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**Genealogical Family History in Aotearoa-New Zealand:**

**From Community of Practice to Transdisciplinary  
Academic Discourse?**

**A thesis**

**Submitted for the Degree**

**of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**in Genealogical Family History**

**in the Department of Societies and Cultures**

**at the**

**University of Waikato**

**by**

**Margaret Mary Selman BROWN**

**University of Waikato**

**2008**



## **Abstract**

Genealogical Family Historians conduct research in order to reconstruct genealogical families, through the application of a rigorous methodology: weighing the evidence for placing each individual in a family group, linking family groups of the past and making contact with kin of the present.

Genealogical Family Historians trace the movements and migrations of identified individuals and family groups; and study the local, national and international social settings of lives lived in families and households in different times and places, over many generations. A large worldwide Community of Practice with many constituent groups, including the New Zealand Society of Genealogists Incorporated, has formed itself around this research activity.

In this transdisciplinary study focused on social learning, I have explored and analysed the domain, the practice and the community of Genealogical Family Historians researching in and from Aotearoa-New Zealand during the past 50 years. Genealogical Family Historians meet formally and informally, in small groups or at large conferences to pursue their self-directed learning.

The collaborative practice includes publishing and teaching; and the locating, preserving and indexing of records. Many conduct research and communicate with others in the new world of cyberspace. My overarching research question has been: where is the future place for this scholarly discourse? My approach to this study is transdisciplinary: my point-of-view is above and across departments and disciplines. The ethos and vision of transdisciplinarity is attained only through existing disciplines, and transdisciplinary research has the potential to contribute to those disciplines, as I demonstrate in this thesis.

The transdisciplinary scholarly discourse of Genealogical Family History owes much to the disciplines of history, geography and sociology; and draws on biology, law, religious studies, linguistics, demography, computer science and information technology. I have also drawn on understandings from my own prior and concurrent disciplinary knowledge and experience for this study. Other Genealogical Family Historians bring different disciplinary understandings to the discourse that is Genealogical Family History.

My positionality is that of an insider, an involved member of the Community of Practice for many years. In this study, I have allowed my key informants to speak with their own voices; and I have sought illustration and evidence from documentation and observation in the wider Genealogical Family History Community, past and present. I have used enhanced reflection on my own practice in my analysis and in case studies. This study demonstrates how the Community of Practice has played an important role in developing a transdisciplinary mode of inquiry and suggests that there are some generic features of the field and practice of Genealogical Family History that form the substance of a transdisciplinary discourse ready to take its place in academia.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction: Corridors of Time

It was more than ninety years since my great-uncle had turned up in New Zealand. The idea that the family might be able to trace his origins down that corridor of time, without, even, knowledge of his real name or the country in which he had been born, had seemed preposterous – a search for a needle in a proverbial haystack. And now, without warning, an arm had reached out of the haystack and handed me the needle. I had gone in a matter of minutes from knowing *nothing* about my great-uncle's family history to having an instant context of considerable breadth, depth and complexity.<sup>1</sup>

Dr Michael King, journalist, professional historian and biographer thus records his experience of being contacted in Dunedin by a genealogical family historian living in New York. In this family story Michael King has carefully recorded how the person at the edge of memory, and the centre of discovery was connected to him. Maurice John BELGRAVE<sup>2</sup> was the father of his mother's sister's husband: who was his uncle by marriage, and his godfather. Michael King acknowledges the memory and the life of the father, a man who died before he was born, with the term 'great-uncle'. It conveys both a retrospective reality and a sensible practicality.

The arm that reached out from the haystack of history belonged to a distant cousin of Michael King's first cousins, David BELGRAY.<sup>3</sup> "David was still in practice as a psychoanalyst at the age of sixty-eight. But tracking down members of his family on four continents over four decades became an obsession and at times took on the guise of an alternate career."<sup>4</sup>

Genealogical Family History (GFH) has been my alternate career. I am not an historian. I am not a social scientist. Now retired, I come from a diverse academic background, having previously studied and taught subjects that are housed in broader groupings called arts and humanities, social sciences, and education.

This thesis explores the breadth, depth and complexity of the practice and the field of Genealogical Family History, from an insider's perspective (see Chapter 2).

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<sup>1</sup> Michael King, *At the Edge of Memory: a Family Story* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2002), 55.

<sup>2</sup> I use the convention of writing surnames (but only surnames) in capital letters when writing in the discourse of genealogical family history.

<sup>3</sup> BELGORAJ was the earlier form of the name of interest.

<sup>4</sup> King, *At the Edge of Memory: a Family Story*, 63.

The fieldwork for this **transdisciplinary** study of a GFH Community of Practice was undertaken under the aegis of the Departments of Sociology, and Societies and Cultures: departments in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the University of Waikato, where Dr King was a Senior Research Fellow at the time of his untimely passing.

“Transdisciplinarity ...concerns that which is at once between the disciplines, across the different disciplines, and beyond each individual discipline”.<sup>5</sup> The researchers who thus described and developed transdisciplinarity in 1987, and those who adopted a charter<sup>6</sup> at a world congress in 1994 were concerned with an overarching unity of knowledge; and with the radical difference between disciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity on the one hand, and transdisciplinarity on the other.

Disciplinary research concerns, at most, one and the same level of Reality; moreover, in most cases, it only concerns fragments of one level of Reality. On the contrary Transdisciplinarity concerns the dynamics engendered by the action of several levels of Reality at once. The discovery of these dynamics necessarily passes through disciplinary knowledge. While not a new discipline or a new superdiscipline, transdisciplinarity is nourished by disciplinary research; in turn, disciplinary research is clarified by transdisciplinary knowledge in a new, fertile way. In this sense, disciplinary and transdisciplinary research are not antagonistic but complementary.<sup>7</sup>

This thesis reports on exploratory and question-raising research designed to solve a problem that has long interested and concerned me, and others: the place and status of the field of genealogical family history in the world of knowledge and social learning. My overarching research question has been: why is Genealogical Family History not among the subjects offered to university students in Aotearoa-New Zealand?

I set out to test a belief that the field and practice of Genealogical Family History is a scholarly activity, and worthy of a place in the academy. During this project I hypothesised that there is a general and widespread ignorance of what GFH

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<sup>5</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transdisciplinarity> (accessed 4 December 2007).

<sup>6</sup> The “Charter of Transdisciplinarity”, adopted at the First World Congress of Transdisciplinarity, held in Portugal, in 1994, translated by Karen-Claire Voss, is at <http://nicol.club.fr/ciret/english/charten.htm> (accessed 1 February 2008).

<sup>7</sup> The Charter of Transdisciplinarity: Article 1.

research actually encompasses. I therefore determined that the practice of the members of the community, and the field of GFH research, would be central in my endeavour, and as subject rather than as object.<sup>8</sup>

My study of GFH is set in a history: a history of events and of attitudes. It is a history that continues to affect GFH in the present, and will impinge upon its future. This thesis is about the past, the present, and the future of a particular GFH community whose members undertake research in (and from) Aotearoa-New Zealand: hereafter called ‘the Community’. The postulated future readership of this thesis is a wide range of people interested in scholarly aspects of genealogy and family history.

I discuss some of the history of GFH in Aotearoa- New Zealand later in this chapter, including a history of some specific attitudes towards the field and its practitioners, but first I address the need for some definitions.

### **Preliminary Definitions**

Some words need definition at the outset, because some meanings are often taken-for-granted, and some words are used imprecisely and with ambiguity, both within and beyond the field I have studied. I signal the potential ambiguity of some by using single quotation marks. I draw attention to terms I have coined, adopted, or adapted, by bolding them.

#### *Genealogy and Family History*

These terms, separately and together, have various meanings. Those who use them come from a variety of backgrounds and use them in different ways and for differing purposes. In this section, I give some of my own definitions and usage.

In this thesis, ‘Genealogy’ refers primarily to the study of the *links* between individuals. The links may be genetic, or believed to be genetic;<sup>9</sup> and may be

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<sup>8</sup> Article 1 of the Charter declares that, “subjecting the human being to reductive analyses within a framework of formal structures... is incompatible with the transdisciplinary vision.”

<sup>9</sup> When ‘genetic’ is used in the GFH Community to refer to relationships, there is usually the acknowledged possibility that the ‘truth’ of a *biological* connection may be hidden, or not known.

through marriage or cohabitation. Links forged by adoption and fostering are included. ‘Genealogists’ are interested in individuals, as they exist over time in both *known* and *re-constructed family groups*, within wider family relationships. Genealogists are interested in establishing the parentage and ancestry of particular individuals and their siblings; *and* in discovering *descendants* of ancestors.

‘Family History’ is a term now widely used within the Community, to include not only genealogical research, but also the attempt to understand the social and historical context within which each genealogically related person lived, or is living, as a member of ‘a family’, throughout each person’s lifespan. Some speak or write of ‘putting flesh on the bones’. I discuss definitions of ‘family’ in Chapter 2.

Those genealogists who have compiled charts for specific purposes, some of which may show only male descent, or links to the ‘well bred’, or to the famous or infamous have caused some practitioners to try to avoid having their work called genealogy. Sometimes the term ‘family history’ has been preferred, but it too is at times an inadequate or misleading term.

People claim to ‘have’ their ‘family history’ because they have been given data and stories about just one or two ancestral **name-lines**,<sup>10</sup> or about some descendants of just one couple. Some use the term ‘family history’ for proven or for assumed ancestry, others solely for the extensive charting of descendants of ancestors. Some talk or write of their ‘family tree’ for *any* of these purposes.

To reduce as many of the above ambiguities as possible, and to maintain a focus on the practice of researching particular **families of interest**, and their **genealogical families of extension**<sup>11</sup> as understood by members of the Community, I have used the all-embracing term: **Genealogical Family History** throughout this thesis. A family of interest includes all the known *and* yet to be discovered people linked or connected to a particular family group. A family of extension includes all families of interest linked to the one being discussed, or researched. Thus Michael King’s families of interest discussed in *The Edge of*

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<sup>10</sup> I use the term ‘name-line’ to refer to *one* family of interest where GFH research has established genealogical connections between the first known ancestral bearer of a surname and the researcher.

<sup>11</sup> I use this term to distinguish between the concept of ‘extended family’ used by sociologists and others, and the GFH concept.

*Memory* were his own, those of his first cousins; and those of the father of his godfather and uncle by marriage. For him, the BELGORAJ/BELGRAVE /BELGRAY family of extension included all those he met, or heard about through the research of others. In an earlier book that is “not autobiography *per se*: but is necessarily autobiographical”<sup>12</sup> Michael King gives enough detail of his own other families of extension to indicate that he too had had an interest in a number of aspects of genealogical family history research.<sup>13</sup>

This thesis is not an autobiography, but is necessarily autobiographical from time to time because of my positionality with regard to the Community I belong to, and have studied, for I draw on my *situated* knowledge and experience.

### *Research*

For this thesis, it is the *conscious action* of continuing to enquire and learn about kin, which defines research in expressions such as ‘GFH research’. I use ‘kin’ as a general term to embrace both kith and kin: all persons related and/or connected by birth and/or upbringing *and* by marriage, or civil union, or de facto marriage<sup>14</sup> to an individual, or group of individuals. Within the Community, the terms ‘related’ and ‘connected’ are often used to distinguish between connections ‘by blood’ and ‘by marriage’. The terms ‘consanguinal kin’ and ‘affinal kin’ are sometimes used as synonyms for kin and kith respectively, and the terms ‘Kindred’ and ‘Affinity’ found in a table in some Prayer Books<sup>15</sup> provide yet another example of distinctions that are understood by many GFH researchers. Genealogical family historians also use the terms ‘family of orientation’ and ‘family of procreation’ to indicate their *focus*, during research, on parentage of an individual, *or* on children of two people.

Another term used ambiguously is ‘ancestor’. Sometimes it means all persons from whom one descends genetically or genealogically (except perhaps one’s parents and grandparents): ‘my ancestors’. Another usage is all people alive in the distant past,

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<sup>12</sup> Michael King, *Being Pākehā: an Encounter with New Zealand and the Māori Renaissance* (Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985), 12.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-29.

<sup>14</sup> This study has been undertaken at a time when New Zealand legislation has been debated and enacted to recognise same-sex civil unions. Some decades ago, other legislation in New Zealand recognised the existence of *de facto* relationships.

<sup>15</sup> For example, the 1662 version used in the Church of England - in England and elsewhere.

known or believed to be kith and kin: ‘our ancestors’; while ‘the ancestors’ is sometimes used for all people who lived a very long time ago. See Chapter 7.

### *Communities of Practice*

I have already used the term ‘Community of Practice’ (CoP). It is integral to this thesis, although the theory of that discourse is not my main focus. I discuss CoP theory in the next Chapter. I believe it is a sufficiently self-explanatory term to require no definition at this point. This study is centred on one Community of Practice, and on its relationship to other research communities.

However, I have found it necessary to give a name to this Community, and to acknowledge its **wider community**. They both exist, together with other GFH communities, within an **entire community**.

### *The Entire Community*

In this thesis, ‘entire’ refers to the community of *all* those who have actively sought, in some way, to *discover* relatives beyond the family members of whom they have already had some knowledge: that is, to discover ancestors and/or collateral kin, people living in the past and/or the present. My use of “entire” encompasses currently active and interested genealogical family historians from every place in the world, as well as all those who have been active in the past. Theoretically, “in some way” could also include persons who do no more than express a vague interest in the ancestry of their birth parents or of their adoptive parents; as well as those who have ever idly wondered why they are said to be a ‘second cousin’ of another person. The act of thinking about just one genealogical or genetic relationship immediately brings all such people into a web of infinitely more connections, and of people interested in kin, whether they realise that or not.

### *A Wider Community*

The entire GFH community, so defined, was far too big and amorphous an entity to study for this thesis. When seeking a ‘unit of analysis’ my initial focus was on genealogists and family historians with research interests in New Zealand and its major source of individual emigrants: the British Isles. This does not equate to an English-Speaking world. It does not exclude those who speak English as an *additional* language. It includes those who speak only English but whose

ancestors spoke other languages (see Chapter 4). This wider community has been important throughout, as an ever-present part of the broad background contextual to the particular GFH Community chosen to study.

### *An in-and-from Community*

My unit of observation and analysis became the GFH community with links to one specific place: the place I call Aotearoa-New Zealand (A-NZ) or New Zealand, and I have described this community as **'in-and-from'** because I view its membership from the perspective of the *geographical* research interests of its members.

Some genealogical family historians who belong to the A-NZ GFH Community both reside in *and* research the lives of connected persons who have lived or are living in New Zealand (as well as in other places). Some GFH researchers live in other countries, but have research interests in New Zealand (and elsewhere). Some members of the A-NZ GFH Community are domiciled in New Zealand but have *few* GFH research interests pertaining to families whose members have lived in New Zealand: these people mainly research ancestors and collateral kin of other places.<sup>16</sup> Some genealogical family historians in all of these categories also research people unrelated to them as well: as professional<sup>17</sup> genealogists and record agents, - or just for the enjoyment it affords them to research the families of others.

The wider community of the A-NZ Community also includes some who may have little knowledge of New Zealand. They do not live here. They do not research past or present families here, but they do contribute to the field and practice of the A-NZ Community through publications, conference attendances and cyberspace activities.

There are many in-and-from communities in the entire GFH community - each with its wider community. Some have existed over many centuries: for example the Jewish GFH Community with its links to Israel and elsewhere. Each individual researcher belongs to any number of in-and-from GFH communities. For example, I could say I 'belong' to the Sri Lankan GFH Community because a distant cousin migrated there from England in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I know a Sri Lankan with New

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<sup>16</sup> I have often used a microfilm reader seated beside a Dutch-born New Zealander or beside a genealogical family historian with a Dutch parent, or spouse, as they read films of documents created in the Netherlands.

