and are used to give them a sense of identity and of their place in New Zealand history. But landowning has a problematic history for the family, so this chapter also deals with the defence of landowning and questions of integrity, which to some extent unsettle claims to belonging.

Descendants of the Williams brothers and their wives became part of a gentrified ruling class in New Zealand, so Chapter Three deals with the assumptions and issues of class which permeate these narratives.[110] Many of the narrators show a concern with wealth and inheritance, notions of refinement, schooling, social position and

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[109] Richard Price, *Alabi's World* (Baltimore, 1990). This is a study of eighteenth century Surinam. The voices are: Price's own printed in Univers 45; Moravian writings in Trump Bold; Dutch planter sources in Trump Bold Italics; and the words of the Saramakas (descendants of escaped slaves) in Trump Italics with ragged right margin to emphasise their spoken nature. See p. xx. Peter Burke, likens the book to the multivocal novels of Aldous Huxley, William Faulkner and Lawrence Durrell, and commends it to the consideration of historians dealing with different view points. See Peter Burke, 'The History of Events and the Revival of Narrative' in Peter Burke (editor), *New Perspectives in Historical Writing* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 238-9.

[110] For discussion of social class in New Zealand see Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand,* 4th revised edition (Auckland, 1991), pp. 110-11, 328-31; James Belich, *Paradise Reforged,* pp. 126-33; Stevan Eldred-Grigg, *A Southern Gentry: New Zealanders who Inherited the Earth,* (Wellington, 1980); Erik Olssen, *Building the New World; work, politics and society in Caversham 1880s-1920s,* (Auckland, 1995); Jim McAloon, *No Idle Rich. The Wealthy in Canterbury and Otago1840-1914* (Dunedin, 2002). McAloon however, denies the existence of a New Zealand gentry, arguing that the wealthy labelled as gentry were in fact more akin to the British middle classes.

rural hierarchy in particular. Most of these narratives are influenced by conflicting myths: one the powerful New Zealand myth of the egalitarian society; and the other a family myth, a belief that the Williamses eschew status and the display of wealth in favour of a life style of simplicity.[111] Thus while some narrators accept their class status without question, many narratives centre on living up to or rejecting family status expectations.

The next chapter deals with the religious tradition of the family. Here the different poles of religious tradition find expression in narrative: the Williamses as bishops and part of the Anglican hierarchy; and the Williamses as Dissenters and dissenters. There is evidence too of the use of the Christian myth of redemption, of images such as that of the Suffering Servant and the Peacemaker, which are evoked by stories of the life of Henry Williams in particular. Religion and class overlap in the idea of Christian simplicity, and also in matters concerning family traditions of charity and philanthropy.

The myth of the family's special relationship with Maori is explored in Chapter Five. Significance is attached to the ability to speak Maori, although few of the family do so today. Some narrators speak of sympathy for, understanding of and personal friendship with Maori, while others talk of ways in which the idea of partnership, as expressed in the Treaty, is exemplified in their personal lives. Finally, in claiming this special connection, one or two narrators invoke Maori taonga in the form of specific knowledge or artefacts given to the Williamses, the possession of which is seen not only to legitimate their presence in New Zealand, but to transform them from aliens to indigenes and to connect them to 'deep time' or the *longue duree*.

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[111] The New Zealand egalitarian myth is discussed by Keith Sinclair *History* (1991), pp. 96-8, 172-6, 271, 275, 328-31; Erik Olssen, *Building the New World*, pp 246-9, 260-1. Reference to the Williamses' belief in a life style of simplicity may be found for instance in Sybil M. Woods, *Samuel Williams*, pp.135, 227, 230. She writes of the household of Samuel and Mary Williams and their practices of thrift, of 'Spartan simplicity' and 'almost unrelenting' self-denial.

CHAPTER 2

Family myths of land and landownership

Introduction

The Williamses are a wealthy family, owning a considerable amount of land in the North Island. This land was mostly acquired in the nineteenth century, and some of it before 1840. While today much of the land they originally owned or leased has gone, some still remains in family hands. In 1987, just before the share market crash, the Williamses were still listed among the ten wealthiest families in New Zealand, their wealth based on farming and property.[1]

The Williams oral testimony about land and place is a gendered discourse, and one that overlaps into class and the relationship with Maori. The men lay claim to the land mainly through recitations of acquisition, subdivision and inheritance; they speak about changing farming practices to ensure viability, and the need to ensure the succession in their own lifetime. They speak too of the public duties that come with landownership. Women talk about the links between family and place also, interweaving landscape with historical particulars and personal memory in a discourse richer in detail than that of men, and focused more on homestead and the love and security of family and social networks. Childhood memories are given a 'pioneering' gloss by many, emphasising isolation and adventure. These narratives of land are about belonging, and a few of the interviewees appear to appropriate Maori symbols in a rhetoric of indigenization, as though to know the Maori stories of the land gives one a deeper claim to belonging. However, cutting across claims of belonging is a sense of defensiveness about family landholdings, both as to the manner of acquisition and the amount acquired. While some preferred not to discuss these matters at all, most seemed aware of and refuted charges against their ancestors of having used their trusted position with Maori to gain possession of land, a charge made more poignant by virtue of the family's missionary status and the claim to be defenders of Maori interests. This discourse reveals the Williamses' concern with integrity.

Before examining the oral testimony this section will look first at aspects of the historical process of land acquisition by settlers in New Zealand, and then at land acquisition by the Williams family within this context.

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[1] Graeme Hunt, *The Rich List. Wealth and Enterprise in New Zealand 1820-2000* (Auckland, 2000), p. 221. There is no indication of how this was assessed in such a large and dispersed family, many of whom while regarding themselves as members of the family do not bear the name.

History of land acquisition, occupation and distribution in New Zealand

Debates over landownership and land use have a long history in New Zealand, and have endured partly because they 'concerned universal questions of wealth and power'.[2] While the Treaty of Waitangi guaranteed to Maori the continued possession of their land unless they wished to sell, from the outset British expectations of economic growth in the colony were based on the ability to acquire land cheaply and easily from Maori.[3] This the settlers proceeded to do, by purchase, by confiscation after the wars, and by forced sale when Maori got into debt to Pakeha. By 1890 approximately 55 million acres of Maori land had been alienated and 11 million acres remained in Maori ownership, almost all of it in the North Island.[4] The process left a legacy of Maori resentment towards Pakeha.

Economic development was not the only imperative for Pakeha, who, like Maori, also 'idealised and mystified' land. Land could mould the community, improve the character of the owner, and enrich in a moral and spiritual sense those living off the land. Many were keen to encourage closer settlement in order to increase production and promote the ideal social structure of the family farm. These ideals enjoyed widespread support even from big landowners, and were based on the belief that no one of whatever class or race had a 'moral right to own land unless they used it productively'. Such ideals continued to find support throughout most of the twentieth century.[5]

From the mid 1840s wealthy colonists began arranging leases of large tracts of land for grazing sheep on the open country of the east coasts of both islands. Over the next

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[2] Tom Brooking, *Lands for the People? The Highland Clearances and the Colonisation of New Zealand. A Biography of John Mckenzie* (Dunedin, 1996), p. 10.

[3] W. J. Gardner, 'A Colonial Economy' in Geoffrey W. Rice, (editor), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd edition (Auckland 1992), p. 59.

[4] Tom Brooking, ' "Bursting-Up" the Greatest Estate of All', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 26, 1 (1992), p. 1.

[5] For a discussion of the nineteenth-century land debate see Brooking, *Lands for the People?*, pp. 79-95; Tom Brooking 'Use it or Lose it. Unravelling the Land Debate in late Nineteenth- Century New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 30, 2 (October 1996), pp. 141-5. See also Miles Fairburn, *The Ideal Society and its Enemies: The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society 1850-1900* (Auckland, 1989), pp. 19-73, and Rollo Arnold, *The Farthest Promised Land: English Villagers, New Zealand Immigrants of the 1870s* (Wellington, 1981).

few decades more and more of these pastoral runs were freeholded.[6] Much of the land owned by the Williams family was acquired in this way. As more immigrants arrived, expecting to earn good wages and quickly acquire property, the demand for land increased, particularly the demand for smaller farms.[7] Two solutions presented themselves, firstly, the subdivision of the large estates and secondly the acquisition of more land from Maori.[8]

In the 1890s the Liberals introduced legislation aimed at 'bursting' the large estates in the interests of closer settlement and 'putting the small man on the land'. A graduated land tax was introduced which hit the large land owners and absentee owners hardest, and a Land Purchase Board was established to acquire land for subdivision either through voluntary sale or by compulsory purchase. However, many large holdings remained unaffected by the legislation, and the break up of a few expensive estates could not by itself satisfy the 'considerable land hunger' of the settlers.[9] In fact the Liberals and successive governments had much more success in 'bursting up the greatest estate of all', the remaining 11 million acres of bush land still owned by Maori in the North Island. This land was much cheaper and, despite Maori objections, the state purchased millions of acres in the ensuing decades.[10]

Throughout most of the twentieth century the state continued to pursue closer settlement policies, modified to respond to events of the time. For instance, after World Wars I and II, some land was compulsorily acquired from large landholders and absentee owners for the settlement of returned servicemen.[11] The Williams oral testimony reflects the effects of all these measures to break up large estates.

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[6] Gardner, pp. 63-4.

[7] Gardner, p. 74; Tony Simpson, *The Immigrant: The Great Migration from Britain to New Zealand, 1830-1890*, (Auckland, 1997), p. 174.

[8] Brooking, *Lands for the People?*, pp. 75–6, 131; J.D. Gould, 'The Occupation of Farm Land in New Zealand, 1874-1911', *Business and History*, 5, 2 (August 1965), pp. 123-41; Gardner, pp. 78-82. In 1882 the Land Act introduced by William Rolleston, Minister of Lands, sought to provide land at low rental to tenants with a 30-year revaluation of the lease. A similar attempt was made by John Ballance in 1885, with an act providing for the lease of small grazing runs of les than 5000 acres with a 21 year right of renewal.

[9] Brooking, *Lands for the People?*, p. 131.

[10] For an account of acquisition of Maori land from 1890 see Brooking, *Lands for the People?* pp. 131-156.

[11] J. R. Fairweather, *Land Policy and Settlement in New Zealand. May 1985. Research Report no 165*, (Lincoln College, Canterbury, May 1985), pp. 8-9.

However, closer settlement was also due to a huge increase in farm productivity which made large estates unnecessary in many areas. This 'grasslands revolution', which began in the 1880s and continued for most of the twentieth century, was driven firstly by technologies using steam, electricity and fossil fuels, and secondly by scientific improvement in pasture and stock health.[12] Between 1945 and 1970, farm production doubled. Along with the continuing electrification and mechanisation on the farm, aerial topdressing, new stock breeds and improved pest control contributed to the change. A few new products and new markets were developed, prices increased and for a time farmers prospered.[13]

But clouds were gathering on the horizon. Until the 1960s Britain was still the main export market, but its entry to the European Common Market disrupted a framework of trade built up over a century. As export prices fell and domestic costs increased farming profitability diminished in spite of rising production. While some farmers diversified their operations to minimise their risks, some gave up and others sought economies of scale. Despite rapidly increasing land prices and government policies to regulate land aggregation, farm amalgamations became common.[14] Government assistance was also made available in a series of ad hoc measures which for a time masked the problems.[15] But in 1984 the new Labour Government began a reform of the economy designed to make New Zealand more competitive internationally. Farming was at the forefront of these changes, which resulted in a drastic fall in farm earnings. Farmers responded by turning to less intensive methods, reducing farm inputs, but even so those with large mortgages were in severe financial difficulties.[16] Many farms which had been in families for several generations were sold. Some of those whom I interviewed had farmed through the post war period, and experienced both the good times and the bad.

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[12] James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders From the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Auckland 2001), pp. 248-9.
[13] Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, pp. 308-9.
[14] Fairweather, pp. 9-11, 26-7. After World War II policies were aimed at lifting restrictions on land prices while regulating land aggregation and absentee ownership. But in fact case law shows that the trend in interpretation of the 1952 Land Settlement Promotion and Land Acquisition Act allowed considerable aggregation in order to maintain the economic viability of farms.
[15] Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p. 311; A.B.Ward, 'The Agricultural Sector', in *Decade of Change: Economic Growth and Prospects in New Zealand 1960-1970. A collection of Readings*, edited by Peter A. Lane and Paul Hamer (Wellington, 1973), pp. 15-38.
[16] Harvey Franklin, 'The Economy', pp. 156-62, and Richard Willis, 'Farming', pp. 163-70 in *Pacific Viewpoint: New Zealand in the 1980s: Market Forces in the Welfare State*, 32, 2 (October 1991).

History of Williams land acquisition

Various branches of the Williams family acquired land in different parts of the North Island during the nineteenth century. These land holdings are concentrated in four main regions, namely in Northland around Pakaraka, in the Wairarapa near Masterton, in Hawkes Bay around Te Aute and west of Hastings and Napier, and on the East Coast from Gisborne to Ruatoria [see Appendix 4, Map 2]. The following account is intended to give an indication of how different branches of the family became established in these regions.

Northland

By 1839 New South Wales investors had been buying land in New Zealand for two decades. Some of the missionaries too had bought land on their own account, usually to provide gainful employment for their children. CMS missionaries were sent to New Zealand for life, and this presented them with the problem of how to provide for their children's future. Henry and Marianne Williams had 11 children, and in the 1830s there were few, if any, opportunities for them to find employment in New Zealand such as they might have expected in England. It seemed that only farming would offer a solution to the problem, and indeed the children of the chaplains in the colony of New South Wales were permitted a grant of 2560 acres for each son and half as much for each daughter.

The details and difficulties of Henry Williams's land purchases are described in Lawrence M. Rogers's *Te Wiremu* (1973).[17] Henry made his first purchase at Taiamai (Pakaraka) in 1833, basing his actions on the New South Wales precedent and on a series of CMS resolutions which assured the missionaries of their approval. By 1837 he had acquired approximately 11,000 acres, paid for in goods such as horses, cows, sheep and some money.[18] When the eldest son, Edward, reached the age of 15 in 1833 he began to live and work at Taiamai, joined later by his brothers. All relied on the assistance of local Maori as farmhands. But trouble was brewing over this purchase by 1838 when criticisms began to be voiced in London.[19]

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[17] Lawrence M. Rogers, *Te Wiremu: A Biography of Henry Williams* (Christchurch, 1973).
[18] Rogers, *Te Wiremu*, pp. 218-22.
[19] Rogers, *Te Wiremu*, pp. 223-5.

In addition Henry Williams also later made extensive purchases of land in various parts of the North Island. The missionaries were concerned that the New Zealand Company would deprive Maori of much of their land, and indeed Colonel William Wakefield claimed to have purchased 20 million acres in 1839 for the Company.[20] Henry Williams's additional purchases were therefore apparently made with the purpose of holding lands in trust for Maori in order to forestall the intended purchases of the New Zealand Company and protect Maori interests.

In fact the number and extent of various land claims was also concerning the British Government, which intervened in 1840. In January, before the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, it was proclaimed that no title would be valid until confirmed by the Crown, and all transactions prior to1840 would come under official review by a Lands Claim Commission. Thus Henry Williams's claims now had to be proven valid. Rogers reports that in 1841 the Commissioners found him to have paid the equivalent of 1,722 pounds for 11,000 acres for his family, sufficient in fact for 22,000 acres. Over the next few years the grants were revised downwards and upwards a number of times, and it was not until 1844 that the grant to Henry Williams of 9000 acres was finally issued.[21] These facts are important to the family in their defence of Henry's integrity, since they are understood to demonstrate the justice of his claim.

It was however Henry's additional land purchases to be held in trust for Maori which also led to trouble.[22] The opposition of the CMS and its missionaries to the activities of the New Zealand Association and later the New Zealand Company, earned Henry Williams some powerful enemies. They accused him publicly in England of underhand and fraudulent land dealings, and of selfishness, 'hypocrisy and unblushing rapaciousness'.[23] In New Zealand too, the colonists, desperate for the land that had been promised them by the company, were highly antagonistic towards the missionaries and Henry in particular. Rogers writes that as the 'gossip and calumnies'

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[20] Alan Ward, *An Unsettled History. Treaty Claims in New Zealand Today* (Wellington, 1999), pp.73-4
[21] Rogers, *Te Wiremu*, pp. 220-30.
[22] Rogers, *Te Wiremu*, pp. 230-9. The story of Henry Williams's dispute with Governor Grey, and his dismissal, is summarised here from Rogers, a book which is to be found on the shelves of most members of the family and with which many are quite familiar. Its influence is evident in some of the oral testimony.
[23] Letter from Colonel Wakefield to *The Times* of London, 5 September 1840, cited in Rogers, *Te Wiremu*, p. 235.

grew, it was these that 'caused Governor Grey to make the landownership the main theme of his attacks against Henry Williams and the other missionaries', and this 'propoganda' was 'partly responsible for the Society's dismissal of Henry Williams'.[24]

However, Grey focused on the land grant in the north, claiming that it was an injustice both to Maori and to other settlers, that to keep the missionaries in possession of these lands would require a 'large expenditure of British blood and money', and that the government anticipated 'violent and stormy opposition' from these missionaries intent on pursuing their own interests.[25] When these charges were accepted by the British Colonial Secretary, Grey, with the cooperation of Bishop Selwyn, demanded that the missionaries surrender their lands. Rogers writes that now 'Williams was fighting not for his land but for his character'.[26] Henry wrote to his brother-in-law, Edward Marsh, saying that if they took the land 'they'll take but trash – but mine honour they must not trample in the dust'.[27] Henry demanded that Grey either substantiate or repudiate the charges against him, but Grey did neither. In November 1849 the committee of the CMS passed a resolution dismissing Henry Williams, a resolution of which Rogers claims 'not one clause [could] be justified by the facts'.[28] Henry received this letter in May 1850, and within a week departed Paihia for his sons' farm at Pakaraka.[29]

This brief account gives little idea of the acrimony engendered by this dispute, nor of the bitterness felt by Henry Williams and his family, which still rankles with some.[30]

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[24] Rogers, *Te Wiremu*, p. 239.
[25] Letter from Grey to Gladstone, 25 June 1846, Great Britain Parliamentary Papers 1847-8 [1002], pp. 106-7, cited in Rogers, *Te Wiremu*, pp. 249-50.
[26] Rogers, *Te Wiremu*, p. 252.
[27] Letter from Henry Williams to Edward Garrard Marsh, 26 March 1850, Williams Papers, Auckland Museum Library, cited in Rogers, *Te Wiremu*, p. 253.
[28] CMS resolution, 20 Nov 1849. CMS to H.W., 21 Dec 1849; quoted in Hugh Carleton, *The Life of Henry Williams, Archdeacon of Waimate, Vol 2* (Auckland, 1877), pp. 243, 257, cited in Rogers, *Te Wiremu*, p. 276.
[29] Henry Williams's journal, 25 May 1850, quoted in Carleton, *Henry Williams, Vol 2*, p. 232, cited in Rogers, *Te Wiremu*, pp. 283-4.
[30] Family resentment at the treatment of Henry Williams is evidenced in the writings of his sons, Samuel and Thomas, and of his son-in-law, Hugh Carleton. Letter from Samuel Williams to Henry Williams, 1 Oct 1851, quoted in Sybil M.Woods, *Samuel Williams of Te Aute* (Christchurch, 1981), p. 120; Thomas Coldham Williams, *The Manawatu Purchase Completed, or, the Treaty of Waitangi Broken* (Wellington, 1867), p. 66; Hugh Carleton, *Henry Williams, Vol 2*, Appendix, p. i, writes that against Henry Williams 'assertions [were] uttered in defiance of fact, by which injury so deep was inflicted on an unoffending man', and goes on to declare the 'utter untruthfulness' of these assertions.

Although he was reinstated by the CMS in 1854, Henry and Marianne never returned to Paihia. In the 1870s when Henry's son-in-law, Hugh Carleton, published *The Life of Henry Williams* in two volumes his 'main objective' was 'vindication of [Henry's] character'.[31] He also recorded that as Henry lay dying his 'mind reverted to the treatment he had suffered' and he was heard to say repeatedly 'Cruel, it was cruel'.[32] These words were repeated to me in oral testimony also.

The land at Pakaraka remained in family hands for the best part of 100 years. During the northern wars of the 1840s the sons prospered, selling cattle to the British troops stationed in Auckland, reputedly for 100 pounds a head. In 1855 they bought back several thousand acres that had been deducted from the claim by the land commissioners.[33] As most of Henry's sons moved to farm in other parts of the North Island the property was gradually subdivided and passed to the descendants of Henry's youngest daughter, Caroline, who married Samuel Ludbrook. It is the Ludbrook branch of the Williams family which over the years has developed a strong family association with the Pakaraka area.

However, over the last half century parts of the original land have been sold out of the family.[34] Today the only part still in family ownership is what remains of 'Tupe Tupe', farmed by Samuel Ludbrook, a great great grandson of Henry and Marianne Williams. Some members of the family still experience a sense of loss in remembering this process. One member of the Ludbrook family made an effort to repurchase 'Pouerua' in the 1990s, but failed. He was anxious to record this in detail in the oral testimony. His testimony and others point to the on-going problem between the family and certain Maori in the region.[35]

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[31] Carleton, *Henry Williams, Vol 2*, Appendix, p. i.
[32] Carleton, *Henry Williams, Vol 2*, p. 351.
[33] David Yerex, *They Came to Wydrop. The Beetham and Williams families, Brancepath and Te Parae, Wairarapa 1856-1990* (Wellington, 1991), pp. 16, 17.
[34] Rex D. Evans (compiler), *Faith and Farming, Te Huarahi ki te Ora: The Legacy of Henry Williams and William Williams*, revised edition (Auckland 1998) pp. 366, 392-3. *Faith and Farming* was first published in 1992. 'Waikaramu' and 'Titirangi' were sold in 1958, 'Taiamai', once part of 'Tupe Tupe', in 1972 and 'Pouerua' in 1989.
[35] This problem was exemplified at the time I was doing the interviews by a series of articles in the newspapers about the wish of certain Maori to remove the pillar depicting Henry Williams from the Te Ti marae. See, for example, the *New Zealand Herald*, October 8,1999, p. A10 and October 9-10, 1999, p. A4.

Wairarapa

The Wairarapa saw the first wave of New Zealand 'squatters' or pastoralists. Wellington colonists with capital explored the Wairarapa, bargained with local chiefs for leases and in 1844 drove in their first flocks of Australian merino sheep.[36] The Williamses were relatively late on the scene. Their story is told in David Yerex's *They Came to Wydrop* (1991).[37] When four Beetham brothers decided in 1856 to settle in the Wairarapa, they explored the area between the coast and the plains, land that had previously been regarded as inaccessible. It was an area of low hills and open valleys, with wide, open areas of native grasses surrounded by dense forest. The brothers applied for a runholder's licence for about 10,000 acres in 1857.[38] After stocking their run the brothers were deeply in debt, but their new brother-in-law, Thomas Coldham (TC) Williams, proposed that he form a partnership with them, financing the freehold of the original block and its development.[39] TC Williams was the third son of Henry and Marianne Williams, and married Anne Beetham in 1858.

The holding was gradually expanded. Buying from other settlers and from Maori, by 1890 the partnership held over 70,000 acres, the largest single farming establishment in the Wairarapa.[40] [See Appendix 4, Map 3] They ran 80,000 sheep and Shorthorn and Hereford studs were also established. TC Williams was the leading member of the partnership in financial terms, and although he never lived there he visited regularly and had a strong influence on operations.[41] When times were hard for Wairarapa runholders from the late 1870s, TC's money enabled the partnership to continue farm development and initiate business interests. They became involved in a meat export company when refrigerated shipping began in the 1880s, and when the railway came to Masterton, they established nine butchers shops in Wellington.[42]

In 1903 the Williams-Beetham partnership was dissolved and a process of subdivision began [see Appendix 4, Map 4]. This was partly in response to the

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[36] Gardner, p. 63.
[37] David Yerex, *They Came to Wydrop. The Beetham and Williams families, Brancepath and Te Parae, Wairarapa 1856-1990* (Wellington, 1991).
[38] Yerex, pp. 30-7.
[39] Yerex, pp. 44-52.
[40] Yerex, pp. 59-61
[41] Yerex, p. 65.
[42] Yerex, p. 87.

Liberal's land reform legislation of the 1890s, and partly to the needs of a new generation of the families wanting to farm.[43] TC Williams retained two thirds of the property, which he then divided between twelve of his thirteen children, the sons receiving equal shares which were one quarter more than the daughters. One son, Wyvern, was disinherited. The eldest son Hugh, received 'Kumukumu'. 'Te Parae' went to TC's second son, Guy, who also leased the properties of two of his sisters. He built the present 'Te Parae' homestead, and laid out the grounds including a substantial lake. The property, with subdivisions and additions, has since been passed on to his son and grandsons. Algar received 'Longridge ' which he sold immediately, causing much displeasure among the family. Erl took over 'Mamaku' which he subsequently passed on to his son.[44] During and after World War II much of the land that had been left to TC's daughters was acquired by the Government on the basis of absentee ownership, for the settlement of returned servicemen under the Rehabilitation Scheme.

Today much of this land is still in family ownership, and at times additional land has been bought. Farming operations have changed over the years to ensure viability. 'Te Parae' was further subdivided between Guy Williams's son, Alister, and two of his sisters. Alister and his wife continued to run a successful sheep and cattle farm, but also developed the 'Te Parae' thoroughbred stud. The farm later passed to his two sons who farmed for a while in partnership, until Richard moved the stud to a nearby property, and Thomas remained to develop a large deer farming operation in the 1970s.[45]

Hawkes Bay

In Hawkes Bay, Williams family land acquisition began when Henry's second son, Samuel, and his wife, Mary, eldest daughter of William and Jane Williams, moved to Te Aute in 1854 to set up a Maori boys school at the request of Governor Grey. The school was endowed with a farm of 7000 acres, a trust created by government grants

[43] Yerex, pp. 95-6.
[44] Yerex, pp. 104-110.
[45] Evans (1998), pp. 250, 256-7. See also Yerex, pp. 103-35.

and land donated by Maori.[46] However, although the school opened in 1855 it was forced to close in 1859 through lack of promised government funding. In order to provide this funding, Samuel, unable to find a suitable leasee, eventually leased the Trust land himself and set about making it profitable. The school eventually reopened in 1872.

Meanwhile in 1857 his cousin, James Nelson (JN) Williams, joined Samuel at Te Aute.[47] Both shrewd businessmen and experienced farmers, the two worked in tandem buying and selling land, developing and subdividing. They often employed not only sons but also nephews as managers, thus providing employment and advancement for other members of the family.[48]

In 1857 JN Williams bought 20,000 acres at Keruru, and in 1864 secured the lease of 3000 acres of the Heretaunga block. This was later freeholded, although its validation took 25 years of legal and political battles. Here JN built his homestead, 'Frimley', and established a canning factory.[49] On this land the northern and western parts of Hastings now stand. In 1873 he sold 'Keruru' to buy 'Apley', a 15,000-acre farm which he later subdivided.[50] In 1879 he bought 'Edenham', 8000 acres south of Elsthorpe and not far from Te Aute. This was later added to until it doubled in size, and then was gradually subdivided over several generations and mostly sold off.[51]

It was not until 1874 that Samuel made his first purchase of land for himself, buying 1600 acres which began the establishment of Te Aute Station. Later another 4800 acres were added. This included the Roto-a-tara lake and surrounding swamp, purchased directly from Maori and subsequently drained after the Waipawa river had been dammed back into its original course following a huge flood in 1867. He also bought the 21,000-acre freehold property of 'Mangakuri' from JN. This land ran from

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[46] Evans (1998), pp. 226.
[47] Iain and John Gillies, *East Coast Pioneers. A Williams Family Portrait. A Legacy of Land, Love and Partnership* (Gisborne, 1990), p. 231; Evans (1998), pp. 602-3.
[48] Mary Boyd, 'Samuel Williams' in *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Vol One, 1769-1869*, edited by W. H. Oliver (Wellington, 1990), pp. 596-7. Boyd notes that Samuel Williams was 'upset by the treatment meted out to his father for purchasing land to sustain his children' and therefore 'took it upon himself to provide for his extended family'. See also Woods, *Samuel Williams*, p. 214.
[49] Gillies, p. 231.
[50] Evans (1998), p. 602. 'Keruru' was later repurchased by JN Williams's granddaughters, Ruth and Gwen Nelson, who bequeathed it as an educational trust.
[51] Evans (1998), pp. 602-3.

near Elsthorpe to the coast, and was managed by Samuel's nephew, George Coldham Williams. By 1882 Samuel owned over 25,000 acres.[52] In addition he bought the 13,000-acre St Lawrence Station in 1901 as a means of funding the newly-established Henry and William Williams Memorial Trust.[53] After his death in 1907, both 'Te Aute' and 'Mangakuri' were subdivided and farmed by members of the family for several generations, but were gradually sold off between 1964 and 1989. It seems the only land still remaining in the family is 'Kahotea', a part of 'Te Aute' belonging to Hugh McBain, and 'Waipari' a part of 'Mangakuri' belonging to the Warren family.[54]

Samuel's lease of Te Aute Trust land and the close association between this and his own land caused problems for Samuel and his descendants. In 1869 the chiefs who had given the original Trust land demanded an inquiry into the reasons why there was still no school, and into Samuel's handling of the land. There were further inquiries in 1875 and 1877, this time demanded also by the critics of land aggregation.[55] All inquiries exonerated Samuel and the trustees of wrong-doing. However, again in 1906 Samuel was called to give evidence before a Royal Commission of Inquiry. Although this centred more on school curriculum issues, Samuel once more had to defend his lease of Trust land, again with the same result.[56] The sense of injustice and persecution engendered among the family by these continuing inquiries still resonates in some of the oral testimony.

East Coast

By the 1880s JN Williams was turning his attention further north. In 1883 he explored the East Coast region in search of suitable pastoral land. He eventually leased 37,000 acres from Ngati Porou at Waipiro Bay. This lease enabled JN Williams to purchase blocks from other runholders and by 1900 he controlled more than 100,000 acres in the region. In response to criticisms of land aggregation in the

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[52] Woods, *Samuel Williams*, pp. 209, 212.
[53] Evans (1998), p. 227.
[54] Evans (1998), pp.227, 244 and Evans (1992), p. 358.
[55] Woods, *Samuel Williams*, p. 212. The fact that in 1881 the run holder, J.D. Ormond, lost the Waipawa seat to a Waipukurau store keeper who advocated the subdivision of large sheep stations for closer settlement, shows how the opponents of land aggregation were gaining ground.
[56] Woods, *Samuel Williams*, pp. 145-6, 147-8. See pp. 142-5 for the story of Samuel Williams's efforts to put Te Aute College on a sound financial footing by developing the land himself.

1890s, JN offered most of these estates for closer settlement, but the land was turned down as unsuitable.

JN's sons, Heathcote Beetham (HB), snr., and Arnold Beetham (AB), were put in charge of these properties, and their profitability improved when a freezing works was built in Gisborne. HB ran 'Huiarua' and 'Turihaua' where he developed a well-known Angus stud. 'Turihaua' later passed to JN's grandson, also Heathcote Beetham (HB) Williams, jnr., and is now farmed by two of JN's great grandsons, Hamish and Marcus, who diversified into a Romney stud and deer farming. AB farmed 'Waipiro' from 1892. When the lease expired in 1915 the land was returned to its Maori owners, but AB remained on a nearby freehold block, 'Puketiti', for the rest of his life. He was followed by his son Desmond, and recently ownership of 'Puketiti' was passed to AB's great great nephew, Daniel Russell.[57]

Other members of the family also acquired large holdings on the East Coast with the assistance of Samuel and JN Williams. [see Appendix 4, map 5] For instance, in 1892 Samuel Williams leased 'Kaharau', a 20,000-acre block near Ruatoria on which he put his nephew, Thomas Sydney (TS) Williams, as manager. TS later took over the lease, and also in 1897 purchased 'Pakihiroa', 30,000 acres of bush inland from Ruatoria, which included the sacred mountains, Hikurangi and Horokawa. He ran the two properties as Tuparoa Station. In 1914 he returned the Kaharau lease to its Maori owners in 'clear grasslands and full production'. After World War I the rest of 'Tuparoa' was subdivided among three members of the family, and from 1969 parts were sold to the New Zealand Forest Service for planting, and part to the Crown for the return of Mt Hikurangi to Ngati Porou.[58] In a similar manner Kenneth Sydney (KS) Williams acquired 'Matahiia' near Ruatoria, and the brothers Claud and Carl Williams bought adjoining properties at Muriwai near Gisborne, 'Coventry' and 'Sherwood'. For the most part these have been passed on to sons and grandsons.[59]

Nor were Henry and Samuel the only clerical members of the family to acquire land. In order to better provide for their families Bishop Leonard Williams bought

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[57] Evans (1998), pp. 603-4.
[58] Evans (1998), pp. 101-2.
[59] Evans (1998), pp. 85-6, 90, 299-300. See also A.B. Williams, *Land of the Sunrise* (Gisborne, 1957), pp. 19-22, 40-2.

'Mangataikopua', and his son, Archdeacon Herbert Williams, bought 'Ruangarehu' which was once part of 'Waipiro'. These properties were farmed as companies or partnerships by members of the family for the benefit of all descendants, but have been gradually sold off.[60]

The Williamses on the East Coast have also been criticised for their land acquisition. Woods defends both Samuel and the other Williamses against these continuing 'calumnies'. She speaks of 'the skill and ingenuity and unremitting hard work' needed to turn much of this land to profitability, quoting the belief shared by Samuel and JN that 'a man who could make two blades of grass grow where one grew before was a benefactor to mankind'.[61] She defends them on the basis of the risks they took, the sense of responsibility to the extended family, generosity to others and the practical example and assistance they gave to Ngati Porou in farming. She quotes at length from a speech made by Sir Apirana Ngata in the House in defence of the Williamses in general and KS Williams in particular, emphasising the assistance they gave to Maori.[62] A similar defence is made in other books on the family, and is to be found also in the oral testimony to which we now turn.

Memory Biographies

The following three memory biographies explore the ways in which myths about land and landownership become central to the narratives of some members of the family. It is no coincidence that all three are men, all of whom have been born, brought up and have farmed on land with a long connection with family in different parts of the country. They have been chosen to demonstrate the variety of different ways these family myths of land can be called upon to construct narrative identity and make claims of belonging. However, for some they are also unsettling myths.

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[60] Evans (1998), p. 554.
[61] Woods, *Samuel Williams*, p. 213, quoting from A.B. Williams, p. 8.
[62] Woods, *Samuel Williams*, pp. 212-8. Ngata's speech is recorded in *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (NZPD) 1915*, vol 174,(Wellington, 1915), pp. 616-9. Sir Apirana Ngata was an important leader of the East Coast tribe, Ngati Porou, and also an MP. He made a speech in Parliament in 1915 in defence of the Williams family after another MP had accused Bishop Williams of bringing 'to a fine art the system of land-grabbing in this country'.

Thomas Coldham (Tom) Williams was born in Masterton in theWairarapa in 1939. His childhood was spent at 'Te Parae' from whence he briefly attended the local primary school, before going to board at Hereworth Prep School in Havelock North. His secondary education was at Wanganui Collegiate, where he also learned to fly a plane. After a few years working at his father's direction in a local abattoir, a butcher's shop and farms in the South Island, and one year travelling overseas, Tom returned to begin taking over 'Te Parae' when he was only 24. He describes the changes he made in the mix of farming activities in order to keep the business viable, getting rid of sheep and cattle studs, beginning a deer recovery programme using helicopters, introducing deer farming and developing the race horse stud with his brother.

When his father died in 1972, Tom was 33. He stepped into his father's shoes as a county councillor, spending six of his twelve years on the Council as its chairman. He later became chairman of both the new Game Industry Board and the Racing Industry Board, and he tells of what he achieved in these positions. When I interviewed him in 2000 he had retired from both these jobs, but continued to be involved in the farm and in a local theatre trust and an aviation trust. About ten years earlier he and his wife had instigated the writing of a book about the Williams and Beetham families in the Wairarapa doing some of the research themselves and contacting old family associates for the writer to interview.[63] Michele D. Dominy makes the point that in writing local histories people construct the past, inscribe themselves on the landscape and 'signal local epistemologies about place as constitutive of identity'.[64] It is also, of course, what Tom and his wife intended, a way of ensuring that as older generations of the family disappear their memories of earlier times and the stories they used to tell are preserved for future members of the family. We will see in this analysis evidence of the way written histories of the Williamses, sometimes based on oral reports, feed into oral life narratives in the present.

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[63] David Yerex, *They Came to Wydrop. The Beetham and Williams families of Brancepath and Te Parae, Wairarapa 1856-1990*, published on behalf of Mr Hugh Beetham of Brancepath and Mr Tom Williams of Te Parae (Wellington, 1991).

[64] Michele D. Dominy, *Calling the Station Home: Identity in New Zealand's High Country* (Lanham, Maryland, 2001), p. 53.

Heathcote Beetham (HB) Williams, jnr., was born in 1922 at Gisborne, and raised at 'Turihaua', a coastal farm about 16 kilometres north of Gisborne bought by his grandfather, JN Williams, and farmed by his father, also HB Williams, snr. HB had a tutor for his early education until he was sent away to board, first at Hereworth Prep School and then at Christ's College, where he became head prefect. He left school and joined the army during the war, but after his older brother Jack was killed, HB was manpowered back to work on 'Turihaua'. He eventually took over the management from his father, and has since passed this responsibility on to one of his own sons. He and his wife still live at 'Turihaua' but have moved out of the big house built by his father. As well as farming, HB has served on the Gisborne Harbour Board and been the director of a number of companies, a role which he also inherited from his father. He has helped administer several Williams family charitable trusts, and also set up several charitable trusts himself. At the time of the interview HB was occupied with his trust work, planting trees and helping on the farm when extra hands were needed.

William Banks (Bill) Ludbrook was born in 1946, at 'Taiamai' near Paihia. 'Taiamai' was part of the block of 11,000 acres bought by Henry Williams in 1835, an area of rich volcanic land centred around the mountain, Pouerua, which became part of the Lubrook estate. Bill was raised on this farm until he was six years old, when his father died and the family moved to Cambridge. They returned to 'Taiamai when Bill was a teenager. He attended the local schools in both places. In 1964 Bill Ludbrook took over the management of 'Taiamai', but sold it in 1972. He later ran a motel in Paihia, and eventually became an investment and property broker in Auckland. After his cousin Peter Ludbrook sold 'Pouerua', almost the last remaining part of Henry Williams's land, Bill tried to buy it back from the Tai Tokerau Maori Trust Board. It was this struggle for the land that Bill was so eager to tell me about, and which occupied much of his narrative.

The narratives of these three men share one feature in common, namely that their stories of the land are linked with genealogy and inheritance. The first two narratives also address the issue of securing the economic viability of the farm in order to maintain family ownership, and speak of the business interests and civic duties seen

as being associated with the landowner family. The third, however, focuses on the effort to regain what has been lost, and details claims of belonging.

Tom Williams

Tom Williams is a tall, confident man who exudes a sense of power and authority. He lives in the large house at 'Te Parae' in the Wairarapa, built by his grandfather, Guy Coldham Williams. At every turn there are reminders of the family's past. Approaching the house from the road one is impressed with the garden full of huge old trees which speak of the work and hopes of earlier generations. In front of the house the lawn runs down to a large lake built under the supervision of Tom's grandmother. In the dining room hang large portraits of Tom's great grandfather and great grandmother, Thomas Coldham and Annie Williams, and also of Tom's father and grandfather. I interviewed Tom at the expansive kitchen table, with his adult son and daughter coming and going, the sounds of tractors and dogs outside, and the occasional business phone call interrupting.

Tom's is the story of balancing tradition and innovation, continuity and change, each helping to maintain the other. His free narrative begins with the story of the interlinking of land and family over several generations. Having situated himself within this context he then turns to his own early life and education, his preparation for taking over the family farm and home. Here he tells a number of anecdotes which are indicative of the values he was expected to learn. As the new 'master' at 'Te Parae' Tom's narrative becomes more thematic. First he talks about the changes he has made in farming practices in order to keep the farm economically viable. Then he speaks of the various public offices he has held following in the tradition of his father, and of his achievements in these positions. Thirdly he talks of his own family, his wife and children. He draws this all to a close by reflecting on his present involvements and what he sees as the future for the farm and the family. Tom's narrative was influenced to some extent by the fact that he was still coming to terms with the death of his youngest son in a helicopter accident a year earlier.

Tom begins his narrative by momentarily debating with himself about where to start the family story, in New Zealand or in England: 'The beginning could be the land,

here at "Te Parae". The beginning could be further back than that.'[65] Then with a brief acknowledgement of the family's English origins he quickly settles on the story of the land and the Williams-Beetham partnership which is based both on business and marriage.

I suppose that the Beethams recognised that the Bidwills, Vavasours, Riddifords – [those] families had come from Wellington around the coast .... and had colonised the centre of the Wairarapa Valley .... The Scottish people, and the Camerons in particular, got in a boat and sailed around Cape Palliser and saw all this rugged-looking country that looked like Fort Williams back in Scotland and they landed there ....The east coast land is occupied by Camerons....[66]

So when the Beethams wanted to take up some land they knew there was some land somewhere between the coastal country and the Scots, and the central Wairarapa Valley .... And so the Beethams hopped in a boat and came round to the Whareama River which is north of Riversdale and south of Castlepoint and walked up the Whareama River to what we now know as Blairlogie, and then – with a guide – and then turned south and arrived in the Wainuioru. And that's effectively where we are today, the Wainuioru Valley. They stood on a hill not far from here, and it was their mother's birthday and they looked down the valley and they called that hill Birthday Hill, and that property is still called 'Birthday Hill' to this day, and the property associated with it, Birthday Hill Station.[67]

And so it was then – later – that my great grandfather, TC Williams, married Annie Beetham. And the Beethams were struggling on 10,000 acres, with all the dramas of breaking in this country – problems with stocking it – sheep and cattle, and the various diseases that they put up with at the time .... So when Annie and TC married, the Beetham brothers required some capital to expand their operation and so my great grandfather was in a position to put some dollars in ... and that's what he did. So that was sort of the origins of the Williams and Beetham partnership, and – and he continued to put money in to the point where I think the station grew to about 70,000 acres.[68]

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[65] Tom Williams, 15 March 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A, 0.3.
[66] Tom Williams, 1A 1.3.
[67] Tom Williams, 1A 2.1.
[68] Tom Williams, 1A 2.9.

And then in 1905 the – it wasn't called the Land Aggregation Act but it was something very similar to it – was designed to break up the big land holdings. It was a graduated tax on land and so that effectively broke up the big land holdings and that was the reason why 'Brancepath Station' and its 70,000 acres and 100,000 sheep were divided, two thirds to the Williams and one third to the Beetham family on the basis of the capital and physical contribution to the one operation. So the Beethams retained 'Brancepath', 'Korerau', and 'Birthday Hill' and various other chunks of the original station, and the Williamses retained 'Mamaku', 'Patekawa, 'Katetane', 'Te Parae', - and various other properties, of which we largely are still here –'Kumukumu' and 'Longridge'.

They're still in the Williams family?

In large measure – well, if not directly – I think we're the only Williams as such but the descendants of them. 'Mamaku' that was given to one of TC's sons – and these properties were all divided up by TC to his sons, and so Bill was given 'Mamaku', Guy was given 'Te Parae', Hugh was given 'Kumukumu' – and other brothers got 'Longridge' and – and so they all got 5 or sort of 8,000 acres. And there are Williams descendants at 'Kumukumu' – and that's Dr Morvyn Williams – his daughters. Charlotte owns 'Kumukumu' now, and 'Mamaku' is owned by – Gay. Bill Williams had a son – I think I'm right – named Peter. Peter had a daughter, Gay, and Gay married John Myer, and so the Myers now own and run 'Mamaku'. And so 'Te Parae' is still with – sort of direct Williams ownership.[69]

My father – well Guy Williams, my grandfather, got the 'Te Parae' block and he – he split the – he had four children, three girls and a boy .... And my grandfather, Guy, split 'Te Parae', and it's about 5000 odd acres, between three of his four children....[70]

So Barbara – the second daughter who married Colin Deans, was given about 7 or 800 acres of the property ... called 'Kaututane', and Barbara and Colin Deans lived there. Joan, the youngest daughter ... obviously lived in Marlborough but was given a part of 'Te Parae' called 'Wiremu', and both the Deans family and – they live at 'Kautatane' today. And Michael Deans married Anne Goodwin from the South Island and they have two children and – a son, James, and a daughter, Susie, but Michael and Anne still live at 'Kautatane'. Joan Dillon's property – 'Wiremu' ... they had three children .... [And] my

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[69] Tom Williams, 1A 3.9.
[70] Tom Williams, 1A 6.0.

understanding is that Joanna, the second daughter, has bought out or now controls 'Wiremu', so again the property is still in the family ownership, albeit through a couple of marriages....[71]

The rest of the property – 'Te Parae' was 1500 acres, and that was my father's, Alister, and my brother and I have farmed the land for around – since I guess we both took over round about early 1960s, and we've recently – well, Mother, my mother, was Nancy Teschemaker and she came from the South Island from Marlborough, not far from 'Leefield' where the Dillon family resided. And she – she was a Teschemaker, Nancy Teschemaker was her maiden name, and my father and mother married in 1938 and – just prior to the war – and I was born in 1939 and my brother in 1942. My brother's name is Richard.[72]

And I guess I'm Thomas Coldham named after my great grandfather. And my great grandfather, Thomas, had a son called Guy who was Guy Coldham, and he had a son called Alister who was Alister Coldham, and he had a son called Thomas, myself, who was Thomas Coldham , and I have a son called Guy – Guy Coldham. So I guess the Coldham bit has sort of stuck and that's in recognition of – of Marianne, Henry's wife who was I think Marianne Coldham.[73]

This long recitation achieves a number of objectives. First of all it situates the family among other landowning families in the Wairarapa, not the first to arrive but among the early settlers. This is a claim to belonging. Some of these families are still there and still farming, so it is a statement about both the past and the present. There is little mention of Maori as prior owners, although David Yerex quotes a letter that shows the Beetham brothers did at first encounter opposition from Maori owners who had 'a few summer pa where they came to grow vegetables', and notes that later the local Ngati Kahungungu chief, Piripi, was a frequent visitor at 'Brancepath'.[74] In Tom's narrative the land appears almost as *terra nullius,* the settlers as first occupiers.