<sup>17</sup> That is, they are paid to undertake GFH research for clients. Some may do so to a professional standard, some may not.

Zealand citizenship, living in Australia, who traces ancestry from Sri Lanka to the former Portuguese colony of Goa in India, and thence, to an eponymous ancestor<sup>18</sup> in Portugal. I belong to the Tongan GFH Community because I have second cousins who are Tongan/Pākehā New Zealanders. One presently lives in England and could therefore be said to belong to the in-and-from GFH Communities of Tonga, England and New Zealand.

I have not yet succeeded in finding a suitable pronounceable term or acronym for practitioners in this field. Members of the wider Community use the term ‘Genea’ (pronounced ‘genie’). It resonates with the magical discovery of Aladdin’s cave, and the unpredictable appearances and gifts of his genie. ‘**Geneal**’ is more easily pronounced, and reflects the general good humour and helpfulness of many in the field. It retains the distinctive spelling of genealogy. It will have to suffice until a better term is coined for both academic and common use.

### **The Genealogical Family History Community of Aotearoa-New Zealand**

There are many nameable groups in the GFH Community. I first acknowledge some important ones, and explain why I have not focused on them as separate groups to analyse or discuss in detail.

#### *Tangata Whenua*

I acknowledge the first known peoples<sup>19</sup> to migrate to my country of birth, citizenship and genealogical orientation: the Māori peoples or tangata whenua<sup>20</sup> of Aotearoa-New Zealand. This unofficial name for the place and nation of New Zealand is widely used, especially by some who wish to acknowledge first-comers, as well as a multi-cultural heritage.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> I believe the earliest ancestry has in this case been taken on trust for surname considerations, rather than proved from genetic or genealogical documentation.

<sup>19</sup> I refer to the Iwi - various tribal groups who can trace the arrival of a canoe bearing an ancestor: the arrivals involve different voyages and so different times, places and traditions.

<sup>20</sup> I follow Michael King’s lead and do not provide a glossary for any words in common New Zealand-English use.

<sup>21</sup> About 200 years ago (500 years or so after the first major Polynesian migration to these islands), other migrants began arriving from various places and cultures: some of our grandchildren’s ancestors among them. Michael King’s four grandparents each arrived here about a century ago. Indigeneity is an important and challenging concept for all peoples of this land.

Although I have researched whakapapa and assisted others to do so, I am not Māori, either genetically or by chosen cultural orientation; and respect those who claim to be the latter by *not* analysing this area of the entire GFH Community, in response to their assertions.<sup>22</sup> I discuss this further in Chapter 10.

#### *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS)*

Another very significant component of the entire GFH Community is the LDS faith community where genealogical research has long been a duty of membership.

Although I have interacted with this GFH community over many years, I am not a member of that faith, and did not wish to study the place of GFH in that community: again because I am an outsider.

Although these two groups, where genealogical family history is recognised as important, have tended to remain both organisationally and visibly separate from other groups of the A-NZ GFH Community, some individuals have from time to time, concurrently belonged to other groups. For example, at least two Presidents of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists (NZSG) have been members of the LDS faith community;<sup>23</sup> and an NZSG Special Interest Group formed in 1994, to assist members with Māori family history research.<sup>24</sup>

#### *The New Zealand Society of Genealogists Incorporated*

I have been a member of the NZSG, the largest formal organisation<sup>25</sup> in the A-NZ GFH Community, for nearly 40 years. Through it, I am presently associated with other formal organisations in the wider Community: the Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS) and the Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations (AFFHO). I am associated with the former, additionally, as a member of the Wiltshire Family History Society, while my membership of the Tay Valley FHS links me to the Scottish Association of Family History Societies (SAFHS).

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<sup>22</sup> I am not genetically Māori, although I could make a case for being *genealogically* so, as a whāngai member of Ngāti Hikitanga Te Paea, with many kith and kin who are genetically part-Māori. I find myself resisting being called a 'Westerner' – West of where, exactly? I have used the term Pacific Islander, but that confuses too many. I prefer to call myself a Pākehā New Zealander.

<sup>23</sup> I know of presidents who were active members of the following Christian denominations during their term of office: Methodist, Open Brethren, Anglican, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian. Others had no particular allegiance or affiliation at the time they held office.

<sup>24</sup> *Whakapapa: an Introduction to Māori Family History Research*, by Brenda Joyce and Bruce Mathers is a 2006 publication of the Māori Interest Group of the NZSG Inc. I note that the Group's newsletter is now (2008) on-line, and is printed in Australia.

<sup>25</sup> Membership in 2007 was between 8000 and 9000 (excluding group only/branch only and corporate members), with a cumulative membership, over 40 years, approaching 22,000.

Other NZSG members have similar but different memberships of such societies; and of other formalized organisations like the New Zealand Founders Society<sup>26</sup>, the New Zealand Pioneers and Descendants Club and the New Zealand Family History Society exist or have existed, in Aotearoa-New Zealand. Each of these is also relevant to any discussion of genealogical family history in Aotearoa-New Zealand: as is the work of individuals not aligned with any one of them. I acknowledge their several contributions to the A-NZ GFH Community, but my focus is on the NZSG, because that is where I am an insider. The permeable periphery<sup>27</sup> of the A-NZ GFH Community encompasses all groups discussed above, and it is in that sense that I have included them in this transdisciplinary study.

I now discuss some of the history of attitudes and assumptions that *continue* to affect the field and practice of the GFH Community in its relationships with the wider academic community. I begin with attitudes I have personally encountered. My concurrent work life in an academic field that also grapples with attitudes and assumptions informs this thesis too.<sup>28</sup>

### **Attitudes and Perspectives**

A recurring question over the past eight years has been about why I embarked on this study as a student in a Sociology department. Why not History? In the following section, I outline a key event that affected my choice of subject area in which to begin this study about the *place* of Genealogical Family History in academic learning, teaching and research.

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<sup>26</sup> “Those wishing to join [this Society] must have had ancestors in New Zealand prior to December 1865.” This Society now “encourages interest in New Zealand history from 1820 on.” <http://www.wellington.govt.nz/services> (accessed 2 March 2008). This invites socio-cultural questions about members’ points of view *vis-à-vis* ‘founding’, ‘settlement’ and colonisation.

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>28</sup> I refer to tertiary teaching and learning development. Tertiary teaching development (sometimes called ‘staff development’) is supported by organisations such as HERDSA; the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia. See <http://www.herdsa.org.au/> Tertiary learning development/advising in New Zealand is a teaching specialism strongly supported by a community of practice, and by an incorporated society within it; and, from time to time, by the tertiary institutions within which members variously work. I am member #1 of ATLAANZ: the Association of Tertiary Learning Advisors in Aotearoa-New Zealand. See <http://www.atlaanz.org/> In 1998, at a HERDSA conference, I facilitated a discussion about how new subjects might gain admission to university curricula, using both tertiary learning development and genealogical family history as examples. I was at the time a member of both TLCAANZ (the first name for ATLAANZ) and HERDSA.

### *Writing Family Biography*

My most significant experience of the interface of GFH with History occurred when the New Zealand Society of Genealogists, through the Ted Gilbert Literary Trust (TGLT), held a competition for writing **family biography** in the years leading up to New Zealand's sesquicentennial commemoration in 1990. In order to record, for a wider audience, extensive research I had undertaken on *one* of the name-lines of my husband and children, I entered.

During the experience of writing up my research, having it judged,<sup>29</sup> edited, published<sup>30</sup> and reviewed, I became increasingly aware that 'Family History' is not synonymous with 'History'; and, in particular, that its practitioners have a very different *perspective* from those who study 'the' history of 'the' family'.

### *Being Published and Reviewed*

My submitted essay was lodged in the National Library with the 96 others; and an edited version was one of 12 published in a book of essays. My essay was a family biography of a couple with five known children,<sup>31</sup> 39 or 40 now-known<sup>32</sup> grandchildren, 107 then-known great-grandchildren,<sup>33</sup> and descendants in the thousands. It included some genealogical information about the ancestry of the main subject of the essay, a Scotsman who arrived in New Zealand as a widower with two of his teenage sons; but little about his father's family or his wife's family, because little was known then, and little more is yet known, despite another 15 years of research. Much more has been learned about his nine sisters, their lives, and the migrations of their descendants: and a little more about one of his four brothers.

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<sup>29</sup> The judges were Ian McL. Wards (formerly Chief Historian, Historical Publications Branch [Internal Affairs], Dr Jeanine Graham (Senior Lecturer in History, University of Waikato) and Dr B. R. (Brad) Patterson (Lecturer in Economic History, Victoria University of Wellington).

<sup>30</sup> Margaret Brown, "From Keillour to Kapiti," in *Our Lesser Stars: Twelve New Zealand Family Biographies*, ed. Colleen P. Main (Auckland: NZSG, 1990), 63-93.

<sup>31</sup> My use of 'known' indicates that I am aware that there might be others *yet to be discovered* born to this couple.

<sup>32</sup> I have not yet decided what to do about counting a child whose name is unknown, but whose existence is possible when oral history, knowledge of sources, and a 'gap' in the family are considered together. My use of 'now known' is because, in 2006, I learned from a Geneal resident in Canada (a 3C1R to my husband), of the existence of two more children at this generation – one was born in 1858 just 25 km from where we are now resident. My precision is partly to signal new discoveries to any who read this thesis and claim kinship through the human subjects of my essay.

<sup>33</sup> 'Then known' signals the number believed to have been discovered at the time: I now know I may have counted one or two twice – by a name found in a record, as well as from oral history about some unnamed children who died young: but there may be also be more to discover.

Dr David Thomson, then of Massey University, wrote a review<sup>34</sup> of the published book for *The New Zealand Genealogist* (hereafter the *NZG*.) His review set off more thinking about differences between history and genealogy. I gave a lecture on the topic to the Auckland Branch of the NZSG in November 1991. There was considerable interest in my comments. The editorial committee of the NZSG asked me to write it up for the *NZG*. I sent my article in November 1992.<sup>35</sup> When it came back, someone's emendations *inverted* and *negated* my argument. I withdrew the manuscript.

At the time of the publication of *Our Lesser Stars* a reviewer for a national newspaper made a sardonic remark to the effect that 'of course their lesser stars are the real stars', but she missed the point.

We in the GFH Community<sup>36</sup> were well aware of at least two sub-texts in the editor's choice of title – words alluding to R. A. K. Mason's poem 'The Lesser Stars'. We knew, back then, that historians dealt with important movements, and wars, and key figures on world or national stages: their stars. We knew that some were then daring to suggest that Lawrence Stone had derived his findings about family, sex and marriage in England from the history of men, and certain classes of them.<sup>37</sup> We knew that some historians were promoting histories of different classes or groups, or were involved in the movement to tell *herstory*. We knew that most of our relatives were not famous, not even in New Zealand – that was simple fact to us and we felt no grievance or envy. They were not 'real stars' to us: they were real people and real in the sense of 'familiar', to us, because we had researched their family biographies. The main point was that they were *our* stars. However, we also knew back then that some of our knowledge of individual lives had the potential to subvert some perceptions of some historians.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> David Thomson, "Book Reviews - *Our Lesser Stars*," *The New Zealand Genealogist* 208 (1991): 118-119.

<sup>35</sup> Margaret Brown, "Questions for Family Historians?" - a manuscript submitted to the NZSG Editorial Committee, November 1992.

<sup>36</sup> This includes discussions, at the time, with some of my interviewed informants, with members of NZSG branches and groups to which I have belonged, and with acquaintances at conferences and in other places where Geneals gather.

<sup>37</sup> Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1580-1800* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977).

<sup>38</sup> For example, I remember a historian marvelling at how well Anglican and Methodist clergy worked together in one place in New Zealand in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century – not knowing that their wives were sisters.

The book's title claimed status for our knowledge more than for our kin. The title of my withdrawn manuscript, "Questions for Family Historians?" was a double entendre: I believed we had questions to ask historians, as well as questions to ask ourselves.

The Chief Librarian at the Alexander Turnbull Library at the time of the sesquicentennial competition wrote, in his foreword to *Our Lesser Stars*:

The biographical black holes that frustrate and delay researchers, librarians and archivists are becoming more apparent as we become less concerned with political elites and more with representative figures and groups....

The concept adopted by the Society, of encouraging its members to perform at the highest level by compiling the results of their research into readable narratives, and using them to create an archive from which they can be disseminated on demand, is a stroke of genius.

The research communities and in due course all New Zealanders will benefit from this kind of partnership between family historians as compilers of knowledge and libraries as guardians and disseminators of that knowledge.<sup>39</sup>

There is some ambiguity of status here. Were family historians considered researchers, or mere compilers? Were we considered to be a research community? *Who* was seeking the results of GFH research that librarians and archivists could then disseminate? I discuss these attitudes further in Chapter 10.

Back then, some professional historians saw GFH as an historical endeavour, but most saw it as a different and lesser one from others in the whole field of history. Most Geneals accepted the undervaluing of their research or their status as providers of some knowledge to academic research communities. However, some of us were beginning to be aware that we might constitute an embryonic or marginalised *scholarly* research community.

Soon after Dr Thomson's review of *Our Lesser Stars* appeared, I discussed it with other Geneals. They agreed with my distinction between history's perspective and the aims of family biography or GFH. I discuss here what I voiced at that time: in the lecture, in my manuscript, and in those discussions.

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<sup>39</sup> J. E. Traue, foreword to *Our Lesser Stars*, 9.

### *Stars in a Different Galaxy*

Dr Thomson's first questions about the 12 essays in *Our Lesser Stars* were that "Most, perhaps inevitably, concentrate on the 19<sup>th</sup> century: do more recent migrants or their descendants not think or write about their families? .... Or should we take it that New Zealanders think of families as belonging only to the distant past – are families in our own experiences too boring or unimportant to be worthy of study?"<sup>40</sup>

My response included an acknowledgement that Dr Thomson had not accessed all the unedited essays (for some of the 97 did come further forward in time); and that he seemed not to have been given the competition guidelines: for we were *required* to "centre on a family [*of at least three generations*] whose major New Zealand activities occurred before 1940".<sup>41</sup> It was therefore inevitable that we would choose families living mainly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

I also wondered, at the time, if Dr Thomson's "distant past" was more recent than my own. I asserted that family historians quickly add to our "experiences" the names and lives of relatives who lived in earlier times. I gave a personal example of how long a family memory about individuals or family groups can be: knowledge of names and events can endure for 200 years, even in an unremarkable family.

In my manuscript, I commented on what seemed to be a lack of understanding of key differences between history and family biography, in a number of different areas. It seemed to me that the most important difference was because of our *familial* relationship to our subjects and our *choice* of human subjects to research:

As family historians our subject matter is pre-determined, for our ancestors and their descendants are thrust upon us. We begin by being in a [familial] relationship to our subject matter when we research and write family history. Macro-historians and biographers are generally in a different relationship to their subjects and may begin by choosing to write about well-known or well-documented people, or...those who will fit a case to be argued. The family historian does not have such dangerous freedom of choice....<sup>42</sup>

I claimed that it is not because families in our own experiences are too boring or unimportant to write about: "It is because they are *our* families."

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<sup>40</sup> Thomson, "Book Review of *Our Lesser Stars*," *The New Zealand Genealogist* 208: 118.

<sup>41</sup> I quote from the "FabCom Competition Guidelines" that I received as an intending author.