Secondly, it speaks of naming places. To name a place is firstly to identify it, to allow it to become known and familiar, secondly to own it at least in a metaphorical sense, and thirdly to categorize it. Giselle Byrnes speaks of this as a ' "taxonomy of knowing": a way of seeing, ordering and recording the world in order to posses it'. It

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[71] Tom Williams, 1A 7.2.
[72] Tom Williams, 1A 8.9.
[73] Tom Williams, 1A 9.6.
[74] Yerex, pp. 37-43.

is part of the process of colonization.[75] Although most of the Williams family properties here have Maori names there is no indication as to whether these were names used by local Maori or given by the family. In either case the preference for Maori names suggests an assertion of indigeneity, a way of people making a 'foreign environment seem familiar and seeing themselves as being *of* the land'.[76] Perhaps it may also be a claim to a belonging that predates general European settlement.

Thirdly, it speaks of a business and marriage partnership, aspects of which have lasted for generations, the foundation of a dynasty. It speaks of the family's response to legislative change aimed at breaking up the large estates and achieving closer settlement, a response which in effect protects the family's ownership and continued presence on the land. And finally it weaves into the story of land at every point the genealogy of the family, concluding with the almost biblical recitation of 'begats' relating to Tom's own direct line of descent and the use of the name, Coldham.

There is something rhythmic and formulaic about some sections of this narrative, which suggest they are part of a well-told family myth. They could be transcribed in stanzas as follows:

They stood on a hill not far from here, Stanza 1
and it was their mother's birthday
and they looked down the valley
and they called that hill
Birthday Hill.
And that property Stanza 2
is still called 'Birthday Hill'
to this day,
and the property associated with it,
Birthday Hill Station.[77]

And I guess I'm Thomas Coldham Stanza 1

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[75] Giselle Byrnes, ' "A dead sheet covered with meaningless words?" Place Names and the Cultural Colonization of Tauranga', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 36, 1 (April, 2002), pp. 27-8. Byrnes cites Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History* (London, 1987), pp. 154, 67. See also Dominy, p. 140.
[76] Byrnes, p. 29.
[77] Tom Williams, 1A 2.1.

named after my great grandfather.
And my great grandfather, Thomas, Stanza 2
had a son called Guy
who was Guy Coldham,
and he had a son called Alister Stanza 3
who was Alister Coldham,
and he had a son called Thomas, Stanza 4
myself,
who was Thomas Coldham
and I have a son called Guy Stanza 5
- Guy Coldham.[78]

Transcribing in this way helps to show how their poetic nature 'fossilizes and ritualises' everyday speech, making it part of the liturgy of family myth and easy to remember.[79] Indeed Annette Kuhn suggests that this process of retelling stories to the point where they become almost formulaic, assuming a timeless, mythic quality, is the way 'a group seeks to hand on the contents of its memory-bank to future generations – and so ensure collective immortality for itself'.[80] Here then both the collective viewpoint and resistance to time find expression within the individual narrative.

Land and family are the key to Tom's narrative. Asked later what he knows about some of the family falling out with one another, Tom immediately focuses on land, saying:

Yeah that was TC and one of his sons, the one who owned 'Longridge'. And whichever one it was ... TC was really miffed that the minute that he got – inherited 'Longridge' he sold it the next day. So that was the last that TC ever had anything to do with him. Except when they were at the club and he was with one of his other sons, and as they walked out of the club they passed this individual coming in, and he said 'Good morning, sir.' TC said 'Good morning.' And then he carried on, and when he got outside the door he said 'And who

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[78] Tom Williams, 1A 9.6.
[79] Catherine Kohler Reissman, *Narrative Analysis. Qualitative Research Methods Volume 30* (Newbury Park, California, 1993), p. 45, cites J. P. Gee, 'The narrativization of experience in the oral style', in *Journal of Education*, 167, 1 (1985), pp. 9-35; 'Units in the production of narrative discourse', in *Discourse Processes*, 9 (1986), pp. 391-422; 'A linguistic approach to narrative', in *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 1, 1 (1991), pp. 15-39.
[80] Annette Kuhn, 'A Journey Through Memory', in *Memory and Methodology*, edited by Susannah Radstone (Oxford and New York, 2000), p. 193.

was that?' And the brother said 'That was your other son, Mr. So-and-So.' Yeah – so there we are.[81]

In the book by Yerex, however, this story has a different spin. The sale of 'Longridge' did indeed cause TC much displeasure, but some years later he nevertheless agreed to bear the financial losses of the same son, Algar, who had sold his inheritance. It was this that upset the older brother, Hugh, so that he would never again speak to Algar.[82] Whatever the truth of this family story of a falling out, it is interesting to note that Tom associates it with land, while his cousin, Sarah, whose concern at that point in her narrative is more with class, attributes the falling out between brothers to the fact that one had married a woman socially beneath him.[83] Thus each remembers it according to their own focus of interest, demonstrating how what appears to be the same story may have multiple meanings depending upon the circumstances of the narration.[84]

Returning to Tom's narrative, after some brief recollections of his childhood and school days, he continues with the story of his own preparation to take over 'Te Parae'. The twin threads of continuity and change are present again, each supporting the other. Although his father had been sent to Cambridge University, Tom was sent to work in the local abattoir and butcher's shop, before going to work on two South Island farms. Tom believes the reason for this was that after nine years of the regimented society of boarding school 'it was time I figured out what the real world was about'.[85] He appears happy to have complied with his father's plan. He goes on to recount with some enjoyment and approval anecdotes of his experiences from this time, most of which have a moral lesson and express quintessential masculine values. For instance, arriving at his new job in Southland he recalls:

I looked around until I saw the most elderly looking fellow and I said, 'Mr Russell?', and he gruffly said, 'Yes', and I said, 'Well I'm Tom Williams, and I've been sent to see if I can help, from Mr Kirkpatrick.' And he said, 'Boy, there's a needle – sew!' These bags were coming off the back of the chaff cutter about

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[81] Tom Williams, 2B 16.0.
[82] Yerex, pp. 105-6.
[83] Sarah Williams, 24 February 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape2 side A 0.1.
[84] Julie Cruikshank, *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1998), pp. 43-4.
[85] Tom Williams, 1A 18.1.

one every 30 seconds and I had to start sewing them up. Well I didn't know how to sew a bag, but by the time I'd spent about five minutes at it I was an expert. And that was sort of my introduction to life in Southland.[86]

He learned to turn his hand to anything, to work hard and to get his hands dirty, he learned to get on with the 'hard case blokes' who work at the abattoir, to respect people from all walks of life and not to take advantage of being the boss's son.[87]

Despite the contrast with his father's Cambridge education, I think Tom's experience still bears the hallmarks of family tradition. Listening to some of the anecdotes about his great grandfather, which Tom heard from his father and uncle and tells later in his narrative, it seems to me that they express admiration for the ability to get on with all sorts of different people. For instance Tom told the following story about TC Williams as the owner of 'Te Parae'.

One occasion the fencers – they seemed to have pretty much permanent fencers – were being paid up and they knew that for three months work the fencers would then go out to the ... hotel and have probably three weeks of drinking before they cut out the three months of cheque, and then they would come back and start work again. And when they came back after a week, and TC said 'What are you guys doing here wanting work?' and they said 'Well we've cleaned up our money, and we need work again.' And he said 'Well you can't have spent that much money in one week, just drinking. You must have been doing something else.' They said 'Oh no, just at the hotel.' So the conclusion he came to was the bloke at the hotel had ripped them off. So he got the coachman to bring his horse and his trap around ... and he went round to the hotel – grabbed his shooter as he went – and walked into the bar and accosted the hotelier with the news that in fact his fencers had turned up two weeks early and he'd obviously – the hotelier had ripped them off, the publican, and that he would like their money refunded now please. And the publican said that he had no intention of doing any such thing, nor had he in any way ripped them off. So TC pulls a revolver out of his holster on the side of his hip, and proceeds to shoot the bottles off the bar – bang, bang, bang – and the publican very quickly changed his mind and produced the money. So TC was happy. He went home, gave it to the fencers, they went to the hotel and spent a couple of weeks drinking and then came back to work. That all

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[86] Tom Williams, 1A 27.9.
[87] Tom Williams, 1A 18.1, 20.8, 22.9, 27.9.

sounds a quite fine story. The hotel in the 50s partially burnt down, and again it's alleged that when they were stripping the hotel they pulled down the old – sort of the façade of the bar, and here were all these bullet holes. Now I don't know, but I guess if it was true that it would probably lend some credence to the story. However time has blurred so whether it becomes myth or reality I do not know [laughs].[88]

This anecdote also shows TC as an autocrat used to wielding power, or what Tom calls the 'no nonsense, the boss-is-right-no-matter-what' attitude. It finds an echo in the kind of training Tom's own father saw fit to give him, the kinds of stories Tom tells about it, and the lessons he has learned about bosses and workers. However, Tom's laughter and final remarks suggest discomfort with the rough arrogance of his ancestor and namesake. Such behaviour would not be acceptable today.

With these lessons about workers and bosses learned and a year travelling overseas, Tom was now ready to take over 'Te Parae'. At this point his narrative, which until now has been simply chronological, becomes also thematic. Each theme – farming, public service and family – forms part of the totality of his custodianship of 'Te Parae'. First he must maintain the economic viability of 'Te Parae'. He introduces two vital new factors, his recently developed interest in deer hunting, and the information that while at school he had learned to fly. This announces Tom's innovative approach to managing the farm. He is the new broom. He gets rid of his father's Romney sheep and Shorthorn cattle studs, which require a lot of work for little financial return, and instead begins the helicopter deer recovery operation and deer farming, while continuing to build up the race horse breeding.[89] Innovation and commercialism both maintain the tradition of family and land, and are part of that tradition. For instance, Tom tells with pride the story of his mother's influence at 'Te Parae' in bringing the horse stud into the equation:

When my mother and father married, that was the origins of the horse stud. Mum said she would bring her dogs because she was a musterer in the high country, and certainly her family were – you know pretty much taken out in the slump – they were very close to bankruptcy, and the only thing that put food on the table was the wage or the salary that my mother earned when she – she was off contract mustering. So she had a team of dogs and that's how they

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[88] Tom Williams, 2A 14.7.
[89] Tom Williams, 1A 40.9, 1B 0.3.

survived. And she said she'd bring the dogs, and she had a couple of horses – she'd bring the horses. The old man said 'Well the dogs are useful and they're most welcome – we need them. But the horses can stay behind because they're no use at all.' They were race horses – one of them was a mare that she was given because it wouldn't breed, and the other was a mare that she bought for five pounds. And both of those families – inevitably, history would say – the mare that wouldn't breed did breed, and the mare that she bought for five pounds also bred and they're now two of our foundation families of the stud, you know, 60 years later. [And my mother] bought a horse – a mare – by tender, which is a most unusual way of buying horses .... This horse just looked over the loose box ... and Mum saw the head and thought it was the most lovely head she'd ever seen on a horse and she said 'That's the horse I want.' So she tendered 2000 pounds and bought the horse, and the horse turned out to be Sunbride who established a dynasty here. But prior to that she had four fillies in a row and none of the fillies ... could run very well on the race track, and so after she had the last one and it couldn't run the old man said 'Well I think that that mare should go down the track. She's clearly not good enough.' And Mum said 'I disagree. She's staying here.' And the old man said, 'Well I think that she should go, you should get rid of her.' And Mum said 'If Sunbride goes I go with her, and we'll walk down the road together.' And so again the old man sort of relented fortunately because then she had a colt and the colt won the Melbourne cup and the Sydney cup. Yeah – so Dad was pragmatic enough to say that he was definitely wrong in his judgment ....[90]

Later in the interview, Tom tells a story of TC, which suggests that the ability to take advantage of commercial opportunities is one that is valued in the family.

[H]e was a commercial individual, he saved his pocket money, he bought some potatoes from the – one of the boats that came into the Bay of Islands, got the local Maoris to give him a hand to plant the potatoes. And they said 'This is a really good deal.' And he said 'We'll go half and half.' And so they planted the potatoes and then it came time to harvest the crop, and so TC took his half and the Maoris took their half and – and they all went their own ways. Next planting season came around and – and the Maoris said, 'Well that was a good deal boss. We should do that again?' and he said 'Yep that's great – we will, but', he said, 'this time you've got no seed because you've eaten all yours, and I've

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[90] Tom Williams, 2A 30.3.

got all mine in the shed so it'll be 75/25.' So – but the crop was bigger and the Maoris got plenty out of their 25 percent, but TC had enough to then sell potatoes to the whalers and the sealers and the boats that were coming in to the Bay of Islands. And so he graduated from that activity, as I understand it, to acquiring land.[91]

Both of these stories have the feel of well-told family tales, and indeed Yerex has recorded the first story briefly, and also one similar to the second.[92] While both express values that are important to the family, innovation and commercialism, they also reflect other concerns of the present day. The first of the two manifests more recent attitudes applauding independence in women. The second attempts an adjustment for latter-day sensitivities to racial prejudice in the reassurance that the 'crop was bigger and the Maoris got plenty'. This attempt is unsuccessful because it does not address the racial stereotypes that are central to the story, and which today reflect poorly on the founding father of the Williams dynasty in the Wairarapa. Rather, the attempt serves simply to reveal Tom's own sense of unease with the anecdote.

Tom then turns to the theme of public service, speaking of it as though it was the most natural thing to do. In 1972 his father died, and the following year Tom 'took over from him' as an elected member of the County Council.[93] He served on the Council for 12 years and was chairman for six, before resigning to help with the deer industry.

And the deer industry in 1984 was looking to set up a marketing organisation for the deer industry and it had a producer organisation called the Deer Farmers Association and they wanted to set up a marketing side of it, and it was called the Game Industry Board and I was persuaded to put my name forward to... be involved with the Game Industry Board. It was a composite board unlike the Meat Board or the Wool Board or the Dairy Board where they were just made up of farmers, this board was made up of industry people, processors and exporters and farmers, and so I was – ultimately ended up being appointed as the chairman of that organisation as its inaugural chairman. And I spent 10 years as the chairman of the Board ....[94]

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[91] Tom Williams, 2A 19.4.
[92] Yerex, pp. 123, 17.
[93] Tom Williams, 1B 3.5.
[94] Tom Williams, 1B 2.5.

And it was a challenging time for the [deer] industry. We developed marketing plans, we developed a brand called Cervena in direct response to the downturn of the consumption of venison in Europe, subsequent to the Chernobyl explosion and the concerns of the consumers about – about radiation – in the animals. And there had to be a way of differentiating New Zealand venison from – from everybody else's. Yeah. So we developed the brand Cervena.[95]

He goes on to speak in a similar vein about his involvement in the Thoroughbred Breeders Council, the Ministerial Commission of Inquiry into Racing, and the Racing Industry Board that was established as a result of its findings.[96] Tom prefaces these developments with the words, 'I was persuaded', which suggest both reticence and a sense of duty in accepting these roles. Being a community leader is a natural extension of his position as part of a large landowning family, which he is willing to accept but should not take for granted. Here the class issues of land ownership come into focus.

The third theme is family, his marriage, his children and their careers, and focuses strongly on the story of the recent death of one of his sons in a helicopter accident. Finally, he draws this all together with some reflections on his ongoing activities and interests, which leads me to ask about the future. His reply returns immediately to the question of family and land, and how to maintain continuity:

So what about the future?

Ah – ah – well – I'm not sure – I think that – I have a bit of concern about life in rural New Zealand – I have quite a lot of concern about it, I have to say. And I think that – an organization like 'Te Parae' that probably used to run 5000 stock units was very economic [and] now we're running 6500 stock units and it's economic but it's only just economic. I suspect that in a few years time it won't be enough. And so I think it's important that the next generation gets skills off the farm. And – and I think New Zealand's a wonderful place to live and great place to rear children and have fun, if you like, in terms of recreational pursuits that are available to anybody in this country on a real low cost basis by international standards. But I just have some concerns about – about ultimately where the country goes, and so I've encouraged the kids to do

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[95] Tom Williams, 1B 4.2.
[96] Tom Williams, 1B 5.3, 6.9.

what Tim's done effectively and go and get paid in American dollars and bring it back to New Zealand. I mean they double just by the mere conversion factor. Guy I think will always be a rural person – he'll work for Wrightsons and where that'll take him I'm not sure but – I wouldn't encourage him to come back to 'Te Parae' any time soon, given the sort of level of salary that ... he can get off the farm as opposed to the one he can get on the farm. But you know I hope they'll always maintain 'Te Parae' for what it is and – and I suppose if I had – a sort of a wish it would be that there's always a Williams here at 'Te Parae', simply because of the history of the place and how it evolved and – but I would say that it's probably inappropriate to – expect – well certainly there's no way in the world that we could divide it between the two boys, or even our daughter Angela, and expect any of them to get anything approaching a reasonable living off it. It just wouldn't happen. So ... it's got to stay as one unit and it's also, I think, got to be run as a place to live and come home to, rather than a place to say 'This is where we're going to make our fortune'. It won't happen .... So the future – yeah, I see it as the children being involved in activities off the farm, and perhaps in large measure out of the country, but always having 'Te Parae' to come home to.[97]

Tom is a man of action as indicated by the common refrains in his narrative: 'I formed an organization', 'I was looking for something else to do', 'we developed'.[98] Key stories are of achievements, all of which contribute to the economic viability of 'Te Parae', either directly through changing farm practices, or indirectly through his work on producer marketing boards. Tom's concern is first and last with the continuity of land and family, a continuity, however, which is no longer certain.

HB Williams

HB is a small, weather-beaten, wiry man. The interview took place not at his home, but at his holiday cottage beside Rotoiti where the family has been coming since HB was a boy. Other family members have adjacent holiday houses, and grandchildren were coming and going during the day. Although I spoke to HB at the family reunion

[97] Tom Williams, 1B 30.2.
[98] Tom Williams, 1A 40.9, 1B 4.2.

he did not initially volunteer to be interviewed. Later when I realised that this branch of the family was under-represented in the cohort I asked him directly.

Like Tom's, HB's story is one of maintaining the family land and fulfilling the duties associated with it. The free narrative begins with a nod in the direction of the missionary ancestors and quickly moves on to the story of the land and the family. HB highlights the ways in which the family has overcome a series of threats to its continued ownership of the land, both 'Turihaua' and other blocks on the East Coast. He then moves on to speak about the family's business interests and the charitable trusts that have been established with the wealth thus generated. Next he comes to the questions of how he, as the second son, came to own 'Turihaua' and pass it on to his own sons, and of how he also became involved in the family businesses, connections which have now mainly been severed. Finally he returns to the more comfortable subject of farming and particularly tree planting, which occupies much of his energy in retirement. Unlike Tom's, HB's story is fraught with conflict which gives it a binary structure. HB is ambivalent about the family's historical land ownership and wealth, constantly on the defensive. Gender is also an issue with HB who is under the shadow of his able and domineering father much of the time.

HB begins his narrative with a brief history of his missionary ancestor whom he refers to as 'my great grandfather ... brother of Henry Williams'.[99] He notes that William Williams compiled the Maori dictionary and grammar and translated the Bible into Maori, before coming down to the East Coast to set up a mission station at Waiohika. After 20 years the 'Hau Hau fanatics' caused him to move to Napier, where he became the first Bishop of Waiapu. HB remarks on the prodigious ability of William Williams to walk great distances between the Bay of Plenty and Wellington. Educated and fit, the bishop is here the model of muscular Christian gentility.

With the salient points of William's life thus disposed of, HB moves on to the story of land acquisition, and how he came to be at 'Turihaua'. In many ways this is a story like that told by Tom Williams, of land and family intertwined. He explains that his grandfather, JN Williams, bought land where Hastings now stands, and also, in

[99] HB Williams, 19 January 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 0.3.

conjunction with his cousin, Samuel Williams of Te Aute, bought numerous properties around Hawkes Bay. JN then rode up the East Coast and leased '70 or 80,000 acres' from the Maori at Waipiro Bay, and later bought still more land to the north near Hikurangi, and to the south, namely 'Turihaua' itself. Meanwhile JN's sons, HB, snr. and AB, returned from their studies at Cambridge, and were sent to manage some of these properties.

What is interesting about this explanation, and where it differs from Tom Williams's narrative, is in its defensiveness and the constant justification. This begins when he notes that in his walking William must have passed a lot of the land that was later owned by the Williams family – 'not that he bought any land', he hastens to add.[100] HB then continues:

And his son was my grandfather who established a big farm in – almost what is the middle of Hastings today, from the railway line back towards the mountains. And in those days it was just starting to do the orchard expansion and – he subdivided his property into orchards and sold them gradually off ... and he bought land around Hawkes Bay, in bigger blocks in the back country. He wasn't the only one. Of course the other side of the Williams family, the Henry Williams were doing much the same. They had a son of Henry's called Archdeacon Sam who ran Te Aute – gave Te Aute ... to the nation for an area for Maori schooling. And they had other properties they bought. Some were bought as trust properties to endow the school and others were for members of the family. They also moved up to the East Coast, Ruatoria and that area, together with JN who, having established himself pretty well in Hawkes Bay, decided there must be somewhere else where he could buy land.[101]

[laugh]) I don't know what their attitude was in those days – but – he wasn't satisfied with having a lot of land in Hawkes Bay, he wanted to break in country. I guess you could say he wanted to see the improvement and the production side of the colony – because it was very, very obvious that we had nothing else in New Zealand in those days except to produce, produce.[102]

HB's comment 'He wasn't the only one' sounds defensive as he goes on to implicate others, while his laughter and remark, 'I don't know what their attitude was in those days', sounds somewhat critical of his grandfather's activities. He also offers several

[100] HB Williams, 1A 1.9.
[101] HB Williams, 1A 2.6.
[102] HB Williams, 1A 3.7.

justifications for the acquisition of so much land: the (not strictly correct) fact that Samuel 'gave Te Aute to the nation', and that some of the properties were purchased to endow the school; that the properties were for other members of the family; that JN had the best interests of 'the colony' at heart; and that in leasing large areas of land from Maori and returning it to them after development, he has been a benefactor to Maori also.[103] Whatever the truth of these assertions, they remain as justifications in his narrative and suggest a considerable degree of unease with the family history.

It is perhaps significant that HB is of an earlier generation than Tom, and had begun farming through the 1940s, when large blocks were once again being eyed for subdivision and soldier resettlement, and the 1950s, when high commodity prices meant small farms remained profitable. By the late 1960s and 70s, when Tom began farming, falling prices and rising costs were eroding profitability and land aggregation became necessary to achieve economies of scale. For HB large land holdings are possibly more difficult to justify than for Tom, who seems untroubled by them. Also possibly HB's branch of the family has always been conscious of a conflict between the missionary enterprise and large land holdings. This view was certainly expressed to me by one or two interviewees, and there is a letter to JN Williams from his elderly mother in which she exhorts him to think of his soul rather more and earthly wealth rather less.[104] In addition to this there have been accusations levelled at the Williamses of the East Coast for many years concerning their large holdings and the advantage taken of their long connection with local Maori.[105] These views were most famously refuted in Parliament in 1915 by Apirana Ngata, a speech which was quoted to me by several interviewees in defence of the family.[106] It is clear that HB is well aware of these accusations of undue influence when, in speaking of JN's journey up the coast to get land, he tries to choose his words with care:

He established contact with the Maori, which probably wasn't very hard because his father had been a missionary up there. And they were – not so much persuaded – but they leased their land .... [And by about 1912 when he

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[103] HB Williams, 1A 4.1.

[104] Interview with Jane Tylee, 7 June 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 Side B 32.2, 35.0; also letter in possession of Jane Tylee from Jane Williams to her son, JN Williams dated 9 August, 1890.

[105] Evans (1998), p. 603-4. Already in the 1890s JN Williams was being criticised for land aggregation.

[106] *NZPD 1915*, Vol 174, pp. 616-9. Others who refer to this speech include Terence Williams, Gerald Williams, John Russell.

had made many improvements on the land] he decided to terminate the leases and let the Maoris take it back.[107]

HB rejects the idea that Maori were 'persuaded' to lease their land to the Williamses, and emphasises that it was his grandfather's decision to willingly return the newly-developed land to them rather than renew the lease.

In speaking of the purchase of 'Turihaua' itself, HB reveals that there has recently been a Waitangi claim against it, a matter which at first he seems to be reluctant to talk about.

[JN] actually bought our property in 1896. And maybe there hangs a story, but I'd better not tell you about that.

Why not?

Well – just recently we got a notice in the paper under the Waitangi Tribunal making a claim against our property.

Have you?

Absolutely completely farcical because first of all they said Henry Williams – that's the old missionary – had bought this land, and Henry never bought any land in Hawkes Bay or Poverty Bay, it was his sons and grandsons. They said he'd bought it in 1850, he'd paid for it with two blankets and an axe – this is 5000 acres, and it's still the same today, and when the Maoris went back to him some years later and said they'd worn out the blankets he refused to give them new ones. And this came in the mail within the last four months.

This was sent to you?

Yeah, a Waitangi claim against 'Turihaua'. And so you know, the ridiculous part was that Henry Williams was dead in – 1857 I think – and this property was bought in 1898. And it was bought by my grandfather, JN Williams, from the bank of New South Wales, who had held it for three years, who had foreclosed on the previous owner who was a man called MacDonald and had gone broke – cut most of the bush off it but had gone broke. So the relevance for a claim is so ridiculous – it was untrue, you know. And I would have liked to have shown it up with a good deal of publicity but the lawyer said 'Oh, don't do it, you know – draw attention to the early days.' So they just wrote a letter, gave them a fax and these people were told in no uncertain terms they hadn't even done any homework – could have rung the Land Department and got that story for the cost of a toll call, plus maps if they wanted them for $50. Anyway that's the

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[107] HB Williams, 1A 4.1.

saga of the Treaty of Waitangi as far as me and my father and grandfather, who owned the property in line, and now it's my son who owns it.[108]

HB's voice is raised, he becomes very angry and is scornful of the research on the claim as he goes on to tell me that far from paying with axes and blankets his grandfather paid 25,000 pounds for the property. Nevertheless he heeds the lawyer's advice not to draw attention to the early days, both the advice and HB's compliance suggesting some unease with the family history. There is a curious twist at the end of this diatribe when HB appears to see the Treaty, for which the family is usually quick to give Henry Williams credit, turned instead against the family. Despite, or perhaps because of HB's discomfort with large land holdings he is fierce in defence of the propriety of their dealings, and well-versed in the details of the original purchases. Here, as in so many other instances, the Williamses' concern with integrity is apparent, so often as a response to allegations over several generations of having deceived Maori.

Eventually HB again picks up the story of family land and his father's management of both 'Turihaua' and the backblocks 'Huiaroa'.

Interestingly enough, after the 1918 war, I think in particular 'Huiaroa', Dad's property, was offered to the government for soldier settlement and it was offered again after the 39 – 45 war, and both times they turned it down. They said it was too far away from the places where you can get a labour force, or too far back for the soldiers to go – which was so ridiculous because there's beautiful land on it, as well as a lot of pretty rough stuff, and they turned it down twice. No, it's the sort of thing that I quite like to say to people who say, you know, 'You've got this land – and – and you've hung in there'. We tried to get it available to soldiers and they just wouldn't take it.

So Huiaroa block's still– ?

Yeah, well it's now been sold to a forestry company ....[109]

They didn't ever try to take 'Turihaua' for a soldier settlement?

Oh, yes. I'm glad you asked that question, because Walter Nash, during the war, he came to Dad and said 'I think "Turihaua" would make a great soldier settlement property.' In those days I think they would have probably divided it up into – I don't know six or seven perhaps – places. Anyway Dad said 'All

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[108] HB Williams, 1A 7.1.
[109] HB Williams, 1A 11.5.

right if you do that' – and we then had the biggest Angus stud herd in New Zealand – he said 'I'll boil all my cattle down, and close the farm.' He said 'I've got three children, one in the airforce' – I was in the islands and my sister was in the Fannys doing – preparing to be parachuted into France or Germany in the – you know, in the WACs as they called them – and so he pulled back. And Dad also said 'I've given a Spitfire' – from his own funds (I don't know what they were worth then. I wouldn't want to give one today) – 'towards the war effort apart from all the other ... charities.' So Nash pulled out, and left the family in charge of it.[110]

There is an interesting sequence here in which HB once again offers a justification for the amount of land the family owns ('we tried to get it available to soldiers and they just wouldn't take it'), but it is not until I question directly that he is obliged to tell the story of how his father fought to save 'Turihaua' from soldier settlement. Despite his initial response, 'I'm glad you asked that question', my impression was that this was a combative stance as HB's voice is once more slightly raised and angry. 'Turihaua', with its mild coastal climate and situated relatively close to Gisborne's freezing works and saleyards, was no doubt a much more desirable property. The fact that the family has since sold 'Huiarua' to a forestry company suggests that it was probably marginal for farming, certainly in smaller settlement blocks. Furthermore in *East Coast Pioneers* (1990) these two stories are interconnected, as 'Huiarua' was offered for settlement instead of 'Turihaua'.[111] HB's narrative is silent on these matters.

So 'Turihaua' remains more or less intact, and today is farmed by HB's second son. It appears that the property is still a family affair, with the children, or at least the sons, having varying shares. It seems his oldest son lives on the property and has a small part as one of his deer farms, while the youngest one has 'taken his cash' and bought an adjacent horticultural property.[112] Echoing the concerns of Tom Williams for the future of the family farm, HB sees the need for 'Turihaua', which once had 12 or 14 owners, to eventually have just one, because, he explains, 'properties need to be big today to be successful – well to be economic'.[113]

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[110] HB Williams, 1A 12.7. NB. Walter Nash was a Minister in the Labour Government of the time.
[111] Gillies, p. 276.
[112] Dominy, p. 41, notes that in the high country families are rooted to a particular property, not just to farming. The same probably applies here and explains why HB Williams and others interviewed like Terence Williams, Tom Williams and John Russell talk of buying adjacent land for their sons.
[113] HB Williams, 1A 13.7.

While this could be seen as the end of the family farm tradition, I think it should be understood rather as an attempt, in a difficult economic climate, to try to maintain that tradition by encouraging the purchase of other and, if possible, adjacent properties. That this is HB's view of it is suggested by what he says next:

[My father] was the oldest and there was my Uncle Arnold who went up the Coast, and there were three sisters, and there were two younger brothers, both were either killed in the war or in the epidemic afterwards.

Right, mmm.

So Dad had always been – he was always there to look after – there were nephews and nieces and goodness knows what, and he was considered the brains of the family with the ability to, you know, look after their finances and see that they were all looked after. And so he stayed on there and he didn't get married, and his sisters got very cross with him and wrote letters saying, 'HB, you know it's time you got married. You should have someone now – you're 49.'[114]

HB is uncertain, when asked, whether his aunts were anxious to see their brother produce an heir to continue the care of the family, but he then goes on to talk about his own grandchildren, as though the farm and care for the wider family are closely linked in his own mind, and he is trying to continue the tradition.

HB now moves on to speak about his father's business interests, and in particular his partnership in Kerridge-Odeon Theatres, which made the family quite wealthy. Although the company suffered in the 1987 share market crash, HB and his sister had been warned to reduce their large personal holdings and had put them into charitable trusts. He concludes by saying: 'And they've been very, very successful. They're doing very well, giving away a lot of money now, so someone's benefited in the long run'.[115] Once again wealth is justified, this time by philanthropy.

Being part of the family firm has not always been easy for HB, who appears to have lived in the shadow of his influential and able father. After his brother's death he was manpowered out of the army due to his father's influence, although he did not discover this until years later. He returned to the farm:

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[114] HB Williams, 1A 15.9.
[115] HB Williams, 1A 21.3.

Anyway that's it – so I went on to the land and – and because there was no one else I began to run the farm, under my father who was a very – dominant man, and wouldn't let me take the reins – always said 'I can farm this property from the telephone by my bed.' And I'd say 'Well I've been in charge of as many soldiers as you've got stud bulls, and I think I should be able to have a go, you know.' [laughs]

It must have been quite tricky actually.

Oh, in that particular era fathers never gave away – or very few – until they virtually couldn't cope at all. You know they hung in there – they never said to their sons 'Well, you can take over now.' Because they always thought they'd make a mess of it. And that's why I let my son take over when – oh, 15 – 17 years ago now – and we're still on the farm. We watch what he's doing, and I go down and assist with the stud work and help him – go for a drive around the property now and again, do some tree planting, but he's the boss and that's the way it should be.[116]

Nor has he enjoyed the business side of his family responsibilities. Speaking of the fate of Kerridge-Odeon he says:

When I think how it ended up, poor old Sir Robert [Kerridge] and Dad would have turned in their graves. You know it was a complete fight at the end, because of the change in ownership and a very smart young businessman in Auckland taking over.

Were you involved in it at that stage still?

I was involved. I had an alternate director. I wasn't going to get into big business, I didn't want to be – it was pretty cut throat – so we had a lawyer who was the director. But there was nothing but trouble. We could see problems coming. He stacked the – just before the final crumble of the slump, he stacked the meeting with his people. We had our family all up there and he unseated our director, kicked him out, and made, you know, terrible remarks about some of the family. So we weren't terribly pleased and then of course – bung! – down she went! So it all disappeared – still there, shares are worth nothing. All the properties and things have been sold.[117]

Kerridge-Odeon is not the only family business that HB was pleased to see the last of:

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[116] HB Williams, 1A 41.7.
[117] HB Williams, 1A 17.9.

My father was involved in first of all the Hawkes Bay Farmers, and his uncle was Williams and Kettle, and when Dad got to Gisborne he was involved in the local Gisborne Sheep Farmers Company – which I ended up slipping into his shoes in that. And we, you know, we were taken over and we became part of Dalgety Crown company which covered the whole of New Zealand. I was glad to get out of that. Get down to Wellington, they're pretty cut throat fellows there [laughs].[118]

Although HB's story, like Tom's, is one of land and family and the associated responsibilities, it is also the story of a burden born out of duty. 'But it's the way life goes,' he says. 'You get responsibilities whether you like it or no.'[119] Worse still, it is a duty performed in the shadow of his father. 'Some people are born for it, they're good at it, but not me.'[120]

What really makes HB animated is talking about trees. He likes to talk about the Eastwoodhill arboretum which he has been instrumental in keeping going, once again by the establishment of a trust.[121] In retirement at 'Turihaua' tree planting is one of his main interests, but his initial response to my invitation to talk about this is instructive:

And you're planting trees?

My father wouldn't plant a tree. It's extraordinary because his brother, AB, the one up the coast, was completely tree mad. Like he built up his own aboretum round his home at 'Puketiti' which is just above Te Puia. Had the most magnificent trees and everybody interested in trees would go and visit his property where he'd had trees growing since 1903. But Dad never wanted to plant a tree. He did put in one plantation of no merit whatsoever, and whenever I suggested planting a tree – 'Oh, why do you want to do that? Just gets in the way and you've got to protect them from the stock.' So it wasn't until I became fully in charge that we started to plant more general trees. But I must admit my father did a lot of erosion control planting, which was good. And we've carried that on through two generations ... [so] probably 'Turihaua' is the best planted property on the coast as far as erosion control. We've, you

[118] HB Williams, 1B 2.8.
[119] HB Williams, 1B 2.8.
[120] HB Williams, 1B 4.2.
[121] HB Williams, 1B 11.2, 13.3, 14.0, 16.1.

know, continually planted gullies and hills, and now we really need to cut some out – too thick, the willows and poplars. But Hamish'll now fence off an area to divide two paddocks from each other ... and he'll say 'Well you can plant trees there.' So it's good – I enjoy that part. And it gets a bit much to look after them sometimes. At the moment I've got ... 5 or 600 pohutukawas planted on the roadside. The main highway goes up right along for five kilometres I suppose past the property, and I virtually planted the whole of our side of the road in pohutukawas.[122]

Even on the subject of trees his father can cast a shadow. Perhaps tree planting has been partly a form of resistance in a life compliant to the call of family duty. Hard work as tree planting may be in your 70s, one can sense HB's relief at being able to talk about this. He not only planted his own property but encouraged others through his involvement with the Eastwoodhill arboretum and Farm Forestry Association. The significance of tree planting as a way of belonging will be discussed shortly.

Bill Ludbrook

I interviewed Bill Ludbrook at his home in a smart suburb of Auckland. He had phoned me earlier asking for an interview, since he was anxious to be recorded. His story begins in the present with the purpose of establishing himself as the defender of the Ludbrook land, thus revealing from the outset the conflicted nature of his narrative. He then moves back in time to tell the story of the land and family, thus establishing his ancestral link with the land bought by Henry Williams. He also wants to establish his strong emotional link with this land, drawing on childhood memories of his hero father, on the story of his attempts to get back to the land. In his narrative there is a parallel between the loss of his father and the loss of the land. He seeks to walk in his father's footsteps with regard not only to land but his relationship with the local Maori community. He completes his narrative to the present and then once again breaks the chronological continuity, backtracking to his major focus, the attempt to regain 'Pouerua' and in particular his attempt to persuade Maori to allow him to do so. Bill calls on Maori history and legend to reinforce his claim to the land of his fathers, but is unable to overcome Maori determination to ensure their own claim. He is finally unable to live up to his dead father.

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[122] HB Williams, 1B 8.3.

The interview began with Bill telling me that over the years, as Henry Williams's name cropped up in connection with Treaty claims suggesting that he had 'ripped the Maori off with the land', Bill had felt impelled to do some research on the matter.[123] He then showed me a Bay of Islands tourist brochure, written by Fergus Clunie in 1998 at about the time of the family reunion, and highly critical of Henry Williams.[124] Bill is clearly indignant about this and tells me he has written a response to Clunie in the Northland *Chronicle*, based on his own research. He is also delighted that Kim Hill had interviewed Clunie on National Radio, and 'ripped into him'.

[T]his [brochure] was specifically about Henry, and because it relates to the Ludbrook land up there, I thought well you know, if I don't defend it who the hell else is?[125] ....

He was saying that Henry ripped the Maoris off the land basically.

The stuff he bought for his children up there?

Yeah, yeah – and he was heavy-handed in taking the land, and rather than educating the Maoris how to plant the land – well they were brilliant farmers anyway, I mean no one could teach the Maoris how to be gardeners – they were superb gardeners. But he was saying that he wanted to – landed gentry was the terminology he used – he wanted to set up his sons on the best land available, and he virtually used his influence with the Maoris to get it. And he did get it. But I mean he didn't take it or anything like that. It was – it was – willingly – sold to him because of the Maoris [and] what they thought of him. He was a giant of a man .... But because the land happened to be subsequently Ludbrook land for over 100 years, then I had a personal interest in what he was saying, and I thought that what he was saying was – was too harsh, and – and I think unless somebody – intervenes and puts another point of view forward, then it just rolls on. Everyone believes it.

So when you say too harsh, do you think that some of his criticism is justified?

It's probably debatable ... you can have an opinion that may not necessarily be absolutely accurate without taking everything into account, and I just felt that he was too harsh because – I know, you know, what the Maoris' attitude

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[123] Bill Ludbrook, 21 August 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 0.3.

[124] Fergus Clunie, *Historic Bay of Islands: A Driving Tour*, New Zealand Historic Places Trust Register Series 3, (Auckland, 1998).

[125] Bill Ludbrook, 1A 2.7.

was to him having the land. And it wasn't antagonistic <u>at all</u>. And there's plenty of evidence to support that .... They were very happy for him to have the land.[126]

Like HB, Bill is defensive about the land and how it was obtained from Maori.

Having thus established himself as the defender of the family land and of Henry Williams's reputation, Bill then returns to the beginning to tell the story of the Ludbrook's arrival in New Zealand, their link with the Williams and the land, the place where he was born.

Is this [issue with Fergus Clunie] what stimulated your interest in all this, or did you already have an interest? I mean you'd been involved in these debates previously?
Yeah – I mean, I guess it goes back to the story that – you know this is where I was born, this place. And it's the area that Henry – you know when he purchased the land from the Maori chiefs in 1833 – you know his sons farmed the land and then subsequently the Ludbrooks took it over. And that was a direct result of Caroline marrying Samuel Blomfield Ludbrook.[127]
[The young Samuel Ludbrook arrived with his mother in 1843] And then Samuel grew up and married Henry's daughter, Caroline and they bought ... a piece of land from John, which is one of Henry's sons, because Henry's sons were managing this farm of 12,000 acres from Pakaraka right through the Taiamai plains to Ohaeawai .... So John and Caroline bought this small piece of land there, and started farming and then gradually built it up into a dairy unit, and they farmed there and made their lives there and their families. And then it was eventually taken over by my grandfather, who was a son of Samuel Blomfield Ludbrook. Caroline's my – when people say 'How are you related to Henry Williams?' instead of saying 'Well he's my great great grandfather,' I usually use the shortened version and say 'Well Henry's daughter's my grandfather's mother.' It seems much closer .... So then eventually my grandfather took it over and then his three sons inherited the land, Geoff and Cecil and my father [who] was Ken .... And of course on the piece that my father had, that's where we were all born, and he had about 500 acres and he milked cows on it. It was beautiful land, you know volcanic and rich. And he had the dairy unit and next to him was Cecil – had about, I don't know, one or two thousand acres – and then next to Cecil was Geoff who owned 'Pouerua'.

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[126] Bill Ludbrook, 1A 4.6.
[127] Bill Ludbrook, 1A 6.8.

And that – 'Pouerua' – was part of the original homestead, and the other blocks were cut off from that. And 'Pouerua' is where the original house is built, where Henry's sons built it .... Henry Junior built the house about 1845, and he lived there for a while, and then eventually my uncle Geoff lived there. Geoff and Lucy and they had their family there. So there, you know, we're talking sort of subsequent to Henry Williams's day by a long way.[128]

Thus Bill establishes his ancestral link to the land in much the same way as Tom and HB Williams have done. However, unlike either, Bill is keen to claim the relationship with Henry Williams. Of course in his case he cannot escape this link between Henry and the land, but he appears to be seeking ways to express this more closely. He has also had to learn to defend against the accusations levelled at Henry, and all of this is important to his subsequent argument to retain the land. It is Bill's relationship to Henry that justifies his claim to the land. This is in contrast to HB Williams, who allows his desire to defend the propriety of the family land purchases to be restrained by legal advice and perhaps his own sense of unease regarding family wealth, and to Tom for whom it appears not to be an issue.

Bill then recalls his own memories of living at 'Taiamai' as a child, memories that are inseparable from the death of his father. He becomes so emotional that at times he is unable to speak. His few memories of his father are all of a small boy's hero and protector, and are all associated with farming activities.[129] Although he was not allowed to go to the funeral himself, he cherishes what his mother has told him about it.

[My mother] said that the funeral was just something else – this huge – the Maori population were – she said they just came out of the bushes on their ponies. That was the way she described it, but they just came from everywhere on horseback and – and she can see – she said she could see all the ponies tethered to the picket fence and Maoris everywhere. I mean he was a – he played rugby and cricket, and I mean he was just sort of the life of the party sort of thing. And the Maoris used to love him and respect him. Subsequently, long after that I learned from the Maoris that – that – you know

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[128] Bill Ludbrook, 1A 7.7.
[129] Bill Ludbrook, 1A 20.6, 24.9.

the elders used to tell stories about him – as a young man – when he used to play rugby and go to the pub and all this.[130]

What is important about the number of Maori who attended his father's funeral? For Bill, the family and the land, Henry Williams and the land he bought, are undeniably linked with Maori, and Bill is making here the claim that his father too kept to the family tradition of earning the love and respect of Maori. He is shortly to make the same claim for himself.

In order to be near the support of her own family, Bill's mother decided to move to Cambridge. This was not a happy time for Bill, and he tells the story of an urgent need to return to the farm.

I had this extraordinary sort of yearning to go back, and I became quite sick and so my mother thought 'Something not right here.' And she took me to see several doctors, and they didn't know what was wrong with me, in fact they couldn't find anything wrong with me .... But then I remember my mother telling me this particular day – I would have been about 11 I think – and she said that some friends of hers were going up north .... They were driving up to spend about a week up there and [my mother arranged for me to go with them]. And she told me this day and I'll never forget it, that I was going back up north .... So I was over the moon. I mean it was just so vivid. And away we went .... So I went back and it was just the most extraordinary feeling. I was just so happy to be there and it was funny really because normally when you go away from home at a young age you sort of get home sick for your family, but I wasn't, I was just the opposite. And I remember these people [I stayed with] lived not far from the farm and I remember walking over the farm – I would have been 11 I suppose – and – and it was just silent of course – there was no one around but – and memories came back to me .... [131]

This is the key pattern in Bill's narrative, the attempt to get back to the land. The loss of his father is symbolised in the loss of the land, and so Bill's quest for the land is invested with extraordinary emotive power. Family and land become one.

When he was 13 his mother did in fact decide to return to the farm. His memories of this return are golden – flying north in a DC3, the house full of flowers for their

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[130] Bill Ludbrook, 1A 28.9.
[131] Bill Ludbrook, 1A 31.5.

arrival, being met by his cousin, 'this beautiful young girl', who gave him a wink and said 'Hiya, Billy'. It was all 'just too good to be true'.[132]

By age 19 Bill had stepped into his father's shoes. Not only was he managing 'Taiamai', but he was also playing rugby with his Maori mates, often, he says, the only Pakeha in the team.[133] After the game they would go to the Ohaeawai pub and, when the pub closed, to a woolshed where they would party and sing till late. Bill was the guitarist and he recalls: 'That was just absolutely awesome. I tell you the whole bar was full of Maoris and these wonderful voices would sing and harmonis[e].'[134] Bill is not only part of the team, but seems to be 'leader of the band'.

However seven years later in 1972 they sold the farm. Bill says his marriage meant they would have had to build another house for his mother, an expense which the farm could ill afford. Bill and his wife ran a motel in Paihia for some years.[135] They then moved to Cambridge, which proved a mistake as it reminded him of all his childhood unhappiness. He recalls his feeling at the time: 'I just wanted to get the hell out of there again', and remembers that his life just seemed to be going around in circles.[136] However, while there he did a farm management course, learning modern farming techniques, which were quite different from what he had always known. He recalls that he felt 'Yes, I can be a successful farmer because, you know, you follow these principles'.[137] Here I think is a key to Bill's story. He does not talk about his feelings in losing the farm, but this I think indicates that he viewed the loss of 'Taiamai' as a personal failure, and perhaps having let down his father, the man of whom the Maori said 'He was the best of the Ludbrooks'.[138] Certainly it was something that he had to make good. Still hankering to go home and back on the land, in the early 1980s he took a farm managing job for his cousin, who owned 'Pouerua', the block with the mountain and the old family homestead. He describes

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[132] Bill Ludbrook, 1A 37.7.
[133] Bill Ludbrook, 1A 42.5, 1B 1.7, 3A 18.8.
[134] Bill Ludbrook, 3A 21.5.
[135] Bill Ludbrook, 1B 7.5.
[136] Bill Ludbrook, 1B 13.1.
[137] Bill Ludbrook, 1B 13.1, 18.0.
[138] Bill Ludbrook, 3A 18.8.

these two years as 'paradise'.[139] But the 1980s were difficult times for farming, and his cousin was not the easiest person to work for, and so once again he gave up farming and moved to Auckland where he is now involved in real estate and property development.