<sup>42</sup> Brown, "Questions for Family Historians?" 2.

Whatever my choice<sup>43</sup> I knew I would be writing about real people, people belonging to both the families into which they were born, and also the families that they founded in New Zealand. Many members of the latter are very much alive, known to me and to each other. As a family historian wishing to remain on good terms with my relatives and in-laws, a 20<sup>th</sup> century focus would be fraught with the difficulties of balancing truth and tact....<sup>44</sup>

I also declared that "...such a constraint is rarely felt by macro-historians, although biographers of the living understand it well."<sup>45</sup> Later events have caused me to want to qualify that assertion.<sup>46</sup>

In 1991, Dr Thomson was also "struck by how much these authors know of their families a century or more ago – and by how much they do not. Every page carried evidence of imaginative guessing. Some of this is open and signalled.... But much invention is hidden."<sup>47</sup>

Although I agreed with Dr Thomson's example of how some authors put words into the mouths or heads of long-dead ancestors, I read the 12 essays again, looking for evidence of *invention* and of *guessing* on "every page". What my discourse analysis revealed to me was the competent<sup>48</sup> genealogical family historian's perennial care to acknowledge whether findings are complete or not, and to signal findings conjectured on weight of evidence after searching a variety of records pertaining to the times and places inhabited by kin. This requires the skill of gleaning *contextual* information when sources that might name an ancestor are lost, inaccessible, or unproductive.

Thus when I read in Donald Hansen's essay<sup>49</sup> that Joseph JACKSON "may well have found occasional work" on the nearby turnpike and that Ann "could have earned some money" by selling produce, I knew the qualifying words indicated extensive research looking for the specific family *in* its particular location.<sup>50</sup> If their

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<sup>43</sup> I had considerable choice – all 19 of our children's emigrating (to New Zealand) ancestors belonged to families that qualified for the competition.

<sup>44</sup> Brown, "Questions for Family Historians?" 2.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> See Chapter 9.

<sup>47</sup> Thomson, "Book Review of *Our Lesser Stars*," *The New Zealand Genealogist* 208:119.

<sup>48</sup> I discuss competence in Chapter 8.

<sup>49</sup> Donald Hansen, "Cutting Colts and Biting Dog Tails," in *Our Lesser Stars*, 40-62.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 41.

names were not in the records searched, it does not mean that all the *possibilities* given are ‘guesswork’ or invention.

Similarly, when Patricia Frykberg wrote about a family that was not her own,<sup>51</sup> she carefully used the methodology and discourse of genealogical family history, recording the possibility that Captain BENDALL *could* have been at home for the birth of a child, although he *may* have been at sea.<sup>52</sup> My manuscript included a comment that Dr Thomson had noted this widespread practice among genealogical family historians: signalling research avenues used, even if inconclusively.

I could agree with Dr Thomson, in some ways, that these 12 “family histories” might leave “the questioning reader...wondering whether we have evidence of the wishes, nostalgia, blind spots and fantasies of 12 individuals in 1990 more than a record of anything that actually happened 100 or so years ago.”<sup>53</sup> It is not possible to recreate the life of any one person, let alone a family of thousands of members; and one can only write about such people from out of one’s own cultural and personal circumstances.

However, I did not agree that all authors were unaware of these parameters. I had myself pointed out how I wished to seek to judge my pivotal subject as a person of his time.<sup>54</sup> I had chosen certain elements of his life to foreground within the word limit, because his descendants were interested in those areas. I did not think that sensationalising the tragic deaths and problems with alcohol of a few of his many descendants (some as close as grandchildren) would make my account any more *accurate*. I had indicated sources in the unpublished footnotes, for any who wished to follow up such things. I believe other essayists wrote with *tact* too.

Dr Thomson apparently gained his impression of ‘fantasy’ in another way:

[The authors]... with few exceptions wanted to believe certain shared things of their ancestors: morally upright, hard-working founding mothers and fathers, loving towards children and pets, resourceful, strong yet gentle, pressured yet contented, supported by

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<sup>51</sup> Patricia Frykberg, “Captain William Bendall: His Life, His Family, His Times,” in *Our Lesser Stars*, 199-224.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Brown, “From Keillour to Kapiti,” 33.

caring relatives, gathering peaceably for Christmas or a wedding, living into happy old age.<sup>55</sup>

He believed he found evidence to the contrary, for the studies are “studded with the restless and the dissatisfied.” He singled out Donald Hansen’s essay for approbation, because:

[His] central figure is portrayed as weak, indecisive, given to drink, on poor relations with his wife and children, incapable of making good or even of holding on to what little he had. One yearns to meet more such pioneers, for the record suggests there were many like this one.<sup>56</sup>

Apart from giving no evidence that families of our own day are, as he claimed, markedly different from those in the 12 published essays, Dr Thomson seemed unaware of another consequence of writing about a real family with members still alive. I spoke and wrote about my understanding that ancestors are peculiar, not representative:

It is not always appreciated that ancestors, by definition, have children. Ancestors are not a representative group of a past population. They are a select group who had children, who [themselves] had children, [who themselves had children].... Those of their descendants who have the ability, time, money and inclination to research and write family biography are an even smaller group. It is not surprising that [an ancestral] couple [of such researchers] may produce descendants the majority of whom are boringly upright, for sadly, [Dr Thomson’s] ‘individuals crippled physically and emotionally’ may never have a posterity to record their existence. A mathematical existence in the statistics of crime, welfare or violent deaths, [should not be] equated with the peculiar status of ancestor.<sup>57</sup>

In his critique Dr Thomson stated that he could see no pattern in the essays, and thought the authors were unconsciously romanticising their families’ past. I am not sure what pattern he was seeking. Studded does not mean permeated; and very little evidence of patterns can be extrapolated from those essays: the content of each already selected from each writer’s more extensive GFH research work. Each was bound to be peculiar in some measure after such selection processes.

Family biographers knew back then just how much the complexity that Dr Thomson does note in the volume of essays reflects the unique identity of each

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<sup>55</sup> Thomson, “Book Review of *Our Lesser Stars*,” *The New Zealand Genealogist* 208: 118.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>57</sup> Brown, “Questions for Family Historians?” 5-6.

branch of a family descending from one couple, when compared with others researched but not necessarily written up.

I still do not find it strange that the families written about and selected for publication seemed to be "...unsettled and for ever on the move" and *also* "...able to establish roots, build community ties, keep up contacts and offer security."<sup>58</sup> This is what a comprehensive *family* biography of at least three generations descending from one founding couple is quite likely to portray, in my experience.

Dr Thomson pointed out in his review that historians seek to answer questions, but that he could discern no questions prompting the 12 authors to write. In my manuscript I outlined what I then believed to interest family historians: *discovering* ancestors and their collateral kin; and finding out about the people among whom they lived – not just genealogical facts and not just biographies of selected individuals. In the manuscript I stated that: "I believe the underlying questions for us are: Who belongs to my family? What was each like? How and why did they occupy themselves, both as individuals and as members of families?"<sup>59</sup>

Dr Thomson was the catalyst for my notion that family history is a different field from history. He maintained good relationships with the NZSG, sharing his knowledge of the history of the family.<sup>60</sup> Other historians and history-trained archivists have viewed GFH and Geneals differently.

In 1974, when I first visited the Lincolnshire Archives Office, then sited in the old gaol within the castle, I overheard two staff members discussing how many documents to issue to genealogists: they concluded that three per day should be sufficient. I was silently dismayed to think I had travelled 12,000 miles for such meagre opportunity. Fortunately, that policy was not implemented, and during 1974-75, and again in 1986 and 1999, I was able to use many documents, and good

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<sup>58</sup> Thomson, "Book Review of *Our Lesser Stars*," *The New Zealand Genealogist* 208: 118-119.

<sup>59</sup> Brown, "Questions for Family Historians?" 2.

<sup>60</sup> David Thomson, "Who Will Care for Me? Family Responsibilities in Nineteenth Century New Zealand," in *Landfall in Southern Seas*, Proceedings of the AFHHO Congress, February 1997, Lincoln, New Zealand, compiled by Garry Jeffery (Christchurch: Congress Organising Committee, 1997), 113-124.

card indexes to them, to supplement work done by writing letters, and by using many Lincolnshire records available on film in New Zealand.

In 1980, as the NZSG representative on the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand (ARANZ)<sup>61</sup> I attended the first New Zealand training course for archivists and record keepers. Most of the attendees were history trained, and those already working with archival records were prone to refer to any clients whose interest was ‘just’ genealogical, somewhat disparagingly, as ‘granny hunters’. One exception at the course was the late Dr Rollo Arnold, a Professor of Education whose academic background was initially in English and History, but whose doctorate and published writings incorporated a great deal of genealogical family history research and writing.<sup>62</sup> In a plenary session he chaired, he alone answered in the affirmative when I mischievously enquired who had traced their *seize quartier* ancestry, a term used in the wider GFH Community, especially in the records and journals of the London-based Society of Genealogists.

In 1989 Dr Tom Brooking of the University of Otago, delivered a keynote address entitled “Out of Midlothian” at an NZSG conference in Dunedin. He spoke in the context of his relationship with the Dunedin Group of the Society where he had listened to individual responses of members concerning a general belief that Scots came to New Zealand largely because of the Highland Clearances. Geneals had used the GFH phrase “Not *My* Family” so often he had revised his thinking in this respect. His 1989 lecture referred to those conversations and he introduced his paper in the proceedings thus:

Five years ago I talked to this group on Scots migration to New Zealand. Since then I have had the privilege of a leave in Scotland and further contact with Rosalind McLean [sic] who is completing her PhD thesis on Scots emigration to Otago. It seems I got the picture about right apart from indulging in a few romantic delusions such as the claim that most Scots migrants came from ‘humble’ backgrounds!<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> See: <http://www.aranz.org.nz/>

<sup>62</sup> Rollo Arnold, *The Farthest Promised Land: English Villagers, New Zealand Immigrants of the 1870s*, (Wellington: Victoria UP, 1981).

---, *New Zealand's Burning: The Settlers' World in the Mid 1880s* (Wellington: Victoria UP, 1984). Rollo Arnold and Betty Arnold, *Settler Kaponga 1881-1914: A Frontier Fragment of the Western World* (Wellington: Victoria UP, 1997).

<sup>63</sup> Tom Brooking, ““Out of Midlothian”: Scots Migration to New Zealand, 1840-1914,” in *The Tartan and the Gold*, Proceedings of the NZSG Conference held May 12-14, 1989, Dunedin (Dunedin: Dunedin Genealogy Group, 1989), 1.

He shared some very interesting material about migration supported by maps and tables of percentages, and concluded his lecture with the information that he was working on a study of Scots in Caversham, Dunedin. At question time, genealogists were keen to know precisely *how* he was going to identify ‘Scots’ who had lived in a suburb. He responded that he was considering just those with ‘Mac’ surnames.

No one challenged his methodology *in public*, but the gasps around me confirmed that many present knew that SMITH, BROWN and WALKER have long been among the most popular Scottish surnames; and it was clear that the dialogue between local Geneals and Dr Brooking would continue.<sup>64</sup> I have recounted this to others since: one also gasped, and said her Macs were *Irish*.

In the late 1980s, I met a very capable history graduate who excelled in one aspect of the Carnegie scholarship of integration (see Chapter 2): synthesising the writings of others. The requirements of an MA in history included a thesis based on original research, but this student had little idea how to proceed, nor even a desire to find out things historical from primary sources. Later, after gaining that qualification, he undertook some genealogical research for me, but again had no idea what to look for or what to do. In fact, he referred to reading original source material, semi-jokingly, as ‘getting his hands grubby’. I wondered back then why so many genealogical family historians who had never been university students could plan and execute effective research in manuscript collections, and use other documents held in distant places, when he could not.

I believe there are three main reasons for some of these historic attitudes towards Geneals in Aotearoa-New Zealand. First, some will have absorbed assumptions and attitudes to be found elsewhere. Second, as a consequence of having uncritically accepted such attitudes, any who have ever denigrated the work of Geneals are not so likely to research and/or write up the many histories of their own families, and therefore *remain* in ignorance of what it is that Geneals set out to do, and what they achieve. Third, as Elizabeth Shown Mills has remarked:

Unfortunately, the public and academic image of genealogy is typically that of the “family tree climber”. Serious [GFH] researchers have learned that, when visiting archives and record offices, any use of the G-WORD (genealogy) may limit their access to records. The

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<sup>64</sup> See Chapter 2.

result is that they conduct their research so quietly, so efficiently that staff and other patrons do not recognize them as genealogists.<sup>65</sup>

I have found this to be true, when undertaking GFH research in *some* repositories, in New Zealand, in Australia, and in England. One of my aims in undertaking this project, therefore, has been to address the ignorance brought about by this or other factors.

Shown Mills<sup>66</sup> gives a comprehensive account of the genesis, history and ossification of the conflict between genealogists and historians in America, in her journal article. Sheila O’Hare is another scholar<sup>67</sup> beyond the A-NZ GFH Community who has commented recently on attitudes of historians towards genealogists and genealogy. She writes that:

The relationship between historians and genealogists has long been a troubled one. Each tends to regard the other with bemused contempt. To historians, genealogists are obsessive collectors of meaningless minutiae, enthusiastic but woefully untrained, churning out dubious family trees studded with even more dubious famous names. To genealogists, historians are utterly out-of-touch academics, obliviously offering one jargon-dripping tome after another to an uncaring and uncomprehending world.<sup>68</sup>

O’Hare avers that genealogists in the past “came in for the lion's share of professional historians' abuse and condescension” and invites her readers to “Consider historian Lawrence Stone's 1971 characterization of genealogy's "anal-erotic" psychological motivation and David Lowenthal's 1989 reference to the "nostalgic compulsion and self-protective amnesia" of non-historians....<sup>69</sup>

However, Shown Mills criticises O’Hare for citing “the expected scholarly journals” acceptable to history, while “for genealogy [covering] only Alex Haley’s novel – recognizing not a single scholarly journal.”<sup>70</sup> Shown Mills suggests that four genealogical journals published by genealogical societies would be acceptable

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<sup>65</sup> Elizabeth Shown Mills, “Genealogy in the Information Age: History’s New Frontier,” *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 91 no. 4 (2003): 260-277.

<sup>66</sup> I use this designation to distinguish M/s Mills from sociologist C. Wright Mills.

<sup>67</sup> According to a side bar on <http://www.common-place.org> “Sheila O’Hare is social sciences bibliographer at the University of California, Santa Cruz, with postgraduate degrees in history, law and library and information science.

<sup>68</sup> Sheila, O’Hare “Genealogy and History” in *Common-Place: The Interactive Journal of Early American Life, Inc.* 2, no. 3 (2002), <http://www.common-place.org/> (accessed 25 July 2007).

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Shown Mills, *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 91: 270.

to her, but gives no publications from universities that would have been acceptable as 'literature' for this thesis at its outset (see Chapter 2).

### *An Historian's Use of Researched Genealogical Material*

I reflect that the consequences of having written a family biography continued. In 1997, a Chris Maclean wrote to me, asking me for further material about the BROWN family who lived on Kapiti Island - not because he had read *Our Lesser Stars*, or the deposited essay, but because someone had told him of my work.

In *Kapiti*,<sup>71</sup> the prize-winning book Mr Maclean published with the assistance of the Department of Internal Affairs, he attributed some of my work to others, despite my warning to him that they had used my research without proper referencing.<sup>72</sup> In my reply, I invited him to ring me to discuss my material but he did not do so.

He referenced one small paragraph to me.<sup>73</sup> In it, he *introduced* a surprising number of errors. Elsewhere in the same section of his book, I could see just how much he owed to my original research and how he had misunderstood and wrongly juxtaposed my discovered facts. Other genealogical family historians have since told me that they too have had conversations with him, or about him, about his use of genealogically researched material.

I felt the need to address the actions of this history graduate. When *Kapiti* first appeared, I wrote to the publisher about my concerns, saying I would take the matter up in other spheres.<sup>74</sup> Mr Maclean changed a few of the offending errors in the next edition of *Kapiti*,<sup>75</sup> and sent me a copy; but I had not listed all that needed attention, and again he did not *discuss* my work with me. I did not have the opportunity to ask, for example, why he appeared to have set out to denigrate a particular family member. The arena I chose to address many of my concerns was the *NZG* thinking it the best place to correct what Mr Maclean had invented about family members who arrived pre-Treaty, and have thousands of descendants. On this occasion, a different editor published my proffered manuscript, promptly and

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<sup>71</sup> Chris Maclean, *Kapiti* (Wellington: The Whitcombe Press, 1999).

<sup>72</sup> Margaret Brown, letter to Chris Maclean, 26 June 1997.

<sup>73</sup> Maclean, *Kapiti*, 163.

<sup>74</sup> Chris Maclean, letter to Margaret Brown, 25 January 2000.

<sup>75</sup> The volume published in 2000, is said to be a reprint, despite the amendments.

without amendment.<sup>76</sup> I now live in the area where the migrant family I researched and wrote about all those years ago once lived: with ‘interesting’<sup>77</sup> responses from acquaintances and strangers who have lived here for some years.

I have thus documented aspects of a many-decade history of ongoing attitudes towards the field and practice, and practitioners, of Genealogical Family History, as they have affected me. Many others in the wider Community have had similar but different experiences. I discuss recent changes in attitude in Chapter 10.

### *Why Social Sciences?*

All of those experiences caused me to look beyond history for a place to begin this thesis. Geography was my undergraduate major for a BA completed in 1961, but family life and work life then took me down many different paths. Completing an MA with first class honours, in English Literature, in 1992, prompted me to explore the possibility of beginning a higher degree in that area. At the time, *Genealogical Family History as Biography*, perhaps with a focus on one of my MA strengths was my preference.<sup>78</sup> Potential supervisors departed to Glasgow and Christchurch, and thoughts of undertaking a doctorate related in *some* way to genealogical family history were placed on hold.

My undergraduate studies had included Anthropology, Sociology and Religious Studies in addition to Geography, English and French, and my work life has been teaching. Late last century two sociologists with an interest in GFH agreed to be supervisors; and a new transdisciplinary field of enquiry, centred on *social learning* in communities of practice, provided a way to draw many threads together in order to introduce the field and practice of Genealogical Family History in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to the academic community.

I next outline some myths about genealogy, family history and what I term GFH: myths that contribute to ignorance about GFH. This is somewhat of a pre-emptive

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<sup>76</sup> Margaret Brown, “The Generosity of Family Historians: a Cautionary Tale.” *New Zealand Genealogist* 274 (2002): 128-130.

<sup>77</sup> I use the words ‘interest’ and ‘interesting’ frequently in this thesis: mainly without ambiguous intent, but sometimes to signal that tactfulness is the better part of language precision. See Chapter 9.

<sup>78</sup> Jacobean drama, and New Zealand novels: in the former I had found some new genealogical questions to ask about Thomas Middleton, but tucked them away in an Appendix, despite the relevance of the playwright’s family situation to his work. My Geography background had surfaced in the latter area, in a research paper on Janet Fame and her ‘sense of place’.

strike: an attempt to demythologise assumptions about GFH even before I outline my conceptual framework and the methodology employed in this thesis. I begin with an example provided by the editors of a textbook for social science students.<sup>79</sup>

### **Myths about and within the Community**

The editors of this text, prefaced Dr David Swain's chapter with their own remarks, *without consulting him*,<sup>80</sup> and they also repeated their words in a summary placed earlier in the book. They made various errors or faulty assumptions in the sixteen lines they contributed.

#### *We All Know What Genealogists Do*

Davidson and Tolich think that "genealogy (sic) is the study of family origins and history," and that genealogists "compile lists of ancestors, which they arrange in pedigree charts or other written forms," and that they "aim to complete a family 'tree' that traces the history of the family being studied, and to collect a series of 'stories' about each of the people identified on the 'tree'".<sup>81</sup>

Some Geneals do some of those things, but much more besides, as I demonstrate in later chapters. There is no such thing as a "completed" family tree in the entire GFH field. Those editors also wrote that genealogy "usually involves both archival research (dealing with large collections of secondary source material) and key informant interviews" thus revealing, first, that they did not understand that it is *primary* source material in archives that engages competent genealogists, wherever possible. Second, some very competent Geneals will never have conducted *any* "key informant interviews", because the family groups they have chosen to research lived too long ago. They will probably have asked living relatives for information by letter, telephone, email, and when visiting; and made contact with others researching segments of shared families of extension.

Davidson and Tolich claim that Dr Swain "talks about the differences between amateur genealogy, and that carried out by academic sociologists."<sup>82</sup> But Dr Swain

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<sup>79</sup> Carl Davidson and Martin Tolich, eds., *Social Science Research in New Zealand: Many Paths to Understanding* (Auckland: Pearson Education, 2003), 130, 306.

<sup>80</sup> Personal Communication.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. The editors' spelling.

states that “the *assumption* has been that researching one’s own genealogy marks the amateur hobbyist in contrast with the academic researcher who studies other people’s lives” and goes on to discuss “sound practical reasons why a sociological research project should focus on the principal researcher’s own family”.<sup>83</sup> There are other strands in Dr Swain’s chapter (placed between Judith Fyfe’s “Oral History” and Greg Newbold’s “Historical Research”) that I will discuss in later chapters.

### *Lost Knowledge*

Another myth outside the Community is the belief that all GFH data comes *only* through oral history. I have heard New Zealanders say that they cannot proceed with GFH research because they do not know the name of the ship in which emigrants sailed. I have heard others say that all the older members of their immediate family have died, and so they cannot learn anything because they cannot ask them. Some who join the Community are then surprised to learn how much information is to be found in public records, in the knowledge and memories of *distant* kin, in primary records preserved in family, business and government archives, and elsewhere.

### *“It’s All on the Web”*

Conversely, there are myths within the Community, and beyond it, about how much information is accessible on the Web. In the past, I often heard LDS staff tell people in Family History Centres that “everything is on the IGI”.<sup>84</sup> This index is now freely available online. It used to be on microfiche printed out from a computer database. There is still widespread ignorance among new researchers concerning the compilation of the IGI: what is *not* there; and how and when new material is added to it.

### *Just Chop my Branch from the Tree and Send it To Me*

Many of those who come into the Community bring with them misunderstandings and myths about GFH that have currency outside it. One frequently encountered myth is that a ‘family tree’ already exists, somewhere, just waiting to be chopped down and given freely to whomsoever wants it. Those who have never attempted a

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<sup>83</sup> David Swain, “Sociological Genealogy: Searching for Gran,” in *Social Science Research in New Zealand: Many Paths to Understanding*, 307. My emphasis.

<sup>84</sup> The International Genealogical Index of the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU), see <http://www.familysearch.org/>

family reconstruction seem to assume that someone in a family has been told, or has easily collected, all essential information about individuals and family groups. There is also an element of ownership for some: you have ‘my’ tree, and I therefore have automatic right to it. This myth is supported by a belief that GFH research is quite easy.

### *The Status and Validity of Oral History*

Oral history is very important for genealogical family history research, but I have often been struck by the status it is accorded with respect to accuracy, both within and beyond the Community.

During my fieldwork, I came across an example of how oral history can *create* myths when I found a folder with some information about “old identities”, in a local library. A family I had researched featured in the first cutting, and there was a very interesting attempt to construct a ‘census’ of those living in the settlement of Johnsonville in the 1850s. The author was, I discovered, a friend of a friend of my mother-in-law, a local historian who had generously shared her knowledge of land records, some 30 years ago. The main source was Arthur Carman’s book *Tawa Flat and the Old Porirua Road*.<sup>85</sup> Carman recorded oral information given to him by older people. One had talked to him about remembering when the family arrived in Tawa Flat. She recalled three little girls at church in their white dresses, and so the local historian counted a family of five for the census. Carman’s informant did not mention the four boys – who presumably did not wear white dresses to church. My GFH research had found that there were seven surviving children,<sup>86</sup> with the youngest probably born *after* the family moved to Tawa Flat, so the census should have counted the parents and six or seven children.

Mr Chris Maclean is one writer who has favoured oral history over genealogical research. He has accepted and *referenced* memories from a named member of this same family of extension, (including stories heard by one man when very young), yet he does not give specific acknowledgement to the documented scholarship of genealogical research.

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<sup>85</sup> Arthur Carman, *Tawa Flat and the Old Porirua Road*, rev. ed. (1956; repr., Tawa: A. H. Carman, 1970).

<sup>86</sup> At least one child died before emigration (and possibly one or two more in a cholera epidemic of the time); and one died during the *Birman*’s 1842 voyage.

### *Stereotypes*

Myths contain some truth, and stereotypes must have come about, for example, when enough in a group exhibited the same characteristic. I vividly recall an NZSG Branch meeting in Auckland where a comparatively recent Scottish migrant bewailed the common descriptor of ‘dour Scot’, for she remembered many happy and cheerful Scottish kin. Others agreed with her and I was reminded of the newspaper cutting from a local newspaper pasted onto the back of a photo of my husband’s maternal grandmother’s Scottish great-grandparents: they had celebrated their golden wedding in 1885, “lacking none of their former liveliness and hilarity,” according to the write-up. That couple reached their diamond jubilee. They had been married for nearly 62 years when James died in 1897. Ann survived him by a few months.

### *Early Deaths*

The long marriage of James STEVENS and Ann DRON helps challenge another myth: that *everyone* back then died young and so very few ‘knew’ their grandparents. (See Chapter 10.)

In this case, *teenage* great-grandchildren in Dunedin could not attend celebrations in Kinross in Scotland, nor family funerals there. They, and their siblings and first cousins, ‘knew’ their living great-grandparents only through correspondence and the memories of those who had met them. Some met their grandfather, John, the eldest son of James and Ann, but did know him long: for he predeceased his parents, dying in Dunedin at the age of 56. His wife Eliza was born in County Clare, Ireland.

I introduce some ‘personal’ GFH research and findings into this introductory chapter, using the language register of a genealogical family historian, in order to demonstrate how GFH research into a small segment of just one GFH family of extension can challenge a number of myths.

John and Eliza’s eldest granddaughter once visited John’s sister Agnes and her family, in Australia. On the return voyage, the sailing ship was becalmed for some weeks in the vast expanse of the Tasman Sea, causing parental anxiety at home in Dunedin. Nearly a century later descendants of James and Ann visited Kinross.

They knew of a tombstone there, located and photographed it. The monumental inscription gives the places of death of all their children: six in or near Kinross,<sup>87</sup> and the others in Dunedin, Glasgow, Liverpool, London, Sydney, and “New Zealand”. The youngest child, after marrying a Danish woman in Australia, had finally settled in Hawkes Bay. It is said that he and his oldest brother met for the first time in their lives, as married men, at the Dunedin railway station.

### *Stayed in One Place*

Another myth is that ancestors in the countries of origin of migrant kin, especially those in the British Isles, did not move very far or very often. That may be true for many, up until the mid-1850s; but even before the enclosures, the clearances, and urbanisation, ancestors and kin of many of us in the wider GFH Community were travelling to hiring fairs and thence more miles to jobs that lasted a year less a day; or travelling to continental Europe with their employers, or as employers of servants; or, were marrying someone from a neighbouring village and settling there, briefly. Some children and grandchildren of these peripatetic people have ended up many miles away from a so-called home village.

In the course of this study, I have identified one factor contributing to the endurance of this particular myth. When some **heritage visitors**<sup>88</sup> visit an ancestral village they notice that the **surname of interest** still exists in the village *and* is also to be found, centuries before, in the parish register. I use this term for a surname believed (by the researcher) to belong to a group of related and connected kin, a group identified by the use of one surname. I discuss this more fully in Chapter 7.

In this discussion of myths, I have also introduced a few aspects of the practice and field of Genealogical Family History, and some coinages necessary for elucidation of the complex shorthand language of the Community, as I seek to emphasise the research work and knowledge of Geneals that is often not visible to outsiders, and to develop my thesis.

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<sup>87</sup> At Gairney Toll, at the Cavelstone and Classlochie farms, in Milnathort, and in Kinross.

<sup>88</sup> In my use of this term, I include both Geneals well-prepared to visit archives and record offices, and places of significance to them; and kin who telephone a family genealogist a week before departure wanting to know where to go and who their ancestors were.

### *Developing my Thesis*

I present my transdisciplinary conceptual framework in Chapter 2, and give details of my methodology in Chapter 3. I allow the voices of my key informants, and other members of the wider Community, to be heard describing and discussing what it is that they do that they call GFH research, in Chapter 4. I present findings from my document analysis about the practice and the field, in Chapter 5.

I devote Chapters 6 to themes and motifs of GFH practice. In Chapter 7, I discuss present issues for the Community. Chapter 8 deals with the GFH scholarships of discovery and teaching and I address the issue of competence. Chapter 9 is about the GFH scholarship of application. Chapter 10 presents the epistemological challenge of GFH: I explore why GFH itself is a transdisciplinary academic discourse; and identify current trends in the field and the practice.

In my final chapter, I summarise the aims and findings of this project and my original contribution to scholarship. I present my solution to the over-arching problem I set out to study, and look to the future place of Genealogical Family History in the academic world.



## Chapter 2

### My Conceptual Framework: Building the Plane - while Flying It

‘Oh yes,’ replied the man. ‘He does a bit in my way;’ and on investigation, it turned out, that both the porter, and his friend the weaver, were skilful botanists, and able to give Sir J. E. Smith the very information which he wanted.... Such are the tastes and pursuits of some of the thoughtful, little understood, working men of Manchester.<sup>89</sup>

Genealogical Family History, in any guise, is not a widely offered mainstream academic subject in the universities of the wider GFH Community within which the A-NZ GFH Community is situated. New Zealand universities enable the teaching of some aspects of GFH, through Continuing Education Programmes, from time to time; but there are no degree programmes, and there is no systematic study of the history, theory, field and practice of what I have called genealogical family history. Therefore, in 2000, there was no literature about my topic,<sup>90</sup> emanating from universities, on which I could draw for this thesis.

### Transdisciplinarity

A link from the CIRET<sup>91</sup> site took me to a ‘virtual conference and seminar site’ and a paper from “Rethinking Interdisciplinarity”, a project aimed at enhancing interdisciplinary research and exchanges in the humanities.<sup>92</sup> In the introduction to her paper on the potential of transdisciplinarity, Helga Nowotny asserts that:

Knowledge, as well as expertise, is inherently transgressive.... Knowledge seeps through institutions and structures like water through the pores of a membrane. Knowledge seeps in both directions, from science to society as well as from society to science. It seeps through institutions and from academia to and from the outside world. Transdisciplinarity is therefore about transgressing boundaries. Institutions still exist and have a function. Disciplines still exist and new ones arise [continually] from interdisciplinary work. Therefore: beware!<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton: a Tale of Manchester Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 76.

<sup>90</sup> Within academia, the expression ‘the’ literature’ is often used to mean ‘a’ particular body of literature: a body of recognised writings published in ways and places approved by a discipline and by the academy more generally.