Bill now comes to the crux of his story, the sale of 'Pouerua' in 1989 and his attempts to regain it. 'Pouerua' included both the sacred mountain and the old homestead built for Henry and Marianne Williams by their sons. He believes the sale came as a complete shock to the family, who had no prior knowledge of it. Bill himself first read of it in the *New Zealand Herald.* He tells me:

Unfortunately [Peter Ludbrook] didn't offer it to any of his sons or anything, he just sold it.

He had sons that could have – ?

Oh they were screaming – they were screaming to take over – three big strapping boys – were just dying to take over the farm. And Peter had some sort of – brain fade or something – and – and just – sold it. And it was just – you know it was so devastating for the boys .... And it was just one of those bizarre things really.[140]

Bill says that if he had known he would probably have bought it himself.

He goes on to emphasise the significance of Pouerua, the mountain, the pa and the surrounding landscape, which he claims is 'the most important historic monument in New Zealand by a country mile'. It is the 'birthplace of Nga Puhi', has seen a thousand years of Maori occupation, and is comparable with the pyramids, the Colosseum and Hadrian's Wall.[141] He showed me photos of the area taken by an Auckland University archeological group, demonstrating the evidence of intensive Maori occupation and gardening. Bill speaks passionately about the mountain, saying he could talk for hours about it, and telling me at some length its Maori history.[142] This apparent knowledge and respect for the indigenous serves in part to anchor Bill and his family in a past that predates the family's ownership of the land.

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[139] Bill Ludbrook, 1B 15.5.
[140] Bill Ludbrook, 1B 38.0.
[141] Bill Ludbrook, 1B 44.2.
[142] Bill Ludbrook, 2A 2.9, 4.5, 5.6.

However, the farm was sold to a developer who soon found his plans frustrated by the Historic Places Category A rating of Pouerua. Already, Bill recalls, under its new owner the fences were becoming dilapidated and gorse was beginning to grow. The developer gifted the mountain back to Tai Tokerau Maori Trust Board, but according to Bill the gift came with a deal to also purchase some of the land, and the expense involved meant the Trust Board had no funds to maintain the mountain in good order. Bill asked the Trust Board for first option if they should ever considered selling it, and soon found himself with a contract to buy.

But when the local Maori people discovered what the Trust Board had done, Bill says 'all hell broke lose', and he was asked to go and speak to them on the Oromahoe Marae of Ngati Rahiri.[143] This he did in 1997, taking his wife and children with him. He tells the story of this meeting which for him was momentous and so emotional that when he stood up, he tells me, he was at first unable to speak:

And I just couldn't say anything – I was – I was just frozen, you know. And I stood there telling myself not to be a bloody idiot, and to control myself, but all of these memories that I've been talking to you about all came back to me. And then I heard this voice from this woman, very gently spoken woman – I don't know who it was, but I could hear this voice saying to me, [softly] 'Kia ora, Bill, kia ora', just like that. And it seemed to go on forever – I seemed to be just standing there doing nothing forever. It probably was five minutes – I don't know – it just seemed it. And then I gradually brought myself under control.[144]

He then goes on to read much of the speech he made to the Maori, which is a justification of his claim to the land. He begins with a Maori introduction which is poorly pronounced, but explains its significance to me as he proceeds. He reads almost the entire speech, leaving out only some sections that he has already told me concerning his own life. Essentially it is a statement of the family's view of their history and their legal and moral claims to the land, the continuity of their relationship to and custodianship of the land, his own history and his sentiment towards the land, his knowledge of the land including local Maori history, and the intertwining of family and Maori history. His speech could also be understood as a

[143] Bill Ludbrook, 2A 0.1.
[144] Bill Ludbrook, 2A 9.1.

way of constructing indigeneity. It includes many elements found in similar claims made by pastoral runholders in the South Island, although Bill places much stronger emphasis on the connection with Maori.[145]

He begins by declaring himself by birth, long-standing family association and sentiment to be part of the land and the people of Nga Puhi:

I'm greatly honoured to be here today, together with my wife and family. I was born and bred at 'Taiamia', our daughters Erica and Louise were born at Paihia, and our son Hamish was born at 'Pouerua'. We have tried to raise our children to possess three important qualities – integrity, pride and courage. I am an exile from Nga Puhi. I understand your fears about Pouerua, and therefore I think you should know something about me and my background and future intentions for Pouerua. Ever since I was a small child I have had a strong bond and love for Taiamai and Pouerua and the Nga Puhi people. In recent years that love and bond has turned equally strong to one of compassion and sadness, with an inner force and drive and urge to help to stop the neglect and deterioration at Pouerua, and to nuture its associated family and tribal history. My family's association with the Nga Puhi people over a very long period of time is the backbone of an important period of European – early European Bay of Islands history.[146]

Bill then goes on to detail the association of his family with Nga Puhi, emphasising the length of that association, the fact that his ancestors' arrival was welcomed, that Henry Williams dedicated his life to Maori who in their turn admired and trusted him. This link is sealed by the fact that Hone Heke and Henry were buried near to one another, both now a part of the land.

It commenced on the arrival of my great great grandparents to the Bay of Islands on the 3rd of August 1823 .... They were greeted by a canoe full of Maori headed by Te Uri-o-kana, the son of Maka, an uncle of the respected chief of Nga Puhi, Hongi Hika. Henry and Marianne Williams settled at Paihia, and Henry established a mission station.

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[145] For a discussion of claims to indigeneity made by pastoral runholders of the South Island at the Waitangi Tribunal hearings on the Ngai Tahu claim see Dominy, chapter 7, 'Asserting Native Status', pp. 207-27.

[146] Bill Ludbrook,2A 10.5. This is the beginning of a speech which Bill reads and which lasts for 20 minutes in the narrative. Note: 'Taiamai' and 'Pouerua' refer to the Ludbrook farms, while Taiamai and Pouerua refer to the localities in which these farms lie and after which they are named. These are somewhat fine distinctions based on the context.

Henry Williams as a 23-year-old was a lieutenant in the royal navy. He was a courageous young man who had immense physical strength and mental determination. He feared his God and therefore had no fear of men. He arrived in the Bay of Islands as a missionary. His purpose in life was to help the Maori people. The Maori people learnt European domestic and educational skills from them, and ultimately Christianity.

In the following years Henry Williams was admired and trusted by the Maori people. He was a protector of Maori rights and he was a peace-maker. He had great mana among the Maori people. Te Koki and Ana Hamu protected Henry and his family at the Paihia mission station for 27 years. Ana Hamu was a powerful ariki in her own right, and was a signatory to the Treaty of Waitangi and the deed of Pouerua. His association with Northland Maori was long term. It was Henry Williams the Maori people came to for advice regarding the Treaty of Waitangi. In the church grounds at Paihia is a stone cross memorial erected by the Maori people in 1876. On it are written the words, 'He was a father indeed to all the tribes, a courageous man who made peace in the Maori wars.' In the meeting house or whare runganga on Waitangi Marae, is a Maori carving of Henry Williams. He and Marianne are buried in the church grounds at Pakaraka. His friend Hone Heke is buried close by.

Bill now explains the Ludbrook association with 'Pouerua', as the 'seed' of Henry Williams, and invokes the names of respected Maori leaders of the past. He emphasises again his own love for the land and the family's association with local Maori.

My great great grand parents had 11 children ... and they needed occupations. Farming was the only option. On the 21st of January 1835 Pouerua was sold to Henry Williams by the Maori chief, for his children as a farm. Amongst the Maori names on the deed of sale are the Ngati Rahiri leaders from Pouerua and Waitangi – Marupo, Te Kemara and also Ana Hamu, Haratua and Heke and others too. On the paper are written the words, 'Know all men by this paper of ours that we do give over and sell to Mr Williams, to his children and his seed forever, the land called Pouerua.'

In December 1858, Henry and Marianne Williams's daughter, Caroline, married Samuel Blomfield Ludbrook, and in 1860 they settled on part of this land at Taiamai, now known as Ohaeawai. Pouerua has been farmed for several generations of Ludbrook sons until 1989, when a cousin, Peter Ludbrook, sold

to John White. Before then Pouerua's mana had been protected by the Ludbrooks and Williams for no less than 155 years.
I am from a family of six children, and my father's name was Ken, a hard-working man and a good sportsman. He was an excellent cricketer, and played fullback for Ohaeawai plus the Bay of Islands North Auckland rugby rep team. He was extremely popular amongst the Maori people. He took me with him on his horse for mustering sheep as a four-year-old boy. He taught me to ride a horse confidently at the age of five. We all loved him and loved living at 'Taiamai' and growing up amongst the Maori people. Life could not possibly be better and happier for any living human being.
In those days there were no trees on Taiamai plains – you could look right across Ohaeawai rugby club anywhere and from the main road you clearly viewed the Pouerua mountain, the birthplace of Nga Puhi, a sacred cultural monument which has over the generations become unique in this country.

At this point Bill skips over some of the content of his speech which he has already told me relating to his father's death, and the family's departure from and return to the farm. He picks up the story again from the time he took over management of 'Taiamai' at age 19, telling in detail a Maori legend associated with a sacred rock called Te tino o Taiamai, situated near the 'Taiamai' homestead. This rock not only gives the district its name, but is the 'focal point for the *mana* (sic) of the land conquered by [the Nga Puhi chief] Kaitara'.[147] Bill concludes: 'From this legend of Taiamai came the Nga Puhi greeting to a welcome visitor, "Ka kata nga puriri o Taiamai" – "The puriri trees are laughing". As a young boy I was told this story and I have never forgotten it.'[148] The greeting appears to have arisen from a lament by the conquered tribe, Ngati Pou, at the loss of this land, and in an inversion of meaning seems to have become a claim of belonging by Nga Puhi.[149] Bill thus appears to make his own claim to belonging through that of Nga Puhi.

He then goes on to register his dismay at the sale of 'Pouerua', although here he makes a significant slip, speaking at first of 'Taiamai', the land which he himself sold, rather than of 'Pouerua'. Such a mistake suggests the very close linkage in Bill's

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[147] Jeffrey Sissons, Wiremu Wi Hongi and Pat Hohepa, *The Puriri Trees are Laughing: A political history of Nga Puhi in the inland Bay of Islands* (Auckland, 1987), p. 122.
[148] Bill Ludbrook's version of the legend of Taiamai appears in Sissons, Wi Hongi and Hohepa, pp. 121-2.
[149] Sissons, Wi Hongi and Hohepa, p. 122.

mind between the sale of these two family farms. He continues by making a plea for the continuation of that long association between his family and Maori through the land, which he vows to protect:

In 1989 when Peter Ludbrook ... sold 'Taiamai' ['Pouerua'] I could not believe it. I said to my family 'There must be some mistake. The family cannot sell "Pouerua". It is our heritage, our family history.' The Maori chiefs sold it to our great great grandfather out of their love and respect for him. The family have protected Pouerua and have honoured the responsibility to Nga Puhi for 155 years. Such an honour and prestigious responsibility cannot suddenly be simply cut off with the swipe of a pen. The Maori people have always been able to walk freely over Pouerua at any time during the custody by my family. In 1835 when the Nga Puhi chief sold to my great great grandfather there were still 1400 Maoris living on the northern slopes of Pouerua mountain. They were granted stay by Henry Williams. His sons, and generations of Ludbrook sons have granted freedom to the Maoris to roam Pouerua, and so it will continue. (Bear in mind I had this contract – I was the legal owner of this mountain at this stage.)

In 1992 during a visit to the Bay of Islands whilst I was driving the main road passed 'Pouerua', passed Pakaraka, I was saddened to see that Pouerua Mountain under the new ownership ... was visibly deteriorating. Gorse was beginning to flourish due to the obvious neglect from the time of the new owner. I decided then and there that I would dedicate my life to appealing to the Crown, the New Zealand Historic Place Trust, to other members of my family, and finally and more importantly to the Tai Tokerau Maori Trust Board.

In 1992 Bill says he wrote to the Minister of Conservation asking for protection for Pouerua, but it was not forthcoming, so he took the only course open to him:

My unfailing determination to ensure the protection of Pouerua is at long last starting to look hopeful as a result of pursuing the only effective solution and option available – to regain custody of Pouerua as the seed of Te Wiremu, Henry Williams, will provide a chance for the long term protection which will benefit us all.

He declares that he is not seeking the authority and prestige which is associated with the land and will remain with Maori, and promises to protect their wahi tapu.

We are not seeking mana whenua – and cannot. We only desire to continue with the family connection. It is a very important family matter .... Fears about

my family regaining custody of Pouerua are unfounded. Nga Puhi have everything to gain. I know the Maori and family history of Pouerua, of Tahuhunui-o-rangi, of Rahiri, of Maikuku, the birth place of Nga Puhi, I know where the wahi tapu areas are, I know where Hone Heke is buried (Bear in mind ... there are very few people who know where he's buried. This astounded them, they couldn't believe any of this – a lot of this.) Pouerua's a sacred cultural monument. I have agreed to the registration of the wahi tapu. The Maori people retain their access and they will retain their mana.

Bill now proceeds to give the hui a history lesson. He seeks one more time to ensure that the Maori gathered at the hui know that their ancestors sold the land to Henry Williams and his 'seed' willingly and never sought to regain it; that the trouble over land arose out of Grey's jealousy at Henry Williams's influence with Maori and was not based in fact; that even after Henry Williams was disgraced by dismissal from the CMS, Maori remained loyal to him and he to them.

Finally there is one issue which needs to be clarified regarding the sale of Pakaraka land to Henry Williams back in 1835. It relates to accusations by Governor Grey which had a devastating effect on Te Wiremu. There are some present-day Maori people who need to know this. When Governor Grey arrived in New Zealand he was jealous at the influence Henry Williams had over the Maori people, and proceeded to undermine his position and publicly discredited him. When Williams purchased Pouerua he became the focus of charges by Grey that he was involved in land speculation. Grey also decided that the chief cause of Heke and Kawhiti wars with British troops was the land purchasing, and mounted a campaign to persuade Henry Williams to give up his land at Pakaraka. Grey was so jealous he subsequently arranged the dismissal of Henry Williams from the CMS. Henry Williams met the attacks from Grey with dignity and stubbornness. He had an adequate answer for each charge Grey levelled, so adequate that the Governor could not face him and kept on repeating his charges. Henry Williams made the ultimate challenge: 'The Governor must substantiate his charges or retract them.' If they could be substantiated the Governor could have the land. All the Governor had to do was to prove his charges, but the Governor would not, because he could not. There was not, and never had been any challenge by the Maori to Henry Williams's possession of land at Pakaraka. He did not take advantage of his undoubted influence over the Maori to secure the land, but paid a fair price.

That the Maori were satisfied is proved by the fact that although given the opportunity by the Land Commissioners in 1845, none objected to the purchase, and even in the days of Heke's war, no Maori ever contested ownership ....

Henry and Marianne left their mission station in Paihia for the last time in May 1850, retired to 'The Retreat' at Pakaraka. Soon after his arrival at Pouerua, he wrote a circular letter to the Maori people dated June 5, 1850. In that letter he said, 'Friend, here am I residing at Pakaraka. The top of Pouerua is to be my residence where I can see before me and behind me. No one will come here but my children. I love my children. Come my child and see me. I am getting old but my heart is alive to speak of the things of God and Heaven. Write to me, keep near to God whose word alone is true. The word of man is false. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all things else will be added unto you. This is from me, your father, Henry Williams.'

The Maori people flocked to him at Pouerua. They even built a road from Kawakawa to Pakaraka to be near him. Powerful chiefs like Kawhiti and Heke settled near Pouerua to be near him for instruction. Heke on his deathbed asked Williams to bury him. When Williams himself died in May 1867 two warring tribes nearby were in pitched battle over a land dispute. When word was passed around on either side that Henry Williams was dead, the Maoris were paralysed. Such was his mana that the fighting stopped. Peace was effected forever, and the leading chiefs immediately left the site to act as mourners. His devoted brother, William Williams, said this: 'The swords are beaten into ploughshares and the spears into pruning hooks, and the whole fabric of native superstition is gone. The weapons of warfare are laid, and their animosities with distant tribes are given up, their petty quarrels settled by arbitrators.' This was felt by the Maoris to be the most fitting tribute to his memory.

Bill concludes his speech with a final appeal to Maori legend:

I will close now by saying one more time – we are not seeking mana whenua and cannot. We only desire to continue with the family connection to Pouerua, and to look after it and to keep alive with dignity the family and tribal history, and the close relationship with the Maori people of Nga Puhi. That is a very personal, sensitive and important family matter. It will ultimately help to restore your pride as well as our pride – to clear the gorse and let it stand majestic again. This should be accepted as a joint interest between the

Ludbrook family and the Nga Puhi iwi. I have pursued this matter which is so close to my heart because I know it is right. I also believe that if Pouerua had any other custodian it would not be right, for we have all ready seen what can happen. The spirits of the maunga are not happy, of that I am sure, but they will be if we do what's right for this great place called Pouerua, the two posts of Tahuhunui-o-rangi. I will look forward to the day when we are able to join together and say, 'Ka kata nga puriri o Pouerua' – 'And once again the puriri trees are laughing.'[150]

Bill's claim to knowledge of the local indigenous history and myths associated with Taiamai and Pouerua, and his mention of the burial place of Hone Heke, are intended as a particularly potent claim to the land. Not only is this a reassurance that he knows and will respect the sacred sites, but in saying 'I have never forgotten' and invoking Nga Puhi sayings Bill seems to indicate that he shares their cultural values associated with the land. At the same time this appeal to indigenous knowledge appears to anchor him more deeply to the land, his roots now extending beyond the period of Williams and Ludbrook ownership, making the case for his earlier claim to be 'an exile from Nga Puhi'. Just as Peter Read and Tom Griffiths talked of Australians 'embracing Aboriginal history as part of [their] own history', so Bill has sought to embrace local Nga Puhi history as his own.[151]

Bill recalls that he felt that many of the Maori present were in sympathy with him. He cites Dun Mihaka and an unknown Maori woman, who argued that the land was sold to Henry Williams because of his relationship with the Maori, they wanted him to have it, and therefore it was not for present day Maori to claim it back. However, according to Bill the meeting was swayed against him by Kingi Taurua:

Kingi Taurua was a hard man and he – he had showed no emotion at all. All he wanted was to get the mountain back. Didn't – nothing like that interested him whatsoever. As far as he was concerned the mountain belongs to the Maoris and that was that.[152]

Bill argues that Kingi Taurua was able to persuade them because many Maori do not know their own history and were therefore unable to refute his arguments. They were

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[150] Bill Ludbrook, 2A 10.5-30.2. This concludes the speech.
[151] Peter Read, *Belonging. Australians, Place and Aboriginal Ownership*, (Oakleigh, Vic., and Cambridge, 2000), p. 181.
[152] Bill Ludbrook, 2A 30.2.

easily persuaded to believe that they had been 'ripped off'. I think Bill was caught between the family's view of this particular piece of history, which probably matches that of some (older) Maori, and present day discourses of generalised 'colonial disinheritance' of indigenous peoples.

Bill did not try to involve other members of the family in his quest for fear they may have tried to dissuade him. 'I guess it really goes back to my childhood ... I just had this fantastic attachment to it somehow – to the land – and my father. It's hard to explain really, but it was just so strong.'[153] Although the land he fought for is not the land he lost, not his father's land, it is the land of his fathers. 'Pouerua' is not simply a surrogate for 'Taiamai', it is the core for family and Maori alike. To regain 'Pouerua' would have more than compensated for the loss of 'Taiamai', and erased Bill's sense of failure and shame. When I ask if the battle is over he replies: 'It's dead. It's dead. Dead as a dodo'.[154] Three times he has tried to return to the land of his fathers, and three times he has apparently failed. These days Bill says he just dreams of one day retiring to Paihia.

In this final appeal to Nga Puhi he has marshalled every argument he can, calling on four epistemologies of land and people: the personal, the family, the historical, and the indigenous. But perhaps in the end he is justified in abandoning the quest. After the meeting a 'minority radical group' occupied Pouerua mountain for several months, and in the end Bill decided not to pursue it further. He withdrew his contract for the land.

So they occupied it for five months and you wrote to them at the end of that time, did you?

I did. Well they still occupied it and they were going to stay there forever, and I mean I could have got the police .... I could have removed them .... I wasn't going to give up on it until I was absolutely certain that there was no use in pursuing it [but] I mean I wasn't going to go ahead with that current feeling amongst the Maori people. I wanted support for it rather than – than – it wouldn't have worked, I wouldn't have wanted it that way. So I just wrote to them and said, 'OK'.[155]

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[153] Bill Ludbrook, 2B 9.1.
[154] Bill Ludbrook, 2B 5.1.
[155] Bill Ludbrook, 2A 42.9.

He argues that in the final reckoning regaining the family land was less important than maintaining the relationship with local Maori. It may have been that in the face of such opposition his nerve failed him, but he seems to suggest that to own the land without Maori support was counter to the spirit in which it had always been held by the family. If the family is seen as identifying both with the land and with Maori, when these two come into collision one must give way. The land is relinquished in order to preserve the family relationship with Maori.

The aim of these three memory biographies has been to reveal some of the rich detail in each narrative, showing how the men comprehended their experiences, and exploring the interactions between personal experience, identity, the family myths associated with land and wider social discourses. For each there have been different contexts, pressures and experiences but all are shaped by the myth of family identification with land and claims of belonging. All three begin their narratives with recitations in which family and land are inextricably linked and tell stories in which the maintenance of those links is paramount. What these narratives also show are some of the ways in which family myths are formed and passed down through the generations, through the repetition of these same recitations and stories, some of which are now recorded in family books, and through the expectations placed upon each rising generation.

All three are also, to a greater or lesser extent, unsettled narratives. Tom Williams is a confident man whose identity and that of his family are bound up with 'Te Parae' over four of five generations. Although his memories seem relatively composed, he is uneasy on two scores in particular. Firstly, the stories that he tells about his great grandfather, the founder of this particular Williams dynasty, make him uncomfortable and embarrassed. Although they still express some values of importance to the family, they also evoke images that no longer find favour today. Secondly, he is anxious about the future of his family's relationship with the land, and their ability to maintain such a large homestead on the present acreage. This is an issue which strikes at the heart of Tom's own identity.

HB Williams and Bill Ludbrook have much greater difficulty than Tom in attempting to compose their memories. HB appears to have felt trapped by family history and a strong sense of family duty, and is not at ease with the family's ownership of the land which gives them their identity and their claim to belonging. Bill Ludbrook's narrative seems to convey a sense of failure, which is rare in oral testimony. But such a conclusion belies his anxiety to tell his story, Bill being the only person who approached me for an interview rather than the other way around. An alternative explanation of his narrative may be that it is based on a religious (Christian) myth in which the quest for the land as creation, the 'immemorial past', the 'ever-enduring base of things', gives way to redemption, to recognition of the self in other and the 'future expectation of the kingdom', thus in a sense 'eternalizing concrete experience'.[156] In other words, perhaps Bill's apparent failure is justified in the end by choosing the greater good, to place the family's relationship with Maori above regaining ownership of the land. It could be seen not just as redemption at the personal level, but for the family also, a view which might assist Bill in at least partly coming to terms with his failure, and also explain his anxiety to tell his story.

The oral testimony

Drawing on the memory biographies of the previous section, and also other narratives from the cohort, this section will examine particular motifs of the narratives relating to land. These include: ways of claiming the land, such as the use of genealogy in narrative; the responsibility for continued possession of the land by the family and ensuring succession, an issue which is central to all three of these narratives; and duties that are associated with landowning. I will look at some of the differences that occur in these narratives including ambiguity towards the ownership of land, and stories of loss of the land. Being a farmer for most of one's life does not necessarily mean that one's narrative is conformed to the models seen here. Among the men I interviewed were some whose narratives were determined by quite different imperatives. Some of these too will be discussed. This section will also explore the

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[156] Paul Ricoeur, 'The "Figure" in Rosenzweig's *The Star of Redemption*' in *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative and Imagination*, translated by David Pellauer, edited by Mark I. Wallace (Minneapolis, 1995), pp. 95, 100-104.

influence of gender on narratives of land. The fact that the three memory biographies are all those of men is not altogether surprising, since almost always it was men who took on the farming of the land. Only one woman whom I interviewed, Sara Williams, was farming family land, and her narrative shares some of the same features as the first two narratives. However, many of the other women too draw on memories of the land on which they grew up, and Sara's narrative has aspects in common with these also.

Claiming the land in narrative

The idea of a link between land and family seems a particularly strong and pervasive one in many of the narratives. Karl Hutton, a city-dweller all his life, in his search for lost family connections, finds the farm his grandfather once owned. 'I wanted to stand on the land and see what it felt like – just that,' he laughs, as though somehow being on the land would bring his grandfather closer.[157] Families are frequently identified by the land with which they are associated. In speaking of his distant cousins, Hugh McBain refers to the ' "Atua" lot', meaning all the family who are related to and living in proximity to the family at 'Atua', probably on land which was originally part of 'Atua'.[158] Another speaks of his mother's cousin, identifying him for me by the name of his station. 'KS – KS as in Ken Williams you know – "Matahiia", north of Gisborne'.[159] These last two are ways of speaking to someone assumed to be an insider, a member of the family with some prior understanding of these references, or a landholder in the same area and of the same class.

In the previous section all three narrators appear to have mental maps in which the names of families are inscribed upon the landscape in a slowly changing succession, forming a 'social connection' to the land through continuity of inheritance over generations.[160] However each narrative is adjusted to suit the particular purpose of the narrator and his rhetorical requirements.

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[157] Karl Hutton, 2 September 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 3 side B 12.2.
[158] Hugh McBain, 12 June 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 Side B 8.3.
[159] Tom Reed, 9 November 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 2 side B 14.6.
[160] See Dominy, p. 217.

Tom Williams begins by situating his own family among others of more or less the same class of long-term, large landholders.[161] As he focuses on his own family the map becomes more fluid and detailed. Ownership and subdivision of properties parallels marriage and reproduction through the generations, as he moves towards the explanation of how he comes to be the present incumbent of the family home and property. Land is named, Birthday Hill being only the first of many, and to each station – 'Kumukumu', 'Wiremu', Kaututane', 'Mamaku' – the name of a family is attached as a superscript – the Morvyn Williamses, the Dillons, the Deans, the Myers.[162] Their connections to landowning families in other parts of the country are also noted. Tom points out that his family is now 'the only Williams as such'. Although daughters have often received a share of the subdivision, it has usually been a smaller share than that received by their brothers, and his view remains a very masculine one of land defined by ownership and inheritance. At the end, as we have seen, he establishes his own claim to 'Te Parae' and the original homestead, reciting his direct lineage emphasised by the Coldham name.

Bill Ludbrook's narrative, like Tom's, is one of generational subdivision and inheritance, but is skewed to suit the purpose of his story of making a claim on a lost birthright. Since he no longer owns the land of which he speaks, he connects with it as his birthplace. In an emotional appeal he prefaces his story with the words, 'you know, this is where I was born, this place'. He then points to the historical and genealogical connections. Bill's claim is predicated on the genuine claim of Henry Williams to the land and his relationship with Maori, the close connection between

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[161] Dominy, p. 42, notes that identity also depends upon 'being firmly rooted within high-country networks' and that these relationships are also inscribed in place.

[162] Dominy, pp. 54-5, quotes Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History,* (Chicago, 1989) p. 152: 'Enclosure is essential, not only to the act of settling, but also to the *description* of settling'. Dominy argues that naming a space creates symbolic boundaries, and identifying features by name enables people to locate themselves in the landscape. Names define places relative to other places and render the vastness knowable. On p. 140, Dominy notes that among the run holders of the South Island high country, station names are more significant than family names since stations can be 'passed from generation to generation, sold from family to family, or even remain in a family but with a different family name in the instance of a daughter and her husband inheriting the rights to the lease', or owned by a family that is incorporated as a land company, and managed by one of the siblings. She also quotes Kevin O'Connor, 'The Conservation of Culture and Nature in New Zealand Mountains' in *Proceedings of the 1989 Hill and High Country Seminar,* (Lincoln University, 1989), p.99: 'By naming, and respecting names we affirm the bonds that tie us to land'.

the Ludbrooks and Henry Williams, and the length of time his descendants have lived there.[163] Finally his claim is also made through local indigenous knowledge.

HB Williams's focus is more diffuse than either of the previous two because he is attempting to accomplish so much in his narrative. Firstly, he is trying to describe the acquisition of a very dispersed group of properties in Hawkes Bay and the East Coast by both his grandfather and his grandfather's cousin, properties on which various members of the wider Williams family were installed as managers and owners. The genealogical connections thus become quite complex, and tend to be submerged in the story of acquisition. Secondly, as has been mentioned, HB is uncomfortable with the nature and magnitude of this land acquisition and he is seeking to justify it on the basis of benefaction to the wider family, to Maori and to the nation as a whole. Thirdly, he is trying to explain how he came to be on his own particular property, 'Turihaua':

And both the brothers were then sent by their father up the coast to look after various properties. My uncle, AB, went to Waipiro for a start. There were three or four stations straight in from Waipiro Bay towards the mountains. One was called 'Puketiti'. That's where he built his home and lived. And my father was told to look after a big station of 23,000 acres further back than where AB was ... but also at the same time JN had bought the property we're on now ... They got a lease with a right to buy in 1892 [and] actually bought our property in 1896[164]

What HB is describing here and in the excerpts quoted earlier is a large family business based on land. Magnitude is important both in terms of the number of properties and their size. It is a business in which the founder and family patriarch dictates to his sons, and directs other young family males, a tradition of which HB is both beneficiary and victim. He is the recipient of a desirable piece of land, '*our* property', but also acknowledges, and has suffered under, the tradition of paternal control, indicated by the use of the passive verbs, '*sent* to look after' and '*told* to look after'. (italics are mine)

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[163] Bill Ludbrook, 1A 6.8, 7.7.
[164] HB Williams, 1A 6.7.

Another piece of this business jigsaw is revealed in the narrative of Terence Williams, who was 83 when I interviewed him. He had grown up on and farmed a property near Gisborne called 'Sherwood', which was half of the 'Wairakaia' property purchased by Samuel Williams. Terence begins by trying to describe 'Sherwood' in his childhood but soon finds it is impossible to do so without bringing in the family. Like HB he portrays a Williams family land business involving Samuel, JN, 'old HB', and many of their nephews, great nephews and cousins.[165] However, unlike HB, Terence is not conflicted about either the ownership of land or the patriarchal workings of the family.

Even for those not born or raised on their family land, the recitation of land and genealogy can be important. Hugh McBain was born and raised in England, but left the British Army and came to farm at Te Aute in his twenties. He is one of the few descendants of Samuel and Mary Williams to still farm land around Te Aute, and some years ago bought and moved into the house that was built for his grandmother, Lucy Warren. Hugh is steeped in the history of the place through his mother's stories told to him in childhood.

I'd heard from a young age because my mother, when she ... lived here, their life seemed to revolve around the family only .... And you know they seemed to be sort of self-sufficient. And you see living here at the height of the thing, if you start up at the northern end there was Arthur Williams who lived in a house just by the county boundary, just before you get to Pukehou church. You know where Pukehou church is?

Yes, yes.

On the left, living there. So that was Arthur Williams, that was Samuel's nephew. He was the chaplain at the college. Then there was another house where Jim and Jean MacClean lived. That was actually the gardener's house originally. Then you had the 'Awarua' homestead which was a bit like this, you know, where Athol Williams used to live. You could see that from the road. There's a lot of trees planted just on the other side of the college .... So you had the family living there. You had Lydia living in the old family home at Te Aute, which is now the headmaster's house. And then behind that you had what they call 'The Cottage', which is an old rambling house ... where Allen

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[165] Terence Williams, 29 October 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 4.4, 6.6.

Williams used to live. He was Samuel's nephew, you see. Nephew as the chaplain, nephew as the farm manager. And then coming this way down at 'Roxton' he built a house for his brother, Edward .... And then you had Lucy [Hugh's grandmother] living here, and then later you had Mum's brother, Greville, living down at 'Penlee', and then you had ... another one, don't think they lived on the place, but down at 'Drum Peel'. You had Allen's descendants lived down there, so there were a lot of – Oh, and ... on the way to 'Drum Peel' there was one of Arthur's children – there was another farm there with another one living. So there were heaps of them, all of the families round about, and that wasn't including all the ones out at the coast. [166].

The focus here is less on the inheritance of land and more on the history of the family as a community, centred on Te Aute College and the trust farm. Hugh tours the locality describing the homes and occupations of the various family members, weaving between the recent (Jim and Jean Maclean) and distant (Edward) past without distinction.

It was suggested in HB Williams's memory biography that planting trees may be another way of claiming land, perhaps the metaphor of 'putting down roots' being taken literally. Dominy writes: 'Trees are a way of marking time, of locating events, of reading the history of habitation, of marking and measuring attachment'.[167] Many of the Williams properties are well known for their old trees. Terence Williams begins his narrative by telling of an early childhood memory of his grandfather planting a golden weeping willow at 'Sherwood', the first in the district, he thinks.[168] Tom Williams is planning to plant a garden at 'Te Parae' as a memorial to his son, Mark, surely an indication of his hope for the continuing relationship between the family and the land.[169] And as HB Williams remarks, his uncle AB was 'tree mad' and HB himself is a keen tree planter, telling me, 'You get a lot of satisfaction even going out and saying 'Well, I planted that fir tree'.[170] Today he talks of planting the road that runs between 'Turihaua' and the shore with hundreds of pohutukawa

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[166] Hugh McBain, 1B 5.0.
[167] Dominy, p. 57. She also suggests that 'historical memory [can be] measured by tall trees', p. 53, and writes of trees as 'boldfacing the functional and symbolic imprint of culture on the landscape', p. 35.
[168] Terence Williams, 1A 0.2.
[169] Tom Williams, interview notes.
[170] HB Williams, 1B 20.2.

trees.[171] The planting of native trees in particular may be seen both as a 'process of legitimation' supposedly reflecting positive changes in the relationship with the landscape, and as redemption from an environmentally destructive colonial past which lies in a 'return to Eden'.[172] Putting down the roots of native trees rather than those of exotics may have symbolic significance for this fourth-generation farmer.

An interesting twist is provided by Gary Williams who inverts the narrative relationship between land and family, to argue that his presence on family land partly justifies his claim to be a Williams. Gary is the son of the senior male descendant of William Williams, but he believes that because he is adopted he struggles for recognition in the family. One way that he claims this position is through the link to the land, 'Rotokare'. It was originally owned by his great uncle, Frank Williams, who 'got into some difficulty' and sold it to his older brother, Fred, Gary's grandfather. Fred then passed it on to his oldest son rather than back to Frank's son, and thence it has come into Gary's possession. Gary laughs as he tells this story, admitting that it was a 'big disappointment' to Frank's family and it has 'affected things over the years', meaning his relationship with the family.[173] Later in discussion about 'Rotokare' he tells me:

I had that battle as to whether I'm a Williams or not, and of course it's even deeper than that, because I am a Williams. But the local Maori kaumatua down the road here, he virtually said I was the rangatira, you know, the guardian of the land – in a manner that they couldn't do it properly themselves. And it's been the nature of me to do it. Like I haven't intentionally gone out to do it, but I've been struggling and fighting against the developers and trying to maintain the wild value habitat down here .... Yeah, it's in my nature to be like that.[174]

After providing a complex scriptural argument which connects his ownership of 'Rotokare' to his kinship with Henry Williams, Gary finally goes on to claim belonging out of a deep knowledge of the place, its geology and its indigenous history:

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[171] HB Williams, 1B 8.3.
[172] John Morton and Nicholas Smith, 'Planting indigenous species: A subversion of Australian eco-nationalism', in *Quicksands: Foundational histories in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand*, edited by Klaus Neumann, Nicholas Thomas and Hilary Eriksen (Sydney, 1999), pp.154, 159.
[173] Gary Williams, 20 September 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 1.8.
[174] Gary Williams, 2B 23.5.

You know I've got a little round stone here with a dolphin bone sticking out of it – it was found out in the paddock here – it's 1.8 million years old and – you know I'm part of the part of this – it's amazing – you get involved in it .... But this is the second largest pa site in Hawkes Bay just on the knob over there. Yeah, there's lots of middens all around the lake, yeah, with the wildlife and other things. And so there's been battles going on, people trying to develop land – they haven't got a very good view of me .... You know I'm a real oddball.[175]

Thus Gary's claim to 'Rotokare' is not made through descent and inheritance, but by a deeper authority: firstly the authority of the tangata whenua, whom he claims have declared him guardian of the land because of his fight to preserve it against developers; secondly because of his deep knowledge of the place evidenced by possession of ancient artefacts; and thirdly through scripture and the religious tradition of the family. Being the chosen guardian of the Williams land he can thus reinforce his claim to membership of the family.

Maintaining the farm and ensuring the succession

In these narratives there are two aspects to maintaining the farm and ensuring succession. First of all the appropriate training has to be given to sons who are intended to take over, and some of these narratives have rich anecdotal stories of induction into the cultural values and practices of being a landowner. Secondly the narrators tell stories of the various ways that they and their forebears have responded to changing political, social and economic conditions to maintain the viability of their family properties, and ensure the take over by the next generation. Women's contribution in raising the next generation (of sons) is taken for granted, but in some instances they are also given the credit for having maintained the succession in other ways.

After years at boarding schools, often from eight or nine years of age, most of these boys probably had surprisingly little experience of farm work. When they left school they had to be trained, a process that was usually directed by fathers, as was made

[175] Gary Williams, 2B 26.7.

clear by Tom and HB Williams.[176] Terence Williams's sister, who was present during parts of his interview, said she had always believed that instead of farming, Terence wanted to do medicine. Although he denied this he did admit that he would like to have done veterinary science. In their discussion around this issue it seems clear that Terence's choices were constrained by his father's expectations.[177] Eric Williams, the eldest son in his 'Te Aute' family, recalls that his father wanted him to go to Oxford or Cambridge, a tradition that was strong amongst earlier generations of the Williams. He resisted, finally agreed to go to the prestigious Cirencester Agricultural College, but found the course irrelevant to New Zealand conditions and left after two terms.[178] Eric eventually decided that he did not want to farm 'Te Aute' and left to pursue his own course of action. Though he went farming he tried to make his own way, and is rather reluctant to admit the help he received from his father.[179] Alastair Deans says he wanted to go into the army but felt obliged to return to the farm.[180] From these examples and others it appears that parental, and particularly paternal expectations both constrained the choice of occupation, and directed training.

Training consisted of both formal study and work experience, the latter being privileged over the former. Often after leaving school they would do some practical work such as shearing or shepherding, have a brief period of formal study, and then get additional practical experience before going home to begin taking over. Once again fathers seem to have organised this and looked to family or family connections to provide training positions. For instance, Alastair Deans worked for Peter Ensor at 'Double Hill' in the Canterbury high country after leaving school.[181] Terence Williams went first to work for AB Williams at 'Ihungia' near Tokomaru Bay.[182] He then went to Massey Agricultural College for two years to learn modern methods, and worked on a Hereford and Romney stud farm in Southland before returning to 'Sherwood'. When Gary Williams left school he had two shepherding jobs before returning to 'Rotokare', the first with his mother's family near Taihape, and the

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[176] Tom Williams, 1A 18.1; HB Williams, 1A 41.7.
[177] Terence Williams, 1B 35.0.
[178] Eric Williams, 2 June 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 25.3.
[179] Eric Williams, 1A 24.3, 29.4.
[180] Alastair Deans, 19 August 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side B 41.3.
[181] Alastair Deans, 1B 23.6.
[182] Terence Williams, 1B 41.1.

second on one of the farms of his Williams grandfather near Gisborne.[183] Eric Williams and his brother Bill both did their practical training at 'Te Aute' and on neighbouring family farms.

Although this training was a rather hit and miss affair, most men seem to think they learned useful farming skills and knowledge such as lambing and working dogs. They also learned a number of cultural values. John Russell was first sent to Southland to the farm of some family friends, and then returned to work as a shepherd at 'Tuna nui' before taking it over. He recalls:

Put on a horse, given a dog, told to do a lambing beat. I had never done one before. I had never lambed a ewe before, because my stepfather wouldn't let me out on the farm. So I had a dog I didn't know how to run, I had a horse I could ride, and I had a sheep I didn't know how to lamb. So I was dropped in the deep end a bit.[184]

The metaphor of being 'dropped in at the deep end', which has very masculine connotations of small boys being taught to swim the hard way, is apparent in other narratives also. Hugh McBain, arriving from the British Army where, in the officers' mess, he was used to 'silver salvers' and being 'waited on hand and foot', found the experience hard in many respects.

Started at the bottom as a single shepherd in the whare .... doing your own washing ...[having] spaghetti and chops for breakfast .... Yes, so that <u>was</u> quite hard , and it was quite hard not knowing ... having to get to grips with running a couple of dogs, keeping up with the ... head shepherd from Gisborne who had seven dogs and could whistle ... every move. And when he was setting off on the horse, they'd all be in a row, and you'd worry like hell if one of your dogs got in front [laughs], or got in the way when you were doing something if you couldn't control it. So it was quite challenging. Fortunately I had ridden a horse.[185]

The use of the second person here until the final sentence, suggests that Hugh is still uncomfortable with these memories of his inadequacies. Above all what these

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[183] Gary Williams, 1A 3.8.
[184] John Russell, 9 June 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 2 side A 29.6.
[185] Hugh McBain, 1A 38.5.

experiences taught them was to tough it out and to turn their hand to anything, 'having a go' and 'learning to take a beating', as John Russell approvingly puts it.[186]

Another thing they learned was how to get on with people of a different class, and how to deal with workers. As Tom Williams says, his father sent him to the abattoir to learn 'what the real world was about' after years of boarding school. He recalls his fellow workers: 'They were rough – to say the least they were rough ... quite different from anything I'd been used to, that's for sure.'[187] Learning to work with such people and learning to take orders unquestioningly from the boss were all part of the preparation for one day becoming the boss yourself. John Russell remembers that when he began shepherding at 'Tuna nui' his grandfather was more or less retired, overseeing the property, but not very closely.

There was a manager .... He was a sort of acting manager, so it was a difficult period.

Difficult for you as a grandson?

Yes, quite. So I came back and asked my grandfather some questions one night about what I thought. What we had been doing didn't seem to work, how should we have done it. So he quizzed me, and he discovered that nothing had been happening at all ... then everyone got a bloody rocket, and I turned up next morning and I was just about – worse than nobody.[188]

He learned when to keep his mouth shut, and to recognise and respect the dividing lines between workers and landowners.

Once they are in charge of the family farm, these men see themselves like their fathers and grandfathers before them, becoming responsible for its maintenance and succession. They tell the stories of their own efforts to keep the farm viable, but also the stories of earlier generations. Over decades these efforts have been directed towards overcoming specific threats, whether from government policy to break up large estates or to get land for the settlement of soldiers, general economic downturns, changing market conditions, or particular family circumstances. Within the first section of Tom Williams's narrative is the story of how his great grandfather subdivided his holding in the early 1900s between his thirteen sons and daughters in

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[186] John Russell, 2B 4.5.
[187] Tom Williams, 1A 18.1.
[188] John Russell, 2A 29.6.

order to circumvent some of the effects of the Land Reform Act and the Property Tax Amendment Act. Tom then not only tells of getting rid of his father's uneconomic Romney and Shorthorn studs and starting deer farming, but also the story of his mother's influence in establishing the race horse stud, all of which have contributed to the continued success of 'Te Parae'.[189] However, he is much less confident that the next generation will be able to make a living there, and certainly not entertaining the idea of further subdivision. Instead he is considering ways to ensure that it remains a place to come home to, saying that if he had a wish 'it would be that there's always a Williams' at 'Te Parae'.[190]

HB Williams tells of his father's development of the Aberdeen Angus stud, the story of his father's fight with the government to keep the farm from being taken for soldier settlement, and of his own effort to fend off Waitangi claims.[191] He has tried to keep 'Turihaua' intact as an economic unit for one member of the family, watching to see which of his three sons seemed most promising, and then retiring to make way for him.[192] Remembering his own father, and conscious of his responsibility to succeeding generations, HB says, '[My son Hamish] is the boss and that's the way it should be .... if you want one member of the family on a historical family farm. And he does a good job.'[193] HB also assumes a watching brief over the land of his uncle, AB Williams, which was once part of his grandfather's estate. He describes to me the complexities of inheritance since his cousin, Des Williams, died, and expresses satisfaction that it 'has gone back to the family'. 'You see this boy's grandfather who has got 'Puketiti' was my first cousin and Des's first cousin, so it's someone our side of the family that it's come back to,' he explains.[194]

Terence Williams discusses the changes over the generations on the two adjacent properties, 'Sherwood' farmed by his father and himself, and 'Coventry' farmed by his uncle. He tells of cutting the bush in the early days; of his father and uncle experimenting with different breeds of cattle trying to find which is most economic and most suitable for dry country; of buying up adjacent flat land to help them

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[189] Tom Williams, 1A 40.9, 1B 0.3, 2A 30.3.
[190] Tom Williams, 1B 30.2.
[191] HB Williams, 1B 6.8, 1A 11.5, 12.7, 1A 7.1.
[192] HB Williams, 1B 29.9.
[193] HB Williams, 1A 41.7.
[194] HB Williams, 2A 10.3.

through droughts; and finally of putting the land unsuitable for grazing into commercial forest.[195] When Terence retired he divided 'Sherwood' between his three sons, but is sad, even angry, that only one still remains actively farming the land. Most of the rest has been sold.[196] His uncle's children did not want 'Coventry', but Terence is pleased that it was bought by a second cousin. 'It's still owned by a Williams – Colin Williams who is a Sydney Williams,' he says.[197]

This is a very masculine world of work and responsibility and decision-making, and of constant battling to maintain the farms as viable units in family ownership. In these narratives women sometimes make particular contributions which are acknowledged as a source of family pride. However such stories are always told with a sense of transgression. HB credits his wife, a farmer's daughter, with being instinctive with animals and keeping an eye on things. 'She would have made a wonderful farmer. Not easy for me, she's always telling me what to do, of course.'[198] Davis Canning farms 'Oakbourne' near Porangahau in Hawkes Bay. The property has been in the Canning family since 1852, but their hold has sometimes been tenuous and stories of maintaining the farm for future generations are a feature of his narrative. Davis was a great teller of anecdotes, one of his best being the story of his flamboyant grandmother, a great granddaughter of Henry Williams, who 'saved "Oakbourne" '. After her husband died in the 1918 influenza epidemic the farm was deeply in debt. Calling on the help of her cousins, KS and AB Williams, she decided to relinquish her extravagant lifestyle at 'Oakbourne' with its 15 acres of garden, and moved to a 'little house' in Napier with her six children. She gradually paid off the debt, but according to Davis never gave up her butler.[199] Davis's grandmother's determined and decisive actions in rescuing the farm from bankruptcy, are made more feminine by her foolishness in retaining the butler and remaining an incorrigible spendthrift. Tom Williams's mother too, breaks the boundaries of convention in the story he tells of her arrival at 'Te Parae'.[200] She comes with a reputation for having used her mustering skills to keep her birth family from starvation and bankruptcy

[195] Terence Williams, 3A 25.8; 1A 26.7, 3B 2.4; 1A 30.4; 3A 34.1, 41.3, 42.9.
[196] Terence Williams, 1A 30.4, 3A 42.9.
[197] Terence Williams, 1A 4.4.
[198] HB Williams, 1B 0.3.
[199] Davis Canning, 2 November 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side B 6.5 – 11.2, 17.6.
[200] Tom Williams, 2A 30.3.

during the Depression. She brings her own team of high country mustering dogs and a couple of unlikely brood mares. When the first offspring of these horses prove hopeless on the race track and her husband threatens to get rid of them, she threatens to leave with the horses. When the later offspring win the Melbourne Cup her husband has to eat humble pie. Their contributions are acknowledged but these are women out of place in a man's world, turning things upside down.