<sup>91</sup> CIRET: the International Center for Transdisciplinary Research (see chap. 1, n. 6).

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.interdisciplines.org> (accessed 12 March 2008).

<sup>93</sup> Helga Nowotny, “The Potential of Transdisciplinarity.” <http://www.interdisciplines.org/interdisciplinarity/papers/5> (accessed 12 March 2008).

### *'The' Literature*

Within the GFH field, names of scholars are not used to label theories about GFH, or aspects of GFH practice. I discuss the contributions of some in the Community who have ventured into the territory of explicating what GFH is, and is not, in Chapter 8 and elsewhere. There is no recognised methodology for studying GFH, as a phenomenon, from within. This thesis, therefore, has been an exercise in “building the plane while flying it”.<sup>94</sup> I have studied the field and the practice, considering, broadly, what is core to the subject matter, approaches, concepts, aims, theory and research questions of the GFH field, using scholarship and literature from many sources.

As intimated in Chapter 1, I have an **overarching problem** for which I seek a **solution** - I do not have a series of research questions that the methods of experimentation, or of categorisation, or that the application of existing theories can answer. Sotirios Sarantakos<sup>95</sup> first alerted me to a distinction between answering questions, proving by experiment, and solving problems. I seek to explore, and to solve, not prove.

### *Research Questions*

As with ‘literature’, so with ‘research questions’: in this transdisciplinary study, my research questions do not necessarily conform to the expectations of any current discipline. I did begin with some specific questions. I asked myself why there has been so much belittling and undervaluing of GFH researchers and their work. I asked my key informants (see Chapter 4), and myself, why Geneals *continue* researching for so many years, and what it is, precisely, that we *do* that we call research. I asked myself if there is *any* theorisation about the field observable within it, including engagement with ethical issues. Other questions were raised, and explored, but not pursued. I give an example in Chapter 5.

### *My Transdisciplinary Approach*

Because Genealogical Family History is in itself transdisciplinary in nature, I have had considerable choice about how to conduct my research. To study GFH solely

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<sup>94</sup> I first heard this expression used by Bishop (now Archbishop) David Moxon, in relation to the setting up of the three Tikanga system of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia. See Chapter 10.

<sup>95</sup> Sotirios Sarantakos, *Social Research* (Melbourne: Macmillan Education, 1993). First published 1992 by Keon Pubs.

under the paradigms, literatures and theories of any one subject would be to reinforce the idea that GFH is an object that might be studied by others, but not a field to be studied as a subject in its own right. I have therefore adopted a transdisciplinary approach because the transdisciplinary *ethos* also allows human beings to be subjects, not objects; and it promotes rigour, tolerance and openness. As the Charter puts it:

The transdisciplinary vision is resolutely open insofar as it goes beyond the field of exact sciences and demands their dialogue and their reconciliation with the humanities and the social sciences, as well as with art, literature, poetry and spiritual experience.<sup>96</sup>

The literary quotation at the beginning of this chapter epitomises my belief that there has long been respect between some experts in some fields: *regardless* of individual position or circumstances.<sup>97</sup> The fictional Sir John Smith had the ability, time, status and resources to be a botanist. He was seeking a very rare plant, and knew that a handloom weaver in Manchester could assist him: the porter carrying his bags turned out to be a fellow botanist too. Gaskell had observed real people living (like her characters) in “the manufacturing districts of Lancashire”. She writes of those who “throw the shuttle with unceasing sound, though Newton’s ‘Principia’ lie open on the loom, to be snatched at in work hours, but revelled over in meal times or at night,” and of “many a broad-spoken, common-looking factory hand” studying mathematical problems “with absorbing attention”.<sup>98</sup> This thesis is about some thoughtful, little understood Geneals, and their field and practice, in and beyond Aotearoa-New Zealand. I discuss GFH and creative literature further in Chapter 9.

This chapter incorporates ‘literature’ and ‘theory’ relevant to my thesis, under the newer descriptor of ‘conceptual framework’. I acknowledge first where I have come from, intellectually, by giving a chronological and thematic overview of significant elements in my conceptual framework. I have acquired them from a number of different fields and disciplines; and from some thinkers not bounded by disciplinary expectations. “Transdisciplinarity does not strive for mastery of

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<sup>96</sup> The Charter of Transdisciplinarity: Article 5.

<sup>97</sup> A New Zealand example is Joan Wiffen, a self-trained palaeontologist who discovered fossils proving there had been land-based dinosaurs in New Zealand. See <http://tpo.tepapa.govt.nz/> and linked sites.

<sup>98</sup> Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 75.

several disciplines but aims to open all disciplines to that which they share and to that which lies beyond them.”<sup>99</sup> I acknowledge key contributions to my discourse in this chapter, including the disciplinary literature and theory I consider most relevant to my study.

I began this thesis aware of *potentially useful* theory and concepts, derived from many subject areas. I acknowledge here my long-standing debt to some disciplinary scholars and teachers:

- Geographers (of the late 1950s) for aspects of physical and regional geography, cartography, transport and communications; and the newer concept of ‘gendered space’<sup>100</sup>
- Sociologists and Social Anthropologists (of the early 1960s) for some concepts pertaining to human groups, institutions and organisations: ‘feedback’ was the most useful when applied in my work and voluntary spheres
- Religious Studies for an introduction to philosophy of religion; and more recently for the concept of critical empathy, and the conversation/conversion distinction<sup>101</sup>
- Many literary critics and theorists: for a number of theories encountered when structuralist criticism was being challenged by post-structuralism, and by a new wave of feminism.

Also embedded in my thinking before I began this thesis was some of the literature of the field of genealogical family history. The literature *of* the field became a large part of my document analysis. I discuss it in Chapters 5 and 8, in particular.

The above list of early influences on me does not include History. I address this omission later in this chapter. First, I summarise literature and theory from some of the above disciplines and from transdisciplinary scholarship that has contributed to my conceptual framework. This includes Etienne Wenger’s theories of Communities of Practice. I next outline insights from sociology, and from other sources, including Steven Johnson’s work on emergence theory; and conclude this chapter with a discussion of the GFH concept of ‘family’, and an image for the future.

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<sup>99</sup> The Charter of Transdisciplinarity: Article 3.

<sup>100</sup> I acquired this knowledge when listening to geographer Dr Robyn Longhurst’s lectures to my New Start programme students.

<sup>101</sup> The Rev’d Canon Dr Douglas Pratt used this terminology in public seminars during the 1990s.

## Enduring Insight from Language and Literature

For me, ‘Language and Literature’ has included studying Languages, and the language and literatures of those languages, and Literary Criticism and Theory. My language focus has always been on what words might mean in context: that is, on what words *can* mean to speaker, hearer, reader, writer – at the time, *and* at later times.<sup>102</sup>

In this section I outline some contributions to my framework from theorists who know what words *can* mean. David Lodge and Terry Eagleton in particular helped form my understandings of literary theory.<sup>103</sup> Their texts presented enduring ideas that have relevance for this thesis. For example, E.D. Hirsch’s influence on my thinking lay in what he wrote of the metaphor and paradoxes of perspective.<sup>104</sup>

The three relativistic fallacies Hirsch identified within perspectives of history have remained an analytical tool for me beyond literary criticism. His treatment of the fallacies of the ‘inscrutable past’ and of the ‘homogenous past’ has contributed to understanding aspects of practices that I have observed in the GFH Community. The third historicist fallacy that Hirsch tackled, is one that he found lurking “behind many a critical bush...the fallacy of the ‘homogenous present-day perspective’.”<sup>105</sup> My discussion of myths about GFH in Chapter 1 reveals some past and present *perceptions* of homogenous intention and practice in the GFH Community.

Hirsch suggests that some historical perspectives forget “that the distance between one historical period and another is a very small step in comparison to the huge metaphysical gap we must leap to understand the perspective of another person in

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<sup>102</sup> An example from GFH work with a former colleague: a written source said one of his ancestors was “fairly successful” in his business. The ancestor appeared to us to have been *very* successful. Why the apparent modesty? His descendant did not know. We realised that the meaning of the word ‘fairly’ had changed over 75 years. The shoemaker was not saying he had been ‘quite’ successful: he was claiming success through ‘fair dealing’ or ethical (for the times) practice. There was also, therefore, a suggestion that some were less ‘fair’ in achieving their success.

<sup>103</sup> David Lodge, ed., *Modern Criticism and Theory: a Reader* (London: Longman, 1988); Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: an Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackford, 1983). Their anthologies were sites for production of meaning in the 1990s: they provided access to, and were part of a community of minds discussing concepts of interest, over time and at that particular time.

<sup>104</sup> E. D. Hirsch, Jr., “Faulty Perspectives,” in *The Aims of Interpretation*, reprinted, Lodge, *Modern Criticism and Theory*, 254-263.

<sup>105</sup> Lodge, *Modern Criticism and Theory*, 257.

any other time or place.”<sup>106</sup> I find myself in strong agreement with that statement, and with Hirsch when he wrote:

Every act of interpretation involves... at least two perspectives, that of the author and that of the interpreter.... When we speak or interpret speech, we are never trapped in a single matrix of spiritual categories: we are never listeners or merely speakers; we are both at once.... my meaning exists and is constructed only from my perspective, while the simultaneous criticism of that meaning implies a different perspective.<sup>107</sup>

Hirsch noted that the poet Coleridge first used the term ‘point-of-view’ as a spiritual metaphor.<sup>108</sup> **Identity**, including its spiritual and religious dimensions, means something to members of the A-NZ community of genealogical family history (see Chapter 6). In later chapters, I discuss the role of the community I have studied in bridging gaps, including those of religious and cultural perspective.

Other concepts derived from past study of literary theory, are bricolage,<sup>109</sup> and Mikhail Bakhtin’s dialogic, unfinalizability and carnivalesque (see Chapter 8);<sup>110</sup> and Jacques Derrida’s *différance*: with its elements of meaning deferred and of differentiated meaning, and his imperative to deconstruct binary oppositions. Each informs an aspect of this study, but hermeneutical interpretation has been the most important legacy.

### *Hermeneutical Interpretation*

Too often, in my opinion, hermeneutics as an analytical tool has been judged primarily by association with the interpretations of fundamentalist evangelicals (rather than by those of scholarly theologians) in various faith and non-faith communities, leading to it being described as ‘circular’. I do not believe that all hermeneutical analysis must necessarily be a closed system. Seeking to interpret by considering a part in the context of the whole, and then the whole after

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 262-263.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 263.

<sup>109</sup> Lodge introduced me to Claude Lévi-Strauss’s application of the term bricolage, in his reprint of Gérard Genette’s “Structuralism and Literary Criticism” from *Figures of Literary Discourse*, translated by Alan Sheridan. Lodge, *Modern Criticism and Theory*, 62-65. As bricoleur I seek to recycle for the purpose of constructing something new: not merely to collect building blocks.

<sup>110</sup> Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist. trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist ([1930s]; Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981). I have not quoted from either so do not include them in the Bibliography.

reconsidering the part seems to me to describe movement (perhaps spiral or helical), but not a geometric circle.

I found a *Wikipedia* exposition of this interpretative strategy particularly germane for this study. It defined hermeneutics as “a specific system or method for interpretation, or a specific theory of interpretation.”<sup>111</sup>

Essentially, hermeneutics involves cultivating the ability to understand things from somebody else's point of view, and to appreciate the cultural and social forces that may have influenced their outlook. Hermeneutics is the process of applying this understanding to interpreting the meaning of written texts and symbolic artifacts... - which may be either historic or contemporary.

In the last two centuries, the scope of hermeneutics has expanded to include the investigation and interpretation not only of textual and artistic works, but of human behaviour generally, including language and patterns of speech, social institutions, and ritual behaviours.... Hermeneutics interprets or inquires into the meaning and import of these phenomena, through understanding the point of view and 'inner life' (Dilthey) of an insider, or the first-person perspective of an engaged-participant in these phenomena.<sup>112</sup>

My point of view in this thesis is that of an **insider**. I did not have to ‘adopt’ an insider view or perspective for this study, as anthropologists working in the field might seek to do, for I continue to live within the field of Genealogical Family History and cannot change that past and present experience to become an outsider.<sup>113</sup>

As a Geneal using historic texts and artefacts myself, I seek to understand the insider perspectives of my ‘subjects’ - the particular ‘engaged participants’ who are my ancestors and their descendants, their in-laws and neighbours, and their friends and co-workers. As someone who has chosen to research and write *about* the field, I have endeavoured to understand the points of view of my informants and of the Geneals I have observed. I see a **genealogical hermeneutic** working in many ways in the Community. For example, when a Geneal knows the usefulness of one genealogical source for one geographic place, he or she can seek similar sources for different places, in different repositories.

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<sup>111</sup> *Wikipedia*: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermeneutics> (accessed 1 July 2007).

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> For me, insider/outsider is another binary opposition to be deconstructed: I am always more or less an insider or outsider compared to those around me.

My genealogical hermeneutic includes thinking about partial knowledge in relation to prior and new understandings, seeking bigger pictures of social and cultural forces, and then applying new understandings to the genealogical detail. Knowledge in one field or academic subject can inform GFH work, and when I have learned new understandings from my genealogical research, I can apply them to other areas of knowledge, or take them back to a disciplinary area to further appreciate or challenge concepts there: that is my brand of hermeneutics. I see my genealogical hermeneutic as a lateral hermeneutic rather than a ‘top down’ one (see below).

### **Understandings from Teaching and Learning**

My work life has contributed to what I bring to this thesis. Helga Nowotny has highlighted one aspect of teaching and research with relevance for this transdisciplinary study:

One virtue you need when working in transdisciplinary research: patience. You must be very patient indeed. The evidence clearly shows that developing transdisciplinary teaching takes time and commitment from both academics and institutions. To understand the language of other disciplines takes time.<sup>114</sup>

I count myself fortunate that I began this study with knowledge of many disciplinary frameworks and languages: after working with university students and their teachers (from every department, in every year of study, and at every level of study) for so many years,<sup>115</sup> and so did not have to set about acquiring that knowledge. I also consider it not just appropriate but essential that I draw on understandings from the area of tertiary teaching and learning advising, for two reasons. My overarching problem concerns the place for the teaching and learning of GFH; and, *every* discipline of the canon is concerned with teaching and learning as well as with ‘knowledge’ and ‘research’.

The scholarship of some in my specialist field of contributing to the development of tertiary teaching and learning, helped form my initial conceptual framework for

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<sup>114</sup> Nowotny, “The Potential of Transdisciplinarity,” 1.

<sup>115</sup> My work life included five years seconded to work for some of my time with students and staff in a Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education Research. (See chap. 1, n. 28).

this thesis. I now outline the elements from that field and discourse that I have chosen to adopt or adapt for this study.

*Ernest Boyer and Charles Glassick: the 'Carnegie Scholarships'*

I encountered the writings of Ernest Boyer<sup>116</sup>, and of Charles Glassick, both of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and their concept of the scholarships of discovery, integration, application, and teaching in the context of my tertiary teaching development work. Their identification and explication of these four scholarships provided one schema for the studying the Community, and I apply my understandings of their ideas in Chapters 8 and 9.

The **scholarship of discovery**, according to Boyer, “contributes to the stock of human knowledge and the intellectual climate of a university.” It has always seemed to me that discovery is an easily recognisable aspect of all scholarship; and its importance in genealogical family history research is equally obvious. However, with reference to discovery, Boyer highlights how “not just the outcomes, but the process, and especially the passion give meaning to the effort” and to the advancement of knowledge. He writes of the “exhilaration ... from a new idea”.<sup>117</sup>

The **scholarship of integration**, according to Boyer, “...gives meaning to isolated facts, makes connections across disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating non-specialists too”. Integration “...also means interpretation - fitting one’s own research - or the research of others - into larger intellectual patterns”. Boyer’s approval of “...interdisciplinary and integrative studies ... responding to new intellectual questions and to pressing human problems” appealed to me, especially in terms of exploring where GFH might find a place in academia.<sup>118</sup>

The **scholarship of application** is discussed by Boyer and Glassick in terms of the requirement for academic scholars to serve their communities: “to be considered scholarship, service activities must be tied directly to one’s special

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<sup>116</sup> Ernest L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press / The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990).

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-20.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

field of knowledge and relate to, and flow directly out of, this professional activity.” Boyer considers that the scholarship of application is more dynamic than ‘applied’ suggests. By this he means that while some may think that discovery must always come before knowledge, he holds a different view.<sup>119</sup>

I discuss the potential for the *application* of genealogical family history research understandings and methods in academia, and beyond, in Chapter 9 especially.

I heard Charles Glassick speak about the **scholarship of teaching**<sup>120</sup> and say that it is not as self-evident as it might seem to be. Boyer wrote: “When defined as scholarship ... teaching both educates and entices future scholars...[and the scholarship includes] the hard work and serious study that under-girds good teaching”. Teaching is a “dynamic endeavour involving all the analogies, metaphors, and images that build bridges between the teacher’s understanding and the student’s learning.”<sup>121</sup> I discuss some teaching observed in the Community in Chapter 8.

#### *Ference Marton and a Phenomenological Approach*

In a keynote address that I heard at a HERDSA conference in Melbourne in 1999, Ference Marton also addressed what is required of academics, teachers and learners in higher education, and shared his view that:

Developing more powerful ways of seeing the world is the most important function of higher education – in research, in teaching, in the service of the community. Powerful ways of seeing the situations and the phenomena we have to handle imply discerning critical aspects of those situations and phenomena and attending to them simultaneously. But we can only discern that which varies. Hence the pattern of experienced variation inherent in learning situations of any kind constitutes constraints for the learning that can possibly take place.<sup>122</sup>

Because I have suggested that ignorance of GFH best practice may be one significant reason for the undervaluing of the field, I feel it is incumbent upon me to address that lack of knowledge in this thesis, by critical attention to learning situations within the A-NZ GFH community. Marton’s approach to teaching and

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 22-23.

<sup>120</sup> Charles Glassick, Lecture, University of Waikato, 26 July 2000. Charles Glassick was the HERDSA Visiting Scholar for that year.

<sup>121</sup> Boyer, 23.

<sup>122</sup> I quote from the conference programme notes, advising potential attendees of the import of Ference Marton’s keynote address: “The University of Learning” at the HERDSA conference in Newcastle, NSW, in 2001.

learning affirmed my intention to incorporate some *description* of the *varied* activities of GFH researchers into this thesis, so that readers unfamiliar with the diversity of practice in the GFH Community may be better placed to engage with my analysis of critical aspects that my key informants and I have discerned.

I also pay tribute to the scholarship of another in the teaching and learning development field: Varvara Richards.<sup>123</sup> We worked together, or separately, on theoretical and practical aspects of the field and practice of the specialty of tertiary learning advising through its Communities of Practice. It is a field with many CoPs.<sup>124</sup> We presented experiential workshops with a focus on Varvara's signature tune (**voice**) and mine (**audience**) on a number of occasions. I draw attention to the voices speaking to GFH audiences, over time, throughout this thesis. I draw attention to the importance of language skills and abilities, including an understanding of voice and audience, in the new era of GFH in cyberspace.

Another scholar encountered in the course of my work life is Etienne Wenger.<sup>125</sup> His contribution to the conceptual framework of this thesis is considerable. His early work gave me a springboard for embarking on the project; and his later work coincided very happily with new understandings about the Community.

### **Communities of Practice: Etienne Wenger**

Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger coined the term *community of practice* in the 1980s during their research into learning-through-apprenticeship. Their attempt to clarify metaphorical and historical meanings of 'apprenticeship' led them to

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<sup>123</sup> Varvara Richards, "The Talking/Writing Nexus: Developing Voice," a Keynote address, in *Learning Talk*, Proceedings of the Association of Tertiary Learning Advisors of Aotearoa-New Zealand (ATLAANZ) Conference held November 18-20, 2003, Hamilton, NZ, edited by Vicki Young and Margaret Brown (Hamilton: University of Waikato/ATLAANZ, 2004), 1-11.

<sup>124</sup> Among them are the Bridging Educators' Association, and various support groups for those who work with students from language backgrounds other than English. I refer elsewhere to two of them: ATLAANZ, and the Tertiary Writing Network (TWN).

<sup>125</sup> I thank Dr Neil Haigh for introducing me to this scholarship. It informed a paper we presented to the HERDSA *Learning Partners* conference of 2001 (see chap. 1, n. 28). A version entitled "New Zealand Tertiary Learning Developers: Learning Partners in Communities of Practice" was published in the Conference Proceedings.

explore learning as ‘situated learning’. This resulted in a view that “learning is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice.”<sup>126</sup>

Lave and Wenger had viewed the central defining characteristic of learning as a situated activity, and identified a process that they called **legitimate peripheral participation**. This accorded well with my own insider knowledge of the activities of the field of genealogical family history, including the various ways the GFH Community initiates newcomers and novices.

Wenger has recounted how he went on to develop a theory of learning focusing on communities of practice. In his book, he systematically explores a theory of learning by foregrounding each of the inter-related elements of community, social practice, meaning, and identity.<sup>127</sup> Here I found key words already present in my initial thinking about genealogical family history research: especially social practice, identity, and a shared enterprise. Apprenticeship records had been very useful in my own genealogical research (see Chapter 5). I already knew something about the many different ways people learn, through membership of both formal and informal teaching communities. The notion that those who research genealogical family history somehow constitute a Community of Practice became integral to this study.

Wenger has argued that communities of practice develop around what matters to people, and that a community of practice defines itself along three dimensions:

- How it functions [- its *mutual engagement* that binds] members into a social entity
- What it is about - its *joint enterprise* as understood and continually renegotiated by its members
- What capability it has produced - the *shared repertoire* of communal resources (routines, sensibilities, artifacts, vocabulary, styles, etc.) that members have developed over time.<sup>128</sup>

I discuss aspects of these dimensions in later Chapters. Some questions put to key informants were partly in response to thinking about what *matters* to the GFH

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<sup>126</sup> Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1991), 31.

<sup>127</sup> Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 72-85.

<sup>128</sup> Etienne Wenger, “Communities of Practice: Learning as a Social System,” in *Systems Thinker*, June (1998): 1-11.

community, what binds its members, and about what constitutes its enterprise and shared repertoire. Wenger also put forward the concept of **constellations of communities of practice**.<sup>129</sup> This metaphor initially provided a most useful platform for viewing various GFH communities: especially those existing over time, and in different places.

### *An Expanded Definition*

When Wenger worked with Richard McDermott and William Snyder, he applied his concepts more specifically to the *management* of CoP knowledge and practice within organizations. Their 2002 book<sup>130</sup> nonetheless provided a usefully refined and expanded definition of aspects of communities of practice, in general:

Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis....

These people don't necessarily work together every day, but they meet because they find value in their interactions. As they spend time together, they typically share information, insight, and advice. They help each other solve problems.... They ponder common issues, explore ideas, and act as sounding boards. They may create tools, standards, generic design, manuals, and other documents - or they may simply develop a tacit understanding that they share. However they accumulate knowledge, they become informally bound [by the value of what they learn together].... Over time, they develop a unique perspective on their topic as well as a body of common knowledge, practices, and approaches. They also develop personal relationships and established ways of interacting. They may even develop a common sense of identity. They become a community of practice.<sup>131</sup>

Wenger has explicated other features of CoPs: they are not new and they are everywhere; some are named, some are not; some are recognizable, some are invisible; and people are core members of some and occasional participants in others. CoPs have stages of development<sup>132</sup> and a life cycle – they form, develop, mature and die. The permeable periphery ensures that “learning takes place...

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<sup>129</sup> Wenger, *Communities of Practice*, 126-133.

<sup>130</sup> Etienne C. Wenger, Richard McDermott, and William M. Snyder, *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge* (Cambridge, USA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002).

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>132</sup> Wenger, “Communities of Practice: Learning as a Social System,” 3.

through modified forms of participation structured to open the practice to non-members”.<sup>133</sup>

### *Recent CoP Theory*

During this study Wenger posted a further summary of his theory on his own website.<sup>134</sup> It contained some significant additional theorisation of CoPs, for Wenger had expanded his theory to include a focus on three crucial characteristics of a CoP: the domain, the community and the practice.<sup>135</sup> In 2005 Wenger repeated his position that CoPs are “formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour,” and that “CoPs are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, and who interact regularly to learn how to do it better”.<sup>136</sup>

The newly refined emphasis on *commitment* to the domain and Wenger’s ‘jump-cut’ to stating that it is “therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people”<sup>137</sup> caused me to rethink how I viewed a community of GFH practice with respect to some people not realising that they belong to it. Wenger was beginning to equate the core members with the recognised community, and while still allowing a permeable periphery with legitimate peripheral participation, was perhaps implying that those in that space might not have the commitment and/or the competence to be considered full members, by those at the core.

I discuss ‘competence’ in Chapter 8.

Reflection on all of this also demonstrated the need for better terminology to describe membership and boundaries of different types of CoP, and to distinguish the components of the constellation of GFH Communities as I viewed them. To this end, I have coined a number of terms for better describing the field and the practice within the entire GFH Community.

Wenger has claimed his concept is being applied in organisations (by which he has tended to mean structures in the paid workforce), government, education,

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<sup>133</sup> Wenger, *Communities of Practice*, 100.

<sup>134</sup> <http://www.ewenger.com/theory/index.htm> (accessed 25 Jan 2005).

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. See Chapter 5.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

associations (professional and otherwise), the social sector, international development and the web,<sup>138</sup> and that:

[The concept is] influencing theory and practice in many domains. From its humble beginnings in apprenticeship studies, the concept has been grabbed by businesses interested in knowledge management, and has progressively found its way into other sectors. It has now become the foundation of a perspective on knowing and learning that informs efforts to create learning systems in various sectors and at various levels of scale, from local communities, to single organisations, partnerships, cities, regions, and the entire world.<sup>139</sup>

Despite such comprehensive claims, most of Wenger's current theorisation continues to be drawn from workplaces. My present study is not of workplaces: and therefore my findings about a **mixed membership hobby community** will contribute both reinforcement and new understandings to community of practice theory. The membership of the wider GFH Community is *mixed* in terms of age, gender, race, social class, educational background and religious affiliation; and because members are 'newbies' or 'old hands'; and also because some are paid for their work, or some part of it - either in the Community or because of it; and most people become members voluntarily.

Another development in Wenger's field is the birth of *CPsquare*. This web-based CoP for those interested in CoPs "is like a town square, a place where people gather to connect and learn together".<sup>140</sup> I also note that Wenger does not align himself strongly with any particular academic discipline, but has been developing theory about the practice of social learning that is not discipline-bound. He acknowledged this in 2007, saying: "I am an independent thinker, researcher, consultant, author, and speaker. I am mostly known for my work on communities of practice, though I consider myself a social learning theorist more generally."<sup>141</sup>

I now return to influences contributing to my conceptual framework from the discipline that many associate with GFH: an association brought about by the shared word 'history', a shared interest in the past, and the relationship of the past to the present.

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<sup>138</sup> Wenger, <http://www.ewenger.com/> (accessed 1 Sep 2007).

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> <http://www.cpsquare.org/> (accessed 13 June 2007).

<sup>141</sup> <http://www.ewenger.com/> (accessed 12 June 2007).

## Perspectives from History

In the previous chapter, I have recounted the story of my experience of having some genealogical family history research findings published, judged, critiqued, and used by historians. It was out of that particular experience that I began to distil my conviction that GFH is a *very different subject* from History.

### *More Encounters with History and Historians*

GFH *inevitably* has a close relationship with historical thought, methods and findings, and historians had already contributed to my own understanding of many aspects of the lives of ancestors and their social settings. Peter Laslett's work on the structures of family groups and households, over time, is one example, and I enjoyed Ferdinand Mount's slant on the subversive nature of 'the family'.<sup>142</sup> David Hackett Fischer<sup>143</sup>, a cultural historian, contributed to both my own GFH understandings and to my desire to present the diversity and complexity of the field and practice by emulating his concept of a 'braided narrative'.<sup>144</sup>

Historians have addressed NZSG groups and conferences over the years that are contextual to this thesis. Some have shared their scholarship with a good understanding of their audience and have contributed greatly, in this and other ways, to the body of knowledge of the whole A-NZ GFH Community. I will single out just a few as examples of the diversity of this exchange.

Dr Robin Gwynn then of Massey University addressed an NZSG conference, held in Hamilton in 1994, on the topic of his work on Huguenots<sup>145</sup>. His overview of the migrations of those refugees, (and of others often falsely accorded the term), was very well received, not least because he knew it was likely he was addressing a mixed audience, and he signalled that.

There are many members of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists, who are well abreast of the available literature on the Huguenots. On the other hand, I know that, before the British tercentenary commemoration "Huguenot Heritage" in 1985, there was

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<sup>142</sup> Ferdinand Mount, *The Subversive Family: An Alternative History of Love and Marriage* (London: J. Cape, 1982).

<sup>143</sup> David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: OUP, 1989) Citations are to the paperback edition, 1991.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.

<sup>145</sup> Robin Gwynn, "On the Trail of the Huguenots in Britain" In *Something of Interest*, Proceedings of the NZSG Conference, 6-8 May 1994, Hamilton, New Zealand, comp. Vivienne Parker (Auckland: NZSG, 1994), 112-122.

widespread ignorance about who the Huguenots were.... So please bear with me if I start with a basic definition....<sup>146</sup>

In 2000, Dr Gwynn presented an updated paper to the Society's conference in Christchurch.<sup>147</sup> He again indicated his knowledge of, and respect for, the Huguenot research of members of his audience, and provided a review of more recent material likely to be of use or interest.

Dr Tom Brooking has continued his association with the NZSG and its conferences. In 1998, he and musicologist Dr Jennie Coleman contributed "Newest Scotland: Life and Leisure of Scottish Immigrants in New Zealand to 1940" to the conference held in Dunedin. In 2004, his paper at the Hawkes Bay conference was: "The Equine Factor: The Powerhouse of the Colonisation of New Zealand to 1945". Both of these papers relate directly to the respective conference themes: and for me that is evidence of knowledge of audience, which includes knowledge of what a particular audience knows, and hopes to learn: essential elements in the scholarship of teaching.

In 2006, the NZSG awarded Dr Jeanine Graham of the University of Waikato an Honorary Membership in recognition of her long association with the Society and its membership. Her contribution to the way genealogical family historians have sought to include the history of women and children into their own conceptual frameworks through her involvement with the Ted Gilberd Literary Trust, and at conferences and branch meetings before and since, is immeasurable.

The above, together with what I have written in Chapter 1, includes my observations, reactions and reflections on the *approach* and *attitude* of some individuals within the field of history towards the activity of genealogical family history, over time. My interviewees also discussed their experiences of academic History.

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>147</sup> Robin Gwynn, "On the Trail of the Huguenots in Britain" in *Bound for Canterbury*, Proceedings of the NZSG Conference, 13-16 May, 2000, Christchurch, edited by Christina F. Williams and Brian D. P. Williamson (Christchurch: NZSG 2000 Conference Committee. 2000), 407-418.