Public duties of a large landowner

Public duties are spoken of in these narratives as a natural extension of being a landowner, and thus a leader in the community, part of the way of life associated with the land. Some duties, like being on the local church vestry, are directed at maintaining the local community. Others, such as being on the council, are directed at achieving desirable outcomes for the wider rural community, and still others at promoting particular farming interests. Although the men are proud of their achievements and their positions, these things are usually spoken of with a sense of proper modesty. As we have seen with Tom Williams, one should not appear to be pushing oneself forward.[201] Reluctance itself seems to be a mark of leadership.

There is, of course, a considerable degree of self-interest in this which is seldom spoken of, the work they do ultimately benefiting their farming operations and families. Like Tom Williams, Davis Canning is immensely proud of his work for the fine wool industry as a founding member of the North Island Merino Association, on the National Merino Association, and in helping to start Merino New Zealand, all of which have helped his own merino operation immeasurably.[202] In this performance of public duty there is an unspoken belief in family and community continuity, based on an ongoing relationship with the land. For instance, Davis says that when the old Porangahau church was under threat of sale he thought 'To hell with that, you know, all my ancestors are buried down there', and he himself expected to 'push up daisies' there as well, so he 'got a bit of a team together' to restore the building.[203]

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[201] Tom Williams, 1B 3.5; see also for example Davis Canning, 1A 11.1.
[202] Davis Canning, 1A 14.8, 16.5.
[203] Davis Canning, 1A 11.2.

Part of the community to which they belong is the network of private schools which they and their children have attended.[204] Tom Bunny, John Russell and Davis Canning are also proud of the work they have done on the boards of some of these schools.[205] This is seen as an 'opportunity to put something back'.[206] As Tom Bunny says 'We've got to give as well as take in this life and hopefully in our time we'll be able to give more than we take.'[207]

However, while subscribing to the same ethos, not all actually enjoy these involvements. HB Williams was expected to become chairman of a number of companies started by his father to foster farming on the East Coast, but he found business people 'pretty cut throat fellows'. He tells me 'I wouldn't get involved in those sort of things again, I don't think .... I don't like the business side .... But it's the way life goes, you get responsibilities whether you like it or not.'[208] Terence Williams, who was a member of the County Council for 30 years, recalls that his father was only interested in running the farms, while his uncle was 'more business oriented' and served on the Gisborne Harbour Board and the Sheep Owners Federation. Terence seems to view this division of interest as part of their family partnership, the one exonerating the other.[209]

Charitable trusts are a tradition in HB's branch of the family, responsibility for which he has also taken on. Both his father and his uncle, AB, established trusts in memory of their sons who were killed in the war, trusts which still distribute large amounts for charitable purposes on the East Coast. HB and his sister, Jan, also set up their own charitable trusts, partly to avoid the threat of crippling death duties. These disburse funds in New Zealand to schools and to causes like the Heart Foundation and those who work with drug addicts and the deaf, but also give to overseas appeals from the Red Cross and Save the Children Fund. A more recent one has been the Eastwoodhill Charitable Trust to maintain and develop the Eastwoodhill arboretum near Gisborne,

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[204] Dominy,p. 42 notes that private schools are one way of reinforcing the social networks, for children and their parents and grandparents, that help form identity and are also inscribed in place.
[205] Tom Bunny, 13 March 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side B 16.8; Davis Canning, 1A 18.7.
[206] John Russell, 2B 17.4.
[207] Tom Bunny, 1B 21.4.
[208] HB Williams , 1B 2.8.
[209] Terence Williams, 1A 20.4.

seen as a gene bank for trees worldwide. HB has also involved his children to help him administer these trusts, meeting with them annually to disburse the funds so that the tradition will continue.[210]

HB is involved in one wider family trust, the Henry and Williams Williams Commemoration Trust which organises the reunions. Recently it has 'got a bit more money to spend', and HB has been trying to encourage trust members to put it to some worthy cause.

I said they've only got to go along to the headmaster of some local high school and say, you know, 'Have you got a Maori boy here who you think would benefit from some sort of course like Outward Bound or the ... Spirit of Adventure – something which will develop what probably they haven't got in their own makeup.'.... Even if you had one on-going scholarship every year you're doing something, which originally the Williamses wanted to do – the Williams missionaries – to develop these chaps, give them an opportunity to compete and show their own worth.[211]

HB believes that 'charitable things' are 'in the Williams blood'.[212] It seems that of all the tasks that have fallen to him over the years in association with his inheritance of land and duty, the work of the family charitable trusts are nearest to his heart, and perhaps viewed as nearest to his missionary heritage.

Of course not all the narratives of men who went farming fit into the model described here, although they often overlap in certain respects. For instance, John Russell, whose grandmother was a daughter of JN Williams, sees himself as coming from a military family, although the Russells have been farming 'Tuna nui' for four generations. His great great grandfather Russell was a colonel with the 58th regiment, which was in New Zealand in the 1850s. His great grandfather and uncle sold their commissions to buy 'Tuna nui', and his grandfather trained at Sandhurst and was with the British Army in India, before taking over 'Tuna nui'. He later commanded the withdrawal of New Zealand troops from Gallipoli. Finally, John's father also trained at Sandhurst, served with the British Army and was killed in World War II while

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[210] HB Williams, 1A 22.3, 1B 11.2, 22.1, 24.2.
[211] HB Williams, 3B 5.7.
[212] HB Williams, 2B 43.2.

serving with the New Zealand forces when John was a young child. John felt enormous admiration for his grandfather, admiring and espousing many of his values: ***My grandfather was very concerned ... about his fellow man .... But he expected them too, to be a man .... I've got a neighbour here who used to do a lot of ploughing for my grandfather in the early days and Alec used to go as crook as hell .... And there was nothing that my grandfather enjoyed more than a bloody good fight [laughs]. He loved people who stood up to him, because getting back to what I said to you before, I believe that if someone stands up to you, you know that they're telling you what they think, you know. But if a fellow runs away from you all the time, you don't know what he thinks, you don't know anything about him. And I think that my grandfather, he could respect someone who was their own man. He hated people not being their own man.***[213]

John felt a very strong family pressure to enter the army, but finally decided to 'be his own man' and tell his grandfather he wanted to farm instead. In his narrative, the story of inheriting 'Tuna nui' and passing it on to his sons is overlaid by his need to justify his own decision to go farming, and to be true to the values passed on from his grandfather. 'So when you look at the background of this little fellow, John Russell, he should be quite smart, but he is just – just an ordinary farmer,' he confesses.[214]

Another whose life has been spent on the land, but whose narrative is shaped by a different imperative, is Gerald Williams. Gerald was born in 1915 at 'Waipare', Anaura Bay on the East Coast. His memories of 'Waipare' are of the stores coming in by boat every six months, being the only Europeans in the bay, making their own wine and cider, swimming and catching fish, and especially riding for miles with his brother as they hunted duck, hares, turkey and pigs.[215] It was a life of isolation, pioneering and adventure, interrupted only by being sent to boarding school when he was 11. After his father's death in 1938 the family left 'Waipare'. This was a turning point in Gerald's life, and a moment marked in narrative by memories of burning all the unwanted belongings and his mother refusing to look back as they reached the brow of the hill above the bay.[216] Gerald decided to join the RAF just as war broke

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[213] John Russell, 1B 6.4, 8.3.
[214] John Russell, 1A 3.4.
[215] Gerald Williams,31 August 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 10.2, 20.7, 1.7, 38.2.
[216] Gerald Williams, 1B 31.4, 22.9.

out. He spent much of the war in a POW camp, although he made one escape and was recaptured almost within sight of the Swiss border. When he eventually returned to New Zealand he decided against returning to 'Waipare' because it was isolated and marginal for farming.[217] Instead he bought a farm at Takapau in southern Hawkes Bay where he remained for 21 years and raised his family. He talked about this period of his life for less than four minutes in a three-hour interview, going on to describe in great detail a life of outdoor adventure in retirement.[218] Asked to tell the story of his fortnight on the run in Germany he does so for almost 40 minutes. Gerald's narrative is that of an adventurer, guided by his mother's saying: 'No such word as can't. If you make up your mind and are determined enough, you can do anything.'[219] Despite his occupation, Gerald's narrative bears no resemblance to those of his farming relatives. However, his memories of childhood are not dissimilar to those of many of the Williams women raised on the land, in that they are cloaked in the golden glow of nostalgia.

Women's stories of land

Women's stories of land are usually the stories of childhood. There are two main motifs: firstly nostalgia for people and homestead, and secondly a sense of mystery and remoteness both in time and space, memories which are sometimes given a pioneering gloss.[220]

It is useful to compare Tom Williams's recitation of ownership and subdivision with the narratives of women like Jean Maclean or Anne Seymour, both of whom grew up at Te Aute. Here the historical and personal minutiae of family, the stories that have passed down, are woven into a landscape rich with the detail of childhood memory. Lineage is only loosely present, submerged in other detail, not because it is not known but because it is assumed (wrongly) to be knowledge shared with the interviewer. Jean Maclean remembers:

So that as a child I grew up with Uncle Allen living – well, with Aunt Lydia still living in 'The House' as it was called, because it was the first wooden house to

[217] Gerald Williams, 2A 17.7.
[218] Gerald Williams, 2A 23.2.
[219] Gerald Williams, 1A 3.2.
[220] Dominy, p. 57.

be built in Hawkes Bay .... The beginnings of it were after the raupo whare [in which Samuel and Mary lived at first], and it was later added to, to become that very gracious home which no longer looks like that. There's a painting of it in the hall. And behind it was what was known as 'The Cottage' where Uncle Allen lived. Goodness gracious me, the passage was a cricket pitch, it was 22 yards long. And so Aunt Lydia lived in 'The House' when I was a child. Samuel had well gone, and she was blind from the age of 16 and she had a companion, Nurse Keith, who we called Aunt Nurse. And Uncle Allen and Aunt Amy, his third wife ... lived in 'The Cottage'. And when we were little kids Mum and Dad would go and have afternoon tea with Aunt Lydia or Uncle Allen or somebody, and we would be ... given a drink and something to eat I dare say, and then we would have the fun of Cork wandering round all these old gardens, lovely places. And Aunt Amy had made paths and gardens and over the other side of the gully, and then we would run down the path to 'Roxton' and there was a – that's where Aunt Ada and Aunt Ellen and all those lived – and there was a dam there with great big sort of totara ... planks across it – and we would run round and back and forth over the dam on these things. It was a children's paradise.[221]

Beatrice Haslett introduces her narrative with the words: 'Well I grew up at "Tupe Tupe" in Ohaeawai in the Bay of Islands, which was originally the "Taiamai" property that Henry Williams's eldest sons farmed.'[222] She spends over 30 minutes explaining how this came about. After dealing with her wider Ludbrook connections for several minutes, she continues with the history of her more immediate family and how they came to own Henry Williams's land:

So anyway Samuel [Ludbrook] and Caroline [Williams] must have had one or two children when they bought the land at Ohaeawai - and this was in 1860, September 1860 - from John Williams who was one of Henry's sons who lived at Pakaraka, the one that lived at Pakaraka. And ... our family's been there ever since ... I don't know if you know, but the Williams boys had a ... large amount of land around Pakaraka .... It was sold when they all went to the East Coast. But in the days that Grandpa grew up, and he was Henry's grandson ... there were a lot of relations there because the John Williamses and the Henry –

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[221] Jean Maclean, 8 June 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 29.7.

[222] Beatrice Haslett, 6 August 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 0.7.

Uncle Henry was at 'Pakaraka' and he had no children, and Joseph Williams was at 'Ngaheia' which was the next property which is all still there. He had no children. And Lydia ... who married Hugh Carleton lived at Paihia. Well they had no children, so there were actually quite a lot of uncles and aunts, weren't there, about. It's quite interesting isn't it – the reality when Marianne was living there she had all this family round her, but perhaps only one or two that were having grandchildren. Although Edward Marsh had millions of kids didn't he, and he lived at Puketona and they're related to half the north ... the Matthews and the Puckeys and the Davies, you know, through his wife's family – the Kemps and the Bedgegoods, all very inter-related on both sides, because there was no one else to marry

Anyway that's where my father and his brothers grew up, seven sons, and Grandpa and his family who were ... four boys and three girls .... But only Grandpa of all of the family stayed and farmed in the Bay of Islands. And when his Uncle Henry died at 'Pouerua', Grandpa bought that property, so he owned ... well 'Pouerua' is there on the hill and 'The Retreat' and the church are just sort of down across the paddock, so they're all quite close.[223]

Her concerns are similar to those of Bill Ludbrook but she provides much greater detail of marriages and children, or the failure to have children. Beatrice continues comprehensively recounting schooling, marriages, family sporting prowess, uncles and aunts, distant connections of her father, until she finally reaches her own arrival on the scene.

So when I was born at 'Tupe Tupe' in 1929 ... my Uncle Geoff was on the 'Pouerua' estate and Uncle Ronald had a property behind that and I had three or four cousins all born ... within months of each other really and we've always been great friends. And so that's how we grew up really in the bosom of the family, with all these cousins around. And then the second, the next brother, Uncle Ken, he married and lived at Ohaeawai on the farm next to us – part of the 'Tupe Tupe' property. And he had six children so that was another big bunch of cousins. So that was really – our early life was very bound up with the family, and all the family traditions.[224]

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[223] Beatrice Haslett, 1A 6.4, 8.2.
[224] Beatrice Haslett, 1A 31.4.

As Beatrice narrates this story of land and family, she says 'men don't care about the details women are obsessed with', suggesting that it is through the talk of the women of the family that she has come to learn the details of her story.[225]

Virginia Williams, born in 1949, grew up on 'Aramutu' at Elsthorpe, part of 'Edenham' that had belonged to her great grandfather, JN Williams. They were surrounded by Williams uncles, aunts and cousins. Families, homes, social life, the land are all intertwined in her memories, the foundations on which she was raised. ***So we were quite a close family .... I kind of remember that growing up as feeling very much part of a big family. Even though there were only three of us children we were part of something much bigger than that.... [Uncle Jim] got the homestead, even though he had the farm that was the furthest away [laughs]. You know what it's like. But he had the homestead because he was the oldest son. It was wonderful old house, 'Atua'. It was a great, one of those two-storeyed – and in fact it had an attic which I remember we used to spend a lot of time in exploring and ride down the stairs on tea trays and things .... I do remember we used to have tennis parties there because it had a lovely tennis court, but we seemed to be a very social family .... At 'Atua' we used to have a lot and down at 'Hapua' which was Aunt Bet and Uncle Bevan. Aunt Bet was the oldest of the family, and she was the one that married another Williams. I think he was a second cousin – Jan and Leonard – Leonard's brother. And at 'Hapua', they were down the Kahuranaki road ... going into Hastings, and that was another frequent gathering place. And also where my Aunt Pat who was Aunt Pat Kelly – they lived at 'Raukawa' and we ... were always in and out of each other's homes we seemed to be.... So I grew up having quite a firm knowledge of where I stood in the scheme of things.***[226]

Knowing where one 'stood in the scheme of things' was to some extent a comforting feeling, being part of a solid and secure social milieu, for which the house may be seen as a metaphor. This is something that she misses at times, now living in Auckland. But her comment also contains some negative connotations. Her comment, 'You know what it's like', indicates that she is well aware of the intensely gender-structured roles that were played out in this situation. When Virginia qualified as a vet, her father continued to insist on getting a 'proper vet'. She reflects that she

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[225] Beatrice Haslett, 1A 25.5.

[226] Virginia Williams, 11 August 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 2.8, 4.0, 5.4.

realised then that though daughters were 'loved, they were not valued', and that becoming a vet had been partly an attempt to overcome this.[227] And when her father died leaving the farm to her brother alone, she at first accepted this as a necessity to maintain the land, but when her brother later sold it this practice appeared to Virginia as a considerable injustice.[228]

Not all the women speak of land in ways that intertwine families, homes and social life. Another who grew up in the Te Aute area was Nicola Grimmond. Near the beginning of her interview she describes what she calls 'the setting'. It is in many respects more like the family and land stories of the men in its matter-of-factness:

Where I lived when I was born was actually a farm called 'Ngahere' which is on the coast in Hawkes Bay, south of Waimarama, north of Blackhead – or north of Pouriri, or Aramoana. This is just to put it in to a Hawkes Bay setting. It was a farm that my great grandfather had bought. He was Allen Williams, and he farmed and managed 'Te Aute,' which is where the college is, and his uncle, Sam had been the founder of Te Aute College .... The line of descent probably is a good thing at this stage. Edward Marsh Williams was the great great grandfather, Allen was my – was his son, and went to farm in Hawkes Bay and managed 'Te Aute' and then bought some land out at the coast. And his son, Edward Gordon, bought 'Drumpeel' which was where I grew up or did most of my growing up. But my father, David Empson Williams, farmed both 'Ngahere' before the war and then 'Drumpeel' after the war. So those were my sort of places and so I was a Hawkes Bay farmer's daughter for the first 17 odd years of my life [laughs]. And though that was what I started as, I really left it well behind.[229]

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[227] Virginia Williams, 1B 1.5.

[228] Virginia Williams, 1B 0.2. Dominy p. 106. 'Inheritance, known as "property transfer", is the primary site where gender differentiation, between brothers and sisters as differently positioned subjects, plays itself out with high stakes – stakes not solely of land as asset or resource or livelihood but also of station as prestige marker, and country as site of identity, as a homeplace ....[P]artible inheritance ideology applies and suggests women have equal rights with men, although a commitment to keeping stations intact means that male partible inheritance prevails as men are offered the opportunity to farm, while women are compensated in other kinds of assets.' Dominy notes the tension between siblings arising from a 'surface ideology of partible inheritance' conflicting with the practice of gendered partibility. While siblings were reluctant to talk about these practices, she found the tension was mediated through 'complementary discourses of inheritance and sentiment', discourses which can be seen to exist in the Williams testimonies also.

[229] Nicola Grimmond, 17 August 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 1.8.

For Nicola this is a point of departure. She has some treasured memories of this part of her life, but she also has some extremely unhappy ones involving the death of her mother. Her laughter and her final comment in the extract above show that being a 'Hawkes Bay farmer's daughter' is seen as a background in some respects to be overcome, as Nicola goes on to talk about her education and life as an academic at Otago University.

Sara Williams was the only woman I interviewed who was farming. The farm on which she lives is just out of Wairoa, and named 'Pakaraka' after the land bought by Henry Williams in the Bay of Islands. For many years it was farmed together with 'Mangatawhiti', which was a backcountry farm held by her father and uncle in partnership. 'Mangatawhiti' is where Sara grew up and today she is still a livestock partner in that farm.

Her narrative beginning is typical of a number of other women who grew up on farms, not a genealogy but a story of isolation in the backcountry. She remembers the difficulties and adventure of going to town, the use of kerosene lamps and having no fridge, of correspondence school and an inability to play with other children. Later she tells the story of her father coming to 'Mangatawhiti', man alone:

He came riding up the valley with a pack of horses and ten dogs ... He had his swag on the packhorse, all the possessions he had left after they bought the place, his swag, his team of working dogs and two horses and a 10 pound note in his pocket and a dinner suit that his aunt in Gisborne had given him for a 21st birthday present [laughs]. He didn't quite know what he was doing with a dinner suit away up there.[230]

In this sketch the dinner suit becomes a metaphor for civilization, a symbol of what has been left behind.[231] Like the stories of others in the cohort (for example, Nicola Bush) it finds echoes in the oft-repeated family story that Henry and Marianne came to New Zealand intending to stay for the rest of their lives, cut off from all they had known.

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[230] Sara Williams, 22 September 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 3 side B 10.6.

[231] Jock Phillips notes the difficulty of maintaining class distinctions on the frontier with markers such as 'posh' clothes, in *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male – a History*, (Auckland, 1987), p. 30.

Women's narratives of growing up in the back country usually share three features. They stress the isolation. Like Sara, Megan Payton, Kirsty Burbury, Jane Putt and others recall having no electricity, seeing few other children, being cut off by flooded rivers and taking hours to drive to town. They also talk of the symbols of love and security. For Sara this was food and the pleasure of watching her mother making butter and bread, and preserving beans, eggs and bacon.[232] For Kirsty, among other things, it was the efforts of her mother to make things fun, to truly celebrate special times like Christmas, and organise surprise fancy dress dinners for the family.[233] For Elisabeth Ludbrook it was wet days doing scrap books around the dining table, and nights around the fire singing, or sometimes, when the power went off, listening to their mother telling stories.[234]

They talk of horse-riding, a metaphor for freedom, independence and adventure. Sara's narrative is replete with such memories. As she puts it, 'Horses were the thing.'[235] She recalls that her first real ride out on the station alone was to fetch help when her mother broke her wrist.[236] Once she was old enough to ride to school, nothing could deter her – she would ride 'rain, hail or snow'.[237] Elisabeth Ludbrook and her younger brother would ride off on their ponies to play with friends and cousins in the weekends: 'We'd be gone from nine in the morning till five at night ....[We'd say] "Where'll we go today?" "All right, let's go there".'[238] She describes how the anguish of having to go to music lessons was mitigated by the excitement of the long ride there and back:

God, I had to learn the piano.... And the only good thing about piano lessons was one day a week I got to ride my pony five miles to have my lesson, so that was half a day off school, or a whole day if I could work it right. So I would get on my pony and would ride this five miles up the back roads all alone .... I loved that ride – that would be wonderful.[239]

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[232] Sara Williams, 1A 14.5, 19.3.
[233] Kirsty Burbury, 8 June 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 2 side A 19.9, tape 1 side B 35.5.
[234] Elisabeth Ludbrook, 8 November 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waiakto, Tape 2 side A 27.0.
[235] Sara Williams, 1A 34.9.
[236] Sara Williams, 1A 44.3.
[237] Sara Williams, 1B 10.9.
[238] Elisabeth Ludbrook, 2A 22.0.
[239] Elisabeth Ludbrook, 2A 24.4.

Megan Payton says she was an 'outside person' who would rather be up at four o'clock in the morning mustering on horseback than at home helping her mother. She recalls special times with her father, riding through the bush learning the names of trees, studying the old pa sites and kumara pits, helping with the docking.

Dad found various adzes – I've still got one up in the front hall there – that he picked up in various places round the farm. So there was always – you know, I used to fantasise about sort of historical side of things, but – you know you learnt about birds and you learnt about trees and – you just generally talked and you would ask questions and I think really they were again as I said special times because it was usually just Dad and I doing the mustering and as I got older I was very much more a part of it.[240]

This excerpt points to two important features of women's narratives of land, the gendered experience of being out with father, one of the boys, and an epistemology of land relating to flora and fauna and pre-settlement history. For instance, Kirsty Burbury knows her native orchids, a species of many tiny and insignificant green-flowered plants, while Anne Seymour has learned the rock pool creatures at Mangakuri beach, the many different species of limpet, for instance, and passes this knowledge on to her grandchildren. Like Megan, both remember having learned from their fathers, although men do not seem to talk of such things in life narrative.[241] Morton and Smith point out that the incorporation of indigenous knowledge and a 'general fascination with the primordial, be it in the form of Aboriginality ... or non-introduced species of plants and animals' is a means of 'avoiding exile in an alien land'.[242] Such knowledge performs a similar function to the planting of native trees in creating a sense of belonging.

Returning to Sara's narrative, we find that she is also deeply embedded in the family of the East Coast and that she seldom mentions them without also mentioning the land.[243] As the elder of two daughters Sara returned, seemingly unquestioning, to the farm soon after university when her father became ill. 'I just knew ... I would be

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[240] Megan Payton, 16 March 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 21.1.
[241] Kirsty Burbury, 1B 10.3; Anne Seymour, 6 June 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 26.5.
[242] Morton and Smith, pp. 155, 174.
[243] Sara Williams, 3B 7.0.

required at home,' she says.[244] She describes a dual role, caring for her parents and also taking over the farming duties, and her narrative combines the stereotypes of the dutiful daughter and of the hardy efficient farmer. She tells stories of dealing with natural disasters, of protecting stock from rising floodwaters, rebuilding fences and reseeding pastures after floods, including Cyclone Bola in 1988; stories of managing stock during the droughts of 1983/84 and 1989/90.[245] Such management details are less prominent in most of the men's narratives, but present here I think partly as proof of her ability as a woman to master farming knowledge and cope with the physical demands of farming. They are also part of the story of maintaining the land for future generations, her two nephews.[246] At other times she tells stories of caring for her parents, getting a typewriter for her father to write up the family tree, visiting her mother in hospital. These two roles appear in conflict when she tells with regret the story of how when her mother died in the Wairoa Hospital, Sara was absent, having gone to move the ewes while her sister, the one who was married with children, was present at the bedside.[247]

If Sara's claim to the land is through family and through guardianship, it is also made through knowledge of the Maori history of the land. She tells of a flood at 'Mangatawhiti' which broke the dam, and this reminds her to tell the story of an earlier flood there in the 1880s, long before her family owned the place. This is announced in the manner of a well-told story:

That brings me to the story of the 12 apostles. They are 12 huge totara logs that the Ringatu church had selected and cut in this particular valley – gully – to build a temple with out on the coast. And what they did ... one of the canoes in the Auckland museum also was sourced from this area, the trees were sourced from this same area – was they cut the trees and then they dammed the creek. They dragged the logs ... just to the brink above the dam and then they would wait for a bit of a flood. When there was plenty of water in there they'd put the logs into the creek and they'd be just waiting for the big flood, and [when] the big flood came they let the dam go, and that flushed the logs right down out to sea and from there they retrieved them. Well, in the case of the 12 apostles, 11 of them got washed up on the beach fairly close together

[244] Sara Williams, 2B 12.1.
[245] Sara Williams, 2A 5.9, 10.6, 3A 22.9.
[246] Sara Williams, 3A 10.5.
[247] Sara Williams, 3A 14.6.

and the twelfth one, Joseph went out to sea. He was a bit of a rogue, and they had to hire the tug ... to go and salvage him. And in the process a man got killed so there's a tapu on those logs. And Joseph lies on the ketu, but a bit distant from the other logs. They're still there today .... They never built the temple .... It's just through Maori – word of mouth Maori. I can take you to that slide. I know the spur that those huge totara trees grew on, very strong totara growing country. And the slide, the formation of the slide, is still there to this day.[248]

Sara goes on to tell of old Maori tracks on 'Mangatawhiti' where they have found old adzes, and how the scrolls on these artefacts enabled you to tell from which of the Tuhoe they came.[249] Like Bill Ludbrook, she appears to make a claim to deep belonging partly on the basis of sharing in local indigenous knowledge.[250]

Even for those who did not grow up on the land, some felt that particular farms or farming areas were home. Priscilla Williams, who, as a clergyman's daughter, moved from place to place as a child, and has spent her working life with the Department of Foreign Affairs in different parts of the world, is always pleased to come home. She recalls the family farm, 'Ruangarehu', up the East Coast, where her father, Rev. Nigel Williams, took them for holidays every year. At the time of the interview it was being sold, and in this excerpt she is searching for a way to express her sadness at the ending of this association:

['Ruangarehu'] which my grandfather ... bought rather late in life, as a sort of – it's rather like the early missionaries. In order to be able to give your children an inheritance you need to buy land and farm it and hand on the farm, because you can't hand on anything in the church particularly. So he had done this – yes, Bishop Herbert Williams – and he had built 'Ruangarehu'. And the station's being sold for forestry and the forestry people will be taking it over next year, so it's a bit of – it's inevitable, because the land is steep for farming and it's not economic now in the present state of commodity prices to do anything else with it. And gradually also all the other farms in that area have been sold for forestry so there is nothing for the family, they can't get schooling now. They've done full cycle on that. It's back to being as isolated

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[248] Sara Williams, 2A 0.1.
[249] Sara Williams, 2A 4.2.
[250] Read cites a number of similar examples from his own experience and that of others in *Belonging*, pp. 181, 210-1, 219, 223.

as it had been earlier. So that will go into forestry next year, so this is the last few months of it, and it's – . The station's very near Mt Hikurangi. There'll be dawn celebrations ... so we've talked about in fact having a little family reunion up at 'Ruangarehu' before it is sold.[251]

Her sister, Sheila Williams, speaks of the Gisborne area in general and 'Ruangarehu' in particular as their 'turangawaewae'.[252] Her memories of holidays include the kind of stories of isolation told by those who grew up on such places.[253] So even while moving from place to place, 'Ruangarehu' and its environs have remained 'home' in a sense for Sheila and Priscilla. The apparent need for these two sisters to claim as 'home' a piece of land on which they have never lived, underlines the importance of links to the land in Williams tradition.

Narratives of land lost

It is not surprising that the oral narratives of those who own land that had been associated with the family for several generations, should reflect these links. Nor is it surprising that those who grew up on family land and moved away, but still retain their links with it as adults, should speak nostalgically of their childhood memories. And also for those whose links have been permanently severed by loss of the land, the sense of connectedness with place in their narratives is still strong. Such experiences would seem to have similarities with those of migrants who, although apparently settled, remain 'forever torn between two worlds'. However, the loss of land ends the possibility of return.[254]

We have seen how in Virginia Williams's narrative families, homes, social life and the land are all intertwined in her memories and represent the foundations on which

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[251] Priscilla Williams, 11 November 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 2 side A 11.3.

[252] Sheila Williams, 25 June 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 19.5.

[253] Sheila Williams, 1A 9.7, 12.4.

[254] Alistair Thomson, 'Voices We Never Hear: The Unsettling Story of Post-war "Ten Pound Pom"' who Returned to Britain', *Oral History Association of Australia Journal*, 24 (2002), p. 58. Thomson writes: '[I]n the experience and testimony of the migrant – migration never ends. "Home" is invariably a complicated notion. Return is always a possibility and even the most settled immigrant identity can be unsettled by changes, which stir up deep-rooted anxieties and longings. Understandings of migration which emphasise settlement and assimilation under-estimate the "wayward hearts" of many migrants and the complex ways in which they are forever torn between two worlds.'

she was raised. When 'Aramutu' was left to her brother alone, her father believing it to be no more than an economic unit, she says she accepted the necessity of this decision. However, when her brother sold the farm she suddenly perceived it not only as an injustice, but also as a shaking of her foundations. She says:

So I grew up having a quite a firm knowledge of where I stood in the scheme of things. It's quite strange to go back there now and find it all changed so dramatically. All those farms have been wiped – our family farm has been sold and one of the other brothers, Uncle Barney, his farm was sold as well, so there's only the one, Uncle Jim's farm and the homestead, that's still in the family .... And I find that really strange because when I was a kid growing up it seemed as if that was the way the world was, and that seemed very, very solid. And now it's – it's – it is kind of strange.[255]

Hawkes Bay is still 'her place', and seeing it laid out before her when she comes over the Napier-Taupo hills sends a shiver down her spine, but still she longs to be able to go back to the actual farm, and misses not being able to take her sons there.[256]

I'm sure I could still go there, I'm sure I could. And I will one of these days when it's not quite so – still feels a bit funny – that I could just go and wander over the place. I'm sure it wouldn't be a problem at all. I mean as Mark has said, and that's the way I feel too, you don't really own the land. It's just there and it'll always be there, and it was there before we came along and it'll be there after we're gone and – and – we just – .[257]

While Virginia may try to rationalise her loss in this stewardship argument, this is not possible for others. Anne Seymour and her husband were forced to sell their part of what was once Williams land near Te Aute, where Anne had grown up and had many happy memories of helping her father. She recalls: 'Oh it was hard, it was very hard .... And I hated it. We literally cried our eyes out – we did .... It was the land, the lifestyle, it was the past, it was everything.'[258]

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[255] Virginia Williams, 1A 6.4. This experience also reflects the decline in the relative prosperity and social position of farmers, which was becoming evident from the 1960s. See Elvin Hatch, *Respectable Lives: Social Standing in Rural New Zealand* (Berkley Los Angeles, and Oxford, 1992), pp. 37-43.

[256] Virginia Williams, 1A 8.0.

[257] Virginia Williams, 2A 11.2. Dominy, p. 208, also notes the use of stewardship discourses by South Island runholders as a response to the declining influence and prosperity of farmers.

[258] Anne Seymour, 2B 13.5.

Similarly for some members of the Ludbrook family the recent sale of almost the last remaining piece of the original block has been a devastating blow. This block included the sacred mountain of Pouerua, which can be seen for miles around, standing above the surrounding farmland. Bill Ludbrook was not the only member of the family to feel its loss. I also spoke to three of his cousins who were born and grew up at 'Tupe Tupe', part of the Ludbrook estate. Elisabeth Ludbrook's childhood memories are woven into the land, riding across the paddocks to school, riding out to the bush at the back of the farm, visiting nearby families of cousins to play among the rocks and creeks.[259] When she left school she stayed at home to help her father on the farm until her marriage. After many years away in Sydney and Auckland she returned home to live at Paihia, shortly before 'Pouerua' was sold. Only her brother, Sam, now remains on Ludbrook land. I asked her how she felt about the sale of the Ludbrook land. There was an emotional pause before she answered:

I couldn't believe how painful it was – 'Pouerua', especially 'Pouerua' – 'Pouerua' more than anything else. 'Pouerua' had never been sold. 'Pouerua' was our – <u>home</u> – as much as 'Tupe Tupe' ever was. But also I was amazed at how much it affected all the cousins. <u>All</u> the cousins were injured by it, not just one or two of us, <u>all</u> of the cousins, all the ones who'd grown up in the area, all the Ludbrook cousins who'd grown up in the area, plus a lot of Williams cousins, who'd taken the names with them and knowledge of its background. Right through the family there was <u>huge</u> injury. It should <u>never</u> have happened .... [Peter's] sons were all screaming out and saying 'We love this place – don't sell it under us.' And he had three sons. So you know, he – even by-passing all the sons he could have – informed the Williamses, he could have informed the rest of the Ludbrooks. Any of us could easily have got ten members of the family together to purchase it – or whatever. It was a very, very tragic happening and I'd love to buy it back. And of course Bill Ludbrook carried the same sort of psyche, and to have bought back the mountain was – just back buying back your roots and your heritage. The whole thing was – much more to it than just buying a piece of land, much, <u>much</u> more.

.... And so it sits there and I drive past it every now and then and I look at it and I think 'One day we will buy this back'. Even if it's only the front bit with the house because the house is just – it's spooked really, and the barn is there

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[259] Elisabeth Ludbrook, 2A 2.9, 3.8, 19.2.

where Henry gave his sermons before the church was built, when they first moved to Pakaraka. All the buildings are there.[260]

This lamentation is not simply, or even mainly for the land itself, but for the loss of a place so strongly linked with the family and its history. The repetition of the name 'Pouerua' and the rhythmic quality of the speech at the beginning of this sequence is almost like keening. In Elisabeth's narrative, as in that of Bill Ludbrook, Anne Seymour and Virginia Williams, it seems that the generation that loses the land may experience an enhanced sense of connectedness to it. For subsequent generations, however, mostly unable even to maintain their connection by visiting, the sense of loss is diminished.[261]

At Te Aute seemingly the only family member still farming family land is Hugh MacBain, who is pleased that all his children seem to show an interest in continuing the farm. In 1991 the house that Samuel Williams built for his daughter, Lucy, Hugh's grandmother, came on the market. Hugh could not resist it, and he and his wife moved in a few years ago.[262] But other descendants of Samuel and Mary Williams have a very different attitude. The remnants of 'Te Aute' on which the old homestead stood was sold out of the family in 1989. Despite her nostalgic memories of childhood at 'Te Aute' and having raised her own children there, Jean Maclean says not a word about her feelings at its loss. The only clue to this may be in her earlier comment that 'We never took anything as ours by right. I can remember Mum and Dad saying – we lived in this big house and they said: 'You know none of this is ours by right. It's ours from God to share.'[263] Her brother, Eric, holds not dissimilar views. He relinquished his opportunity to farm 'Te Aute' to his brother-in-law, and subsequently bought a farm near Cambridge. This farm too has now been sold. Eric says he has no regrets about either: 'I feel that land – you're a caretaker rather than an owner .... I think it's a good thing for people to go their own way.'[264] Perhaps this stewardship discourse and apparently loose attachment to the idea of ownership, which seems to be inconsistent with their rich childhood memories of place, arises partly out of the nature of their religious upbringing, partly from their awareness

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[260] Elisabeth Ludbrook, 3B 29.2, 32.5.
[261] See W.R.S. Williams, Jane Putt, Peter Sykes, Douglas Davies etc., in whose narratives the family association with land plays little or no part.
[262] Hugh McBain, 1A 31.9, 36.6.
[263] Jean Maclean, 2B 35.8.
[264] Eric Williams, 2B 17.0.

of the controversy which has always surrounded the Williams land at Te Aute, and partly as a rationalization of its loss. Such feelings of ambivalence about landowning are the subject of the next and final section.

Defence of landowning

Land may be important to the identity of many of the Williams, but it is also often problematic, as we have seen in the memory biography of HB Williams. In many of these narratives the speakers are defensive about the ownership of land, and this reflects an aspect of the family history that goes back in some cases to 1835. There are three areas of land which are controversial in lives and narratives. The first is that of Henry Williams's land in the Bay of Islands, at Pakaraka. The second is that of land acquired by Samuel Williams around Te Aute, and the third that of family land on the East Coast. The family in the Wairarapa is the only branch of the Williams that does not appear to feel defensive about land, having apparently no acknowledged history of dispute.

This defensive attitude is typified by Gerald Williams, a descendant of William Williams, who sets out here to explain why he is proud to be a member of the family, but immediately launches into a justification of Henry's land purchases in the north: ***I'm proud of what those two brothers did when they came out here. And it seems to be quite popular now to run them down, particularly Henry, and say that they ... short changed the Maoris and pinched their land and all sorts of things which – well I think none of these things certain people are saying about those two brothers, I don't think any of them are actually true. When ... Henry started buying land ... so that his sons – he had what – seven sons, and you're working for the church in a foreign land, you wouldn't be paid very much ... even to feed them. I mean how're they going to live on this? And they were, most of them were keen to go farming, and so he bought land for them to farm on and paid the going rate for what ever was the price of land. He didn't swindle the Maoris out of anything – unless you can say that everybody did, but it was a difficult situation I suppose. It was just a case of supply and demand. I mean they weren't swapping thousands of acres for a couple of blankets or ... this sort of thing. Once ... the Treaty of Waitangi – before that I***

think, the Maoris were short changed a bit, but the government actually saw that most of those things, those early land deals were annulled anyway.[265]

The essence of this defence which is repeated in various forms in many Williams testimonies is that Henry was justified because of family need, and he, unlike others, paid a fair price for the times.

Similar legal and moral arguments are used by Elisabeth Ludbrook who says she was brought up in the firm belief that there was nothing underhand about Henry's land deals. However, nagging doubts were fanned by current debates about land claims in the far north, so when she was helping to prepare a video for the family reunion in 1998 she visited the Turnbull Library:

And while I had free time I thought 'Well, I really don't know the truth. I've had it passed down through the family that the missionaries were the good guys, but – what do I know – I don't know it.' So I decided I'd go and find out for myself whether they were as squeaky clean as we've been led to believe. And I spent a day and a half just in the land sales, and I was sur – I was sur – I came away – <u>different</u>. I came away – so – <u>proud</u> of them. I was proud of them because in the land transactions if I read a land purchase by George Clark saying there'd be four lines of so many horses and so many blankets and so many spades, the payment, when I read Henry's he'd paid over <u>twice</u> what everyone else was paying. And he didn't have much money anyway. I just thought he was <u>so</u> <u>particular</u> about doing it right that he even paid twice what all his contemporaries were paying.[266]

In this sequence Elisabeth pulls back from using the word 'surprised', a word which tends to indicate much stronger suspicions of wrong-doing than she is prepared to admit.

However, the problem is not simply a legal one, but also reflects the Williamses' sense of moral responsibility towards Maori, arising both from their family's part in

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[265] Gerald Williams, 4A 40.7.

[266] Elisabeth Ludbrook, 1B 1.4. For further information on the subject of Henry Williams's land purchases, lands held in trust for Maori and the debate surrounding this, see Rogers, *Te Wiremu,* pp. 153-4, 218-39. In his bibliography Rogers lists a number of primary sources of information on the subject, some of which can be located in New Zealand. These include the Williams Papers in the Auckland Museum Library, and documents from the Church Missionary Society archives in London, available on microfilm in the Turnbull and Hocken Libraries, especially section CN/O 101, which consists mainly of letters from Henry Williams between 1822 and 1860. See also Carleton, *Henry Williams, Vol* 1 (1874) & *Vol.2* (1877).

persuading Maori to sign the Treaty of Waitangi, and from their role as missionaries to the Maori and the possibility that this has been abused for personal gain. This is evident in much of the oral testimony in defence of land ownership. When a group at Te Ti Marae lead by Kingi Taurua wanted to remove the carving of Henry Williams, which occupies a central place in the building, because they believed 'he stole [their] lands', Elisabeth, now strengthened by her findings, took action on behalf of Henry and the family.[267] Upset at what she saw to be 'Pakeha fear' of speaking out, Elisabeth agreed to be interviewed on television to oppose this claim on the basis that the research was inadequate.[268] She believes the land that Henry Williams bought for his children is not in dispute with Maori. They are satisfied it was properly paid for and willingly sold to him. What is in dispute, according to Elisabeth, is the many thousands of acres that he held in trust for Maori to prevent its sale to colonists, land which was later confiscated from the missionaries and sold off by the government. She argues that Maori who believe he did this deliberately to make a fortune from it are just not properly informed.[269]

[V]ast tracts of land were put in the missionaries' names to be held in trust for the Maori .... and that's really what all this is. I've seen those early land maps and there're huge tracts of land, but they carry the name 'Archdeacon Henry Williams', and of course he's not purchasing land. Any purchases he made were way before he was ever an archdeacon, and so there're all these lands held in trust .... These very large tracts of land they get upset over and say the missionaries stole our land, were the land that they held in trust for Maori. They weren't land they purchased earlier.

Which – yes, but when did they pass into the trust of –?

Oh mostly in the 1850s when George Clark and Henry were getting pretty old. Some of them are a bit earlier, some of them are late 1840s but none of those big trusts are earlier than that. Then when the government starts to purchase huge tracts of land ... and they're purchasing it from the Maoris for like a penny a thousand acres or whatever the scenario is, and then they're selling that same land for six pounds per thousand acres within weeks, and that's

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[267] See *New Zealand Herald*, October 8, 1999, p. A10, and October 9-10, 1999, p. A4. The headline reads, 'Anger at carving plan: A marae chairman is told he is exceeding his authority, reports Angela Gregory.' The article addresses the opposition of local kaumatua to Kingi Taurua's proposal.

[268] Elisabeth Ludbrook, 1A 5.2

[269] Elisabeth Ludbrook, 1A5.2, 8.1 10.2

going on a lot, and that's when the missionaries come in and take up these big tracts of land ....

So the land that Henry held in trust for the Maori up here – what became of it?

They confiscated it.

They confiscated it?

Took the lot.

From the trust?

From the missionaries, yes from the missionaries' trust.

And then sold it on ?

Mmm. So the missionaries put themselves totally in a vulnerable, no-win situation. But all these accusations that the radical Maoris bring up up here, are always over these large land tracts, so I don't know what it takes –

So they're not concerned about the 11,000 acres that [Henry purchased for his family]?

Not at all, they're quite happy about that.

Pakaraka and so on?

No, that never comes up, they're quite happy about that, because that was pre-Treaty. But that was such a legitimate sale, and ... they held these land commissions ... like a huge inquiry in the mid 1840s into land sales, pre-Treaty land sales. And ... they had land courts up here, where they lined up all the Maori who had sold their land to the missionaries .... It was wonderful they did that, it was marvellous that they did that because it all came out so squeaky clean.[270]

Her own research has thus restored her belief in the integrity of Henry Williams, who emerges not only 'squeaky clean', but persecuted while acting in defence of Maori, not only by the government of his own time, but by present day 'radical' Maori. By association the Ludbrook family can now make the same claim to integrity, and this reinforces their claim to and identity with Ludbrook land. In Elisabeth Ludbrook's narrative, as in Bill's, her claim is also backed up by her knowledge of local Maori legend. Referring to Bill's recent attempt to regain 'Pouerua', and the subsequent occupation of the mountain by Maori, she tells the following story, asserting the family's right to 'Pouerua' from the Maori perspective as well.

[T]here's a lovely story that was run by me on Saturday night, that I had forgotten. And the story is that when Hone Heke sold Pouerua to Henry

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[270] Elisabeth Ludbrook, 1A 8.1, 10.2.

Williams, he went to all the local tribes and he said 'If anyone comes between this family and this mountain, they will be walking on needles.' Have you heard that one?

No, no.

Yes, so Hone Heke put a real hex on it. He said 'Anyone who comes between this family and the mountain will be walking on needles.' So when Kingi Taurua – actually it was his brother who was very actively involved in the sit in up on the mountain – when he came down off the mountain ... and was next seen in the doctor's rooms, one very, very ill guy, so everyone's sitting back saying 'Ah ha! You are walking on needles.'[271]

At Te Aute the confusion about College Trust lands and Williams land has led to similar problems, despite the findings of three commissions of inquiry, which vindicated Samuel Williams. It can be seen from the narratives that the family are still acutely aware of these views, which they have evidently heard discussed within the family since childhood. Eric Williams, who grew up at 'Te Aute', acknowledges that there may have been some 'skulduggery' involved in some land dealings in Hawkes Bay, but exonerates his own immediate family.[272] He attributes the accusations against his great grandfather, Samuel, to 'the tall poppy syndrome', a view apparently held by his father, from which Eric does not dissent:

Dad was very interested in the fact that he [Samuel] had been accused of a certain amount of skulduggery over the land at Te Aute, the stuff that was bequeathed, and how he made money out of it. But –

There were a number of enquiries about that weren't there?