### *Sociology as Conduit*

I now turn to a discipline that I had considered as a possible home for GFH, and discuss the contributions to my conceptual framework from Sociology, again using a chronological framework.

I had already thought about the desirability of approaching the admission of GFH to the academy through the social sciences and through historical sociology in particular. I had studied Sociology in 1961 when it was a nearly new subject in New Zealand universities; and I had acquired a little vicarious knowledge of its development as a subject through contact with a later generation of students.

Colleen Main, former NZSG president, and editor of *Our Lesser Stars*, and one of my key informants, had also been a student of sociology and anthropology, and had discussed her concept of **family biography** at meetings and conferences over the years. In the 1970s, I had contributed family data for Claire Toynbee's sociology masters thesis and read it with interest and appreciation.

For the AFFHO Congress held at the University of Waikato in Hamilton in 1983, I co-ordinated discussions between demographer Dr Ian Pool, and my family members: to provide statistical material from NZSG records in my care (as the Society's Archivist at the time), for his presentation at Congress.<sup>148</sup> This encounter contributed to a notion that GFH might have more in common with social sciences, perhaps through historical demography, than with history. In the next section, I discuss the perspectives of some sociologists who have contributed to my conceptual framework more recently.

### **Sociological Perspectives and GFH**

During the six months of work contributing to my initial proposal, as a student planning to enrol through a Department of Sociology, I read some recommended sociology classics published or disseminated since my long ago undergraduate

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<sup>148</sup> Ian Pool, "The Use of Genealogical Data in Historical Demography: Some New Zealand Examples," in *Under the Southern Cross*, Proceedings of the Third Australasian Congress on Genealogy and Heraldry," 13-16 May, 1983, Hamilton, New Zealand, comp. Antonia Jones (Hamilton: NZSG, 1983), 105-106.

studies in that subject; and also audited part of a first year sociology course. I now introduce some of my understandings thus gained.

*Daniel Bertaux and Paul Thompson*

The contribution of Bertaux and Thompson to my initial research plan was considerable. In the first instance, as a genealogical family historian, I found their work on the inter-generational transmission of knowledge exciting; and some of their methodological understandings were useful too. In his preface to a volume edited in 1981,<sup>149</sup> Bertaux explains that it is “not organised around a given field of sociology, but around a method of sociological investigation”.<sup>150</sup> The papers in that volume, from diverse theoretical frameworks, include one from Franco Ferrarotti who discusses the synthetic nature of autobiographical narrative and his care to “connect individual biographies to the global characteristics of a precisely dated, experienced historical situation”. This approach led him to try to study the ‘biography of a primary group’, in order to seek to understand “the reciprocal praxis which governs the interactions between an individual and a social system.”<sup>151</sup> This resonated with my choice of a unit of observation:<sup>152</sup> a Community where individual practitioners relate to each other and to a wider community, and to the social systems wherein they live.

In the same volume, Daniel Bertaux and Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame recount a life stories approach which, for them, forced consideration of “not only the socio-structural relations, but also [of] the men and women who live them...”<sup>153</sup>. This led to their considerations of “[a realm other than] the one of traditional sample representivity.”<sup>154</sup> I also noted that many topics have much common interest for genealogical family historians: life stories, occupational groups, social mobility, migration, and transmission of knowledge.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Daniel Bertaux, ed., *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences* (California: Sage, 1981).

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface.

<sup>151</sup> Franco Ferrarotti, “On the Autonomy of the Biographical Method,” in *Biography and Society*, ed. Daniel Bertaux (California: Sage, 1981), 19-20.

<sup>152</sup> I prefer this term to ‘unit of analysis’ because it disambiguates social scientific analysis of statistics from a humanistic social science analysis of observation and reflection.

<sup>153</sup> Daniel Bertaux and Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame, “Life Stories in the Bakers’ Trade,” in *Biography and Society*, ed. Daniel Bertaux (California: Sage, 1981), 169.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>155</sup> Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame, “The Life History Approach to the Study of Internal Migration,” in *Biography and Society*, ed. Daniel Bertaux (California: Sage, 1981), 249-261.

Daniel Bertaux and Paul Thompson edited a volume about the **intergenerational transmission of knowledge**, published in 1993. In one chapter, Thompson wrote that:

Telling one's own life story requires not only recounting directly remembered experience, but also drawing on information and stories transmitted across the generations.... My purpose here is to ask what they can tell us in both ways about the process and the scope of intergenerational transmission.<sup>156</sup>

Geneals use inter-generational information and stories, transmitted not just down or across the generations of their own direct ancestral lines, but that transmitted between collateral lines, especially when sharing data and research collaboratively with **email cousins**. I use this term for contemporary relatives – often cousins at many removes: whose individual lives, respective branch lines, and research work have all followed different trajectories, but who meet in cyberspace to focus on a family of interest.

Bertaux continued to explore the use of life histories for understanding pathways to social class. He and Paul Thompson asserted that the “primary goal of the case study approach is not to prove but to make sense of phenomena by proposing interpretations”.<sup>157</sup> My interest in inter-generational transmission extends to more than a focus on occupations and social class, but this approach informed both my initial theoretical framework and my methodology. In this thesis, I seek to make sense of phenomena.

### *Peter Berger*

In another book read for this project, Peter Berger addresses his *Invitation to Sociology: a Humanistic Approach* to any who “have come to wonder or to ask questions about sociology”.<sup>158</sup> Initially there was much with which to personally identify: his “prepossession with the sociology of religion”, his position that “all world views and scholarly disciplines are the result of conspiracies,” and his

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<sup>156</sup> Paul Thompson, “Family Myths, Models, and Denials in the Shaping of Individual Life Paths” in *Between Generations: Family Models, Myths and Memories*, eds. Daniel Bertaux and Paul Thompson (Oxford: OUP, 1993), 13.

<sup>157</sup> Daniel Bertaux and Paul Thompson, *Pathways to Social Class: A Qualitative Approach to Social Mobility*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 12.

<sup>158</sup> Peter L. Berger, *Invitation to Sociology: a Humanistic Approach* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963).

humanistic perspective extending even to decisions about footnotes.<sup>159</sup> I make use of his concept of **motifs** in Chapter 6. Berger's invitation is to an intellectual world he considers "profoundly exciting and significant". Given my acknowledged passion for, and appreciation of, genealogical family history research; and my prior recognition of its intellectual challenge, it is scarcely surprising that in my reading of Berger, I looked for useful points of similarity. Some comparisons raised as many questions as they gave possible affirmation of my views.

Berger distinguishes between the practice of Social Work "whatever its theoretical rationalisation" and Sociology, claiming, "Sociology is not a practice – but an attempt to understand."<sup>160</sup> Genealogical family history is a practice – but it is also an attempt to understand. Perhaps this is true of all practice – would I want to be treated by a doctor who does not seek to understand what s/he does, and to understand me? Conversely, is not *any* attempt to understand, linked inevitably to practice in some way? Perhaps Berger links 'practice' more closely to action and to the application of theory. Wenger does *not* use the term practice as an antonym for theory: "Even when theory is a goal in itself it is not detached but instead is produced in the context of specific practices."<sup>161</sup>

Significantly, Berger does not invite all to his humanistic perspective on sociology, he assumes a level of competence: those "incapable of playing dominoes" would not be invited "to a chess tournament"<sup>162</sup>. This resonates with Wenger's newer work on the recognition of competence as an attribute of core membership of *any* Community of Practice.

### *Charles Wright Mills*

In his book *A Sociological Imagination*, Wright Mills<sup>163</sup> claims that, "ordinary people do not possess the quality of mind essential to grasp the interplay of man and society, of biography and history, of self and world."<sup>164</sup> A sociological

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>161</sup> Wenger, *Communities of Practice*, 48.

<sup>162</sup> Berger, *Invitation to Sociology*, 7-8.

<sup>163</sup> This seems to be his preferred form of address, and it distinguishes him, in a genealogically acceptable way, from Elizabeth Shown Mills.

<sup>164</sup> C. Wright Mills, *A Sociological Imagination*, (1959; repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 1974) 4. He does not define 'ordinary'.

imagination enables the possessor “to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals.”<sup>165</sup> I agree with Wright Mills when he says, “Novelists – whose serious work embodies the most widespread definitions of human reality – frequently possess this imagination;”<sup>166</sup> but I wonder how many “ordinary” people he has known well enough to deny all of them the ability to ever understand their relationships with their worlds. I detect the possibility that Wright Mills’ discourse emanates from a ‘tyranny of expertism’<sup>167</sup> that prevents both expert and novice learning from each other.

I did not incorporate into my framework a term parallel to his, one that some have used: ‘a genealogical imagination’ - because it has been debased by referral to Alex Haley’s fictional work and borrowed material, in what purported to be genealogical investigation.<sup>168</sup> I do discuss how genealogical research engenders a state of continually being what a key informant has called ‘on the edge of conjecture’ (see Chapter 6).

#### *Anthony Giddens and GFH*

I first met the writings of Anthony Giddens through the above-mentioned catch-up reading, in a textbook prescribed for sociology undergraduates.<sup>169</sup> I read it for any hint of his knowledge about GFH because of my hypothesis that some in academia know little about GFH practice – even those academically interested in ‘the family’. Two aspects were disquieting. How was I to take seriously someone whose geographical and geopolitical knowledge appeared so limited? (Why did Giddens think Melanesia is a country, and why a *first-world* country? How is Tasmania separate from Australia other than through the physical intervention of the Bass Strait?)<sup>170</sup> Second, and more importantly, I found that Giddens used ‘family’ to mean ‘household’. His understanding of a family and an ‘extended

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>167</sup> This term is familiar to members of ATLAANZ, a CoP where the practice centres round working with those who have gaps in, or obstacles to, learning. (See Chap. 1, n. 28).

<sup>168</sup> Alexander Murray Palmer HALEY’s novel, *Roots*, is based on one strand of his family’s history. He is part Irish and part Cherokee as well as African-American. *Wikipedia* gave a useful summary of his life at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex\\_Haley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Haley) (accessed 30 August 2007).

<sup>169</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*, (1989; repr. Oxford: Polity Press with Blackwell, 2001).

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 36.

family' is therefore different from that of a Genealogical Family Historian.<sup>171</sup> It was partly in response that I coined the term "family of extension" to differentiate the usages.

However, Giddens' "reconstruction of social theory" that, according to Kenneth H Tucker Jr.,<sup>172</sup> "places an *active person* at the centre of sociological theory and modern society, [incorporating] social structure into his/her very actions through reflexivity..." fits with my concept of *active discoverers* of genealogical family history (see Chapter 5). I also appreciated his acceptance of *a range of perspectives*.<sup>173</sup> Tucker usefully explicates Giddens' double hermeneutic, but implies that new insight is created and held by credentialed experts, who introduce it to 'the general public' who then, by using the expert's terms, compound his or her difficulties when studying them, 'objectively', as objects. I have met many Geneals who understand concepts before they ever hear or read labels for those concepts.

I discovered a sociological perspective much more relevant to this study in a book<sup>174</sup> edited and introduced by Professor Kenneth Westhues, a Canadian academic who teaches aspects of GFH in a course called 'Ancestry, History, and Personal Identity' (see Chapters 3, 8 and 9).

## **Emergence**

At the beginning of this project, I mainly focused on Wenger's theorisation of the 'what' of communities of practice. I have also wondered 'how' and 'when' the entire GFH Community came into being. How and when did isolated individuals and small groups of those wishing to 'trace the family tree' become the vast and complex web that now connects people and sources, novices and experts, paid and voluntary researchers, academics from many fields and hobbyists (and some who are both); and shows no sign of diminishing.

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 173-174.

<sup>172</sup> Kenneth H. Tucker Jr., *Anthony Giddens and Modern Social Theory* (London: Sage, 1998).

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 2. My emphases.

<sup>174</sup> Kenneth Westhues, ed. *Basic Principles for Social Sciences in Our Time*, Waterloo, Canada: St Jerome's College Press, 1987. A conference on the topic was held in May 1986 in Kitchener and Waterloo.

There has been no decree from any direction that all interested should collaborate, learn and enjoy. No one's name has become a label for a theory about why some engage in this activity of genealogical family history research, and why some do not. Evidence of GFH activity in the more distant past abounds, for example, in Māori whakapapa, in Welsh genealogies, in Royal genealogies of many countries, and in Biblical genealogies. No one is credited with starting the activity.

### *Emergent Change*

I found some compelling answers to the 'how' question in Steven Johnson's *Emergence*. Johnson is a biologist writing for a popular science audience. He gives an insight into how the field of researching family history may have developed to its present state, and importantly for this thesis, offers another way of viewing the entire GFH Community, and component parts of it. According to an unidentified writer, *Emergence* is about "change that occurs from the bottom up. When enough individual elements interact and organize themselves, the result is collective intelligence" and co-ordinated group behaviour.<sup>175</sup>

Although the book's sub-title includes four disparate elements that Johnson discusses, it does not mention an important one: *slime mould*. Johnson tells of meeting Lee Sergel who introduced him to its characteristics: "The slime mold oscillates between being a single creature and a swarm..." and is "...an intriguing example of coordinated group behavior".<sup>176</sup>

Johnson traces the history of an intellectual discovery he links to studies of this primitive organism. Biologists, thinking from a general mind-set of kings and dictators, were used to thinking in terms of pacemaker cells, and concentrated on trying to find them, to find the uniforms of the generals as it were.<sup>177</sup> Evelyn Fox Keller, says Johnson, asked the key question: "What if they were organizing themselves?" and shares the answer: "...as it turned out, all slime mould cells were created equal."<sup>178</sup> For this study Johnson's summary of the consequences are important:

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<sup>175</sup> Steven Johnson, *Emergence: the Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities and Software*, (London: Penguin, 2001). This summary is from the book's cover.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

Keller's challenge...also unearthed a secret history of decentralized thinking, a history that had been submerged for many years.... people had been thinking about emergent behaviour in all its diverse guises for centuries, if not millennia, but all that thinking had consistently been ignored as a unified body of work – because there was nothing unified about its body. There were isolated cells pursuing the mysteries of emergence, but no aggregation.<sup>179</sup>

According to Johnson, the science of self-organisation was unknown because others placed the work of thinkers like Adam Smith, Friedrich Engels, Charles Darwin, and Alan Turing on library shelves distant from each other. Johnson discusses other examples of self-organisation such as the work of Jane Jacobs on the formation of city neighbourhoods, and of Marvin Minsky on distributed networks of the human brain. He comments that all these systems:

Solve problems by drawing on masses of relatively stupid elements... They are bottom-up systems, not top-down...they are complex adaptive systems that display emergent behavior...and the movement from low-level rules to higher-level sophistication is what we call emergence.<sup>180</sup>

However, warns Johnson, "...emergent complexity without adaptation is like the intricate crystals formed by a snowflake: it's a beautiful pattern, but it has no function". He goes on to look at systems that are more dynamic, ones that "form patterns in time as well as space",<sup>181</sup> and then tells how people "...stopped analyzing and ...started creating self-organising *artificial* emergence systems."<sup>182</sup>

Wenger has warnings too:

CoPs are not intrinsically beneficial or harmful. They are not privileged in terms of positive or negative effects. Yet they are a force to be reckoned with, for better or for worse. As a locus of engagement in action, interpersonal relations, shared knowledge, and negotiation of enterprises, such communities hold the key to real transformation – the kind that has real effects on people's lives.<sup>183</sup>

For me, all this assisted in understanding the current from-the-bottom-up stage of development of the dynamic system that is the GFH Community I have studied.