Yes there was. The fact, as far as my father was concerned, was that when he took over the lease of the Te Aute lands, the endowments, nobody else had been able to make a success of it. They'd take it up for a year or two, and go broke, or say 'Look I can't make a go of it, too difficult.' And ... after this had happened with two or three lessors, and Samuel said 'Well I'll look after it, I'll take it over.' And he made a success of it. He borrowed a lot of money and put it into the place, and did a lot of work and was successful, so – a tall poppy, naughty boy, shouldn't have been successful, you're a missionary, mate. So I got those stories.[273]

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[271] Elisabeth Ludbrook, 1A 15.0.
[272] Eric Williams, 1B 33.9.
[273] Eric Williams, 3A 14.6.

Others also expressed the view that the problem arose from jealousy on the part of those less successful. Like Eric, they do not believe the accusations against Samuel.

Bill (W.A.) Williams, Eric's younger brother, is even more sensitive to such matters, linking the accusations against Henry with those made against his great grandfather. He was upset at the reunion by the suggestion that the 'missionaries were taking land while the Maori's eyes were closed in prayer'. However he seems to have been satisfied with the explanation by Bishop John Paterson that this is a specific reference to the battle at Ruapekapeka, December 1845, which began on a Sunday while the Maori were at worship.[274] In his narrative he goes on to justify Henry's purchases in the usual ways, and to recall his father being very offended by these innuendos about Williams land at Te Aute:

My father went to so much trouble to try and – in fact he took it far too seriously in some ways I think – to try and spread what he saw as the truth of the land. And he was so mortally offended by people saying 'Oh, the Williamses and all their land, yeah, they bought with a few buttons, blankets and some muskets and a few things like this.' And this used to be a red rag to a bull for Dad. Yes, he'd go on about it at great length.[275]

Bill concludes: 'And I still don't think there was anything untoward in the sense that anything underhand had been done.'[276] For Bill and for his father before him the integrity of Henry and of Samuel, and their suffering under unjust accusations are matters of passion.[277]

Eric and Bill's sister, Jean Maclean, threw an interesting light on this question. Several days before I interviewed her, I had heard stories of 'bad luck' in the Williams family, especially in the form of early deaths.[278] I asked Jean if she knew anything about these stories. At first she seemed not to know, her voice was flat, and she seemed reluctant to speak about it. However, she acknowledged there had indeed

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[274] Bill (W.A.) Williams, 2 November 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1side B 1.1. For an analysis of the Battle of Ruapekapeka see James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict*, (Auckland, 1988) pp. 58-66.

[275] Bill (W.A.) Williams, 1B 7.6.

[276] Bill (W.A.) Williams, 1B 8.4.

[277] Bill (W.A.) Williams, 1B 4.5, 2A 42.9.

[278] There have been a number of childhood deaths from a congenital heard defect in the family, sometimes attributed by members of the family to the first cousin marriage of Samuel and Mary Williams. There have also been a number of accidental deaths of young people.

been a few early deaths and there were graves of some Williams children at Pukehou. Then, making the connection herself between the idea of 'bad luck' and the land question, Jean went straight on from talking about early deaths to talk about land problems, and to defend both Henry and Samuel.

It is evident from what she says that Jean has thought a lot about the matter of land, and has consulted others in the family whom she regards as knowing more than she does. She finally adopts a position of accepting that the questions will always remain, which seems in itself an attempt to disarm criticism. Later, in further discussion on this question, she calls again on the authority of Brian Williams and becomes very firm in her assertions:

I think [Samuel] was a bit of a chip off the old block perhaps – a bit like his father. He was absolutely straight with people. His leadership was strong, he was in defence of Maori land – all the time. He didn't ever acquire land himself from Maori. The only land he ever ... acquired was round the edge of the swamp to enable the draining of it, but Brian researched all of that and I haven't got that at my fingertips but there was – that was arranged with some – no, I can't tell you, I haven't got that so I wouldn't want to put it [on tape]. Brian has researched all of that, and I'd be surprised if ...[it's not] in the Henry and William Williams Trust records or somewhere like that.

Relating to Samuel's – ?

Relating to <u>every single bit</u> of land. No member of the family had <u>ever</u> been on Te Aute Trust land, <u>never</u>. Because many Maori – well, when I say many, some ... thought we were sitting there at 'Te Aute' on land which was rightfully Maori. And Brian was <u>very</u> strong, and he was very strong on history and he ... researched all the deeds and had it all at his fingertips and I just haven't ever gone into it in that detail. But that <u>no family</u> had ever been on leased land. No member of the family had <u>ever</u> farmed Te Aute College leased land.[279]

The emotion that is evident in these sections of narrative, the hesitations, the reluctance, the controlled anger evident in her heavy emphasis, suggest how deeply these questions still affect her.

Up the East Coast where JN Williams acquired land, sometimes with the help of his cousin Samuel, the concern has been firstly about the amount of land held. Gerald

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[279] Jean Maclean, 4A 0.2.

Williams, who was raised on the East Coast, tells a joke he once heard from one of the family:

[Jim said] 'What is the fastest thing on earth? A white man riding a bicycle down the main street of Ruatoria calling out "I own all the land!" ' And I replied 'Well, Jim, I guess that would be right, especially if his name was Williams.'[280]

There was also concern about how much influence they exerted on Maori to relinquish land in an area where the family had had a missionary base.

Those with connections to the East Coast or to JN Williams appeared to find it necessary to offer a defence of Williams land acquisition in the region. In the following excerpt Gerald Williams, reflecting on the amount of land owned by JN Williams, repeats the typical family defence of East Coast landholdings.

[He owned] a huge lot of land, a huge area of land. I've forgotten what the total was now but it has been recorded that when those – all those leases which were all temporary leases, short term leases with no right of renewal, you know – [when] it was all handed back to the Maoris ... the bush had been felled and totally fenced and ... the Maoris did pretty well I think. Father used to have all the figures but it was something like, it was handed back to the Maoris with, I think ... it may have been 60,000 pounds worth of improvements, which would have been quite a lot of money in those days, which the Maoris got for nothing. And even Apirana Ngata – this has been recorded in Hansard – he said in the House, you know, they should be forever grateful for what the Williams family in that part of the country had done for Maori. But it's been all completely forgotten of course, the way they talk now.[281]

Terence Williams and John Russell make similar statements in their narratives. [282] The essential aspects of the argument are that land was either leased from Maori on a non-renewable basis, or, if it was bought outright, the land had been previously alienated by Maori; that JN Williams improved tens of thousands of acres before handing it back to Maori to farm; that he almost went bankrupt in this process. Thus far from harming Maori he actually benefited them and took great financial risks in

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[280] Gerald Williams, 4A 5.8.
[281] Gerald Williams, 4A 3.5. The reference to Ngata in Hansard is to be found in *NZPD 1915*, Vol 174, pp. 614-9.
[282] Terence Williams, 3A 25.8; John Russell, 1B 0.2.

doing so. The reference to Apirana Ngata is central in Williams family memories of land on the East Coast.

Many of the family, however, would prefer to avoid talking about the issue. For instance, Kirsty Burbury, who grew up on an isolated farm on the East Coast, is proud of her family's missionary and church background and of her much respected and public-spirited father, Denys Williams. She does not mention land controversies until I asked, towards the end of her interview, a question about Treaty settlements. After answering in general terms she says:

I know the Williams family have been criticised for land grabbing, but I do know from the East Coast that although the Williamses acquired a lot of land they leased a lot of land from the Maoris – a 21-year lease. And when that lease was up it was handed back about 1915. All the leasehold land went back to the Maoris, and any land that the Williamses acquired they bought from other Pakehas. They didn't buy from the Maoris at all .... up the East Coast, that's in the Waiapu district. I do know that is a fact.[283]

However some of the family are more ambivalent. Jane Tylee, a descendant of JN Williams living in Hastings, who is not a devotee of the Williamses, recalls her father's 'obssession with the Williams family, to the exclusion of all other families'.[284] She appears in the following excerpt to differentiate between what was done at Te Aute, and what was done by her own branch of the family:

There's quite a lot of feeling, perhaps, especially with the Te Aute Williamses, that the Williams family acquired an awful lot of land and – whether they got it cheaply or not I don't know – but perhaps that the Maoris were done out of something that was rightfully theirs.

Does that relate to Te Aute land or East Coast land?

Te Aute land especially I think. I don't really know about JN and the land he had round Hastings, what his relations with the Maori were .... We've got a little booklet – I don't know whether you've seen it – about AB up the coast and how he acquired the land from the Maoris and how he actually had a terrible struggle making a living out of it. I mean he puts a totally different slant on it

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[283]Kirsty Burbury, 2B 11.4.
[284] Jane Tylee, 1A 4.1.

that he got the worst of the land and the Maoris got the better of the land, and in the end I mean he made some very good farms out of what he got.[285]

Later in discussion about the reunion, and in particular the seminar about the family history, she raises the question of land once more. She is clearly uncomfortable about the issue.

So in saying you would have liked to have got down to the nitty gritty [at the seminar] what do you mean?

Well – there is this feeling that when Henry Williams got to New Zealand and he wanted to provide for his sons, that he acquired land from the Maoris, and depending on who you speak to, whether he got it legally, whether he paid enough for it, whether he pressured the Maoris into letting him have it. And this is where the whole feeling stems from doesn't it, the land ... yeah Henry's land.

And the question of land here, now – or not?

[long pause] Yes – well, if you're talking to Jean [Maclean] – are you going to talk to Jean?

Mmm-mm

She'll have it all in detail, <u>yeah.</u> Well one wonders. Archdeacon Sam was a very wealthy man. He was a man of the Church but he owned huge tracts of land and – one does wonder whether he got it all – legitimately.

And he and JN sort of working in cahoots a lot of the time.

Yes, yes. Yes, yes, yes. [long pause] I mean I've got no reason to think that he didn't get it legitimately and – and that conditions in those days were very different from what they are now, and that Maoris could have been completely happy with the deals that they had, but I think there still is some feeling that – he was a man of the Church and he owned all this land and – perhaps it wasn't quite right and proper.

It would have been different if he hadn't been a man of the Church? I mean actually JN probably owned just as much in different parts.

Oh yes.

And it was OK for him?

Yes – well – yes – well – yes, well one doesn't sort of imagine that if you're a man of the Church that you acquire vast amounts of land or possessions. I personally have no problem with it.

But you're not at ease about the whole thing are you?

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[285] Jane Tylee, 1B 32.2.

[laughs – pause] Well we have quite a lot to do with Jean and Bill who are very keen on the Maori relationship and – so it's quite close to us now, you know their activities, their attitude, so it's made us sort of – think about it, think about it.

This is through Peter and Anne?

Yes, yes .... [long pause] yeah, I mean there's always this feeling about people owning a lot of anything. Perhaps I've got a bit of a social conscience or something [laughs] – you – I mean I'm perfectly happy about people owning land or being rich or having a lot of possessions if it's – if it's all quite above board ... fairly got, yeah. And I have no reason to think that either JN or Archdeacon Sam didn't get theirs fairly, but I think there are some people [who] have questions marks .... And I don't think it's been laid to rest.[286]

Jane first addresses the problem of Henry's land, which is fairly remote. However, when I ask about local issues involving members of the family more closely related, she becomes reluctant to answer, with long pauses and anxiety about who else I might be speaking to. She does however suggest that for a 'man of the Church' to become so wealthy might indicate underhand dealings, and lack of integrity. When I make the link between the 'man of the Church', Samuel, and her own great grandfather, JN, she becomes confused about the issue. This stems partly from the fact that her daughter has recently married one of Samuel's descendants, Jean Maclean's son, and she has become aware of the conflicting views within this extended family grouping. It might appear from this that in order to deflect criticism, some branches of the family may in the past have pointed the finger at others apparently more culpable.

A very different story comes from Anne Seymour, who idolised her father Brian Williams, a man deeply interested in and well informed about Maori history near Te Aute. She tells me:

[Dad's] known that a lot of fingers got pointed at the Williams family, and he felt very badly about it.

About what?

Taking too much land, being more interested in gaining land than in preaching the gospels, all sorts of things you know. And I mean things now like the Treaty of Waitangi, and Dad felt very badly about that .... just that it hadn't been

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[286] Jane Tylee, 1B 35.0.

– he was well aware of how much land the Maori had had when the Treaty was signed and how much land Maori could be said to own now .... because it hadn't been honoured right back from the beginning .... And Dad knew that, and I think – you know often he felt there were responsibilities to being a Williams, very great responsibilities.[287]

The concern expressed here seems to be not so much the exercise of undue influence, but more that having helped arrange the Treaty to protect Maori, the Williamses have joined forces with the settlers to deprive them of land, and in doing so have shrugged off their Treaty obligations. One of the few Williamses married to a Maori, Anne suggests that she has access to Maori understandings of the Williamses that are unavailable to other members of the family. She says later in the interview:

Well, I can understand some of the Maori hate – some of it is tantamount to hatred of the Williams family. They are responsible for cheating the Maori ....

You've experienced that?

Yes.

Because quite a lot of the family have persuaded themselves that the family is greatly loved by Maori.

No, not all branches of it.

They distinguish between various branches of it?

Yes they do.

According to what the ancestors did?

According to what the ancestors did.

So what are the distinctions?

Off the cuff, though they greatly revered William, they think some of William's descendants didn't do him any justice.

Which ones?

AB – the ones that forgot what the Church was for and seemed to be gaining land hand over fist. And there's a great deal of bitterness for that. You can hear them say straight off, 'Oh, they own half the East Coast.'[288]

It is significant in this excerpt that Anne, who is usually quite vocal, becomes more reticent and her replies brief. Like Jane Tylee, she too is shifting blame, and becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the issue. However, in this case Anne reproaches the very family that Jane tries to exonerate. Taken both individually and collectively these narratives reflect the complex and conflicted nature of some

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[287] Anne Seymour, 1B 5.1.
[288] Anne Seymour, 3A 29.5.

Williams family myths of landownership. At the heart of these legal and moral discourses lies the family's belief in its special relationship with Maori, which will be further addressed in chapter five.

Conclusion

The narratives examined in this chapter show the variety of ways in which members of the family can draw on the Williams myths of land and landownership to construct a usable past which gives meaning to their lives, a sense of belonging, an identity defined in part by association with the land, and for some a direction for the future. The family's attachment is not just to farming as an occupation, but also to particular properties some of which have been 'in the family' for four or five generations. Identity is defined in terms of inheritance and continuity, the attachment of a family name to a place.[289] These places are seen to be 'home' not just to the individual but to generations of the family. They are spoken of in the narratives as places where the family can gather, places to return to, to bring one's children home to, places whose loss is mourned. They sustain the family materially and/or emotionally, and are therefore places to care for and be responsible for, imposing certain duties including the duty to pass on special knowledge about the place. Above all they are seen as places that give people the awareness of where they stand 'in the scheme of things', without which, therefore, one's identity is less certain. Hence they are sometimes spoken of as turangawaewae. They represent a way of life.

Recitations which entwine family and land, genealogy and inheritance, are a striking feature of these narratives. Some have a rhythmic or formulaic quality, which suggests that they have become part of the liturgy of family myth, making them easier to remember. These recitations are gendered in nature, men tending to focus more on the issues of acquisition, inheritance, subdivision and ownership, women on the social aspects such as marriages and births, and family activites linked to place. Both men and women may appear to see themselves as keepers of versions of family history, specific forms of cultural knowledge. As individual memories are intertwined in narrative with genealogies, land, family and individual identity become inextricably

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[289] Dominy, pp.29, 41.

linked. These genealogies also provide a sense of rootedness, a metaphor embodied in the enthusiasm for tree-planting, especially of indigenous species, which is an expression of claiming and belonging in some narratives.

For men the myths of land are also framed in terms of responsibility. They must maintain the economic viability of the property, changing farming practices to respond to current political, economic and technological conditions, and also ensure succession, preparing the next generation just as they in their turn were prepared. The responsibility is to the past and to the future. Coping with these twin concerns of continuity and change requires adaptability and innovation, and the readiness to turn your hand to any task. These characteristics, along with the ability to get on with men in all walks of life while still remaining the boss, are much valued by these men.

While men have inherited the land and remained, women have generally had to leave it. Their memories of the land are often the nostalgic ones of childhood and the place where they grew up. They are usually framed in terms of security and freedom, domesticity and independence. Security is represented by images of homestead, of food and fires, and helping mothers, freedom in terms of remoteness, the outdoors, the elements, mystery and adventure, riding and helping father on the farm. Such yearning for things past and no longer recoverable may be seen as revealing responses to and desires for social change.[290] Dominy suggests that in fact women's discourses of 'sentiment' complement men's discourses of inheritance, and serve to conceal underlying tensions arising from the 'surface ideology' of partible inheritance conflicting with the practice of gendered partibility.[291]

The choice of myth is not only determined by gender, however. Rather than occupying opposing positions, these narratives lie along a continuum. Men whose links to family land have been severed early, tend to recall place in ways reminiscent of women's narratives, that is in the golden images of homestead and adventure. Conversely, women actively involved in farming all their lives construct narratives in which the responsibility to maintain the land is uppermost. This points to the

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[290] Barbara Shircliffe, ' "We got the Best of that World". A Case for the Study of Nostalgia in the Oral History of School Segregation', *Oral History Review* 28, 2 (2001), p. 62.
[291] Dominy, p. 106. Dominy explores some of these contradictory expressions of attachment to place in the discourses of women, pp. 118-26.

importance of individual experience in determining the choice of myth and the way in which it is deployed. Nor does living on the land in itself necessarily dictate the choice of myth. The values of a military family or the cathartic experience of escape from a POW camp may intervene or even override the experience of a lifetime's farming.

Thus far the Williams myths of land would appear to allow most narrators to compose memories of a comfortable belonging and enduring. Besides emphasising connections to place and to other family groups, Williams genealogies of land are also a form of chronology.[292] The marking off of generations as each responds to the challenges of maintaining family ownership in the land, serves as a form of periodization and draws attention to the duration of occupation. Whatever the nature of their narrative both men and women may claim for the family an abiding relationship with the land, involving both past and future, the sense of having been there for a long time and the hope or intention of remaining. The sense of rootedness evoked by these myths may be seen as a means by which the individual, through the family and its land, may be embedded within the *longue duree* of history.[293]

The sense of rootedness is further accentuated by the use of indigenous epistemologies of land in these narratives. We have seen how women in particular speak of their knowledge of the indigenous flora and fauna, learned from their fathers and sometimes seen as a treasure to pass on to subsequent generations. More powerful perhaps is the use of local indigenous legend associated with land. The emphasis is on knowing the indigenous history of particular sites, the rock, the mountain, the logs to which the stories refer. Some of these claims may seem to be self-consciously adopted and transformed, and Geoff Park warns that 'Pakeha kinship with the land cannot come from simply grafting onto their souls the spiritual

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[292] See Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating our pasts: The social construction of oral history* (Cambridge, 1992), for discussions on the purposes of genealogy in oral history: as a chronology which is ideological in structure, p. 72; as a function of practical social conditions, pp.110-1; as a link between the past and the future, when 'mere duration' may be endowed with 'intention' and the sense of becoming, that is to say *chronos* is replaced by *kairos*, p. 122.

[293] Tonkin, *Narrating our pasts*, pp. 72-5 discusses the *longue duree*, a concept drawn from the French historian, Ferdinand Braudel and the *Annales* school of thought.

insistencies that grew in Maori from their Polynesianness.'[294] However, Dominy cautions against dismissing these inventions and transformations as lacking in authenticity. The task is not to 'strip away the invented portions of culture as unauthentic, but to understand the process by which they acquire authenticity.'[295] These represent ways of constructing indigeneity, of putting down roots that reach further back than the time of the family's arrival in the country or its purchase of the property, of belonging to 'deep time' in Aotearoa/New Zealand, invoking the indigenous to insert oneself into the *longue duree*.[296]

On the other hand, however, a feature of many of these narratives is an underlying anxiety and defensiveness. There seem to be two reasons for this. In recent decades the economic vagaries of farming and environmental considerations, particularly in rugged hill country, have eroded certainty about sustaining some family properties. These changing realities unsettle narratives of belonging. Also, attached to some Williams properties are the myths, persistent over generations, of legally or ethically dubious acquisition, myths which strike at the integrity of earlier generations. It is clear from the oral testimony that these matters were frequent topics of discussion among the Williamses, and that the anxieties and defensiveness have passed from one generation to the next. Did they take advantage of Maori? Were their dealings underhand? This unease finds echoes in the writing of some Australians who designate that continent 'a haunted country' where both 'love of the land and the guilt of invasion' are part of settler identity.[297] Other questions – did they own more than was fair? should 'men of the Church' own so much land? – arise out of the New Zealand myths of landownership expressed in closer settlement policies, and beliefs about the relationship between the material and the spiritual. Whatever the truth of these myths of acquisition, protests of fair dealing and attempts to shift blame to other

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[294] Geoff Park, 'Going between goddesses,' in *Quicksands. Foundational histories in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand*, edited by Klaus Neumann, Nicholas Thomas and Hilary Ericksen (Sydney, 1999), p. 197.

[295] Dominy, p. 209, cites Allan F. Hanson, The Making of the Maori: Culture Invention and its Logic, *American Anthropologist*, 91 (1989), p. 898. See also Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature* (London, 1989), pp. 136-7, on the collision between the 'backward-looking impotence of exile and the forward-looking impetus to indigeneity', and the need to negotiate the 'gulf' between the imported language and the new land.

[296] Read, *Belonging*, pp. 180-1.

[297] Judith Wright, 'The Broken Links' (1981) in *Born of the Conquerors* (Canberra, 1991), pp. 29-30, cited in Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors: The Antiquarian Imagination in Australia* (Melbourne, 1996), p. 267.

branches of the family only serve to exacerbate the sense of unease emerging from the narratives. This is recognized in the attempts of some members of the family to do their own research into these matters, hoping to lay these ghosts to rest by backing up what they have learnt within the family with other forms of knowledge. Despite being claims to belonging these are also unsettled narratives.

CHAPTER 3

Family myths of class

In the mid-twentieth century Leslie Lipson wrote: 'In New Zealand, if any sculptured allegory were to be placed at the approaches of Auckland or Wellington harbor, it would assuredly be a statue of Equality.'[1] Yet most of the Williams see their family as having been part of New Zealand's 'upper class' or 'gentry', and some might still identify themselves in this way. In much of their oral testimony, therefore, there is a tension between the experience and values of a 'gentrified' background and the ideology of egalitarianism. Therefore, before investigating the oral testimony as it relates to class, this introductory section will first address three questions. It will examine the egalitarian myth in New Zealand historiography, and then notions of the 'gentry' in New Zealand. Thirdly, it will describe the class background of the Williams family.

The egalitarian myth in New Zealand

All of those I interviewed have grown up at a time when most New Zealanders seem to have been proud of being part of an aspiring egalitarian society. This pride and the myth are reflected in, and to some extent fostered by, the work of a number of writers, of whom we will examine just three. Through the first half of the twentieth century Williams Pember Reeves' popular book *Long White Cloud: Ao Tea Roa* (1898) has been influential.[2] Reeves suggested that for the first 50 years of the country's history, public affairs were managed by a minority possessing wealth and land, better educated than most settlers and derived from the English ruling class. Under the reforms of the late nineteenth century (of which Reeves himself was an architect), this ruling class was 'thrown over and displaced by a more plebeian and democratic regime'.[3] Although 'viewed with suspicion, alarm, contempt, or anger, by a large class of wealthy and influential New Zealanders', these reforms were justified by the principles that lay behind them, namely to maintain the country 'free from extremes of wealth and poverty, from class hatreds and fears and the barriers these create' and

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[1] Leslie Lipson, *The Politics of Equality. New Zealand's Adventures in Democracy* (Chicago, 1948), p. 8.

[2] Peter Gibbons, 'Non-fiction', in *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*, edited by Terry Sturm (Auckland, 1991), pp. 54-5. *Long White Cloud* was first published in 1898,and there were subsequent editions in 1899, 1900, 1924 and 1950. Written for a British audience, it became a popular history in New Zealand, giving 'contour and coherence' to the past and fostering New Zealanders' pride in their country.

[3] William Pember Reeves, *Long White Cloud (Ao Tea Roa)*, 3rd edition revised (London, 1924), pp. 271-3.

to prevent 'some of the worst social evils and miseries which afflict great nations alike in the old world and the new'.[4] Using the language of class conflict, he credits the Liberals with setting New Zealand on the road to an egalitarian twentieth century.

In *A History of New Zealand* (1959), Sinclair continued this theme, linking the two powerful myths of pioneering and egalitarianism.[5] Concluding his chapter on the Liberal period, he wrote: 'That democratic and egalitarian aspiration, that yearning for what is today termed "social justice", which the Liberals inherited from the pioneering generation and to which they gave a measure of tangible expression decisive enough to mould the future history of the country, is the main element in the New Zealand tradition.'[6] It later found expression in the social security system introduced by the first Labour Government, a system which Sinclair believed to be the greatest political achievement in the country's history.[7] Approving the 'search for equality' and the 'classless society', Sinclair wrote with disparagement for those who still regard themselves as 'Society' in the 1950s:

New Zealand is not a classless society. It must be more nearly classless, however, than any other society in the world. Some people are richer than others, but wealth carries no great prestige and no prerogative of leadership. There is, in each town, a group of people, chiefly the families of business and professional men, who regard themselves as 'Society', but their pretensions are seldom conceded by outsiders, who have rarely heard their names. New Zealand 'Society' is a middle-class clique in

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[4] William Pember Reeves, *The Long White Cloud: Ao Tea Roa,* 2nd edition (London, 1899), pp. 394, 397.

[5] Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1959). This superseded all other short histories of New Zealand then in print, including *Long White Cloud.* It has been in constant demand since with four revised editions, the last in 1991. Gibbons, 'Non-fiction', p. 71, writes that Sinclair narrated the growth of a nation and 'formulated a complex mythology of national identity' which was a 'major influence on New Zealanders' perceptions of their pasts'.

[6] Sinclair, *History* (1959), p. 185. Sinclair argued that working class immigrants had never been prepared to accept an inferior status, bargaining for higher wages and shorter working hours, becoming landowners, and behaving as though 'every man is not only as good as his neighbour but a great deal better', pp. 94-7. Tony Simpson makes a similar argument, that the political culture of 'equity and natural right for all' grew out of the experience of emigration and settlement. See Tony Simpson, *The Immigrants. The Great Migration from Britain to New Zealand, 1830-1890* (Auckland, 1997), pp. 216-7. The egalitarian view of New Zealand society is also espoused by Tom Brooking, *Lands for the People? The Highland Clearances and the Colonisation of New Zealand. A Biography of John MacKenzie* (Dunedin, 1996), pp. 269-72, and by Jock Phillips, *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male. A History* (Auckland, 1987), pp. 30-31, 147, 166, 205. Male egalitarian camaraderie was to be found on the frontier, at war, on the rugby field, in the pub, at work. See also W. H. Oliver, 'Reeves, Sinclair and the Social Pattern', in Peter Munz (ed.), *The Feel of Truth: Essays in New Zealand and Pacific History* (Wellington, 1969), p. 164.

[7] Sinclair, *History* (1959), p. 263.

what is in European terms, predominantly a middle-class community – is an anaemic relic of English gentility and an outlet for harmless snobbery.[8]

More recently James Belich in *Paradise Reforged* (2001), traced the changes to the end of the twentieth century, and still finds a not-quite classless society.[9] Belich argues that while the gentry were losing not only their political, but their social and economic leadership as well, there emerged two new classes. These were a class-conscious working people and a respectable middle class of farmers, professionals and business managers whose culture absorbed that of the gentry.[10] He suggests that 'even today, diligent search could rediscover the gentry as it sometimes rediscovers birds long thought extinct', finding an elderly remnant who still own large stations or considerable wealth, a part of '*the* old-boy network' who speak with ' "plums in their mouths".'[11]

The ideology of egalitarianism is implicit, if not explicit, in these celebrations of the demise of the gentry. But what is meant by egalitarianism? It is based in the idea that all men are born equal, but as Erik Olssen points out in *Building the New World* (1995), equality has various meanings.[12] It may encompass equality before the law, equality of status, equality of material conditions and equality of opportunity.[13] Olssen showed that by 1920 in the working-class Dunedin suburb of Caversham it had all these meanings and each reinforced the others. Translated into practice they included the right to stable employment, material security for all, justice and fairness, the right to a 'fair' wage, opportunities for self-employment and home ownership,

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[8] Sinclair, *History* (1959), pp. 276.
[9] James Belich, *Paradise Reforged. A History of the New Zealanders. From the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Auckland, 2001).
[10] Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, pp. 95, 126-156. Belich distinguishes four classes, 'blurred at the margins, clearer a the cores', at the end of the nineteenth century. These were the genteel (upper class), the respectable (middle class), the decent (working class) and the disreputable or unemployed (p. 126). Maori were outside class culture. A 'tight' working class emerged in the decade 1906-16, fostered by the industrial conflict and strikes of 1912-13, which were 'far closer to class war than most historians would allow', and have been written out of history because of powerful myths of social harmony (pp. 133, 95). However, by the mid 1920s the labour movement began to adopt a more moderate stance. The farmers meanwhile were also forging themselves into a 'nationwide tight class', forming the heart of a wider alliance of rural workers, small businessmen, some of the urban middle and lower classes, and also the gentry. Although never more than 20 percent of the population, farmers managed to persuade society that they were 'the backbone of the country', and its natural rulers.
[11] James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p. 133.
[12] Erik Olssen, *Building the New World; work, politics and society in Caversham 1880s-1920s* (Auckland, 1995).
[13] Olssen, *Building the New World*, pp. 246-7.

solidarity in the community, treating everybody the same and not putting on airs, and esteem based on performance and behaviour rather than wealth. These central cultural values were to be found through out the country and the beliefs themselves if not the practice lasted through most of the century.[14] Some are to be found in the Williams oral testimony.

The gentry

Although Sinclair and particularly Belich use the term 'gentry' freely, it is one with a contested meaning in New Zealand. Some historians like Jim McAloon deny the existence of a New Zealand gentry. He finds the term 'inappropriate to the colonial context, ' and claims that the myth of the 'aristocratic tradition' has had undue influence.[15] Rather than concentrate on the well-known and the highly visible colonial wealthy, he systematically studied probate records of the wealthy until about 1930, and claims to have produced a study not of class, but of a stratum within the colonial upper class. [16] As the name of his book, *No Idle Rich* (2002), suggests, McAloon argues that the colonial upper class, although wealthy, were a 'thoroughly bourgeois group, living their lives by the bourgeois values of thrift, hard work, and moderation.'[17] They do not qualify as gentry since they did not have sufficient unearned income to have the leisure to be gentlemen.[18]

Others like Stevan Eldred-Grigg have had no such qualms. In his popular history, *A Southern Gentry* (1980), he argues that the 'aristocratic tradition' is still an

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[14] Olssen, *Building the New World*, pp. 248-9, 260-1.

[15] Jim McAloon, *No Idle Rich. The Wealthy in Canterbury and Otago 1840-1914* (Dunedin, 2002), pp. 14, 22.

[16] McAloon, pp. 14-16, 23-4. With the wealth threshold set at 10,000 pounds until 1918, and increased in subsequent years, McAloon's cohort included in more or less equal numbers estates of the rural and urban wealthy.

[17] McAloon, p. 14.

[18] McAloon, p. 24. Studying the structure of their wealth, the nature of their class consciousness, and the exercise of power, McAloon finds that almost all were middle class in origin, had made their wealth by hard work, thrift and a measure of luck, which usually included early arrival. They never monopolised political power or operated as a monolithic block in political, social or economic life. Liberal reform was not a major attack on the economic or political power of the wealthy, but had the effect of gradually uniting property interests, small and large. The absence of both an 'aristocratic or gentry consciousness', and of sufficient unearned income to enable gentlemanly leisure made them akin to the British middle classes, pp. 24, 54, 73-4, 175-82.

'unprepossessing fact' about life in New Zealand.[19] He briefly discusses the difficulty of finding appropriate labels for social classes in New Zealand. The wealthy landed proprietors of the South Island about whom he writes have been referred to variously as a 'landed aristocracy' and 'squatters', as well as 'gentry'. Eldred-Grigg claims to follow the precedent set by Edward Wakefield, Burke's *History of the Colonial Gentry* and Sinclair in using the word 'gentry'.[20]
His study is based in part on local histories, station histories and gentry biographies. He finds that the gentry continued to sit on the boards of freezing works and woollen mills, banks and insurance companies; to maintain their status with extravagant and exclusive entertaining with hunting and balls, tennis parties and polo; to send their children to private schools, travel overseas and marry within their own class; to inherit estates or enter suitable occupations in business or the professions; and to continue the tradition of *noblesse oblige.* They remained tenacious but became less visible.[21]

In his anthropological study, *Respectable Lives* (1992), Elvin Hatch also indicates the continued existence of class distinctions, but he is careful to avoid the designation of 'gentry' unless in inverted commas. Hatch studied a rural South Canterbury community, and found both egalitarian and hierarchical tendencies coexisting.[22] He develops a one- and two-table theory of social hierarchy existing among the well-to-do before World War II. Two-table families ate apart from their workers, emphasising social distance and hierarchy, while one-table families ate with their workers and were symbolic of egalitarianism.[23] Social hierarchy in the 1980s was determined by competing criteria including occupation, wealth, farming ability and refinement. In addition he found no consensus on what it takes to be a good farmer or on the virtues of refinement. Thus social hierarchy rests on contested systems of meaning.[24] Hatch identifies certain families whom he describes as genteel, who remain identifiable by their family background and association with large early landholdings. Their defining feature is a boarding school education and they tend to

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[19] Stevan Eldred-Grigg, *A Southern Gentry: New Zealanders who Inherited the Earth* (Wellington, 1980), Prologue.
[20] Eldred-Grigg, Prologue.
[21] Eldred-Grigg, pp. 139-45, 151-162, 174.
[22] Elvin Hatch, *Respectable Lives. Social Standing in Rural New Zealand* (Berkley, Los Angeles, and Oxford, 1992), p. 166.
[23] See Hatch, pp. 139-158, for an analysis of the significance of one-table and two-table practices.
[24] Hatch, p. 184.

marry within their own ranks. Though it is not very cohesive they have their own nationwide social network, fostered by family and boarding school connections. They still tend to lead a 'refined life style', and to be marked by 'cultivated' speech and manners, greater restraint, and decorum which is not simply an outer style, but an 'inner disposition'.[25] These people are the descendants of two-table families, who have 'accommodated to a strongly egalitarian social milieu'.[26]

Studies of the 'gentry' in New Zealand have almost all focused on the wealthy of Canterbury and Otago. There were, however, parallels in the North Island particularly in Hawkes Bay and Wairarapa, as Olssen acknowledges.[27] The Williams were amongst this North Island contingent. Their oral testimony contains much that mirrors Hatch's descriptions of genteel families, and also Eldred-Grigg's characterisations of the 'gentry.' More importantly, a number of them explore the meaning of class and class signifiers as they experienced them, and also declare their espousal of egalitarian principles. Their testimony reflects the contested meaning of class in New Zealand society. It is useful to recall that E. P. Thompson pointed to the historical and cultural rather than the structural nature of class when he wrote: 'Class is defined by men as they live their own history, and, in the end, this is its only definition.'[28] As Olssen points out, by insisting that class can only be understood in specific historical contexts, and stressing the importance of human agency, Thompson frees the study of class from its 'deterministic and materialistic nexus'.[29] Perhaps we find in the Williams testimony an example of class being defined by men and women as they live their own history.

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[25] Hatch, pp. 171-9.
[26] Hatch p. 177.
[27] Erik Olssen, 'Towards a New Society' in *The Oxford History of New Zealand,* 2nd edition, edited by Geoffrey W. Rice (Auckland, 1992), p. 261.
[28] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class,* revised edition (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1968), p. 11. A similar but fuller definition is found on p. 939: 'Class is a social and cultural formation (often finding institutional expression) which cannot be defined abstractly, or in isolation, but only in terms of relationship with other classes; and, ultimately, the definition can only be made in the medium of *time* – that is, action and reaction, change and conflict. When we speak of *a* class we are thinking of a very loosely defined body of people who share the same congeries of interests, social experiences, traditions and value-system, who have a *disposition* to *behave* as a class, to define themselves in their actions and in their consciousness in relation to other groups of people in class ways. But class itself is not a thing, it is a happening.'
See also Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1900,* (New York, 1983) p. 102. Class is not something which predetermines consciousness, but is 'constructed and inscribed within a complex rhetoric of metaphorical associations, casual inferences and imaginative constructions'.
[29] Olssen, *Building the New World,* p. 12.

The class background of the Williams family

Most of those I interviewed know little about their ancestors in England beyond one or at most two generations.[30] However the use of family names such as Marsh, Temple, Coldham, Heathcote and Nelson amongst the earlier generations in New Zealand suggests that they continued to value these connections. Conversely the use of such names may have served to maintain an awareness of their English ancestors among later generations in New Zealand, as did visits to family in England, which have continued until the present. The family's English background is that of the Dissenting urban middle class. They lived comfortably, took their part in civic and church affairs, valued education, showed business acumen and enterprise, and were involved in philanthropic work.[31]

Within two generations of arriving in New Zealand the Williams family had acquired large tracts of pastoral land on the East Coast of the North Island around Gisborne, in Hawkes Bay and in the Wairarapa, as well as in Northland [see Appendix 4, Map2].[32] Among their sons, two entered the church while six became farmer-businessmen, co-

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[30] Information about the Williams's English background is found in the following sources: Sybil M. Woods, *Samuel Williams of Te Aute* (Christchurch 1981), pp. 19-25; Sybil Woods, *Marianne Williams. A study of life in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand 1823-187*, 4th edition (Christchurch, 1997), pp. 9-18; Rex D. Evans (compiler), *Faith and Farming. Te Huarahi ki te Ora. The Legacy of Henry Williams and William Williams*, revised edition (Auckland, 1998), pp. 3-14; Lawrence M. Rogers, *Te Wiremu: A Biography of Henry Williams* (Christchurch, 1973), pp. 26, 30-34; George Davis, *The Shield of Faith: The Life and Times of Henry and Marianne Williams* (published privately, 1998), pp. 1-4, 6-13; R. J. Paterson (compiler), *William Nelson of Tomoana: His Legacy to Hawke's Bay. A Family Scrapbook* (published privately, 2001), pp. 7, 220.

[31] Thomas Williams, the father of Henry and William, was the son of a Dissenting minister. Thomas became a mercer and supplied uniforms to the Royal Navy. In 1783 he married Mary Marsh, the daughter of a captain in the Royal Navy. Later the family moved to Nottingham where Thomas invested in a lace-making business. In 1796 he was sworn in as a Burgess of the city, in 1802 he became one of the two Chamberlains of Nottingham, and a year later one of the two Sheriffs. When Thomas died of typhus in 1804, his widow sold the lace-making business, and established a 'school for young ladies' in the nearby cathedral town of Southwell. Henry was twelve when his father died. Two years later he signed on in the navy as a midshipman, and after nine years of active service retired as a lieutenant. In 1818 Henry married Marianne Coldham. Marianne's background was very similar to that of Henry. Her father also moved his family to Nottingham in 1796, invested in lace-making, became a Sheriff and later Mayor of Nottingham. In 1810, when her mother died, Marianne took over the organization of the household and acted as her father's hostess for official guests. Henry's younger brother, William, on completing his medical apprenticeship, went to Magdalen Hall, Oxford. In 1825 he married Jane Nelson, whose family were also manufacturers and Sheriffs in Nottingham

[32] The information for the rest of this section is gleaned from the oral testimony, and from the following sources: Evans (1998); Woods, *Samuel Williams* (1981); David Yerex, *They Came to Wydrop. The Beetham and Williams Families, Brancepath and Te Parae, Wairarapa 1856-1990*, (Wellington, 1991).

operating with one another in purchasing land and establishing businesses to support this growing industry. Subsequent generations also entered the professions, especially medicine. In the present generations the range of occupations is too numerous to detail, ranging from freezing worker to diplomat, but still including many farmers, businessmen, professionals and a number of clergy.

The family had become and many remained very wealthy. The Williams family featured in the list of top ten wealthy families in 1840 and again 1987.[33] Various individual members of the family are mentioned by Graeme Hunt in *The Rich List* (2000), including TC Williams of 'Te Parae' in the Wairarapa, Samuel Williams of 'Te Aute' who died in 1907 worth 430,000 pounds, HB Williams of 'Turihaua', AB Williams of 'Puketiti', and KS Williams of 'Matahiia.' As well, members of the family were founding partners and major shareholders in the stock and station agency, Williams and Kettle, the nationwide cinema chain, Kerridge Odeon Corporation and various other companies.[34] As landowners they employed numerous farm workers, although most also worked physically on their farms. They built large homesteads staffed by servants.

Education was felt to be important. In the first half of the twentieth century, while most New Zealanders attended state elementary schools, the Williamses often employed governesses for their younger children and sent the older ones to Anglican private boarding schools. Typically boys would go to preparatory schools and then to Christ's College or Wanganui Collegiate, while girls would attend either Woodford House or Nga Tawa. Until the fifth generation some boys were sent to England to school, and more went to university at Oxford, Cambridge or Edinburgh. Among the present generations however, the trend is to send a child to the local primary school, possibly a private secondary school and finally a New Zealand university.

Land has been passed down wherever possible. Sons usually returned home to farm, large properties sometimes being subdivided to allow this. However more recently

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[33] Graeme Hunt, *The Rich List. Wealth and Enterprise in New Zealand 1820-2000* (Auckland, 2000), pp. 27, 221.

[34] Hunt, pp.22-6, 53, 55-7. McAloon, p. 29, showed that in Canterbury and Otago before 1925 only 6.6 percent of wealthy pastoralists left estates greater than 100,000 pounds. Thus by New Zealand standards Samuel Williams's estate was considerable.

this practice ceased in order to protect the economic viability of properties. Nowadays second and third sons might be assisted to buy another property, often adjacent to the original if possible, or they may be encouraged to enter a profession. Daughters were well educated by the standards of the day, but until the present generation most expected to do paid work only until they married, if at all.

Marriages usually occurred within their own class, though the choice of partners may have been limited in the early days when sons tended to marry their cousins or the sisters of their business and farming partners. Later generations not infrequently married members of the 'Southern gentry'. The Williams family are connected to many other wealthy landowning families mentioned by Hunt: the Bidwills, Deans, Riddifords, Robinsons, Elworthys and Aclands to name but a few. Sons who were educated in England sometimes returned with English wives, often from the upper middle class. It was not until the third generation that any of the family married a Maori, and this has remained a rare occurrence.

Until the mid-twentieth century most social contact was restricted to their own class, the wider family network and those with whom they and their parents or siblings had been to school. Like the 'Southern gentry' their manners and voices were 'cultivated'. There were tennis parties, garden parties, golf, hunts, polo, balls and coming-out dances. In summer groups of families would gather at Williams beach and lake enclaves for their holidays.[35] From the third generation extended travel to England was common.

Like some of the wealthy in the South Island, the Williams were moved by the philanthropic impulse.[36] Some put their wealth into trusts to support the Anglican Church and private education, both for Maori and Pakeha. Others gave large sums to build local churches, hospitals and schools.[37] Some, like Samuel Williams, also

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[35] These enclaves included the beach settlements of Paihia in the north and Mangakuri in Hawkes Bay, and a lakeside settlement at Rotoiti.

[36] McAloon, p. 156. About 14 per cent of the wealthy left charitable bequests in their wills, although this figure increased for the very wealthy. McAloon notes that this fails to take account of charitable giving over the course of a lifetime.

[37] Mary Boyd, 'Williams, Samuel' in *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Vol One.,1769-1869,* edited by W. H. Oliver (Wellington, 1990) pp. 596-7. Boyd notes that Samuel during his lifetime was a benefactor of Maori, giving for university training, salaries of Maori teachers, stipends of Maori

made a practice of helping young men of lesser means on to farms or into their chosen professions. These were by no means always family members.

They also attended to their civic duties. Many served years on the church vestry or in local government, on county councils, road, harbour and catchment boards. Of Henry Williams's sons, Thomas was elected to the Auckland Provincial Council, John was a member of the Auckland Provincial Council and of Parliament, while Henry served on the Legislative Council from 1882 until 1903.[38] KS Williams was a Reform Party MP from 1920-35.[39] Recent generations of Williams women have served on church committees, school boards of trustees and numerous organizations such as Red Cross, the Plunket Society, and Girl Guides. In short, judged by the criteria of occupation, wealth, education, refinement, social networks, civic duty and *noblesse oblige,* most of the Williams family differed little from their counterparts in the South Island as described by Eldred-Grigg.

There were, however, two respects in which they may have differed. Firstly, a significant number of young Williams men were ordained in the Anglican Church. Their levels of wealth could not match those of their more entrepreneurial cousins, though often provision was made for them by the family in the form of farming companies and assistance provided for the education of their children. These men were often seen as the moral leaders in the family.

The second respect in which the Williams differed was in their closer, if paternalistic, relationship with Maori. In the nineteenth century Maori society remained distinctive, forming their own status hierarchy, but regarded by many Pakeha as constituting a lower class.[40] Sinclair described Maori in the1950s as a 'landless, rural, labour force'.[41] A number of the family in earlier generations spoke Maori fluently and some acted as official translators. Many of the Hawkes Bay family were grouped around Te Aute College and have been involved in its governance and support throughout.

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clergy, and the support of schools and churches. He also left 50,000 pounds to continue this work in the Henry and William Williams Memorial Trust.

[38] Evans (1992), pp. 159, 179.

[39] Hunt, p. 25.

[40] Erik Olssen, 'Social Class in Nineteenth Century New Zealand' in *Social class in New Zealand,* edited by David Pitt (Auckland 1977), p. 22.

[41] Sinclair, *History* (1959), p. 289.

Several of the Williams clergy in the past were Maori Missioners. The Williams were also unusual in that their philanthropy was often directed towards Maori. However, they do not appear to have socialised with Maori in the same way as they did, for instance, with their wider family, and marriage to Maori has been rare. Nevertheless, there seem to have developed quite close relationships between certain Maori families and the Williamses, some of which have continued over generations. This issue of the relationship with Maori will be addressed in chapter five.

Memory biographies

The myth around which each of these three memory biographies is constructed is based on class difference, and the rejection of class difference. Although they all reflect a view of the Williams family as being part of the 'gentry' or 'upper class', each demonstrates a different understanding of how this is expressed.[42]

Simon Williams was born in Dunedin in 1945. His father worked for Dalgety's, a firm with strong Williams connections, and the family moved around the country as he sought promotion. When Simon was seven they moved to Hastings, then two years later to Invercargill, and finally to Christchurch. Simon attended local state schools along the way. After leaving school he completed part of a law degree before going first into insurance and then into journalism. He worked in England in 1970 and 1978, but has been in Christchurch since returning, where he now teaches media studies at a private school, St Andrew's College. Since his uncle Henry Williams died in 1996, Simon has been the 'head of the Williams family' in a patrilineal sense. That the family, or at least some of it, are still conscious of this position and responsibility, is indicated by the fact that when he was dying Henry formally passed on to Simon 'a big trunk of stuff' about the family and got him to sort it. Talking about what was in the trunk Simon becomes quite animated, at least about the family's history prior to coming to New Zealand.[43] As the head of the family Simon was asked to give a speech at the 1998 family reunion, although in his account he

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[42] Hatch, p. 184. Hatch notes a contested social hierarchy in a South Island rural community, resting on contested systems of meaning which include wealth, refinement and ability.

[43] Simon Williams, 25 June 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 3 side A 5 9.3, 14.0, 14.7, 16.9.

would cheerfully have changed places with his older female cousin.[44] It was at this reunion that Simon caused quite a stir by wearing a kilt. Simon's narrative is ironic in tone. He is concerned with wealth and notions of style and position in society. Having the 'right' kind of car, going to the 'right' school, and knowing the 'right' people are things both to aspire to and to denigrate.

Eric Williams was born in 1924 at Pukehou, and raised at 'Te Aute'. He and his brother and sisters were educated by governesses, and when he was 10 he was sent to board at Hereworth Prep School. He then attended Wanganui Collegiate, and left school in 1942 to go into the air force during the war. After the war he decided to go farming, and spent some time at Cirencester Agricultural College in England. As the eldest son he was expected to take over 'Te Aute' but was not keen to do this, and after his marriage the couple moved to the Waikato. Here he worked on his father-in-law's farm and eventually bought his own property at Te Miro near Cambridge. Eric was a founding member of the Coopworth Breeders Association, and developed a strong interest in tree growing. Now in retirement at Pirongia he is partner in a business harvesting exotic woods. Eric's concerns arise out of what he sees as the elite, patrimonial system existing in the 'Te Aute' of his childhood; the hierarchy of landowner and farm worker, 'squire' and 'tenant'; the concentration on proper ways to behave; of having to live up to family expectations of the eldest son, especially the expectation of taking over the family farm.

Maryrose Wilson was born in 1926 in Timaru, and raised in Karori, Wellington. Her father, Harold Miller, was librarian at Victoria University, and apparently because of his marriage to a Williams, developed a special interest in the early missionaries and in Maori–Pakeha relations. He wrote several books on these subjects. Maryrose was educated at Samuel Marsden School and then at Canterbury University where she did fine arts.[45] Here she acted under the direction of Ngaio Marsh and toyed with the idea of becoming an actor. But in 1952 she married Godfrey Wilson who was ordained shortly after their marriage, and eventually became a bishop. They lived in Wellington, Napier and Auckland. Maryrose was also very active in the church in spiritual guidance, counselling, marriage guidance and social work. Maryrose sees

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[44] Simon Williams, 3A 4.7.
[45] Samuel Marsden School is a private boarding and day school for girls, run by the Anglican Church.

herself as one of the 'haves', but feels more at home with the 'have nots'. She positions herself at the interface between these two.

All three appear to reject the status of the Williams family in their narratives. But it is interesting to note the tone of deep irony which pervades much of the first two narratives. It is as though the narrating self is deriding or mocking the narrated self, and both, particularly Simon, are ambivalent about their rejection of class values. This is not so for Maryrose whose passion for the work she does leaves no room for irony. However, in both her narrative and in Eric's, the Williams family relationship with Maori and its links with the Church play a part. They both see Maori as part of the 'lower class', 'bottom of the heap', but at the same time understand themselves as having a special concern with Maori arising out of their family history. In both narratives also there is an underlying consciousness of the contradiction in a missionary family having achieved the status and wealth that the Williams family did.

Simon Williams

I interviewed Simon at his home, a simple but elegant Georgian style 'cottage' in one of Christchurch's best suburbs. His narrative was detailed, sometimes theatrical, and often ironic. There are two interwoven themes. The first is one of class, and the meaning of class signifiers, the importance of wealth and status and the nuances of refinement. In Simon's narrative, society is based on a class model, and he and his family are constantly trying to fit into the upper echelons of this society, but are handicapped by insufficient wealth. He oscillates between valuing and rejecting these class values, satirizing his family's values, often by affecting a genteel accent, and yet seeking to emulate them. His narrative is peppered with the symbols of status, smart cars, big houses, private schools, the best suburbs, the right friends. The second theme is the desire to be different, which conflicts with his fear of looking a fool. As a child he refuses to go to playcentre because he doesn't know anyone, he will not learn to ski in case he is no good at it, and he doesn't have the courage to wear the kilt he so desperately wanted to wear.[46] At the same time he says he never played rugby simply because he was 'perverse', and he began to wear a kilt when he thought to

[46] Simon Williams, 1A 5.6, 1B 9.5, 28.3.

himself: 'Bugger it, I'm sick of having to do what other people expect me to do.'[47] In Simon's narrative cars in particular are the symbol of status, and the kilt is the symbol of his rebellion and individualism.

Beginning his narrative with the story of his parents' marriage, he launches straight into the issue of class as exemplified by them.

And my mother who was brought up in Wellington society with lots of money – had been going out with a Wellington pharmaceutical – the heir to a pharmaceutical fortune, I suppose would be a grand way of putting it – anyway rich guy who owned a La Gonda, which as a car enthusiast appeals to me. She – that relationship ceased and then she met my father ... and some time after that they decided to get married .... I always have to say I could never quite fathom why my mother and my father got married. I mean they were two very different types of people. He was from a family that was traditional. Well, the Williams family has a kind of feeling about it; and she was from a much brasher family. Her father was a businessperson, and they'd made money quickly and he'd given her a trip to Australia for her 21st in 1938. She went on the Awatea and had a lovely time and did some modelling, some photographic modelling. And he had had a much more – low-key upbringing I suppose you could say. He'd been to Waihi and Christ's College. And it always intrigued me that they got married. But anyway they did.[48]

This tug of war between different values and styles, being 'flashy' or having 'position', is one that plays itself out in the rest of Simon's narrative.[49]

His early life was spent in Dunedin at MacAndrew Bay, and Simon's father worked in a stock and station agency. His Williams grandparents lived in the suburb of Highgate, where his grandfather, Earnest, had a medical practice. Simon reflects:

My mother ... probably had expectations of Dad, who never made any money. You see she had a wealthy childhood .... There'd been lots of money, and Dad's family had money too, but – well no, they didn't actually have money but they had – position – is that what you'd call it? – nice house, huge house, but I don't think they sort of threw money about. Mum says that Earnest didn't have

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[47] Simon Williams, 1B 6.5, 2B 34.5.
[48] Simon Williams, 1A 0.3.
[49] 'Being flashy' and 'having position' may be likened to Hatch's categories of wealth and refinement. Hatch, pp. 153-6, 185.

any money but who knows. He put four children through private schools out of Dunedin so must have been some money coming in from somewhere. And they'd all been to preparatory schools as well, so there was a long period of kids being in private schools. Anyhow when we lived at MacAndrew Bay my father was a clerk - wonderfully degrading title – clerk. I don't know whether people use it now. 'He's a clerk'. It doesn't sound very good, does it.[50]

Nevertheless Simon enjoyed going to Dalgety's and looking at all the 'farm stuff' in the wool store and the grain store.

Another place he liked to go was his grandparents' house, which was large and 'had places you could disappear for hours'.[51] He describes the house in detail. It was built in 1909, designed by Hooper, a disciple of Lutyens, in the Arts and Crafts style. He recalls the white panelling, the dark wooden floor, the Persian rugs, some of the furniture, the things in the nursery, 'beautiful stuff, all English of course'.[52] The third place he liked to go was the family beach cottage at Doctors Point, Waitati. '[I]t was all very cosy ... all the doctors sort of lived together, went out to the cottage together, went to school together, you know. And very cosy it seemed.'[53] These are all images of 'position', of a place in society that was well thought of, solid and secure, not flashy or based on recent wealth.

Much of Simon's narrative is devoted to cars, an obsession which he says began almost as soon as he could talk. He remembers that at that time his own father had a 1936 Morris Eight, because 'he could never afford anything decent', but

His father had had sort of Singers and Vauxhalls and kind of ordinary English cars. My mother's father had had Buicks and Willies Knights and Overlands and cars of that sort – I think it went Overland, Willies Knight and Buick which is going up in status.[54]

Likewise at MacAndrew Bay he can recall the cars of the different residents. He also recalls who was rich and lived in the 'big flash house', and the Whites who were called the Off-Whites because they were poor and wore 'dirty gym shoes to school'

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[50] Simon Williams 1A 5.6.
[51] Simon Williams, 1A 11.0.
[52] Simon Williams, 1A 12.4.
[53] Simon Williams, 1A 20.8.
[54] Simon Williams, 1A 9.8.

and 'grey jerseys with holes in'.[55] He may speak of this with irony, but Simon is alive to every nuance of class and wealth and style and position. His apparent awareness of these matters as a child suggests that they were not infrequently discussed in the home.

Life in MacAndrew Bay was destined to come to an end because Simon's father was anxious to send his son to Christ's College, and that meant he had to get a promotion to Christchurch.[56] But first he was sent by Dalgety's to Hastings, where for two years they were living among the Williams family. Simon recalls that they often visited relatives in Gisborne or Te Aute, and while he enjoyed picnics and eeling and other activities on their farms, he always remarks upon their cars, their houses and their furniture. Frequent ports of call were his aunt near Waipawa who had a dishmaster and a fridge with two doors, and some farming friends who had a Mark 7 Jaguar and two bulldozers.[57] Simon notes that although his family still owned a Morris Eight, his father now had an office car also, a 1953 Consul.[58] He remembers going to Woodford House to pick up his cousin for an exeat day:

We were in the Consul, in front of us was a Land Rover, behind us was a Jaguar, and there were other cars of similar ilk ... Jaguars and Armstrong-Sidleys and cars of that sort, and Chevrolets, Studebakers and Dodges and things were all terribly much the farmers' thing, and we felt OK in the Consul – I think.[59]

The importance of this occasion is of course that it was not merely a parade of cars, but a parade of Hawkes Bay society at the region's most exclusive private girls' school, an opportunity to be seen in the right place with the right people. It was not a moment to squander by arriving in a Morris Eight.

The narrative continues with his father's 'elaborate plan' to send Simon to the most exclusive private boys' school in New Zealand. Unfortunately this plan was not going well. Dalgety's decided to move him to Invercargill rather than Christchurch,

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[55] Simon Williams, 1A 24.6

[56] Hatch, p. 154. Going to the most prestigious private boarding school was less important in the 1980s, but still important in the 1950s when Simon Williams was growing up. Dominy, p. 42, also found that social networks of this class were reinforced by attendance at private boarding schools

[57] Simon Williams, 1B 0.8, 1A 42.5

[58] Simon Williams, 1A 33.6

[59] Simon Williams, 1B 0.1

and there the family remained for seven years.[60] His father could not afford to send him to Christ's as a boarder, even when he passed the entrance exam.

I went up and sat the Christ's College entrance exam ... in March 58. Went up with Guy Schofield and John French who were going to Christ's College as well, and they both did. And we took the Schofield's Rover, as we were taking Guy up. They said, 'Why don't you take the Rover?' So we did. It was a white Rover 75 and John French vomited on the floor I remember, which Dad was very worried about because it was Mr Schofield's car. However I don't suppose it was the end of the world. But anyway we went up and sat the exam in Dunedin and we all passed, but they went and I didn't. And neither the Schofields or the Frenches had had a tradition of Christ's College and our family did. And it was 320 pounds a year to go there, and that was a third of my father's salary.

So that was the importance of going - it was family tradition was it?

Well I think Dad wanted a sense of achievement. He believed it was the thing, and you know, not to do it was a failure. I think he always felt a failure after that. I don't think he ever felt he'd achieved, and I went to Southland Boys High. Of course it didn't matter to me because I didn't know anything about Christ's College anyway.[61]

The Rover was an English car, quite expensive and considered to be very smart. Denied his rightful place at Christ's College, there is a sense of justice, or pay back, for Simon in the idea of vomit on the floor of this status symbol.

Simon says he hated intermediate and secondary school. He recalls a bullying headmaster and the system of caning with revulsion. But he enjoyed living in Invercargill. He speaks of going to the movies on Saturday with his friends, of biking out to Oreti Beach, of family picnics there in the long summer evenings, and biking to soccer with a cigarette in his mouth and his hands on his head.[62] These are times in Simon's memory when he revels in his growing independence, but there was one area where he continued to feel restricted, namely his dress. He would buy luminous socks and 'this weeks flavour in jeans', but what he really wanted was to wear a kilt.

I don't really know why except that I ... liked clothes, and of course as a boy in the 50s – .

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[60] Simon Williams, 1B 8.8.
[61] Simon Williams, 1B 36.9.
[62] Simon Williams, 1B 22.0, 23.5, 24.9, 25.5, 27.5.

You weren't meant to do that?

No. It was grey, grey, grey and grey, and boring like clothes are now for boys.[63]

He thinks he got the idea from a 'stunning' character in an English comic magazine that he used to read, who had wild adventures in the Scottish Highlands and wore a big white shirt and a kilt. It was not until ten years ago that he says he eventually wore a kilt.

Finally in 1962 Simon's father resigned from Dalgety's, and took a job in Christchurch. In the social milieu that his parents regarded as their own, and which they had been seeking for him much of his life, Simon says he found himself overwhelmed. He recalls some of those social contacts and his first years in Christchurch:

I went to Christchurch Boys High for a year, because Father and Mother thought that if I went to Christ's College for a year it might be too much of a shock to the system. So why don't I go to Boys High. Nick [Simon's younger brother] went to Christ's College. Father had finally managed to do something right as far as he was concerned.

What overwhelmed me most was all the private school crowd. Have you ever lived in Christchurch?

No, no I haven't

There are about eight private schools that people in the Merivale/Fendalton type areas send their kids to. And they're very, very sought after and very – you know, you <u>have</u> to do it. And all round Fendalton were these confident – you know the average New Zealander seemed to me to be a bit diffident, but these – I'd lived with people who were quite normal... all these girls who used to go to Rangiruru with loud voices, full of brash confidence .... They used to pile into Mum and Dad's car and zap round the town – it was all <u>quite</u> different.

Normal being diffident?

Well, yes, normal being just ordinary New Zealanders, and what I had believed was normal. Suddenly I came up here and all ... these people who had these flash voices and lots of cars and money and confidence, everywhere. It's exactly the same today – it hasn't changed a scrap. And ... I was overwhelmed by these people – couldn't cope with it at all. I was so shy, you know, and

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[63] Simon Williams, 1B 28.3

people would come to my parents place and they'd say [using genteel or refined accent] 'Oh yes, and what house are you in?', meaning what house at College – College [genteel accent stressed] – 'What house at College are you in? What house are you in?' And I'd say [using diffident tone] 'Well, I – I go to Boys High'. [returns to genteel accent] 'Oh really, Boys High! Well I believe it's quite a good school.' You know this sort of patronising bullshit. And it's exactly the same now, it's no different. And you know, if you wanted – if you've made a few bob in the world you've got to show everyone by sending your kid to a private school, where, of course, they're going to get better educated, which probably isn't true. Now of course, I find myself working at one

I was just wondering about this!

And it's fine, it's great, wonderful, I enjoy it. But that first ... trying to handle these incredible people who were so confident, who knew everybody and who knew – oh – you know –

I mean I'd had a bit of that when I was a kid because ... my Aunt Barbara and my Uncle George – Dad's sister Barbara – lived in Timaru, a wonderful big house out in the country at Salisbury. And whenever we used to travel between Christchurch and Invercargill .... it was always a port of call. And of course their kids went to Craighead so ... occasionally I did brush shoulders with people. I did go to a couple of Craighead balls which were pretty terrifying for a kid from Invercargill. The farming crowd from South Canterbury are pretty – .

A bit formidable?

Yeah. And the Craighead ball, they're all big brash sort of laughy, laughy people who drove around in Dad's big car. 'And what sort of car do you drive?' – 'Well – Morris Eight?' – I mean shit. ... I had this elaborate plan of what car we really owned, and I'd sort of avoid it if we could. My parents and I knew some quite rich people .... One of my mother's school friends was a woman called Lesley MacGregor who lived up on a huge station called Mt Linton, and Dad knew the Pinkneys up ... by Lumsden there. What do you call it? Oh God, it doesn't really matter. Something like Gleneary, yeah Gleneary. And we knew some other people called Ritchie ... who had a big farm up there and had coalmines ... There was money oozing out of these people like nothing on earth.

We went up to the Macgregor's ... for dinner one Sunday and fortunately my father had got an office car to use and it was ... a yellow Holden, which was

quite cool. It was OK. We got up to the Macgregor's and found the Ritchies were there and they had a Buick, and the MacGregors had a Rolls Royce - and a butler - and ankle deep white carpet. And Virginia Macgregor [affecting refined New Zealand English] was absolutely thuper – just been to England – to Europe to finishing school. That was a bit amazing – 'Geeze – funushing school, eh – increduble' [affecting a supposedly lower class accent] – you know [laughs] – 'What do you do there?' sort of stuff.[64]

The tone of this narrative is one of irony. Simon is deeply uncomfortable with his inability to live up to family expectations and standards, and chooses to mock them instead. One of his strategies here is to use exaggerated upper and lower class accents.[65]

It is not until he reaches the point in his narrative where he has found work which he enjoys, that this tone disappears. Speaking of his 20 years in television news he says:

Loved it, got good at it. I was good at it. I was good at it almost from the start, had good attitude and good approach to it and got the stories, good people skills, good personal skills, all those things that help. And I worked hard. I got lots of stories that were <u>my</u> stories.[66]

Simon appears to have found his niche at last, and his narrative reflects this in his enthusiasm and confidence. Even negative assessments of his own performance or the system are no longer satirized and mocked:

I was good at being an authority figure in terms of deciding what we did in the news and who was going to do what and motivating and exciting people to work hard – cause you had to. I was good at that and still am. But what I wasn't good at was being a political animal, because I had people above me who I had to work to, and they were political animals and I wasn't. And I didn't like it much. I wasn't very good at doing that, trying to judge what I was supposed to be, how I was supposed to be reacting to them. I didn't have a political agenda. I just wanted to get the stories done. And I worked hard.[67]

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[64] Simon Williams, 2A 3.6, 6.9, 8.7, 10.0. Hatch, p. 155, notes that the top stratum of rural society was 'marked by a relatively exclusive social life ... not restricted to local families, for elites from nearby districts were included as well.' In this excerpt Simon Williams and his family are socialising in areas well away from Invercargill.

[65] Belich *Paradise Reforged*, p. 133, notes the use of 'a "refined" New Zealand English' by the remnants of the gentry, the tendency to speak ' "with plums in their mouths" '.

[66] Simon Williams, 2A 21.8.

[67] Simon Williams, 2B 0.1.

Recognising his ability to do this work well, Simon is more at ease speaking about this.[68]

Nevertheless Simon's concern with class and style remains a part of his narrative. He and his wife decided to return to England in 1978 since New Zealand seemed 'primitive and crude', but this decision was to have long-lasting ramifications, both financially and in terms of Simon's confidence.[69] The move didn't work out and they were home again in four months, but they had spent all their money and house prices were rising steeply. Simon recalls this time:

We had two mortgages and it was a bit crippling. And of course we were just about to approach the time, the great Muldoon years, when – the great I say in inverted commas – when interest rates started to go through the roof, and after a while we got up to 21 per cent interest. I mean that was insanity. It was disgusting, it was obscene, it was revolting. And of course over 50 per cent of my salary was going in mortgages and we were financially crippled. And we regretted – I regretted – bitterly – the fact that we hadn't .... all the way through we had never quite made the right decisions, financially. You know people said when we first got married, buy a house, save up, then go overseas. Now buying a house in 1969 would have been a really good idea, because by the time we came back to New Zealand after the first trip – well the house my brother-in-law and sister-in-law had bought in Gisborne, they bought for $9000 and sold for $23000 in 1974. Now we missed out on that, because we were buying at the 23 level .... So we were running to catch up for a very long time. And all the way through that era we never caught up, couldn't spend the money on the house ... [W]e saw all our friends moving from their first house to a much bigger house. We were in Christchurch in the Fendalton/Merivale area where there were a lot of people who we knew who had made a lot of money or who had somehow done the financial thing correctly, and we were marking time. And my confidence fell apart – and really – it was bad.[70]

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[68] Hatch, pp.84, 109, 120-4. Ability is one of the contested systems of meaning on which social hierarchy rests.

[69] This attitude that England was somehow better than New Zealand echoes his remarks about the furnishings in his grandparents Dunedin home where everything was 'English of course'. Simon Williams 1A 12.4.

[70] Simon Williams, 2B 3.7.

The blow to Simon's confidence saw the return of the class/status bogey. In 1986 he took a redundancy package and tried to start a business which didn't work. 'I was never a businessman – won't be – never, never,' he declares.[71] However in 1995 he finally took a teaching job at St Andrew's College, which he enjoys. They have since bought an elegant cottage in Merivale. Just the day before the interview he had run a very successful live-to-air teaching programme at the school, and was still exhilarated by its success. He talked of all sorts of plans for the future working with young people in TV, concluding: 'I think my working life's only just begun to be honest – I'm 52 – I just think it's just taking off. All the rest's sort of been a rehearsal'.[72]

For the last ten years Simon has taken to wearing a kilt. By way of explanation for this he tells this story:

There was a guy at this opening yesterday. He is on the rich list in Christchurch. He is a very wealthy man. He owns eight companies, and he arrived at the opening – all the people are dressed up in their best bib and tucker, as my grandmother would say – and he comes in worn out rubber jandals, shorts and a shirt open to his waist – an old tartan shirt. And he said, 'Oh I didn't know this was going to be a posh function. I'd thought I'd just come in from my work.' And I said, 'But Dennis you did know it was a posh function. You're just like me, you like to be different don't you.' He said, 'Yeah, I suppose so.' Now everybody knows he was at the opening yesterday because there he was. They said he would turn up in his shorts and jandals – and he did, just as I turn up in my kilt, and they know exactly who I [am]. When I went up to the family reunion, nobody will forget the person in the kilt. The rest of them all looked the same – I wouldn't know them from Adam – they all look the same. And I have always wanted to look a bit different, even when I was a kid.[73]

Perhaps when you have achieved or made it in society, and feel more secure, you can afford to thumb your nose at certain social conventions.

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[71] Simon Williams, 2B 6.1.
[72] Simon Williams, 2B 26.0.
[73] Simon Williams, 2B 34.5.

Simon's admiration for such disregard links back to the family also. Speaking towards the end of the interview he remarks admiringly on Henry and Marianne's decision to come to New Zealand in 1823:

I mean those people could have stayed in England and had a really good life. I suspect they could have made quite a lot of money. They were in the right social set. Their parents had been Lord Mayor and you know, sheriff and all that sort of stuff. They were right in there, and they chose to say, 'Right, bye!' Gone! Amazing! Incredible![74]

In Simon's view his ancestors also thumbed their noses at social convention and expectation in coming to New Zealand.

Eric Williams

Eric is ambivalent about his Williams origins. He is proud of their missionary history, but uncertain about the story of the family land holding at Te Aute. His narrative is one of moving away from what he sees as a sheltered, elite upbringing and making his own way in the world, largely independent of his family, picking and choosing from family values. He may eschew wealth and refinement, but values of hard work and ability remain important to Eric, as do those of caring for others less fortunate.[75]

Eric's narrative begins with his childhood memories of 'Te Aute', tinged with cynicism towards the class system of which his family was part:

Earliest memories were probably about the 1930, maybe a little before the 30s, of a very sheltered life, where we lived in a house near my grandparents at Te Aute. My father was managing the property which was at that time called Te Aute Station. It was the relics of Samuel Williams's properties, which were adjunct to, or the support for Te Aute College, the Maori college. We had a pretty cosy life really with a gardener, and a maid or cook – she did everything that my mother didn't do. And the house had been added on to, to supply extra rooms. One had been added on to a verandah, another had been added on to a dining room, which provided the bedrooms for the children, and then there was one corner of the house where the maid lived. She was full-time,

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[74] Simon Williams, 3A 9.3.

[75] Hatch p. 165. Hatch links the contemporary importance of the criterion of farming ability in determining status directly to the emergence of the one-table pattern of eating arrangement, since 'the one-table theory of hierarchy dignifies work in a way that the two-table theory did not.'

live-in and would get – I'm not sure how much time off – probably half a day a week or maybe one day every fortnight – something like that – for a peanuts wage.[76]

Comments like the one here on the pay and conditions of the maid are a feature of Eric's narrative, and reflect his discomfort with the differences he perceives between his own family and those who worked for them.

His early memories continue with recollections of visiting his grandparents, and of the governesses. Of this period of his life he recalls:

We hardly were allowed to play with most of the people in the village, the Pukehou village. But ... my grandmother's chauffeur and sometime gardener was a Captain Kitt who had a cottage down on the road which would have been about 70 odd – 80 metres away, in front of the road, whereas the big house would have been well up – elevated and looked out over part of the farm ... And Harry Kitt was the son ... who I used to do a lot of things with. I remember going one day with Harry, we went on an expedition with a little bit of lunch and a billy, and up behind the College there was a stream which ran into a dam which supplied a lot of water for the College, and for the farm troughs, and we had an extremely happy day catching freshwater crayfish in the stream, crayfish and eels, but we made a meal of the freshwater crayfish. And we used to go bike rides, Harry and I. In fact we went into Hastings one day and back which was 18 or 20 miles.[77]

Houses here are a metaphor for class. The big house where Eric and his parents lived was 'well up', the gardener's house was 'down on the road'. Eric is identifying himself as something of an outlaw, enjoying the freedom of having adventures with the servants' children. This is a subversive narrative in which he describes the binary nature of the set-up at 'Te Aute', and then places himself on the 'wrong' side, not the boss's son but the workers' mate. He constantly transgresses the hegemonic model. Another 'great pal' was Cousin Brian Williams, who he remembers as great fun and an enormous man who took an interest in Eric's stamp collecting. Brian is also seen as an outlaw. Eric recalls: 'I realised afterwards [he] had been almost cast out of the

[76] Eric Williams, 2 June 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 0.4.
[77] Eric Williams, 1A 4.0.

family I think because his first child was illegitimate. Terrible thing in those days, really terrible.'[78]

His memories of school are not happy ones, seeing himself even here as being different from the others, who he imagines went to public primary schools before going to this private preparatory school.

After the governess stage, when my eldest sister Patricia had gone to Woodford House – this is more of the sort of secluded upbringing – I went to Hereworth. I suppose I was 10 or 11, something like that. [It was a] private school, and felt a considerable misfit. I just didn't know how the world lived, and it took me a long while to realise how the world lived. I feel, looking back, that I did miss out on a lot of things by being so secluded, so many things that other kids took for granted and knew about, and I didn't have a clue and they used to make considerable fun of me, because I didn't know. They'd lived a rougher life, they'd probably been to public primary schools, some of them .... I did reasonably well at school, nevertheless, sportswise, and became a prefect .... Oh the first year or two I hated it. And just why I had, some sort of psychosomatic problems I don't know, but I remember I used to have sores behind my ears, skin eruptions, and they called me Disease. Everybody had to have a nickname – mine was Disease, because I had this .... I got on very well with two or three guys, but I still felt a little bit at a loss with most of them, little bit apprehensive, and privately I just didn't feel I belonged. I still felt that to some extent when I got to Wanganui Collegiate, though I did reasonably well.[79]

It is common for Eric to see himself as different from others, but he plays two roles. Sometimes he is the victim as we can see here, and uses phrases like 'I felt a little bit out of place there' or 'I was being over powered'.[80] But as he gets more mature his difference is seen as making him an agent for change: 'I decided I wanted to improve the productivity of the sheep', or 'I was questioning things', or 'I kicked against it pretty hard'.[81]

Eric knew that he was expected to follow in his father's footsteps on the farm, but war intervened and when he left school he was called up and joined the airforce. His

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[78] Eric Williams, 1A 5.0.
[79] Eric Williams, 1A 6.7.
[80] Eric Williams, 1A 28.1, 2A 30.6.
[81] Eric Williams, 1A 39.6, 2A 31.9, 39.9.

memories of this period have little to do with the war itself. He enjoyed the freedom of the airforce, where he could be someone outside the role assigned him in normal life. He remembers stealing cabbages in Canada, something he would never have done at home, and above all he remembers his instructor 'who was a god to any of us training pilots, was Cliff Haig who'd been a butcher in Taradale'.[82] For Eric the conditions of war transcended class boundaries imposed by family and school.

When the war was over Eric opted to go farming. He worked at 'Te Aute' for a year or two, after which his father wanted him to go to Oxford or Cambridge, following the tradition of earlier generations of the family. Eric resisted this, finally consenting to go to Cirencester Agricultural College. However, finding it not relevant to New Zealand conditions, he left after only two terms.[83] While in England he was married to Heather Scott whose family came from the Waikato. They had met while Eric was at 'Te Aute', and he remembers being impressed because 'she was certainly not swayed by the glamour of the Williams – the so-called glamour of the Williams family.'[84] She too, helps free him from the clutches of his family.

When they returned to New Zealand, Eric decided not to take over 'Te Aute' as was expected of the eldest son. However, he makes little mention at this stage of his narrative of what must have been quite a momentous decision. He went to work instead for his father-in-law, and describes the conditions, which were different from those he had been accustomed to at 'Te Aute':

[The house] wouldn't have been classed as much more than shearer's accommodation today. And we had a room in that house, and that was where our first child was born and .... I felt a little bit out of place there. It was the type of farming that I had not experienced before in that it was basic, very basic – no tractors or machinery, draught horses, sledges for transport .... All the work had been done with horses, pack horses, draught horses – and I helped with that, so it was a new experience to me. And spreading fertiliser with a sack strung around your neck more or less and tossing the fertiliser out by hand.[85]

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[82] Eric Williams, 1A 14.4.
[83] Eric Williams, 1A 25.3.
[84] Eric Williams, 2A 24.0.
[85] Eric Williams, 1A 29.3.

Having been to the war, Eric qualified to apply for a farm by government ballot but was unsuccessful, and finally in 1951, he bought an undeveloped farm at Te Miro near Cambridge. With the generous loans made to returned servicemen, and financial help from his father which he admits to reluctantly, he did quite well. He became very involved in the breeding of Coopworth sheep, and also in growing commercial woodlots.[86] In the 1980s he tried to sell out to his son and retire, but with the adjustments under the Labour Government, his son was obliged to sell his share. Eric carried on until 1999, harvesting his pines, putting the bush areas into reserve and leasing out his grazing.[87] Not long before the interview Eric had finally sold up and moved to Pirongia, from where he and a friend now run a log harvesting business.

Having completed his story of shaking off the constraints of his family in a more or less chronological fashion, Eric now returns in his narrative to memories of 'Te Aute', which gently satirize the family. He tells several stories, some of which are clearly passed down within the family, which poke fun at his relatives; of great Aunt Lydia listening to the gossip on the party telephone line; of Samuel's parsimony and the expectation that whenever the children earned money they were to put it in the 'Mission box'; of the tyranny of Uncle Allen towards his workers.[88] However, he speaks of his father with respect, recalling his determination to do as much as he could on the farm for the war effort, and his decision to assist a couple of German Jewish refugees despite incurring the disapproval of some in the community.[89]

Despite this personal respect, Eric sees his father as part of a class system with which he himself appears uncomfortable. Eric most enjoyed helping the blacksmith and going out with the head shepherd.[90] In the following extracts Eric moves back and

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[86] Eric Williams, 1A 39.6, 1B 0.5, 2.6. Hatch, pp. 165-6. Hatch notes that after World War II there was egalitarianism in interpersonal relationships due to full employment and the refusal to accept demeaning conditions, but that a hierarchy still existed in the community, based on ownership of land and on ability. Pp. 108-9, Hatch points out that there is also a Protestant ascetic element in the New Zealand farmer ethos, similar to the ideology of the worker in early capitalism, which emphasised skill and proficiency at work. The farmer is less interested in accumulating land than in acquiring a reputation for hard work, good judgment and excellent management abilities.
[87] Eric Williams, 1B 0.5.
[88] Eric Williams, 1B 14.5, 15.7, 17.5.
[89] Eric Williams, 1B 23.6, 25.9.
[90] Eric Williams, 1B 19.6.

forth between nostalgia for and resistance to the tradition evoked by the patrimonial images he describes:

[My father] was, I suppose you'd say, the squire of the Pukehou village at that time, because he was the principal landowner and employer around there. On the farm there were three cottages, over by the railway line, main trunk railway line through the farm. And there was a Maori couple in one cottage, who – he worked on the farm ....

What was his name?

Martin Winterburn. There was an Irish couple who we used to visit, because they were tenants. They paid rent and we used to visit them every now and then. They were also very near to the slaughter house where we killed cattle and sheep – we used to kill about two mutton a week for use around the whole area ... and I remember going when we visited this Irish couple we were 'dearie' and we were intrigued by their accent and so on, but now looking back I feel rather sorry for them too – the sort of conditions, though I suppose as far as they were concerned they were living in clover compared to what they'd left behind in Ireland .... But I didn't think so, no. But I mean Martin worked on the farm and he and I used to do quite a lot together, we worked a lot together like in the harvesting, growing crops and everything else, we worked side by side .... Martin was there for most of his life, and moved up on to the main road into one of the cottages there. We used to have a doctor there, we had a minister there in the village – doctor – Doctor Jarvis .... Arthur was the local vicar, Arthur Williams. He was just across the gully from my father's house. There was a gully there and we had a track through it and we used to go and visit them. They had a tennis court – quite a nice place – we used to have the odd party – afternoon tea parties and things there. And across the road from them which was just on the Hastings side of the big house were three or four houses for people who worked on the station – ploughman – I don't know what they all did, but they all worked there on the farm. Gradually as conditions changed and the wealthy people were not so wealthy and wages increased and equality grew, so that they were no longer sort of tenants all the time, they were able to own their own properties – their own houses.[91]

In this picture of the big house set aside from the workers' houses, important people and less important people, Eric's sympathies clearly lie with the latter. He is pleased that conditions have changed.

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[91] Eric Williams, 1B 28.1.

As Eric reflects on Martin Winterburn and the position of Maori in general around Te Aute at that time, he says:

I didn't appreciate the difficulties with Maoris. I think my father was – probably – a sort of a benefactor – looked on them as people who, although they were respected to some extent they were still – a little bit different. A bit of the apartheid system still going in those days and the Maoris who had been deprived of their land were then – they had to work on the land for the Pakeha who'd taken over. There was a lot of skulduggery went on in those very early days prior to my time, as far as land acquisition was concerned .... The way the Maoris were alienated from their land .... Everywhere in New Zealand but also around Te Aute too – around, should I say, Hawkes Bay, not Te Aute so much but the land for 'Te Aute' station was gifted or loaned or leased or whatever by the local Maori. But by various means a tremendous number of Maori were deprived of their land. I don't think so much by my immediate family there. They did respect them, but they accepted the – lower status of the Maori. I felt that anyway.[92]

Although Eric is quick to exempt his own family from the 'skulduggery' of early land dealings, he feels himself forced to admit that the loss for Maori was a gain for the Williamses, and that even they had, at best, a patronising attitude towards Maori.[93] He likes to think that his own attitude is more accepting, more 'egalitarian', eating with the 'labourers' and playing cards with Kopai at the station cookhouse:

Then there was a cookhouse just near the college ... which was used as a – a place where the labourers, so to speak, on the farm – ploughmen and fencers and so on, would live. And there was a cook who would cook for all of them, and they'd come into a great big room with long tables and they'd all sit down to their tucker. And I remember going there. There was a Maori, Kopai, I can't remember his surname, but I used to go there and have meals with them every now and then. I don't think my parents minded. And we used to play cards. I accepted them I think possibly more so than a lot of people round there, as

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[92] Eric Williams, 1B 33.9.

[93] Frances Porter, 'Williams, William Leonard' in *DNZB Vol I*, pp. 580-2. An example of the earlier generations of Williamses' attitude to Maoris is found in the view of Bishop Leonard Williams who believed Maori had to be removed from their village environment where 'their own careless ways' would interrupt their training as clergy. They needed to learn new habits 'to raise themselves a little in the social scale'.

equals, and I felt sorry for them – I thought they had been given a bad trot. I'm perhaps more of an egalitarian than a lot of people.[94]

Hatch draws attention to the 'one-table' and 'two-table' patterns of eating arrangements, which respectively expressed egalitarian values or social distance between workers and landowners.[95] Eric has chosen to flout the two-table pattern which pertained in his home.

My next question to Eric draws the contrast between the arrangements of the village and station, and the lives of the children in the big house, and Eric responds with a story that underlines this view:

So there was a huge set up, and you guys are up there with your governess?

Yep, yep, didn't go to the local school. And I told my father on one occasion that that was one of the regrets I had, and he wrote me a letter saying that, he acknowledged my feelings but he and my mother felt that it wasn't a good idea for us to be associating with the children at the local school. After all one of the girls had been pushed into a drain by one of the boys on the way coming back from school and he didn't quite know what had gone on but he couldn't take the risk of us being subjected to that sort of treatment. So it was very sheltered and I grew up not knowing much about the facts of life.[96]

There is an 'upper class' formality suggested here in the writing of a letter to address Eric's complaints. Eric's tone is one of irony as he continues to talk about the ostracism of those who offended the family's moral values and about whom it would be said, 'We don't talk about it, dear.' He concludes: 'Thank God morals and ideas have changed a lot since those days.'[97]

In all of this the question of class is complicated by the family relationship with Maori. Maori cannot be simply regarded as having the same class status as the Irish ploughman or the Scottish shepherd at 'Te Aute'. There is something special about their position since they were once masters here where now Eric's father is the local 'squire'. There seems to be an unspoken but deep unease about the results of the

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[94] Eric Williams, 1B 35.7.

[95] Hatch, pp. 140-58. In one-table families the workers ate at the same table as the owner, thus ritually de-emphasising the distance between landholders and workers, and carrying a message of egalitarianism and work as ennobling. The two-table families, in which workers ate apart and thus were distanced from land owners, emphasised refinement.

[96] Eric Williams, 1B 37.4.

[97] Eric Williams, 1B 37.4.

family's missionary endeavour, who is the benefactor and who the beneficiary. As was said of the missionary families in Hawaii, they came 'to do good', and their children 'did well'.[98]

Family expectations have also weighed heavily on Eric. This was not limited to patrilineal succession.

You spoke near the beginning about your father having to follow in his father's footsteps on the farm, and the way you said it, I wondered if it actually meant that you felt a wee bit the same way, and you talked about coming back and making a choice between medicine and farming?

In my time, and especially after the war when everything was stirred up, there was the opportunity to go out on a different channel if I wanted to ... but there was an expectation, a fairly strong expectation by my parents, particularly my mother I think, that I would go the farming way .... Because I was the oldest son in the family, and the eldest grandchild of my grandparents there was this expectation of – that would sort of carry on the family tradition. I mean it would have been great if I had become a missionary or something, or had gone into the church perhaps, but –

Was that an expectation too?

No, no I don't think so. But I remember being a little bit annoyed with my mother on occasions. We had lots of church, sort of twice a Sunday, and church schools, chapel, and, you know, be confirmed and get into the choir and be a server and all this sort of stuff. And I did some of it – a bit reluctantly. I didn't mind being in the choir because I quite like singing. But at home going to the local Pukehou church – 'Eric, surely you'll come to church today?' – this is on a Sunday morning – 'Oh no, I want to play tennis, or I want to do something else.' 'But dear, if <u>you</u> come, the others will come.' And there was this subtle pressure on me all the time to do the right thing, and I kicked against it pretty hard sometimes.[99]

He felt that social expectations, ideas of duty and of appropriate behaviour came both from his parents and from within the school. Eric admires those who are brave enough to rebel against them.

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[98] Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii* (Honolulu, 1989), p. 195.

[99] Eric Williams, 2A 31.9.

At Te Aute the church and religion underscored class difference in Eric's memory. The following excerpt begins with quite an emotional outburst:

The sort of thing that I used to jib at, and this goes way back – we went to Sunday school from home at Pukehou, and it wasn't long before I was questioning things, like ...'All things bright and beautiful' – 'The rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate, God made them high and lowly, and ordered their estate'. And I thought, 'Crap!' (I didn't say crap in those days.)

But you lived in that situation almost.

I did – and I couldn't see the reasoning or the sense in it. And then some of the prayers ... in the prayer book, which indicated that anybody who was a not a Christian, and probably an Anglican or Presbyterian at that, was a heretic. And I couldn't go along with that. So I'm almost – agnostic.

Was it difficult having a father who was a lay preacher?

No, not really because – as far as the church was concerned in Pukehou, where I would listen to his lay preaching on occasions, I was surrounded by people who felt that it was a very good thing that somebody was a lay preacher. I was surrounded by relatives – it was the local relatives who I've talked to you about. They were the ones who were in the church. – and the farming people who hung on to the – those who were employed there. They would come along. We would sit in the front pews, they would sit in the back pews.

What about at home – was there grace and – ?

Oh Lord <u>yes</u>, heavens yes, grace before every meal. But that was in the days when things were a little more elegant and if you had servants – but those were in the days that you probably knew also, where you dished up the vegetables into vegetable dishes, and the meat onto a meat dish and you had special carving things with the carving knife sitting on some sort of a contraption, and the fork on the other side, and Father would carve meat at the main table and then pass the plate down to the other end where Mother would put the vegetables on. And the butter would be rolled into butter pats, and put on a special little plate and a butter knife which you took the butter pat off and put it on your plate and 'Don't take two dear – that's rude and greedy.'

I take it you've moved away from all this as well Eric?

Yes you'll have noticed the butter plate that I brought out for you [indicating the supermarket packet]. I kicked against all those things, and I still do. But I mean we still eat with soup spoons because my wife says that's right. <u>I'm</u>

quite happy to eat with an ordinary dessert spoon. And we have steak knives to eat steak with although if the steak is properly cooked you can cut it with a fork, as the Americans do. So I'm a bit of a rebel.[100]

This part of the interview was recorded after lunch, during which Eric had pointedly placed the supermarket packet of butter on the table and told me there would be no butter knife. In his narrative, social, moral and religious values, from the trivial to the deeply significant, all trip over one another for space. Eric is equally gleeful that his Bible-believing mother was so upset by the 'Geering business' in the 1960s, and delights to think how she would react today with all the questions raised by the Dead Sea Scrolls.[101]

Butter knives notwithstanding, in the end Eric's greatest act of rebellion was to turn his back on 'Te Aute'. When his brother-in-law, Jim Maclean, proved happy to manage the farm, Eric took his opportunity to leave. His explanation of why he did this gives some idea of the power that Eric felt the family had on his thinking.

Yeah, well I wanted to get away from them. I was being overpowered by all the ancestor stuff, and feeling that if I stayed there I was going to be immersed, flooded by the clan. Like I wouldn't be independent. I would have to – I would be sort of beholden in many ways – like being in a society, a secret society or something. And not being able to branch out and do things that I felt I would like to do, being more adventurous.[102]

He sees himself as having been a progressive farmer as a result of having broken away, although in reality his own family had been quite progressive farmers also.[103] He denies having any regrets that the Williams family have now all but lost their land holding at Te Aute. 'I feel that land – you're a caretaker rather than an owner,' he explains.[104] When Eric is speaking about his life since leaving 'Te Aute' the ironic tone disappears from his narrative.

One of the things Eric believes in that he is happy to attribute to his ancestors is a sense of fair play. He does not like to see the wealthy 'trying to grind the workers

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[100] Eric Williams, 2A 39.4, 42.1, 43.0.
[101] Eric Williams, 2A 45.2, 2B 0.1. In 1967 when Lloyd Geering, Principal of Knox Theological College, Dunedin, questioned the Resurrection he was charged by more fundamentalist Presbyterians with doctrinal error. The charge was unsuccessful, but the trial caused a great deal of public interest.
[102] Eric Williams, 2A 30.6.
[103] Eric Williams, 2A 36.0.
[104] Eric Williams, 2B 17.0.

down', and is angry that the National Government of the 1990s cut taxes for the rich rather than the poor. Today as an employer with a good income he likes to think he has 'share[d] some of that with [his] employees', and admires business people like Dick Hubbard, although he recognises the dangers of paternalism in this. It is 'that feeling of trying to help other people who are being wronged, or who I feel are being wronged ... I would like to see a fair pop given to everybody,' he says.[105]

Eric sees himself as having made his own way in life and pursued his own interests, unencumbered by family expectations and the class attitudes, from using butter knives to sexual mores, that went with the family. He sees himself as egalitarian, a champion of the downtrodden, particularly Maori, and this is an attitude which he attributes to his missionary inheritance. There is a tension between these two positions, his pride in his ancestors and his escape from them.

Maryrose Wilson

In Maryrose's story there is a polarity between meeting the expectations of the family and of the hierarchical church, and being 'true to herself'; of being one of the 'haves' and identifying with the 'have-nots'. The wife of a bishop, she uses swear words liberally, talks of going to the pub with the Manukau Maori women, says she prefers to mix with gays, addicts, the poor and 'secret ciggie'-smoking Maori, than with bishops' wives and the 'churchy' members of the Williams family. Maryrose is accustomed to telling her spiritual autobiography. In fact she had it written down and referred to it quite often near the beginning of her narrative.

She begins by saying, 'Well my name is Maryrose. My mother says it means bitter-sweet,' suggesting a rather ambivalent relationship with her mother.[106] Her first memory is of her parents leaving her in care when she was five or six, while they went overseas for a year, although she says this was not as traumatic for her as for her younger sister.[107] Subsequently Maryrose introduces other stories which indicate a feeling of rejection, of being 'discounted' by her parents and never meeting their

[105] Eric Williams, 2A 7.7.
[106] Maryrose Wilson, 22 October 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 0.3.
[107] Maryrose Wilson, 1A 1.0.

required standards.[108] Her mother tells her that although she had won a scholarship none of the applicants had come up to the expected standard; her mother thinks Maryrose has poor taste in clothing; she feels she has to prove to her parents that she is serious about Girl Guides; she feels her parents took little interest in her acting while at secondary school.[109] She talks of constantly trying to please, to achieve and to be accepted.

Also near the beginning of her narrative are two seminal stories, which she uses in her spiritual autobiography. The first is used by Maryrose to show her first awareness of unconditional love:

I was about eight and I think I'd been caught cheating or pinching money or doing something that wasn't acceptable, and I can remember the dreadful feeling of isolation, of being sent to Coventry by everybody. I just have a vision of them all standing in a circle and nobody wanted to have anything to do with me. And then a young girl disengaged herself from the others and came and put her arms round me, and she said – she was one of the kids that none of the rest of us had much time for, from the orphanage up the road – she said, 'I don't care whether you did it or not,' she said, 'I still like you.' And – you know isn't it silly the things that one remembers – and I think acceptance of people whoever they are and whatever they've done is a very strong part of me now. And maybe it owes a lot to that young girl that – who ministered to me a long time ago.[110]

The second is used by her to show her growing awareness of everyone's humanity including her own. It relates to her time at secondary school:

One of the important things to me at school was Shakespeare, and acting. And I can remember – I can remember being Richard the Third. I really loved acting. And I can remember this bit that comes in Richard the Third. I think it all makes a picture in the end. He said, 'Cover your heads and mock not flesh and blood with solemn reverence. Throw away respect, tradition, form and ceremonious duty, for you are but mistook me all this while. I live with bread like you, feel want, taste grief, need friends.' And somehow I think that's really part of me – that I think probably the best part of me is my humanity. I mean I

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[108] Maryrose Wilson, 1A 9.2.
[109] Maryrose Wilson, 1A 4.3, 5.9, 9.2.
[110] Maryrose Wilson, 1A 3.2.

may be a counsellor but I've known – you know, when we're cut we bleed, just like everybody else – you know, that we're human. Don't put us on a pedestal.[111]

The first of these stories is used to say 'don't cast me out', the second to say 'don't put me on a pedestal'. Both are pleas for acceptance.

In Maryrose's memory Canterbury University was a 'golden time' of freedom and self-discovery. But offered a chance to study at the Old Vic, she chose instead to finish her degree and marry Godfrey Wilson who was going into the Anglican ministry. She says 'I'd always had a romantic idea of being married to a priest.'[112] Godfrey went to train in England, and it was while living here that the incongruities of class, wealth and influence came sharply into focus for Maryrose.

[A]nd finally he got a job as a parish assistant to the rector of Bury. The rector of Bury was a man who'd been trained – he'd been trained for ministry by a chap who trained English gentlemen for holy orders. And he came from a very well-known family ... somewhere down south. The first question he asked Godfrey was what was his private income. And you know Godfrey's transparent – I can just imagine his face dropping, you know, because he hadn't got a private income. One of the curates had come from Eton I think, yeah. Anyhow when we first arrived at the Rectory it was a huge place, half Georgian and half Victorian, and the church warden said, 'I've arranged for your confinement lass.' And I thought, 'Shit!' I wouldn't have said shit in those days. Anyway we couldn't find anywhere to live so they let us have their caravan, huge, huge garden and the snow was this high and I would sit shivering where there was a chip heater in the thing. And Godfrey had to bury the Elsan, dig down deep to bury the contents of the Elsan each week. They lived in this huge rectory, which was their castle. Eventually they let us come in and we had a kitchen and a room in the Victorian part, and Godfrey had to stoke the boiler, which was lagged when it went through our compartment ... so we didn't get any heat. And the rector would come down to our compartment saying, 'Godfrey, Godfrey!' and I would hide in the cupboard... But it was interesting because we knew we weren't going to be there forever.[113]

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[111] Maryrose Wilson, 1A 6.9.
[112] Maryrose Wilson, 1A 17.3.
[113] Maryrose Wilson, 1A 17.3.

Eventually they returned to New Zealand and Godfrey was sent to St Peter's Church, Willis St, Wellington. With some outside financial help her three daughters were sent to Marsden School where she pictures them as being somewhat on the outside socially, and says:

by the time they got to the sixth form they wanted a bit more. They all went to Wellington High or Hutt Valley High to finish off.

Too restrictive?

Yes, socially – because the parish we were in you see had all sorts of people. You might smell somebody – smell methylated spirits ... coming from behind you and you'd look round and think, 'Do they clean the pews with methylated spirits?' And then old Jack would say, 'Hullo, Mrs Wilson,' and breathe it all out on you.... We had 16 great years there really.[114]

Maryrose portrays herself, through her family, at an interface between the images of the private school and the down-and-out of the central city parish.

While they were there Maryrose became involved in marriage guidance and counselling, and also served on the board of the women students hostel. Of this board she recalls:

I was so disgusted with the way they treated the staff. The warden would come and sit outside when they had a staff [board] meeting, and they'd get her in to give report and then send her away .... And then they asked me to be the chairperson, so I wrote them a letter and said I would only do it under these circumstances – that she had a full place on the board and so on.[115]

Here she is again at an interface, using her power and position to protect those whom she sees as the underdog.

Just as she felt she was getting on top of her job in guidance and counselling, Godfrey was moved to the Diocese of Waiapu, which took in the East Coast and Bay of Plenty. He had to travel around to different marae in the diocese, and Maryrose decided to travel with him. She remembers it as a time of 'reclaiming my relationship with Maori', and then back tracks in her narrative to explain what she means by this:

Oh, I had had while the girls were at school – I'm sorry to go back – but the principal had said, 'Maryrose, we've got a Maori coming on the staff, and the

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[114] Maryrose Wilson, 1A 20.8.
[115] Maryrose Wilson, 1A 22.4.

board are anxious about this. Will you be – will you look – will you be kind to her,' or something. This was Keri Kaa – I don't know whether you know her – but anyway she turned up on Monday and used to stay with us till Friday, without being asked or anything, you know. And she took a fondness to Marianne [Maryrose's daughter] who's as white as the driven snow, and they'd come back on the bus with this white little kid asleep her arms, and Keri said the people on the bus looked very oddly at her. But she took Marianne back to ... Tikitiki for the first holidays. Keri said, 'We spoke Maori all the time, except to say, "Come here you little Pakeha!" ' And then we all went up there and stayed a month with them in Tikitiki, and you know this was a different culture. I didn't know, I thought you know, 'What do we do? And how do we behave?' And that's been – that's been a very strong part of our future ministry. I now work with more Maori – in my agency there are more Maori people ... than Pakeha.[116]

There is a good deal of family myth buried in this excerpt. Maryrose does not explain why she was asked to care for Keri Kaa, whether simply because she was a clergyman's wife, or because of the Williams family's historical connection with Maori in general and the Kaa family in particular. Her question of whether I knew Keri Kaa suggested to me at the time that somehow I too, as a member of the family, would recognise this connection. The apparent strength of the relationship between Keri and the little Marianne, named after the wife of Henry Williams, is another aspect of this story which is redolent with historical significance for the family. Thus when Maryrose speaks of reclaiming her relationship with Maori it seems to me that she intends to convey not only this recent relationship, but also the long standing one of the family.

In her narrative she then moves on to tell how Godfrey became regional bishop for Auckland, and they moved once more. She recalls:

He travelled all over the diocese and I remember going and standing beside my... great grandparents grave. And I felt I'd come home. This is at Pakaraka, Marianne and Henry. And – oh, another thing that had happened was at Waiapu when we were had first gone there. The first time I'd gone to the cathedral I knew none of these Europeans – intimately – and then I saw these Maoris standing behind a pillar having a secret ciggie, so I went and joined

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[116] Maryrose Wilson, 1A 31.4.

them, and then they gathered me up and took me with their children and their mokopuna and so on, and sat at the front, and I looked round and saw all these Pakehas in the back and thought, 'God, I'm lucky.' You know, they were standing sort of apart at the back – you know I felt – surrounded with love and – it was great.[117]

These two events, the visit to the graveside and the moment in the cathedral, are actually reversed in time, their narrative connection here thus suggesting a strong sense of the family history in her feeling of empathy with Maori. Just as Henry and Marianne were supposed to have been loved by Maori, so is Maryrose. In both these last two excerpts with their images of difference and standing apart, Maryrose places herself again among those seen as outsiders, those who need help in the city and the private school system, those who hide behind pillars to have a smoke. In both cases she is accepted and taken into their midst

Sometime after they arrived in Auckland Maryrose recalls:

Godfrey had to give the certificates out at Manukau Tech, and some women came up to me afterwards and said, 'I hear you're going to be looked over by the Red Cross Family Support on Tuesday.' I was looking for Marriage Guidance tutors really, I think, at the time. Any way they said, 'Will you come to the pub with us.' And so I said – I went to Godfrey and said 'These women have asked me to go to the pub with them.' He said 'Well, you'll have to find your own way home.' Anyhow, I went to this meeting. I'd been doing a bit of research for them because they were doing a bit of – it was the early days when you had to be more accountable to government money – I'd been interviewing some of the people they worked with. And I went to this meeting, a third Maori, and third Pacific Islanders, and a third Pakeha. And after about five minutes this <u>huge</u> Maori woman said 'You'll do.' I said 'I beg your pardon?' She said 'You'll do.' I said 'But you don't know me at all!' 'Oh', she says, 'I know what I'm doing.' And then the Director of Social Welfare came in and said 'These women seem to have taken a shine on you. Will you come to a selection next week,' or something .... So that was a new era. I worked for about nine years with them, looking at families at the bottom of the heap. And by the time I'd finished, all our referrals were self-referrals. And they were not people like me. They were people, my caseworkers were people who'd had

[117] Maryrose Wilson, 1A 36.2.

come out of that. They were warm people and had – grown a lot themselves and they would go in with their pots and pans and help these people learn new skills, ask them what skills they wanted to have and help them budgeting. It was great and it was a terrific learning experience having to supervise these three different cultures. And the blessing was – I've never done it with Pacific Islanders before so I knew nothing, so I watched them for the first year to see how they went with their job. If I'd known more I might have made more of a hash of it – if I'd tried to impose Pakeha things on them. So that's that.[118]

Here again Maryrose appears accepted by people who are not like herself. She goes to the pub with them, she pictures herself working with them as equals, she learns from them.

Maryrose is passionate about the work she does, and gets 'boiling mad' about social injustice.[119]

I spend about 40 per cent of my time doing sexual abuse counselling, which is terrible – terrible. And I'm so angry with the government, I'm so angry at what they expect these people to live on. I had one woman last week who's been raped three times and she – I said 'How are you managing to live?' And she said 'I get a sickness benefit.' And I said 'Now tell me what that amounts to.' And she said '$150 a week.' She said 'I spend $120 to give to my sister and I have $30.' That makes me so angry [in a whisper]. The way they talk about these people, because they can't – how can you survive on that? I've so many of those sort of people.[120]

Gradually Maryrose's narrative turns back to family, her own children, and the wider family where again she feels like an outsider. She is a member of the Henry and William Williams Memorial Trust but confesses however, that she is embarrassed by the often-ingratiating behaviour of the trust members towards Maori and their 'sentimental view of Maori people'.[121] Maryrose is adamant that when the Trust gives them money, Maori should be held accountable for what they spend it on, while others hold the view that it is given as a gift for which no accountability is required. While she sees the Te Aute members of the family as being too idealistic, she feels

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[118] Maryrose Wilson, 1A 37.4.
[119] Maryrose Wilson, 1B 10.0.
[120] Maryrose Wilson, 1A 42.1.
[121] Maryrose Wilson, 1B 15.4.

many other members of the family are too 'well-heeled'.[122] Of the 1998 reunion she says, 'I don't know many of those relations quite frankly. I'm a bit of an outsider I think.'[123]

Nevertheless she knows the Williams family history well, thanks largely to her father. Speaking of her father she recalls this about him:

He came from a poor family in Masterton. His father was a railway worker, and an alcoholic. And he went to university, and he did very well at school. And ... he met my mother – they were having a conversation in the gym, she was talking about her family – Williams family – and he said what rogues and villains they were, and – it was a big thing for him to court my mother –.

With that belief?

Oh yes, but he changed very quickly. I think he changed quickly. But coming from a poorer, rougher environment ... he found it hard. They had a hard – they didn't have an easy relationship.

Because of the different backgrounds?

Yes, yes. And he tells the story which I presume – he left this story for us in a paper bag. He never spoke to me, he spoke to the children about it .... And he said 'One day my father came – he'd been drinking and he came up – he had a gin bottle in one hand and a cut throat razor in the other, and he said, "Are you ashamed of me?" ' – to my father. And my father said 'God help me, I told a lie. I said no.' I mean how could he say anything else. But – and so he took over my mother's family. You know, I mean he got deeply immersed in it, wrote about it, wrote articles and – he was a scholar really, you know.[124]

At the beginning of her narrative she had told me that though he didn't 'come from the whakapapa of [her] mother,... he adopted it all', and he used to read her stories of Henry and Marianne from *Peacemaker of the Tribes* by Phyllis Garlick.[125] She later recalls her main impressions of this: '[M]y father told me these stories about the Maoris and about Four-Eyes and you know how he – how he used to stop wars, you know and get in between them, and that's what grabbed my attention.'[126]

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[122] Maryrose Wilson, 1B 28.3.
[123] Maryrose Wilson, 1B 22.6.
[124] Maryrose Wilson, 1B 44.1.
[125] Maryrose Wilson, 1A 8.1.
[126] Maryrose Wilson, 2A 0.1. 'Four-Eyes' is the English version of the nickname, 'Karuwha', given to Henry Williams by Maori on account of the very strong glasses he always wore.

However these days it is Marianne Williams who is her heroine. Although Godfrey had made a wall display of old family photos, in Maryrose's study there is a special photo of her great grandmother. Early in the narrative she spoke of some of the factors that have influenced her beliefs about the family. She remembered that downstairs in the playroom when she was a child:

[T]here were exercise books that Marianne had written poems in because she knew she was going to the other end of the earth. They were poems by Keats and Shelley and Byron, and at the back was a recipe for piles. You get a chamber pot, you fill it with brown paper, you set fire to it and sit on it. I always tell that story to my Maori friends – love those sort of stories. That sums her up for me. She's one of my heroines.[127]

What Maryrose seems to enjoy about this is the juxtaposition of the esoteric/ aesthetic with the earthy. Towards the end of her narrative she says again:

You see I love Marianne and I love the way she came out in this convict ship, you see, and he [Henry] was upstairs being sick and she went down and ministered to the women, convict women. And you know she's – I'm not an evangelical, but I – there's an evangelical side to me I think, you know, that I can latch into their spreading the Gospel. It's just that I wouldn't spread the Gospel like that.[128]

In the church, Maryrose says, she feels 'happiest of all' and 'terribly comfortable' with the drunkards, the gays, and those for whom life is a struggle, adding:

You know I can be who I am. I find all this dressing up – I know when I went to the cathedral once, the bishops' wives all went and sat in the front you see, front row, and I always sat at the back, and the verger came down said I had to go and sit at the front, and I said 'I don't. I can stay here.' And he said 'Well you shouldn't have married a bishop.' I said 'I didn't marry a bishop.' But you know it's all – and it's swung back to that now – it's very hierarchical.[129]

Speaking of her faith and her work she has this to say:

So I just have to rely on what I believe the Spirit – if I can keep in touch with the Spirit I'll be OK.

And you don't look to the Church for that necessarily?

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[127] Maryrose Wilson, 1A 9.2.
[128] Maryrose Wilson, 2A 5.6.
[129] Maryrose Wilson, 2A 30.3.

I don't look to the institution. I mean, my quarrel with the institution is that I think the church should be a sign of something different than the status quo, and too often it's just like the status quo .... So I identify more with the people at the bottom of the heap I think, really. So that's what casts me – I mean so many of the Williamses look well shod.[130]

In the final sentence of this excerpt she appears to be about to say that she is cast out from the family or at least cast in a different mould from the 'well shod' Williamses.

In these three memory biographies the main theme is resistance to class expectations. While Simon Williams appears obsessed with detailed signifiers of the wealth and position which he both scorns and desires, Eric Williams and Maryrose Wilson seek to resist their upper class origins in their lives and narratives, both linking this in part to questions of race.

The Oral Testimony

Many others in the cohort also have narratives which bring out aspects of social status. Historically class distinction in New Zealand has been based on birth, wealth, education and the possession of large inherited landholdings. These are the focus of the Williams narratives of class. Although few give genealogies in as much detail as Tom Williams did, many explain various family marriage relationships and how these fit with other families of the landed gentry, the 'bloodlines' as one put it. Memories of large homes and servants are also common, whether of their own childhood homes or of their grandparent's homes. Education is crucially important in narratives of class. Stories of governesses are not unusual, stories of private schooling abound, and the male tradition of tertiary education in England is still in evidence in the cohort. Inheritance of land is also assumed, and was dealt with in the previous chapter. Along with this went the expectation that members of the family would shoulder their responsibilities with regard to local politics and business. Manners and moral values, social networks and marriage links with other families are referred to in ways that make it clear that the Williams regard themselves as part of an upper class milieu.

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[130] Maryrose Wilson, 2A 21.8.

Indeed much of the reference to class in these testimonies is not specific to the Williams, but typical of the class of which they are a part. They are, however, not altogether comfortable with this position, possibly because it conflicts with the pervasive egalitarian myth, and also with the Dissenting values of earlier generations. This unease can be detected in the ironic tone of much of this testimony. The following sections discuss the main aspects of narratives of class.

'Bloodlines'

The Williams family acknowledge their English forbears as being probably upper middle class. Henry's wife, Marianne Coldham, is often said to be the most upper class of the ancestors, her father first Sheriff and then Mayor of Nottingham. Several of the family also mentioned the recently-discovered family connection to Lady Godiva through the Coldham ancestors, but if this is raised at all it is usually in ways that suggest it is only of passing interest.[131] Perhaps only for the Wairarapa Williams, with whom the name Coldham is still strongly associated, does it have any resonance at all.[132]

It is not to England however, that the Williams look for their present social position. The importance of birth, wealth, and the possession of large inherited land holdings in determining social position, necessarily involves marriage and reproduction, and as we have seen in the previous chapter this is clearly reflected in Tom Williams' narrative of ownership and subdivision of land.[133] Thus of importance in these narratives, are connections to other land-owning families in different parts of the country, and stories of making the right marriage.

Virginia Robinson tells the story of her engagement in 1949 to Hugh Robinson, only two weeks after meeting him at a garden party at 'Oakbourne', home of her distant

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[131] The connection to Lady Godiva was made known at the 1998 reunion by a member of the family doing genealogical research in England. Most of the family appear to have little interest in tracing their Williams family connections in England back more than a generation, namely to the parents of Henry and William Williams. See Evans (1998), p. 6.

[132] Alastair Deans, 19 August 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 2side B 13.1; Joan Dillon, 18 August 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 0.2, Tape 2 side A 12.7. Both told me with some pride of this connection.

[133] Tom Williams, 15 March,2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 1.3-9.6.

cousins, the Cannings. Her family had never heard of Hugh before, but her brother's wife looked up a scrapbook which she kept of society occasions, and pronounced him an 'OK chap because he was at somebody's wedding or something else.' She laughs at this, saying 'Oh, may deah!' with an exaggerated upper class accent.[134] The family may poke fun at class pretension in this way, but they often do so from the safety of their own position within the system, and perhaps too, in the assumption that their interviewer is also 'one of them'.

Nicola Grimmond describes how the system worked when she claims, laughingly, to be related to all the 'land bloodlines' in New Zealand.

I should say that our blood lines are practically <u>all</u> the bloodlines in New Zealand because – my Gamma – the land bloodlines if you know what I mean – my grandmother, Judith Empson's mother was Emily Acland, whose mother was one of Bishop Harper's daughters. So on one side we have the Empsons, the Harpers and the Aclands – that ties in with the Tripps. And then my mother was the Elworthys which are also another Canterbury sort of farming family so that was that side, and then my father's side of course was the Williamses, and the various other Williams lines that sort of came down. So there'd been a pattern in the family of a Hawkes Bay boy marrying a Canterbury girl or a Canterbury boy marrying – this is on the Elworthy side – marrying a Hawkes Bay girl, and this goes through several generations you know. And so the – it was the way these young guys went off and did their farming training in another part of the country and so consequently – and just school and social sort side of it – so anyway. And school was important ... the males in my family all went to Wanganui and – and of course my grandfather married the headmaster's daughter, you see [laughs].[135]

While it is easy to laugh at the system of gentry connections from within, as Virginia Robinson and Nicola Grimmond do, a number of those interviewed were aware that unsuitable marriage connections in past generations had separated their family from the main stream Williamses, sometimes leaving a legacy of bitterness. For instance, although Bev Armistead has now re-established her connection with the Wairarapa

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[134] Virginia Robinson, 10 November 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, Univeristy of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 10.7.

[135] Nicola Grimmond, 17 August, 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 32.0.

branch of the Williams family, she still regards them as upper class and 'snooty-nosed'. Although not certain, she believes the break with the family goes back two generations, constructing the following story. When her grandfather, Wyvern Williams, died young, his widow remarried to a dentist in Hastings whom the Williamses regarded as 'not good enough'. The family appointed KS Williams from the East Coast to be the guardian of Bev's mother, who was also called Wyvern. Although Wyvern held KS in high regard she 'had no time for any of the other Williamses', and when she married William Bunny she refused to have the Wairarapa Williams family at her wedding because she felt they had 'turned against' her mother, and 'got all snooty-nosed'. 'You know the upper echelon and the sort of middle class sort of thing,' Bev explains.[136]

Throughout most of Douglas Davies's interview he attributes his lack of contact with the Williams family to living in the South Island.[137] However in the final minutes of the interview he tells me with some emotion that this was really because his father was 'treated adversely' by the family who believed he had married beneath him, a view which Douglas believes may have some truth to it.[138] Rob Reed tells a similar story. He can make no claim to geographic isolation from the family, having grown up just north of Gisborne and gone to Wanganui Collegiate with numerous cousins. Nevertheless he claims to have had little contact with them in his early life, and appears to have an uneasy relationship with those he does know. Laughing in an embarrassed way he tells me that although his grandmother was a 'very proper lady', his grandfather was Cockney, thus accounting for the lack of family contact.[139]

Peter Sykes too is in no doubt about the class nature of the Williams family, and the importance of making the right marriage. Although his mother was a Williams from Te Aute she married someone in the Wairarapa from 'different stock':

And so we grew up surrounded by the Williams landowners .... living on what used to be Williams's farm .... [I]t was sort of the landed gentry versus us

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[136] Bev Armistead, 9 August 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 1.0, 21.7.
[137] Douglas Davies, 8 October 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 2 side B 9.7.
[138] Douglas Davies, 3B 34.4.
[139] Rob Reed, 11 November 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 2 side A 19.5.

(laughs), the tenant farmers almost. Because I mean they were – 'Te Parae' and 'Brancepath' ... people like Alister Williams at 'Te Parae', they were the feudal lords who would chair committee meetings and run the fund-raising committee, much like the old English sort of local parochial committee. And so we would go and visit them on almost state visits.
.... the Williamses had numbers of Governor Generals amongst their – including the current Governor General is an in-law. And it's that sort of [laughs] – gentry level which I've never really aspired to, because the Sykes family came up as sort of English rural farmers who settled in the Wairarapa and ended up with a ... soldier settlement block ... [S]o I was brought up into that setting, knowing that these Williams and Beethams were relatives but ... they were not personal friends. I can still go out there and they will still recognise the relationship but it's – they don't know anything about me .... I come from different stock [laughs].[140]

Peter's laughter suggests a slight degree of discomfort with these upper class connections. Peter prefers to see the family as forming two strands, the gentrified farming strand (or what he terms the 'pastoral' strand) and the missionary strand. He stakes a claim within the latter, and chooses to largely ignore the former.

As we have seen the rejection of class attitudes features in narratives as part of their rebellion against the family and its expectations of them. This is part of Sarah Williams's narrative. She has discovered that her Granny Williams was 'born out of wedlock' and not from the 'top drawer'. This explains for Sarah the story she has heard about a family feud:

I know that my Granny – that she was – people were not good about her, and I also know that ... my Great Uncle Guy and my grandfather did not speak to one another .... For something like 30 years they didn't speak to one another, and then apparently organised by the wives – you know the traditional number – my Great Uncle Guy and his wife came to afternoon tea at 'Landsdowne' and among other things there were bananas which must have been – oh glamorous in those days – and my grandfather ... who was the older of the two – [was] said to have said to my Great Uncle Guy 'Won't you have a banana, Guy?' and Great Uncle Guy said 'No.' They were then deemed to have spoken.

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[140] Peter Sykes, 11 February 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 0.3, 1.9.

.... But also when my grandfather met her – or rather she met him – was at the Masterton Club, which of course was the men's club, and she ran the bar in the dining room or something like that. Can you imagine! And there was my grandfather you know, laid-back, good-looking, getting on, you see, and I think she just laid her eyes on him and thought 'Ah – you know – great!' And good for her .... I see that as an absolute splendid – you know exact opposite to where men on the make marry up – I mean why not? .... I admire this stuff![141]

Although her grandmother's dubious origins may have upset the family and Wairarapa society in general, Sarah, who aspires to the egalitarian ideal, is delighted with the discovery. Her grandmother is someone she greatly admires.

Sarah also points to an aspect of class in New Zealand on which the Williams narratives are otherwise silent, perhaps because they represent the hegemony, namely that Anglicanism is a class qualification, necessary but not sufficient.[142] For Sarah, raised as a Roman Catholic, religion as class comes doubly disguised. In New Zealand, she explains, there are Anglo-Catholics and Irish Catholics. Sarah is the former. In her narrative the Anglo-Catholics have well-known names such as Vavasour, Bunny and Johnston, the Irish Catholics none worth mentioning.[143] Part of Sarah's own rebellion against the class attitudes of her family, is to marry an Irish Catholic.[144] Like marriage to those of lower social status, marriage to Maori has also been problematic in the Williams family. This will be dealt with in chapter five.

The material evidence of wealth and status

Although cars are such an important marker of social status in Simon's narrative, he is exceptional in this. In the Williams narratives homes are usually the most significant material indicator of wealth and position.

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[141] Sarah Williams,24 February 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, tape 2 side A 0.1, 2.2.

[142] This is more pronounced in Canterbury and in the North Island, which is the main base for the Williamses, than in the southern parts of the South Island where many of the Scottish settlers came.

[143] Sarah Williams, 1B 26.0, 2A 2.2, 4.1, 2B 17.2. According to Sarah 'the Bunny's were originally de Bounet and they were Norman' . Sarah says her great grandfather Riddiford, 'on the way up', proposed to the eldest daughter of the Superintendent of Wellington Province, Henry Bunny, but she refused him because he was an Anglican and she a Catholic. The next daughter however accepted his offer.

[144] Sarah Williams, 2B 17.2.

John Russell now lives in the large and generously proportioned home at 'Tuna nui' which his grandmother had had built in 1912. He is very proud of it, and of an apparent family tradition of building large homes:

Lady Russell, my grandmother, Gertrude Williams – was the sister of HB Williams from Gisborne, and AB Williams from north of Gisborne, 'Puketiti', and the whole three of them all built big houses, because they came from 'Frimley' which was a big house. I remember 'Frimley'. And I tell people I think that AB Williams and HB Williams and old Gertie had a competition to see who could build the biggest house, and I reckon old Gertie won [laughs]. She had flair – she had flair when it came to building things and setting things up. She set out this whole garden and my missus said the proportions and the drainage and the thought and everything has all been done really, really well – with a good eye.[145]

Note that John first gives his grandmother her proper title in this excerpt, appropriate to the nature of the house and emphasising the gentry connection. He then reverts to the use of terms like 'old Gertie' and 'my missus', thus positioning himself with a foot in both camps – familiar with the gentry and a man of the people.

Despite the size of the Williams homes not all comments about them are complimentary, especially the early homes. Elisbeth Ludbrook continually referred in somewhat scathing tones to 'Williams houses', until I asked her to tell me what she meant by this term. She explained that in reality they were far from grand:

[A]ll the downstairs was where the parents lived or the adults lived .... But upstairs was like dormitories, so they would have – in 'Pouerua' there's a big long one room that was the boys' dormitory, and there's a big long one room that was the girls' dormitory. How else could they do it? It was very practical.

Yes, with 13 children!

Yes, very practical. There was a lot of people living in one house back then. So downstairs would be the bathroom and the toilet and the parents' bedroom and the nursery and the office and the boot room. 'Pouerua' had a boot room as big as our bathroom with shelves all the way round it – a real throw back to when the Williamses had it – and it still had the old boots in it.[146]

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[145] John Russell, 9 June 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1side A 24.7.
[146] Elisabeth Ludbrook, 8 November, 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 3 side B 21.7.

Jean Maclean explains that Samuel Williams, who built several of the houses at Te Aute', was frugal and 'no good at architecture'. She describes the house she grew up in as having a 'billiard room' upstairs in which large numbers of people would stay 'marae-style', often families in desperate need of a holiday.[147] This 'billiard room' sounds like the boys' and girls' dormitories at 'Pouerua' mentioned by Elisabeth Ludbrook. Houses built later at Te Aute were supposedly better designed. Hugh McBain tells the story of when Samuel asked his daughter, Lucy Warren, and her husband to move up from Wellington and help him at Te Aute. He offered to build her a new house. Hugh tells the family story:

Lucy said, 'I'm not having a house', she said to her father – this is as the story goes – she said to her father 'I'm not having a house like the other Williams houses that they reckoned they could design themselves and knew how to do everything including the plumbing and all the rest of it.' She said 'If we're coming up you know - I want a proper house.' .... The other Williamses always say that this is the one that was properly built, that a lot of the others were – a bit ham [laughs] ... [but] you've only got to look at the fireplace. It always amuses us. They didn't sort of worry about getting things level too much (laughs).[148]

Elisabeth's appeal to practicality and Jean's to frugality, reflect not only the nature of the houses, but their own view of the essential nature of the family as one which was neither pretentious nor snobbish. Hugh's story on the other hand reflects the changing expectations and fortunes of succeeding generations

Narrators often use descriptions of homes as metaphors for the social arrangements they remember with approval or disapproval, giving them a moral value. We have seen how in Virginia Williams's narrative the house at 'Atua' is a metaphor for the solid and secure social milieu of her childhood, which told her where she stood 'in the scheme of things', but also for the sexist attitudes that prevailed at the time, including inheritance practices that favoured sons.[149] It is interesting to compare different

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[147] Jean Maclean, 8 June 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 2 side B 42.5.

[148] Hugh McBain, 12 June 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1side B 12.9.

[149] Virginia Williams, 11 August 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 5.4, (see also chapter two). Michele D. Dominy, *Calling the Station Home: Place and Identity in New Zealand's High Country* (Lanham, Maryland, 2001), pp. 105-34, Chapter Four, 'Family, Farm and Property Transfer', provides a discussion on the issues surrounding inheritance for sons and

accounts of 'Te Aute'. They reflect changing times and different narrative purposes. Eric Williams's description is a metaphor for his view of a class system which caused him much disquiet. His memories mainly date to the 1930s. He speaks of his father as the 'squire of the Pukehou village', the main landowner and employer. The family lived in a big house on a hill above the road. Nearby lived the vicar, also a Williams, whom they would visit for tea parties and tennis. On the other side of the road and at a lower elevation were the workers' rented cottages, which were close to the railway line and the station slaughterhouse.[150] Hugh McBain's narrative gives a rather different picture of Te Aute and serves a different purpose.[151] Born and raised in England, Hugh has heard many nostalgic stories about the place from his mother. Instead of a metaphor for class, he sees TeAute as a community, a large family enclave, all with their various roles, supporting one another, safe and secure. Only the houses belonging to family members are mentioned, places with names and descriptors like 'old family home', or 'old rambling house'. Although the gardener's house appears in his account it is now occupied by one of the family. The workers themselves do not appear. Hugh's account spans several generations, and not all the people he mentions lived at Te Aute simultaneously. Thus it is also an account of family continuity, and part of the tradition of the Williamses that he has received from his mother.

In these narratives having English goods and chattels in the house also seems to have been a sign of class. Both Simon and his cousin, Judith Myers, recall the big home of their Williams grandparents in High St, Dunedin. Like Simon, Judith mainly recalls that everything in it was 'English' at a time when this was supposed to be a guarantee of quality.[152] Sarah Williams tells of the Christmas parties at 'Longwood' to which the people from the farm cottages and all the household staff came, parties organised by her grandparents with great attention to detail. After Father Christmas had arrived and distributed presents, she says:

We would have a really wondrous tea party. We would have English crackers. My Granny must have imported them herself, and I remember them – you could

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daughters of South Island High country families. This reflects many of the attitudes and values found in the Williams family.

[150] Eric Williams, 1B 28.1.

[151] Hugh McBain, 1B 5.0, see Chapter Two.

[152] Judith Myers, 14 March 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 18.0; Simon Williams, 1A 12.4.

either have a kind of turquoise blue ones with silver glitter ... and cornflowers twined around, or you could have ones that were pink with gold glitter on them and a rose wound around them. And those were so pretty, so beautiful – I really sometimes didn't want to pull them.[153]

The English crackers seem to put the hallmark of quality on these affairs.

Servants

With large homes, servants were part of the lives and narratives of many of the family. For some servants were just accepted as a fact of life. Joan Dillon growing up at 'Te Parae' recalls that as children she and her sisters:

were taken for outings by our dear old retainer called Marg. We used to go out in the gig ... for picnics and drives and I think she used to drive round till we found the roadman who she eventually married [laughs] .... She used to do the washing and ironing, and – well she was a housemaid really I suppose you'd call her. She was there for years.[154]

Kirsty Burbury grew up on a remote family farm, 'Ruangarehu', 20 miles inland from Tokomaru Bay and three hours drive from Gisborne. Kirsty appears to suggest that servants were necessary because there was no electricity until 1964. She speaks of them in a matter-of-fact way in the narrative, making no apologies for the use of the diminutive surname:

The first person I remember was a cook, an old Scottish lady called Mrs Nelson. We called her Nelsie, and she was there for a number of years. But Mum always had somebody to help with the children, nursemaids of some sort ... and Mrs Nelson did the cooking. And then after she left Mum did the cooking from then on, but we'd have a governess by then who sort of helped – you know, would make our beds and help with the usual chores and bits and pieces.[155]

The somewhat patronising references to servants in these two examples contrast with the uncomfortable memories of people like Eric Williams, whose narratives become awkward as they try to excuse, joke or protest about their servants. Jane Tylee was

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[153] Sarah Williams, 1A 8.5.
[154] Joan Dillon, 1A 4.9.
[155] Kirsty Burbury, 8 June 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 2 side A 25.6.

raised at 'Rouncil' near Hastings. When her grandparents had lived there they had had servants, but she is most emphatic that her own parents never did.[156] Elisabeth Ludbrook recalls that because of the size of their families all the Ludbrooks had Maori maids, and the houses all had maids' rooms. She protests, '[T]he maid was one of the family. I mean we loved our maids. They were always one of the family.'[157] When Virginia Robinson was a young child at 'Sherwood', she lived with the governess in the nursery where she had all her meals except Sunday lunch. The family also had a cook and housemaid, often Maori, and a cowman-gardener. She jokingly says 'We had various – slaves I call them, but I don't really mean that – but you know there were servants about.'[158] Although Elisabeth and Virginia sound matter-of-fact about the presence of servants, neither is quite comfortable with the fact. Elisabeth's twice times protest, and Virginia's joke betray their unease.

Sarah Williams' grandparents had what she calls the 'New Zealand version' of 'the small feudal set-up'.[159] Servants represented orderliness; the gravel paths were raked every Wednesday morning, and the lawns mowed every Saturday.[160] She also recalls visiting the servants and the way in which she was supposed to behave towards them: ***Of course we went to the cottages, we went to the cottages quite a lot. When we were very small we went to – my Granny had a chauffeur and then his wife helped in the house – we went to Mrs Sealy's and she had a doll's tea set which we were allowed to play with. That was great. We used to go to one of the gardener's houses, and the only thing – I remember everybody was so welcoming – it was all just part and parcel of – of our world, but the only thing I remember is that I couldn't stand the condensed milk and vinegar dressing that – and the cut up beetroot and stuff – that was a class thing really. I just couldn't stand it and I was always nervous that I would have to eat it because that would be very impolite not to eat what we were offered – at the gardener's house, I remember that.***[161]

However beneath this order Sarah recognises another reality, a tension that was occasionally revealed when for instance, as a child she greeted the chauffeur with

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[156] Jane Tylee, 7 June 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 35.6.
[157] Elisabeth Ludbrook, 3B 21.7.
[158] Virginia Robinson, 2B 9.9.
[159] Sarah Williams, 1A 6.7.
[160] Sarah Williams, 1A 5.9.
[161] Sarah Williams, 1A 6.7.

'Good morning, Pitts', and he replied 'Good morning, Williams'; or when her sister and the cowman-gardener's son pretended to be pigs, rolling naked in the mud of the pigsty, and she recalls that the boy's parents 'felt terrorised – they felt so guilty and so ashamed and so afraid, that Jock took ... Ian home, put him into a cold bath and then [gave] him a beating with the strap.'[162] This seems to have so shocked them all that she does not even recall her sister's punishment. Examining the anatomy of the servants' relationships with the master's grandchildren in this way, enables Sarah to distance herself from it. She stresses that in her own life she believes in trying to live by the egalitarian myth, 'to be classless'.[163]

Schooling

Private schools provided the cement of the class system. For the Williams family private schooling was the norm, as is evident from Simon Williams's narrative in which his father's failure to send his oldest son to Christ's College plays such a prominent part. Also governesses for younger children were common. It is usually intimated that the isolation of farms demanded these arrangements, and probably in some cases this was true. However it also seems that even when alternatives were available, they were often deemed not desirable. Eric Williams was one of the few who spoke openly and critically about his parents' preference for an education separate from local children.[164] Terence Williams's sister, Juliet, was present during his interview and explained how the two families of cousins from 'Sherwood' and 'Coventry' would ride to each other's place for schooling with a governess, passing the local school which their parents felt was 'too small' to give them a proper education. It is clear however that size was not the only, or even the main disqualifier for the local school, but they are reluctant to talk of the class and race aspects that also pertained.[165] Judith Myers spent thirteen years at Craighead in Timaru. She too says the local country school was 'very small', so their father drove them to school in town each morning. As a result she says she did not mix with the local children, and most of her friends outside school were daughters of her mother's friends from her own

[162] Sarah Williams, 1A 14.7.
[163] Sarah Williams, 2B 13.6.
[164] Eric Williams, 1B 37.4.
[165] Terence Williams, 29 October 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 23.1.

private school days. 'They're all Canterbury people,' she explains, meaning by this the gentry of Canterbury.[166]

These testimonies point to the formation of social networks of gentry which are not restricted to the local community, as both Hatch and Dominy have indicated.[167] Allen Williams went from Napier to Huntley and Hereworth prep schools and then to Christ's College in 1929. While he felt he lost touch with local people, he made other connections, both with other 'firms' like the Acton-Adams from Canterbury and with his wider family. He told me: 'The Williamses all went to Christ's College ....the place was lousy with them. I was Williams IV.'[168] These schools were important in establishing and reinforcing connections within and between families of this class, and thus maintaining a wide network of the genteel, while also confirming the view held by the family of belonging to a wider class network. Jane Tylee expresses some regret that her grandchildren will not be going to private schools and so will 'miss out on those special friendships'.[169]

Some of the younger members of the family whom I interviewed had in fact been to state schools for at least a few years, until going on to private prep schools and secondary schools. However one or two said they were aware of class attitudes within these schools. Bill (W.R.S.) Williams's father had grown up on a family station on the East Coast, but after the war he bought a few hundred acres at Takapau in southern Hawkes Bay. Bill and his two sisters attended the local Takapau primary school in the 1950s. Bill tells the following story about his sisters' experience at the Takapau school:

I wasn't really conscious of this [class difference] until I got a bit older, but I remember we had a shepherd who my father sacked... and this was taken out on my sisters at the Takapau school.... Remember those terrible school buses, and as they got off, the kids used to sing 'God save our gracious queen'. And I

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[166] Judith Myers, 1A 25.9.
[167] Hatch, p. 175; Dominy, pp. 42-4, 264-5.
[168] Allen Williams, 12 November 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 2.8, 15.5.
[169] Jane Tylee, 1B 10.1.

remember Anna and Louise were shattered. It was one of the worst experiences of their lives.[170]

Bill talks of Takapau in class terms, speaking of peasant farms, artisans, the working class and the lower middle class. Living in Auckland now he says he is pleased to have escaped this environment.

Boarding school was believed by some to have encouraged independence. Some enjoyed school but many did not. One or two stories told off the record were heart breaking. Eric and his younger brother, Bill (W.A.), are among those who survived rather than enjoyed their school years. There were nine Williamses at Hereworth when Bill was there.[171] He says it was a 'brutal experience' because 'to be successful ... you had to be tough, whatever tough was'.[172] Amongst other things they were expected to engage in fights and enjoy compulsory boxing. Jane Tylee regrets sending her 10-year-old to Hereworth. She says: 'He doesn't talk about it much, but they sort of squashed all the life out of him, I felt. He used to come home and some days he'd hardly speak.'[173]

Girls did not always fare much better. Because of their isolation, Joan Dillon says, her daughters were sent to Selwyn House in Christchurch when the youngest was six. The child ran away but she eventually 'settled down'. Joan says, 'We felt very cruel. Six was far too young to send her away'.[174] Likewise when Kirsty Burbury was about 14 she was 'put on a railcar' in Gisborne and sent to Woodford House. It was a traumatic experience to suddenly find herself among 180 girls after years of correspondence school. 'I had three years at Woodford and because I was terribly shy and very inhibited at that time I just buried myself in work .... It wasn't easy, wasn't easy.'[175]

As a member of the Federation of University Women and with their records in mind, Beatrice Haslett's narrative was focused strongly on education and her struggle to

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[170] Bill (W.R.S.) Williams, 9 October 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 31.2.
[171] Bill (W.A.) Williams, 2 November 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 9.4.
[172] Bill (W.A.) Williams, 1A 8.0.
[173] Jane Tylee, 2A 0.9.
[174] Joan Dillon, 1A 31.1.
[175] Kirsty Burbury, 1A 8.1.

reach an acceptable standard for entry to university, despite her family's fondness for private schooling. She has little time for this system, which she viewed as very poor educationally and socially. Here she speaks of earlier generations, her father and his brothers:

They didn't go to the local school so don't ask me who taught them unless Aunt Eadie, the maiden sister taught them, and then when the poor little things were eight they went to Huntley in Marton. And they went by – it's quite a saga – they went by boat from Opua to Auckland , and then they had to go across to Onehunga and get another coastal boat to New Plymouth or Wanganui – I'm not sure which – Wanganui I suppose. Then the train to Marton – and that was before the main trunk line went in .... They all went to Huntley when they were eight and then to Wanganui, and at one stage Grandpa had five sons at Wanganui – so they weren't lonely I suppose for brothers, but they really were never at home again you know. There wouldn't have been exeats or – I think Canon Arthur Williams was in Wanganui and he was very good to them. And obviously there were lots of cousins there but – I think my father was a fairly lonely little boy. You know, he always looks rather pathetic in the photos.[176]

She regards her own education under this system as a disaster. With their cousins she and her sisters had a governess who used the PNEU (Parents National Education Union) correspondence work:

This came from England because we were too near the local school to get correspondence school, and we were far too refined to go to the local school. You see the Ludbrooks never had – Dad's family, and so this carried on. And we would <u>love</u> to have gone to the local school.[177]

Beatrice was sent to Auckland Diocesan School when she was nine, but during the war she was able to go to the local Ohaeawai school. Her parents then sent her to secondary school at St Mary's in Stratford, which she compares to Dickens' Dothebys Hall. After much protest she was eventually allowed to go to Whangarei Girls High School where she was very happy and successful.[178] She then went on to study Home Science at Otago University.

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[176] Beatrice Haslett, 6 August 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 18.0.
[177] Beatrice Haslett, 1A 40.6.
[178] Beatrice Haslett, 1B 0.1-4.2.

Later in her interview she appears to contradict these views on the disadvantages of private schools. In spite of her own battles Beatrice says of her own and her sisters' children, who went to private schools in Auckland:

The children have got a big bond, because they all went to school together. I think that's one of the things about private schools that was a bonus. I don't know how good the education was or anything but you know it is a big family thing. They're all at school together - it's a big bond for the boys and girls .... Still if I go out to Kings – I know the last time I was out there doing flowers for a wedding I looked out at the dads ... watching the first fifteen playing and I knew most of them – yes – they're a big country connection still.[179]

These connections also served her well at Otago University. She recalls:

[W]e had a marvellous time . We had all these boy cousins at Selwyn ... that was one thing about our family, you know – it was a family environment. I think there were – I think when John Ludbrook was at Wanganui there were 11 second cousins. You know it is a ... big network, an extended family.... and of course John had been at Wanganui and so he knew all the Wanganui boys and half of them we seemed to be related to .... In hindsight we probably had a dream run.[180]

These links in schools and universities not only extended and reinforced family relationships, but as they drew in one another's friends the circle reached out to encompass other families as well. Thus the network of the gentry was established and cemented in for each generation as they passed through Wanganui and Christ's, Woodford House and Nga Tawa, and various other private schools, and also to some extent at university. For some even this was not sufficient. In order to help overcome the social disadvantage of being Roman Catholic, Sarah Williams and her sisters were sent to England to attend a well-established Anglo-Catholic school, 'something that nobody could cavil at'.[181] While there they also developed connections with suitable Anglo-Catholic English families.[182]

Quite a number of the Williams family also enjoyed a tertiary education, a tradition that goes back to William Williams who studied at Oxford from 1824. The family continued to send young men to Oxford or Cambridge, usually with the intention of

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[179] Beatrice Haslett, 2A 36.4.
[180] Beatrice Haslett, 1B 14.6.
[181] Sarah Williams, 2A 8.6.
[182] Sarah Williams, 3A 20.9.

training for the church.[183] The tradition continued until fairly recently to include one of the cohort, Canon Martin Warren, a great grandson of Samuel Williams. However, Martin declared himself to have been extremely reluctant, but his father's view prevailed:

[My father] went to Oxford and then he went on to theological college at Oxford. That was his vision of a good education – and he was keen that I should – you know my parents ... wanted me to have an English education. I wasn't at all keen on going. I remember aged 18 being in tears not wanting – I wanted to get ordained but I didn't want to go to university in England. Why not, if I was going to be working in New Zealand, why not train with people I'd be working with? But no, better education in England – so I had to go[184].

Not all English tertiary education was channelled by the Williamses into the church. A number studied medicine including Alfred's son, Ulric, also funded by Samuel Williams.[185] Some of the sons of JN Williams and of TC Williams were sent to Oxford or Cambridge and returned to farm, a practice that was not unusual among the landed gentry of New Zealand for several generations.[186] References in the oral testimony to these educational experiences emphasize cricket, rugby and rowing rather than academic achievement.[187] In more recent generations some were also sent to reputable English educational institutions other than Oxford or Cambridge. Allen Williams says he was bored with the career chosen for him in his father's firm, Williams and Kettle, and fascinated by aeroplanes. His father finally offered to send him to the College of Aeronautical Engineering in London in the 1930s.[188]

Gradually, however, the family has turned to New Zealand universities for education. In the 1890s Ernest Williams was the first of many of the family to graduate in medicine from the University of Otago.[189] The interviews revealed several who had

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[183] William Williams's son, William Leonard went to Oxford in 1847, his grandson, Herbert to Cambridge in 1884, and his great grandson, Nigel to Cambridge in 1925. Samuel Williams paid for two impecunious nephews, Alfred and Arthur to go to Cambridge and then for Alfred's sons, Wilfrid and Keith. All these and others were subsequently ordained. See Woods, *Samuel Williams*, pp. 213-4.
[184] Martin Warren, 20 August 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 13.4
[185] Woods, *Samuel Williams*, p. 214.
[186] Eldred-Grigg, pp. 158-9. Eldred-Grigg estimates one in twelve sons of the 'Southern gentry' were attending Oxbridge universities in 1891.
[187] Tom Williams, 2A 1.3; HB Williams, 1A 5.2; Martin Warren, 1A 14.5.
[188] Allen Williams, 1A 8.5.
[189] Evans, (1998) p. 80.

trained in agriculture at Massey and Lincoln Colleges, and others who have done arts, law, social sciences and science at various other New Zealand universities.

Changing practices in education after leaving school are graphically reflected in Tom Williams's description of the course chosen for him by his father, who had himself gone to Cambridge in the 1920s before returning to 'Te Parae'. Leaving school in the early 1960s Tom was first sent to work in an abattoir, before working on a number of South Island farms. His training was completed with an overseas trip with a cousin before taking up duties at 'Te Parae' himself. Tom believes his father thought that after boarding school this practical training would help him 'figure out what the real world was about', but he himself regrets his lack of higher education and of appreciation of art and literature.[190] These changing educational practices suggest that the focus of education is less on refinement and more on occupational training.

The family myth of women's education

There is a belief among some members of the family that the Williamses have always encouraged education for women. This is based on the work of Henry and William Williams's widowed mother who established a school for girls in Southwell at which William's wife, Jane, also taught for a time, and on the foundation of Hukarere Maori Girls School in Napier, where the unmarried daughters of William Williams taught. While it is true that most of the women interviewed had had four years of secondary education and many had had some form of tertiary education, in only four testimonies was this myth explicitly referred to. Hugh McBain makes reference to it in connection with both the Southwell school and Hukarere, while Jean Maclean views her time on the Board of Governors of Woodford House as true to this tradition.[191] The daughters of Canon Nigel Williams, Sheila and Priscilla, grew up with the assumption that they would get a university education, which they saw as unusual for their class and time. Both completed a Master of Arts degree, Sheila becoming a librarian and Priscilla entering the Department of Foreign Affairs. Sheila recalls that while Nga Tawa 'expected [girls] to achieve academically' they were not expected to

[190] Tom Williams, 1A 18.1, 2A 26.9.
[191] Hugh McBain, 1B 39.6, 42.7, 2A 0.1; Jean Maclean, 3A 23.3.

go on to tertiary education or plan for a lifetime career. Rather, you 'did something useful until you met the man of your dreams.'[192]

We were not given particular encouragement at school ... we couldn't sit bursary scholarships from school because there wasn't the level of tuition available. And there was an expectation for girls of that class that you then went back home after school, and you did one of the sort of things that girls did you know that might – you know maybe physical education, or home science – or teaching of course was an obvious profession and nursing – but this was sort of fill-in for a few years until you married suitably and then you, of course, stopped working and then looked after your husband. So that university was not really seen for a particular thing for girls to do at that time, even as late as this which would have been late 1950s. However there was an assumption, fortunately, in my family that we would go to university.[193]

Although there were several well-educated women among the rest of the cohort, none referred explicitly to this family myth. Nicola Grimmond studied zoology at Otago and became a lecturer, but attributes this to the encouragement of her schoolteachers and to her grandmother, who was the daughter of a Wanganui Collegiate headmaster.[194] Terence Williams's sister, Juliet, completed a medical degree in 1945, funded by foregoing her share in the farm.[195] Virginia Williams trained as a vet, but was annoyed with her father who always refused her offers of help in favour of a 'real' (male) vet.[196] All of these women have had long careers in their fields.

Of course the idea of education for women did not necessarily extend to careers for women. All the women interviewed had four years of secondary education, more than was usual for women before the 1960s. But the idea of doing 'something useful' until you married was certainly more prevalent than the idea of embarking on a career. They themselves often attribute this to their class. For instance, Kirsty Burbury says: 'In those days [1945] girls like me were expected to have a year at home - that was the accepted practice, and so home I went, but I did several subjects

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[192] Sheila Williams, 25 June 1998, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 2 side A 4.2, 8.5; Priscilla Williams, 11 November 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 18.9.
[193] Priscilla Williams, 1A 18.9.
[194] Nicola Grimmond, 1A 4.7, 13.0, 18.4, 25.3.
[195] Terence Williams, 1B 35.0.
[196] Virginia Williams, 1B 0.2.

by correspondence just to keep me occupied I suppose. I did English, art and embroidery.'[197] Then after some months caring for the children of various distant relatives, she was asked to become the embroidery tutor for the Correspondence School. At 21 she trained as a Karitane nurse and got married as soon as she completed the course.

Joan Dillon recalls that when she left school at 18 in about 1931 she 'just enjoyed herself', stayed with friends, travelled with her mother to golf championships, went to hunt balls, travelled to England with her mother and remained for two years staying with family and friends, and learning to ski. 'It was just a life with no object really,' she says.[198] Getting married and living on a Marlborough farm was more interesting to Joan: 'There was more object to my life then. I had a family and – during the war I classed all the wool ... on the three properties. That was interesting. I used to do the lambing. I had my own dog and ... became very good at lambing.'[199]

Some, particularly after the war, did a BA, or trained in Physiotherapy, Home Science or nursing, all of which were regarded as suitable for women. In the 1960s Sarah Williams did a BA, then worked as a postie as a form of class protest, before taking a series of what she called 'polite jobs'.[200] Megan Payton wanted to do a Diploma in Physical Education at Otago, but her father thought it unsuitable for a girl and allowed her to do Home Science instead. She says she still regrets this.[201] Others had good intentions which were disrupted by the priority of marriage. Jean Maclean, leaving school during the war, spent one year at university and one year training as a nurse, but she married before she completed the course.[202] Jane Tylee recalls that she was 'quite ambitious' but then confesses:

Well actually a few months after I left school Mum thought I should meet a few boys and so we organised a tennis party and Michael came to that. And a year later we were engaged, before I'd ever got to university. So – then I got married.

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[197] Kirsty Burbury, 1A 9.9.
[198] Joan Dillon, 1A 44.8, 1B 0.3.
[199] Joan Dillon, 2A 3.3.
[200] Sarah Williams, 2B 13.6.
[201] Megan Payton, 16 March 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 3 side A 3.7.
[202] Jean Maclean, 1B 0.3, 3.0.

You had intended to go to university had you?

Yes, yes.

To do?

Oh BA – that's what everybody did.[203]

Like the men, women portray themselves as being constrained by the expectations of family and class, as to suitable courses and jobs and also in the priority given to marriage.

Some, however, after enjoying the social round for a time, were fortunate to find really interesting occupations. Wendy Falloon, leaving school in the mid 1950s, reports with enthusiasm:

Had a <u>wonderful</u> time being sort of launched into – God knows – I suppose they called it 'Society'. My difficulty was that I really wanted to go and do architecture or home science or go to Dunedin, and my mother wanted me to be – my father thought I should be at home for a year to help my mother – well there were only three of us at home, there wasn't a great deal to do .... I mean the social round – I look back into diaries and <u>really</u> we had parties – Hawkes Bay was very bright and gay then. I mean my parents took me to lots of things. There seemed to be weddings galore and I mean 5-600 at weddings, <u>huge</u> weddings. But there were coming-out dances and ... there were a sort of proper round that you did .... I was riding too, I was hunting .... I <u>loved</u> it and I had boyfriends, and you had a <u>lot</u> of friends ....[w]e had tennis parties, and had sock hops afterwards – roll the carpet back or whatever, you know. There was huge fun – and we did trips up to the gannets. I suppose I was quite good at organising things, so we seemed to always do things in groups, never in pairs usually, always with groups of friends. And we played tennis quite well and went to Masterton to tennis tournaments – socially – and Gisborne. It was good fun.[204]

However, after a few months she decided to get a job because she thought she 'should contribute'. She went fruit picking and was very excited about her first pay packet. But after a while she was looking for 'something else', went to night school to learn typing and short hand, and got a job in a Napier law firm.[205] The following year in

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[203] Jane Tylee, 1B 17.0.

[204] Wendy Falloon, 20 March 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 24.4.

[205] Wendy Falloon, 1A 28.2, 30.6.

the late 1950s she went to Wellington to work for the New Zealand Wool Board 'and never looked back'.[206] These phrases, she 'should contribute', she was looking for 'something else', and she 'never looked back', suggest that she had experienced a degree of dissatisfaction despite her enthusiasm for social life. She recalls how her attitude to a career had changed over these years, and how her interest in her work conflicted with accepted priorities for other women in her class:

I remember these great friends saying 'Oh, now Wendy dear, you must come to my cocktail party,' [affecting a refined voice] because there were a lot of naval ships coming in ... Marg Turnbull, this great friend of – mother of my best friend – said 'You can't – Wendy dear, you can't work. I'm having a cocktail party,' [laughs] – when the reality of life was – I decided if you have a job that's really quite important.[207]

It seems clear listening to these narratives that most of these women saw themselves as conforming to the social expectations for girls of their class, expectations which their schools also subscribed to and encouraged. On the whole most now view these few years between school and marriage with mild regret for lost opportunities, or feel the need to apologise, to excuse themselves or laugh at themselves. Although they all had good secondary schooling there is no sense in these testimonies, with the exception of the three mentioned, that being a Williams enhanced their educational opportunities beyond others of their class.

Williams 'gentlemen' and 'noblesse oblige'

The testimony suggests that in previous generations some of the Williams men led quite leisurely lives with their inherited land and business obligations. Many also did their civic duty, which was regarded as part of their family and class tradition. It also gave them opportunities to wield considerable power and influence.

Jane Tylee's father seems to have inherited wealth through his grandfather, JN Williams. Living at 'Rouncil', near Hastings, he had 18 acres which he used to keep tidy to occupy himself, and he helped around the house, for instance bottling the

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[206] Wendy Falloon, 1A 33.9
[207] Wendy Falloon, 1A 35.7.

beetroot which he grew. He did 'good works', kept an eye on his investments and once started a cider factory which failed.[208] She says:

He never actually had a job, which never worried me, but my brothers – I don't think they've still really managed to sort of rationalise this, or accept this – that their father had no proper job.

So what did he do?

He did a lot of – he had a farm in Gisborne which he bought his sisters out from that .... Dad never actively farmed, but he used to go up there and help when it was needed. He used to do a lot of good works ... a lot of charities, things for charity – Church, he was very involved with the Church. .... He actually had a year at theological college in England .... But he must have decided it wasn't for him. But he was always very involved at St Luke's in Havelock and did a lot of work in the grounds. He was Vicar's Warden at one stage. He worked a lot – did a lot of work for the children's home, Hawkes Bay Children's Home – and – yes a lot of – I can't remember other things he was involved with.[209]

From the Wairarapa, Joan Dillon recalls that her father, Guy Williams, had a manager on 'Te Parae' and would spend most of his time in the workshop. 'He was a very good Mr Fixit,' she recalls and he made outrigger canoes for her and her sisters to paddle on the lake he had made at 'Te Parae'.[210] Guy's older brother, Hugh, inherited 'Kumu Kumu', part of the original 'Te Parae', and had a number of businesses.[211] He is remembered by his granddaughter, Sarah Williams, for his Edwardian country gentleman's dress. She recalls him here, giving evidence as she does so that this is part of the family tradition regarding class:

He was enormously laid back, my grandfather. He was the eldest of 12 of a stunningly successful father, and he, according to family, spent most of his life inventing burglar traps. He didn't actively farm, but he created if you like, 'Landsdowne' which was like a tiny version of a home farm with a few acres and with lovely orchard and a few sheep, and – and so forth.[212]

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[208] Jane Tylee, 1A 19.0, 24.0.
[209] Jane Tylee, 1A 19.0.
[210] Joan Dillon, 1A 4.9.
[211] Evans (1998), p.251.
[212] Sarah Williams, 1B 1.9.

It is difficult to know how much these memories reflect the reality of these men's lives, and how much they are coloured by the fact that subsequent generations may have had less leisurely lives, as is suggested by Jane Tylee's comments regarding her brothers. It is difficult for grandchildren to assess the reality of these situations since their memories are of elderly grandparents in their retirement years. It seems, nevertheless, that present generations believe that earlier generations of the Williams led more gentlemanly lives, and that their own lives more nearly match the egalitarian myth.

One reason that earlier generations have appeared to lead lives of gentlemanly leisure may be attributed to their involvement as company directors, thus perhaps being more occupied in boardrooms than in cattle yards and shearing sheds. As well as buying land, many of the family had business interests, often for the purpose of encouraging the further development of farming. For instance, HB Williams's father and grandfather were very active in this way, helping to start freezing works and stock and station agents. As we have seen there is a strong sense of family duty to carry on this work.[213]

Not only did they inherit business obligations, but also a sense of civic duty. Joan Dillon recalls that one of her family gave the land for the Masterton golf course.[214] Elisabeth Ludbrook remembers her grandfather as a 'real builder': '[H]e built the dairy factory in Ohaeawai, and he gave the land for the Post Office and the postal house and the church and the school and the football grounds – and the RSA were all land he gave. So he was very – he was just one of those people.'[215] Just as HB Williams stepped into his father's shoes in business, we have seen how Tom Williams has done the same working on local councils and on farm producer boards.[216] At this stage of his life he says he also now has 'the time to reflect on the family, on those values, on the historical significance and the contribution that the family has made to this nation'.[217] Asked to identify what he means by the values of the Williams family Tom says:

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[213] For instance HB Williams, 1B 2.8.
[214] Joan Dillon, 1B 12.8.
[215] Elisabeth Ludbrook, 3B 7.2.
[216] Tom Williams, 1B 2.5, 3.5, 4.2.
[217] Tom Williams, 3A 14.1.

The fact of the matter is that the family have made a very significant contribution to New Zealand and continue to do so .... There are dozens ... like me who've had the opportunity, very fortunately to be in the position to become involved in public service .... So that the values that have given us those opportunities are still the values that I think are pretty important and the ones that I'm sure the younger generation look up to and aspire to .... I mean I guarantee that my kids know pretty much about their family, where they come from and the reasons why they are who they are, and I think those are values that we need to continue to instil in – or give the opportunity for the next generations of the family to aspire to.[218]

Tom does not want to talk about the privileges and duties of the upper or gentry class as such, but knowing 'about [your] family, where [you] come from and the reasons why [you] are who [you] are', is the basis for his sense of civic duty, the same set of values and beliefs he hopes to pass on to his children.

Allen (Craig) Williams comments on the extent of his father's involvement in business and local politics with a mixture of admiration and mild derision:

Father was ... in everything. He was in the Richardson Shipping Company – started that and ran all the little ships up and down the coast. He was deep in the AMP society, he was deep in the – 'We've got to do something with all these sheep. We've got to start a freezing works.' .... He was a rowing man, because he used to go out to Clyde and row on the river there and I think he was probably chairman of the rowing club. They'd push him up because he'd give them money.

Local council?

Yes, Napier – he was mayor of Napier for one or two terms. He played his part in all those things. Well I've tried to do my bit. I've been in the Aeronautical Society and the Aeronautical Trust and these sort of things. You do get a little bit of time to put a little bit back.[219]

Despite Allen Williams's eagerness to escape expectations of him with regard to the family business, Williams and Kettle, he still retains in some measure his father's sense of civic duty, the need to 'put a little bit back'.

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[218] Tom Williams, 3A 11.9.
[219] Allen Williams, 3A 14.3. .

The position of the Williamses in business and in civic service also gave them considerable influence and power, although they do not often allude to this in narrative. HB Williams provides one of the few exceptions to this when, in response to my direct question, he tells the story of how his father prevented the Labour Government from taking 'Turihaua' for soldier settlement. He describes how his father used the threat to destroy 'the biggest Angus stud herd in New Zealand', and the fact that he had donated a Spitfire to the war effort, as bargaining chips to ensure the retention of his land.[220]

Power could be exercised in all sorts of subtle and not so subtle ways. Anecdotes about some among the earlier generations using threatening and bullying behaviour is found in oral testimony. There are anecdotes about the treatment of some farm workers at 'Te Aute' by Allen (Marsh) Williams.[221] Tom Williams tells about his great grandfather, TC, involved in physical fights and using firearms to get things done his way.[222] Such stories are told with a tone of amused embarrassment, and their purpose partly seems to be to suggest that such behaviour is a thing of the past. However, in more subtle ways, Tom's own involvement in the Game Industry Board and the Thoroughbred Breeding Council cannot help but give him influence in these industries of which his own operation is part.

Although it is mainly the men who have held public positions and are referred to in this context, the values seem also to have been passed on to daughters. Kirsty Burbury admired her father because he was so ' public-spirited'. He was the oldest son of the family and had taken over the family farm. She says he held a respected position in the community as part of the family, and served on 17 different organizations. As children, she says, they 'admired and respected him and were proud of what he did and the respect with which he was obviously held in the district'.[223] Looking back on her own life, she talks about some of the organizations she has been involved with. They include the Community Arts Council, Chamber Music New Zealand, the New Zealand Embroiderers Guild and St Luke's Church,

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[220] HB Williams, 1A 12.7.
[221] Bill (W.A.) Williams, 3A 9.3.
[222] Tom Williams, 2A 14.7, 17.0.
[223] Kirsty Burbury, 2A 17.6.

Havelock North, where she is a chalice bearer and a reader.[224] She reflects with satisfaction how much she, too, had been able to do. Wendy Falloon recalls her child-rearing years:

[T]hat's when I began to feel I was a spoke in a wheel and never stopped spinning .... I wonder when I look back at some of the photos, and think 'How did I survive?' [laughs]. And as a subsequent result of that I started a nanny agency ... thinking how to help people, I think – yes – it's sort of a – I think it's something that's ... a Williams thing, helping other people, helping through the Church or helping through – the organizations that you're involved in, in a community.[225]

Nicola Grimmond also attributes to her Williams heritage the social conscience which motivated her work for student services at the University of Otago.[226]

Social life

Oral testimony suggests that social life for the Williams has often revolved around family in past generations. For instance, Patricia Finlayson, one of the Ludbrook family who grew up in the north remembers a warm, close-knit family. She says 'All my life I suppose my relations seem to have been my friends – my close friends have always been related.'[227] The strength of family social life has been an important factor in the way family myth is developed and passed down, as the wider family gathers to talk, tell stories, and particularly to emphasise class values. Allen Williams lived on the Napier hill and remembers the formality of visiting elderly family members. Bishop Herbert Williams lived nearby and he says 'If you got an invitation to go and see them, you just got cleaned up and your hair brushed and, as I say, polished your shoes again.'[228] He would also go to afternoon tea with the old aunts who lived next door and always had nice cakes and nice china:

I mean an invitation to go to afternoon tea came in the form of a letter – oh yes!.... Mother would say. 'We have an invitation to take tea next door today.' I

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[224] Kirsty Burbury, 1A 30.0-47.0.
[225] Wendy Falloon, 2A 6.3.
[226] Nicola Grimmond, 2A 35.9.
[227] Patricia Finlayson, 30 August 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 2 side A 7.3.
[228] Allen Williams, 3A 2.1.

don't think they mailed them, I think they came through the fence somehow. Or maybe they rang Mother up and said 'You'd better come and get the note.'[229]

In England where Hugh McBain grew up, isolated from New Zealand but with many family visitors, his mother told him glowing stories about the family social life at Te Aute in the 1920s, so that he was eager to experience it for himself:

And 'Atua' – Mum always talked about all the 'Atua' lot would come down, you know – for the weekend, and they'd play tennis and there'd be dancing in here and they'd have a return match up there. Up there they had two tennis courts and [laughs] – and this was the life.[230]

Tennis parties are mentioned in many narratives as an important form of family entertainment.[231] Anne Seymour remembers the tennis parties around Te Aute in the 1950s.[232] There were courts at most of the Ludbrook homes in the north and the family seems to have circulated around for tennis parties. In the Wairarapa, Joan Dillon remembers that all the Beetham cousins from 'Brancepath' would come to the 'Te Parae' tennis parties, although the farm workers were never invited.[233]

Remembering the tennis parties and dances for the extended family in the Wairarapa in the 1950s, Sarah Williams recalls the extent of this family network:

And I had Williams rellies and Riddiford rellies and some double cousins and so on, and that sort of goes back to a thing that when my parents were married – you know said the whole of the Wairarapa was related – and there was that wonderful sense, and we got to know our generation of cousins very well.[234]

Not all have such a positive view. The somewhat overwhelming nature of the Williams network is revealed in what appears to be a well-told story about a party at 'Drumpeel', Te Aute, the home of Gordon and Judith Williams.

[T]he story was told of somebody who came who hadn't been in the family before, and she met this one and that one and they were all Williamses [laughs]. And then she met cousin Judith, and she was introduced to her as Judith Gordon. And this woman said, 'Thank God, I've met somebody who's

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[229] Allen Williams, 3A 10.8.
[230] Hugh McBain, 1B 8.3.
[231] Virginia Williams, HB Williams, Sarah Williams, Tom Williams, Wendy Falloon, Tom Bunny, Elisabeth Ludbrook, all the Te Aute Williamses, eg. Anne Seymour, 6 June 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 15.9.
[232] Anne Seymour, 1A 15.9.
[233] Joan Dillon, 1B 12.8.
[234] Sarah Williams, 1B 6.7.

not a Williams', because she was identified as being Judith Gordon, that family.[235]

This story was told to me as part of a reflection on family members who had felt the need to escape.

Holidays were a time when the extended family congregated at their beach enclaves, some at Paihia, others at Mangakuri on the coast of Hawkes Bay, and later some of the East Coast Williams built cottages at Rotoiti. Although many of the Ludbrook family had moved to the East Coast they kept up frequent correspondence, according to Beatrice Haslett, and also saw one another during holidays at Paihia.

Uncle Percy Williams lived at – had retired to Paihia and the KS Williams had a house there, which they used to come up to each year, and the Oswald Williams – both from Ruatoria .... they had a house at Paihia too. And Eila Reid, she was a TC Williams – she lived just a couple of houses along the road from Grandpa. There weren't very many people who lived at Paihia in those days, because I don't know if you're aware that the Church owned all the land and it couldn't be built on until I think the 1920s or 30s, so that's why there was – it wasn't what you knew it was who you knew obviously, if you were allowed to build a house. Granny and Grandpa always had a holiday house at Paihia.[236]

Anne Seymour recalls the family beach at Mangakuri where 'the days were glorious and endless':

[The family] had their sections. The Warrens had a section, and the 'Atua' Williamses ... [and] Athol's family had a section, yeah, and then the big one, and the big one was Mangakuri – was Uncle Sam and Aunt Joyce – that was their sort of cottage ... where we stayed.[237]

As well as this a sort of 'tent city' would arise. The children would all play cops and robbers while young men went fishing.

Of course social life did not revolve only around the extended Williams family, but also included other members of the same class. For instance, those who lived in the South Island could not often get to the family beaches for holidays, so Simon Williams's grandparents in Dunedin bought a cottage north of the city at Waitati.

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[235] Jean Maclean, 3B 37.7.
[236] Beatrice Haslett, 1A 32.8.
[237] Anne Seymour, 1A 12.2.

My grandfather and a number of the other doctors had purchased a property in 1917, which they'd called Doctor's Point for fairly obvious reasons, and it was ... a stunning beach area. It's still owned by all the doctors, still owned by the same people. .... So it was all very cosy .... All the doctors sort of lived together, went out to the cottage together, went to school together – you know – and very cosy it seemed.[238]

Although Simon clearly enjoyed these holidays he uses it as yet another example of the 'cosy' class system that bedevilled his life.

For younger members of the family private school connections also formed the basis of social life during the holidays. Nicola Grimmond recalls the parties and especially the dances that were organised by groups of parents in the school holidays:

It was more based on schools and if you went to a private boarding school or to Nelson College or Wellington College or – you know one of the sort of more status state secondary schools you got invitations to these parties, and these dances would be – you'd get scads of invitations. I did as I got older. From about the age of twelve on there would be about three or four a holiday and sometimes so many you just had to select and they would be in Napier, Hastings, Waipukurau, Palmerston North, Masterton, you know, Wellington ....They were invitation dances and you all got dressed up in you know, long dresses, and the boys wore suits, and there was a programme and .... These were sort of decorated programmes on the walls, you know, and you look to see – and they were all very much particular dances like the maxina and the valetta and you know the excuse me dance .... I quite enjoyed them .... Because we tended to go with groups – you didn't go with a partner, you went with all the local cousins you know – half a dozen of us would get into a car and off we'd go.[239]

Davis Canning too reflects on these dances, which often had dinner parties beforehand: 'I supposed when you think about it you mixed with your own crowd – the people you went to school with, people you knew.'[240] As Simon makes clear, not all who went to these dances enjoyed them. Simon attended some of the Craighead

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[238] Simon Williams, 1A 20.8. Later Nicola Grimmond lived in Dunedin, and also bought a beach cottage north of the city because it reminded her of Mangakuri in her childhood. She had wanted to do the interview for this project at the cottage, thinking it would be a suitable place for a family history.

[239] Nicola Grimmond, 1B 11.4.

[240] Davis Canning, 2 November 1999, 6 June 2000, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 2 side B 23.7, 28.0.

balls but found them 'pretty terrifying', attended as they were by the 'farming crowd from South Canterbury' who he saw as brash and rich.[241] Bill (W.R.S.) Williams remembers these dances as 'awful', but his parents expected him to go, and to fit into the 'male macho pattern'.[242]

On leaving school the social round continued with greater intensity, as we have seen from the narrative of Wendy Falloon who went to coming-out dances, weddings, balls, and hunts and tennis parties. Coming-out dances were often organised by groups of parents, but Sarah Williams had her own coming-out at 'Longwood', an affair complete with individual programmes.[243] Davis Canning went to work on the Tatham's farm in the Wairarapa. He remembers that Mrs Tatham made sure they went to the social events 'on the Wellington circuit'. Davis met lots of his relations there: Williamses, Riddifords and Bartons. But if anyone 'disgraced themselves' they were 'blacklisted'. Asked what this meant he said that if you failed to reply to an invitation, or got drunk you would not be invited to anything for about three months.[244] Thus graces and manners were gradually instilled into the rising generations, as they prepared to meet their future marriage partners.

Narrative debates on the meaning of class and the gradations of refinement

The memory biographies of Eric and Simon Williams showed them working through some of the questions of class in their narratives, Eric concerned with equality, and Simon with refinement and status. Eric's younger brother, Bill (W.A.) Williams, also does this in connections with his experience in the Korean War. He recalls his arrival in the army, comparing it with his first year at boarding school:

This sergeant greeted me when I arrived at the battery and slung my kit bag over his shoulder and said, 'I'll show you where we're living. I'll take you to our dugout,' and looked after me in a tremendously caring way – and it was not the sort of experience I'd had going to a boarding school where you were – nothing in your first year, and you had a locker at the bottom of the day room and you fagged for the prefects and you were dirt. I was really treated decently

[241] Simon Williams, 2A 8.7.
[242] Bill (W.R.S.) Williams, 1A 42.0.
[243] Sarah Williams, 2B 15.0.
[244] Davis Canning, 2B 34.2.

.... And he said 'This is where we – this is the command post', and introduced me to all the people in there and – the command post officer just greeted me like anybody else and then Harry, his name was, said – just about evening meal time – said 'We'll go up and have a beer at the canteen'. He was a bloke who had got married after World War II, couldn't settle down, ran out on his wife and kids, and I discovered later he was an inveterate boozer .... He was a boozer and a womanizer .... [a]nd a bloke who swore like a trooper, and yet in any sort of situation he was really caring and decent, and this was a tremendous conflict for me – in what I'd grown up with and the values I'd been – had been programmed into me, to find that here was a guy who lived by standards that my family wouldn't have anything to do with, and yet – he was a really good guy.[245]

Later Bill came up before the War Officers Selection Board, and recalls the special treatment accorded him on account of his family connection:

Being Williams I was last in the queue and I never knew to this day whether Brigadier Park who was interviewing us was getting thoroughly tired of the whole show and wanted to get finished or not, but – I arrived into his office and stood to attention and threw him a salute and he said 'Sit down! Sit down!' He said 'Williams,' he said, 'where do you come from?' And I said 'From Te Aute, sir.' And he said 'Do you know Miss Lydia Williams?' And I said 'Yes. She used to be my aunt.' And he said 'Good, good. All right, all right. That's all, that's all.' And I thought, you know, to pass a WOSB on the strength of being a relation of Lydia Williams was a bit incongruous [laughs].[246]

In both anecdotes Bill is questioning the class values of his family, and comparing them unfavourably with what he sees as more egalitarian values, basic kindness and consideration for others and promotion based on merit.

Within the class system of which the Williams were part, there were also gradations of refinement that are referred to either explicitly or implicitly in some of these narratives. As we have seen Simon Williams was well aware of these as he felt they were exemplified by his own parents; the 'position' of the more traditional Williams, solid and understated, compared with the 'chintzy' wealth and brashness of his

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[245] Bill (W.A.) Williams, 1A 22.8.
[246] Bill (W.A.) Williams, 1A 26.5.

mother's family.[247] Simon's own house, a Georgian 'cottage' in one of the best suburbs of Christchurch, reflects the tastes of his Williams grandparents.

Nicola Grimmond speaks of her own marriage in similar terms. She married a man from Auckland whose family, although wealthy, had a different ethos from the one she had grown up with.

The whole sort of Hawkes Bay farming syndrome which was something that he – I suppose felt inadequate about, but I don't know why. There was absolutely no reason for it, but it was interesting things that came out later – years later ... He'd grown up in Auckland but he'd had a sort of King's School, King's College education. His father and his mother's family had owned racehorses and they were a sort of racehorse family, which of course my father's a bit disparaging about too. Anyway so there was a sort of social separation.[248]

For Rachel Miller, who gained entry to the Chelsea Art School through some arty old Etonians and later travelled in Europe, class was about art and sophistication. She is dismissive of the earthy Williams and their farming connections. Rachel recalls some Williams relatives she met while living in London:

Now do you know anything about Sam and Lisa? Now they were interesting. The family didn't approve of Sam really because – he went to England and studied art at the Royal College of Art and that's where he met his wife. They were arty .... They were in Karori at one time and they had a house designed by Plishko who was an interesting architect at the time, and then they lent their house to Colin McCahon .... And [their daughters] at that stage were at Karori school and their big ambition was to marry a Hawkes Bay farmer, they thought that would be great. But when they were in London they sent the girls off to a French lycee, where they learnt Russian as a second language, and the whole competitive thing of a French education really did things for these girls. You know, they really blossomed. And the oldest one got a scholarship to Cambridge, the other one went to university in the south of England somewhere.[249]

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[247] Simon Williams, 1A 38.5, 5.6.
[248] Nicola Grimmond, 2A 1.0.
[249] Rachel Miller, 21 October 1999, interviewed by Jane Moodie, University of Waikato, Tape 1 side A 36.3.

Bill (W.R.S.) Williams too, grapples with class issues. Although he appears to espouse an egalitarian ideal, speaking with approval of his father's abhorrence of snobbery and 'thinking you're better than other people', he also speaks derogatively of Takapau, where he grew up, in terms of peasant farms, working class and lower middle class. Living in Auckland, Bill finds society in Hawkes Bay where he grew up 'socially claustrophobic'.[250] Nevertheless he discusses at length the gradations of refinement, based, like Simon, on the differences between his grandparent families, the Rollestons and the Williamses. He says the Rollestons were socially confident and 'aware of who they were'. Bill finds them intimidating.[251] He says: '[The Williamses were] more down to earth than the Rollestons – just a bit less socially confident, so it's interesting ... we have these classes in New Zealand and they're all like each other but they're not – there are these subtle differences that certainly I picked up.'[252] When I ask him to elaborate on this he says that the Williamses, being 'people of the land', even the very wealthy ones, have a certain 'bearing about them' which is different from that of the Rollestons. Perhaps, he says, it is to do with being South Islanders and North Islanders, something he has sensed at Christ's College. He also thinks there is a difference between the Williamses and the 'Hawkes Bay set':

I get back to this arrogance. You couldn't ever say that the Williamses, for all their faults, none of them are arrogant, you know. Whereas some of these other people – I'm unwilling to name names – are. People I was at Hereworth with and people who went on to Collegiate – I can think of a number of families and there are people who I wouldn't want even to particularly associate with. So maybe we Williamses considered ourselves a little bit apart – I'm not sure. And I know there were some of these people who I know my parents didn't particularly like. You know, the hard drinking and possibly a bit of wife swapping – my parents were just a bit sort of removed from that, and I guess we picked that up.[253]

His family used to visit his great aunt, Nancy Rolleston, the daughter of Sydney Johnston, who lived in her grand family home, 'Orua Wharo', near Takapau. He recalls her as a person with 'genuine class':

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[250] Bill (W.R.S.) Williams, 1B 3.0, 1.7.
[251] Bill (W.R.S.) Williams, 1B 3.0.
[252] Bill (W.R.S.) Williams, 1B 9.5.
[253] Bill (W.R.S.) Williams, 1B 9.5.

She was a remarkable person. I think of all the relatives, all the people I've ever known in New Zealand, she had genuine class. And it's said – there's a story – I don't know if it's true, that she used to have water bowls at the table for you to sort of wash your fingers if you'd been eating the grapes or the cheese or whatever. I think she had some guests who ... thought they were meant to be drunk, so they drank them and she followed suit – she drank it too. That was the sort of person she was, didn't bat an eyelid.[254]

He later compares this with the 'snobbery' of one of his Rolleston aunts:

[She] lived in London and then Brazil and would visit New Zealand occasionally. She made it clear that we were – she didn't call us colonials, they didn't use that term then, but we were pretty crass and uneducated and uncivilized. And that really used to annoy my father particularly, because there's nothing he hates more than that sort of snobbery, and thinking that you're better than other people. I think it was her first visit she came out and they were talking about – cognac came up and Aunt Margie said ' I suppose you call it cog-nack.' My father's told us a number of times ... [that she lived in London because] she was married to Jasper Herrick before the war, and then she went and had an affair with the local chairman of the National Party, and so she was thrown out of house and home ... So she was sort of rejected if you like ... although interestingly enough the people who took her in – literally, because she was taken to the Tavistock Hotel in Waipuk and left there with her bags ... when it all broke up. But my Grandmother [Williams] and Aunt Jane took her in and they befriended her [because the families had known one another for a long time].[255]

Not only does Bill's family resent the condescension towards 'crass colonials', especially from one who grew up in New Zealand herself, but finds her behaviour disgraceful and her ingratitude unacceptable. In short she is in no position to feel herself superior. Bill ends up not denying class but trying to define what he means by 'genuine class'. It is not arrogance, nor pretension, and appears to have a strong moral element.

Sarah Williams too, is well aware of the part class attitudes have played in her life, and of all the subtle gradations of social position dictated not only by birth but by

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[254] Bill (W.R.S.) Williams, 1A 35.2.
[255] Bill (W.R.S.) Williams, 1B 3.0.

religious affiliation, education, occupation, links to England. To be aware of such matters is not necessarily to be comfortable with them. In some parts of her narrative Sarah does seem to simply enjoy the privileges and advantages that being upper class has brought her – an idyllic childhood, servants, wonderful gardens to play in and fairytale Christmases.[256] But she is aware of the price – the hidden resentment of servants, the different standards and so on.[257] In other parts of her narrative she portrays herself actively resisting the constraints of class, becoming a postie, marrying an Irish Catholic, trying to speak like an ordinary New Zealander. Often she satirizes her family's class prejudices and assumptions, imitating voices and expressing attitudes with humour. She speaks of having to learn to curtsey when they went to parties at Government House, or when important visitors came to 'Longwood':

[W]e used to practice curtseying, and drawing the foot you know. You put the pointed foot out and drew it round in a half circle and came right round behind it and so on. So I could give you an effortless curtsey any time ... and that was a most important part of our manners was the ability to curtsey and to shake hands at the same time actually as curtseying – that's what we did for the Dowager Queen of Thailand.[258]

Like Simon and Bill, Sarah is aware of differences between her mother's family and her father's. On Christmas Day they would have two family dinners, the first with the Williams grandparents at 'Landsdowne'. This family showed a 'welcoming solidity', typified by the 'great solid mahogany table' at which they had Christmas midday dinner. Then they returned to 'Longwood' for the Riddiford family dinner, which was a black tie and evening dress affair. Afterwards she says they would play charades in the drawing room where Grandmother Riddiford would be the judge.[259] Sarah recalls: 'She would sit in splendour. We had a wonderful drawing room which had basically Adam fireplaces and an Adam ceiling and it was in that lovely light turquoise with white moulding.'[260] The sophistication of 'Longwood' thus contrasts with the solidity of 'Landsdowne' in Sarah's memory, houses registering degrees of refinement.

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[256] Sarah Williams, 1A1.7, 5.9, 8.5, 11.7, 19.9.
[257] Sarah Williams, 1A 5.9, 14.7, 19.9.
[258] Sarah Williams, 1B 20.0.
[259] Sarah Williams, 1A 11.7, 1B 22.5.
[260] Sarah Williams, 1B 22.5.

As we have seen, Sarah's Catholic family helped to maintain their social standing among the Anglican landed gentry by sending their daughters to an elite Catholic school in England.[261] However going to school in England was something of a shock to Sarah and her sisters. She says they had no 'mana' except for the tins of honey their mother sent them, until these were forbidden by the nuns.[262] While there, their guardian was Githa Fergusson, one of the daughters of TC Williams who married an admiral in the Royal Navy, Rt. Hon. Sir James Fergusson.[263] Known as Great Old Aunt Githa or the GOAG they found her 'quite scary'. However Sarah recalls the one time she came to visit her at school as a very satisfying occasion:

[T]he nun who ran the school, who should have been a far better snob than she was, got into a fearful flutter because she was called Lady Fergusson. Dear God! This nun had dukes and duchesses and viscounts and God knows who – and the grandchildren of the heads of South American countries of the most dubious – you know [laughs] – dubious government coming to school, whose parents would fly them home for the weekend and that sort of thing even then. And Aunt Githa – I mean Aunt Githa was a Fergusson – I mean she'd married into the Fergusson family, the GOAG – but I mean it was simply a knighthood. But anyway this sent, rather satisfyingly sent this nun into an absolute spin. And I was actually in a cricket match, but I had to be taken from the cricket match because GOAG had arrived .... The school was in the country and it had grass terraces up the back and we went up to the top terrace and Aunt Githa ... kicked off her shoes ... and we sort of semi lay down on the grass, and you know chewed a piece of grass.[264]

Sarah enjoys the way the tables are turned upon the nun. She who had destroyed Sarah's 'mana', was now herself discomforted by the arrival of a mere knight's lady. There was even more gratification for Sarah to go and lie down and 'chew a piece of grass' with her aunt, as though her rank was of no account at all. Sarah, who now tries to live the egalitarian life, still finds satisfaction in the story of how she turned her aunt's status to such good account.

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[261] Sarah Williams, 2A 8.6.
[262] Sarah Williams, 1B 33.5.
[263] Evans (1998) p.271.
[264] Sarah Williams, 1B 36.5.

Conclusions

Narratives structured around myths of class are common among the Williamses, to some extent overlapping those of land. Like narratives based on myths of land, they often lack a sense of composure. Class in New Zealand is a shifting social hierarchy resting on contested systems of meaning based on wealth, refinement and ability.[265] Many of the Williams narratives display considerable class anxiety as they wrestle with these different systems of meaning, and with the national myth of the egalitarian society. This was revealed in a number of ways: in the tone of irony that was often employed when speaking of class concerns, as the narrating self becomes divorced from the narrated self; in the exaggeratedly refined accents often adopted when speaking of class values with which they were uncomfortable; in narrative debates on the meaning of class, refinement and position; and in critical assessments about the values underlying certain practices; and sometimes in silences.

As with land, genealogy is important. Various marriage connections to others in the same class were sometimes detailed specifically, at other times apparent simply by mention throughout the narrative of names that were assumed to be known to the interviewer. One woman listed, in a tone of mild irony, all the 'land bloodlines' of New Zealand to which she belonged, explaining that it was not through the Williams family alone that she must take account of land and class in her narrative. Irony was also apparent when marriage was used as an expression of rebellion against class strictures, or when narrators spoke of the immediate enquiries that would be made if young people became engaged to another outside the gentrified social circle. Several interviewees who felt their immediate family had been snubbed by the Williamses attributed this to a parent or grandparent having 'married beneath them', while being adopted seems to have presented an almost insurmountable obstacle to acceptance by the wider family. Such instances not only underline the importance of suitable connections in this family, but they also show how vital the family is in communicating the messages of social acceptance.

Being Anglican, at least nominally so, was taken for granted in most of these narratives. When they spoke of 'the Church' it was to indicate Anglicanism. A

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[265] Hatch, p. 184.

number who adhered to other faiths would justify their change of allegiance, and often announce their love of the old hymns of the Anglican Church as though indicating their origins. That it was also a class qualification was made clear by one brought up as a Roman Catholic, a social disadvantage which had to be overcome by a superior English education.

A proper education was also seen as an important part of the Williams tradition. Governesses and preparatory schools were prominent in memories of primary education, although some younger members of the cohort were comfortable with having attended the local primary school for a time at least. Private schooling however was regarded by most as having been *de rigueur* at secondary level, and particular schools such as Christ's College appear in the testimony as family enclaves which have seen generations of Williamses pass through their precincts. While some appear to have revelled in the experience of private boarding schools, many others found it a miserable experience, often claiming to have felt like 'misfits'. The value of such an education is seen, even by some with unhappy memories, to lie in its academic quality, its ability to foster independence, and to cement the young into the social network of the 'gentry', establishing life-long connections with other 'firms'. Not all the cohort attended such schools, but most who did not justify the omission either by claiming it as an act of rebellion on their part, or by blaming it on force of circumstance.

While some narrators clearly enjoyed and approved their schooling, others were ambivalent about the process and its values. Some might regret the effects of the system on themselves or their own children, but they could also be uncertain about the negative consequences for grandchildren who are attending state schools and fear that they will miss out on 'those special friends' and a degree of refinement. It was clear that in many cases nearby local primary schools were by-passed by parents who regarded them as not good enough either academically or socially. Some were critical of their parents' decisions in this regard, others seemed to tacitly condone them, being reluctant to admit even to the existence of such schools. Such caution seems to be a way of avoiding overt expression of 'snobbish' attitudes which may be unacceptable. These conflicts and ambivalences reflect the process of taking into account individual

experience, perceptions of changing educational practice, dominant egalitarian beliefs and the family traditions of a private education.

Tertiary education was also valued, but more important for boys than for girls. Three older male interviewees had attended English tertiary institutions, seeing this as a continuation of family tradition. One was proud of this, but the others criticised it as elitist and inappropriate for work in a New Zealand setting. Indeed, New Zealand universities appeared to be perfectly acceptable, a number of men and women having attended. While some women regarded this as part of their particular family tradition of education for women, others felt that they had had to battle a more general class prejudice against such education.

Not all received a tertiary education by any means. Some young men undertook a variety of quite mundane jobs, but these were seen as part of their training to take over the family farm or business. Women were often expected to return home after leaving school, and described their lives as a round of social engagements such as coming-out balls and tennis parties, and 'doing something useful' until they got married. In hindsight they are ambivalent about these expectations, enjoying the social life but sometimes scornful of the constraints that were placed upon them, or regretful at lost opportunities. However some tell of overcoming these limitations to find rewarding occupations, and one of taking on work that she felt represented a direct challenge to the class pretensions of her family.

Although wealth per se is not discussed, the symbols of wealth and status are. Chief among these is the family homestead, often adorned with English chattels and surrounded by large gardens with tennis courts. Narrators were usually proud of them, had happy memories of them and were anxious to maintain them in the family. For many they are symbols of status and security, of family unity, continuity and position. At the same time some seemed uncomfortable with them. They felt the need to justify the size of the homestead, or to emphasize solidity and practicality rather than ostentation. One or two, while enjoying the benefit of earlier generations' ambitions, mocked the design inadequacies of supposedly grand homes, or laughed at foolish sibling rivalries which drove them to such pretensions. One saw it as the

symbol of a patriarchal system he considered himself well rid of, the large homestead on the hill looking down on a cluster of small, farm workers cottages below.

With large homesteads came servants, a presence which is problematic in most narratives. Most who grew up with servants experienced the 'two-table' relationship, but perhaps in response to a more egalitarian age they are designated as 'helpers', 'part of the family', or jokingly as 'slaves'. While one or two speak fondly though patronizingly of a 'dear old retainer', most narrators sooner or later comment on aspects of what they now see as an awkward master-servant relationship, in anecdotes of the over-bearing boss, the insolent servant, or the underpaid and overworked maid. These comments may concern the forms of address, the conditions of work, different living conditions, and different moral values. Playing with the servants' children or eating with the farm workers was seen as a protest against class difference in two or three narratives.

Men's narratives of class also focused on an aggregate of notions concerning civic duty, philanthropy and business, often following in their father's footsteps. Some appeared to enjoy these involvements, others clearly did not, but all spoke of responding to a call of duty related to class, using phrases such as 'making a contribution' to society, or 'putting a little bit back'. Power was also a part of this aggregate but the influence that went with being chairman of the County Council or a director of a freezing works was often unspoken. In the same way those involved in family philanthropic trusts shied away from talk about money, shifting attention to those who give their time, or to the beneficiaries of their giving.

Three or four of the cohort have narratives that are innocent of the myths of class and the conflicts that surround them. In general they treat as the norm what others will try to justify and excuse, for instance going to a state secondary school or belonging to a denomination other than Anglican. Conversely, they treat as exceptional what others take for granted, such as tertiary education. The private school network, gracious family homes, servants and so on are not part of their experience, and therefore are absent categories in their narratives, as are explorations of the meaning of refinement.

For the rest however myths of class tend to produce narratives of unease. The Williams view of their family as part of the gentrified class comes into conflict with both the public myth of New Zealand's egalitarian society and, for some, the myth of a family which adopts a lifestyle of (refined) simplicity and philanthropy, rather than ostentatious and vulgar displays of wealth. Usually subscribing in some measure to all three sets of conflicting beliefs, many speak of the manners, moral values and social expectations with which they were raised in an ironic tone, debating the meaning of 'true class' and questions of refinement and position, as they tried to locate themselves and the family at the right point on a continuum.