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>183</sup> Wenger, *Communities of Practice*, 85.

More of Johnson's writing also has relevance. "Emergent systems aren't intrinsically good," he notes referring to Durkheim.<sup>184</sup> Not all practices within the wider GFH community are judged as scholastically or morally 'good' by those within it or on the permeable periphery, as I demonstrate in Chapters 7 and 8.

Johnson takes his reader through the "colony behaviour of social insects..." and some "history of a decentralized mind-set, from Engels on the streets of Manchester to the new forms of emergent software being developed". He outlines the core principles of his field: "neighbor interaction, pattern recognition, feedback, and indirect control" and looks to a future when "media experiences and political movements" are no longer shaped from the top down.<sup>185</sup>

The concept of emergence provides a way of understanding the possible genesis of the present genealogical family history community, and of looking to the future. Johnson explores another word with potential for describing it well: *complexity*. The complexity of a city with its sensory overload, and with its coherent personality self-organised out of individual decisions and local interactions<sup>186</sup> is a useful point of comparison with the *complexity* of the wider GFH Community, *and* of the human subjects of GFH research.

Below and in later chapters I refer to others from diverse fields, working inside, outside or alongside academia: scholars, thinkers and practitioners, some elements of whose work have also become embedded in my conceptual framework. Some are members of the wider Community. They have commented on the status, place and nature of GFH: Donald Jacobus, Anthony Wagner, and Elizabeth Shown Mills in particular.

I end this chapter with a discussion of 'definitions' of 'family': a concept of interest to all Geneals, and to many in other fields. Transdisciplinarity "presupposes an open-minded rationality by re-examining the *concepts* of 'definition and 'objectivity'".<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Johnson, *Emergence*, 137.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-39.

<sup>187</sup> The Charter of Transdisciplinarity: Article 4. My emphases.

## Family as Concept

‘Family’ is the word most central to this study. It has multiple usages both within and beyond the study. Anthony Wagner, Genealogist and Herald, is not alone in calling the word ‘family’ an ambiguous term.<sup>188</sup> Some writers do not attempt any definition; and others approach the concept from a particular viewpoint. It is worth noting that the word ‘family’ rarely occurs in Wenger’s writings and thus he does not define it. The closest he appears to come to a focus on the existence of such an entity is when saying that we all belong to communities of practice, “At home, at work, at school, in our hobbies”.<sup>189</sup>

Others whose writing has contributed to the conceptual framework of this thesis also have a focus that is not on a family group, or on ‘the family’. In one book,<sup>190</sup> Bryan Sykes writes about the genetics of vast numbers of people back through time to one of seven women who had at least two daughters, but he does not define or discuss smaller family groups. His book is full of references to ancestors and descendants; to relatives and connections; to patriarchies and clan mothers, but not to families. I discuss his more recent book,<sup>191</sup> and his changing perspective, in Chapter 7.

Francis Pryor is an archaeologist, working in the field. In *Seahenge*, he too views the family of humankind through genetic ties:

But the concept of family is not changing. Indeed, it cannot: blood relationships, what social anthropologists term ‘ties of consanguinity’, are the basis of all societies. [Blood] is the biological superglue that binds us all together.<sup>192</sup>

Pryor claims that it is “the family that unites prehistory with the modern world”.<sup>193</sup> As one whose professional work is so site-centred, it is not surprising that Pryor adapts an old adage to: ‘Home is where the family is’ and focuses on located-ness. The benefit he claims for studying stone-age *families* where they

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<sup>188</sup> Anthony Wagner, *English Genealogy* (London: Phillimore, 1960), 178-180.

<sup>189</sup> Wenger, *Communities of Practice*, 6.

<sup>190</sup> Bryan Sykes, *The Seven Daughters of Eve*. Corgi edition, (2001; London: Transworld Publishers, 2002).

<sup>191</sup> Bryan C. Sykes, *Blood of the Isles: Exploring the Roots of Our Tribal History* (London: Bantam Press, 2006), 112.

<sup>192</sup> Francis Pryor, *Seahenge: a Quest for Life and Death in Bronze Age Britain* (London: HarperCollins, 2001) 131.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

*lived, over time*, rather than studying barrows, or hill forts, or domestic artefacts over wider areas, for comparative purposes, makes sense to me. His concept of **time-depth** is one that Geneals can extrapolate to GFH research of more recent eras, to good effect.

### *Family or Household*

I do not share Anthony Giddens' usage of *a family*, for he defines a family for his own sociological purposes:

[A family is] a group of persons directly linked by kin connection, the adult members of which assume responsibility for caring for children. Kinship ties are connections between individuals, established either through marriage or through the lines of descent that connect blood relatives (mothers, fathers, siblings, offspring etc.).<sup>194</sup>

For genealogical family historians this definition coincides with some usages, but excludes others. The implication that there must be more than one adult member assuming responsibility for caring for children raises some questions. When a widower is helped in child-care by a daughter as young as 10, is this group no longer 'a family'? Or is the daughter an adult? GFH research discovers such households.

In defining a *nuclear family* Giddens again specified "two adults living together in a household with their own or adopted children."<sup>195</sup> In the wider GFH Community, that is a household at a point in time: it is not a family group of origin/orientation/procreation. It is a snapshot of just one day or night in the life of some members of a family of interest.

My personal GFH research discovered some SMITHs living in the London district of the Precincts of the Tower, at the time of the 1881 census. On one returned schedule, *living at one address*, there are two heads of household: one is Jane SMITH, a widow, there with some of her daughters including one recorded as adopted and bearing a different surname. The other 'household' is headed by her son, and lists her daughter-in-law and their children; the mother of the daughter-in-law; and another infant grandchild (hers, not her son's) with a different

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<sup>194</sup> Giddens, *Sociology*, 173.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

surname.<sup>196</sup> Is this ‘a family’ or two, or more, families? Presumably, the absent parents of the infant are not part of a ‘nuclear family’ as defined by Giddens, because they were not, on the night in question, ‘caring’ for their child. Do they only become ‘a family’ when that child is in the same house? A wider search in the census and in other indexes revealed that the infant grandchild’s father had just died (aged 39); and that her mother was living nearby with two of her sisters, in a household where the husband of one is the titular head of that household.

Giddens stated that nuclear families were “part of a larger kinship network of some type in traditional societies”. I am unsure if he would regard this SMITH family as “traditional”, or pre-modern; and wonder why he thinks his “modern” nuclear families do not ‘live’ in kinship networks. Michael Young and Peter Willmott<sup>197</sup> discovered that there were many more enduring connections between family members in the East End of London in the 1950s than they had expected, although they did also discover some dislocation of such ties after migration.

In this particular case, collaborative GFH research discovered where surviving members of the ‘birth family’ of Jane SMITH’s adopted daughter were living at that time, (and at the time of earlier and later decennial censuses) for Geneals *are* interested in households. GFH research also discovered the reason for this open adoption: but how or why Jane and her husband were chosen to adopt, is not yet known – nor is Jane’s birth surname.<sup>198</sup>

When compiling family groups: charts of families of orientation or origin (for research, recording and reporting purposes) parents, step-parents, and all known children (including those adopted or fostered) are usually listed, whether some members are present or absent, alive or dead, *at any given time*. Geneals conceptualise families differently: and a different purpose brings a different focus, a different perspective, different knowledge, and different strategies. The authors

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<sup>196</sup> This family presented problems to the enumerator trying to determine who was the head of the household.

<sup>197</sup> Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books/Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1957).

<sup>198</sup> I consider these SMITHs as part of my genealogical family of extension, because the adopted child later married my great-uncle. Similarly, when a great-grandson of my said great-uncle and great-aunt by marriage was discovered to be living in New Zealand, my father set up visits from that man’s former wife, their children and grandchildren, and even her mother. He considered them all ‘family’ whether the relationships were by blood or through past marriage.

of a recent book put this example of *différance* nicely in perspective when they write, under the sub-heading “Families and Households”:

Social analyses often distinguish between a family and a household, but in common usage such distinctions are seldom maintained. These concepts, fundamental to our book, are normally seen as dimensions of family forms....

For statistical purposes the convention is that a household may comprise one or more families, and in any dwelling there may be more than one household. Following popular parlance we use the words family and household interchangeably, but, in analyses carried out by the Population Studies Centre, household rather than family data are normally used....<sup>199</sup>

The most useful definition of ‘family’ for this study can be found in Daniel Bertaux’s and Paul Thompson’s introduction to their work on intergenerational transmission:

Families are not, however, neat collective units.... The sense in which we refer to ‘family’ here is as a network of individuals related by kinship and including two or more generations. In terms of transmission, the wider family is likely to be as important as the simple family household.... But while a household normally has clear boundaries, a family in our sense is less easy to pin down. This is because it is collectively constituted from an individual standpoint. Every person has a unique position in a family, and as a result defines relationships differently – so that my niece may be your mother-in-law.... ‘Family’ is a cultural image constructed out of real individuals, and also, sometimes, mythical ancestry.<sup>200</sup>

### *Clans and Tribes*

A study of genealogical family history in Aotearoa-New Zealand would not be complete without acknowledgement that there are groups with a focus on genetic, or mythic ancestry, rather than genealogical ancestry. Bryan Sykes has brought the concept of ‘clan mothers’ into both GFH, and common usage. A number in the A-NZ GFH Community who look to Scotland as their ‘homeland’, become involved in the history, development, and *present existence*, of clans and septs. Iwi, hapū and whānau are important concepts and realities for all New Zealanders: past, present and future.

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<sup>199</sup> Ian Pool, Arunachalam Dharmalingam and Janet Sceats, *The New Zealand Family from 1840: a Demographic History*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2007), 39.

<sup>200</sup> Bertaux and Thompson, *Between Generations*, 2.

### *Family as Cultural Image*

In this study, the GFH conceptualisation of family is my focus. The contextual use in each instance will define what a writer or speaker means by *family*, and I seek to explicate when ambiguity may mask an important understanding. A family as a cultural image of *genealogically related persons*, constructed from assumed or proven connections between individuals, over time, will be my default meaning.

### *The Prototype Vehicle*

In my endeavour to convey, through mere words, the dynamic and multi-dimensional activity that is GFH research, I must heed Boyer and include all the analogies, metaphors, and images I need to build bridges between my conceptual understandings and those of my audience.

There is a children's book I have enjoyed discussing with grandchildren: it is about a Grumpalump.<sup>201</sup> This multicoloured object lies flat on the ground, noticed, but walked on by various creatures. It begins to rise. Some jump on it: causing it to grump. One of the more inquisitive creatures blows life into it and takes off in the basket of the hot-air balloon thus inflated, to who-knows-where, while other creatures just continue to stare.

My conceptual framework for this thesis is a vehicle carefully constructed from the bricolage of my own previous studies, *and* from insights gained through this project. This thesis is about GFH in the past, the present and the *future*.

In Chapter 3, I discuss my methodology and the methods I have used to describe and analyse a field of enquiry that has been misunderstood and undervalued, but has the potential to rise up. It is a field that in itself has a transdisciplinary vision and ethos, a field whose practitioners are not confined to cultural boundaries of nation, race, class, status, education, and religious or political persuasion: nor are those whose lives they study.

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<sup>201</sup> Sarah Hayes, *The Grumpalump* (London: Walker Books, 2000).



## Chapter 3

### Methodology and Methods: a Humanist Perspective

Even as I write... I can feel I am being drawn away from the real lives of these genes into some grey underworld where everything becomes a number.... Once a number is produced, something, perhaps everything, of value has been lost. Like so many tabulations, the numbers disguise individual stories of heroism and betrayal, triumph and defeat, and force them into bleak summaries. This is no way to treat our ancestors....

Since every ancestor was an individual, I was determined to treat the DNA sequences as individuals. Each one had at some time, set off from some distant land and stepped ashore on the Isles.... I decided that, if I possibly could, I would not treat these as anything but individual journeys undertaken with deliberate purpose and not to be grouped together in clumsy approximations.<sup>202</sup>

Bryan Sykes, Professor of Human Genetics at the University of Oxford, and acclaimed scientist, is well acquainted with tabulations and numbers. In this book, he has chosen to personalise and individualise his subject matter. I have determined to treat GFH practitioners: the human subjects of this study, as individuals – individuals belonging to a Community. Geneals treat the human subjects of their GFH research as individuals - as individuals belonging to families. The individual lives and journeys of those human subjects do produce some discernible patterns, patterns of interest to Geneals and to others.

The previous two chapters outline the background to this thesis; my approach and focus; and the literature and theoretical notions that contribute to my theoretical and conceptual framework. I have already acknowledged, in Chapter 2, my debt to the methodological insights of Daniel Bertaux, in particular. There is one among those read whose approach and coverage of the gamut of possibilities was especially helpful. Max Travers gave an overview of different traditions, and perspectives, and movements. His text contributed to updating my understandings of grounded theory, reflexivity, affectivity, the tool of deconstruction, and the interpretive tradition.<sup>203</sup> He designed his text for law students, and working with<sup>204</sup> students of Law and Societies has shaped some of my thinking.

Kenneth Westhues affirmed decisions made about a **humanist approach** to my methodology, through his introduction to a book of essays addressed to young social scientists beginning their careers, essays presented and discussed at a

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<sup>202</sup> Sykes, *Blood of the Isles*, 112.

<sup>203</sup> Max Travers, *Qualitative Research Through Case Studies* (London: Sage, 2001), 40-50, 137-156.

<sup>204</sup> The concept of “working *with*” is from the ATLAANZ discourse (see chap. 1, n. 28).

conference held over 20 years ago. His discussion of elements of humanist sociology (including the social fact), and his cardinal principles of the acceptance of human agency, moral engagement, and practicality,<sup>205</sup> seem to me to be eminently compatible with a transdisciplinary ethos. The eight authors of the book's chapters are from seven fields, and all "have been called humanists, and with few or many qualms...accepted the name for themselves."<sup>206</sup> As Westhues points out, "Even so simple and unassailable a name as this has its liabilities," noting "the colouring the word humanism has taken on," and he remarks to his reader, that "Perhaps the worst thing about identifying as humanist is that you might thereby be invited to pigeonhole yourself more than you already are."<sup>207</sup> This thesis demonstrates my resistance to being pigeonholed, while also accepting that others are comfortable in such spaces.

The combination of a transdisciplinary vision, a humanist perspective, and methods from the social sciences suits my research, my analysis, and my writing aims very well. I have written up my research using exemplars, because of the quantity and variety of material read, and the need to be selective.

### *Exemplars*

Davidson and Tolich consider that exemplars in qualitative research are "the data extracts that survive the rigorous drafting process to make it into the final text. Exemplars build the text's argument by giving the reader entry to the informants' world".<sup>208</sup> I have done this with the vast amount of material provided by my key informants. I have chosen particular issues of magazines, journals and conference proceedings to refer to, as exemplars of each sub-genre published in the field. In most cases, I selected exemplars at the time of initial reading or preliminary analysis: not after a retrospective search for the best exemplification possible. I believe that this will have avoided any tendency to put forward only examples of best or worst practice, while reducing any unnecessary volume in seeking to do justice to the mountain of material, as recommended by Travers.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Westhues, *Basic Principles for Social Science in Our Time*, 2-4, 18-28.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-30.

<sup>208</sup> Davidson and Tolich, *Social Science Research in New Zealand*, 182.

<sup>209</sup> Travers, *Qualitative Research Through Case Studies*, 42.

## Methods

After considering theory and advice, the logistical possibilities, and the aims of this thesis, I settled on the use of four methodological tools (hereafter methods): document analysis, observation, key informant interviews, and reflection. I kept open the option of surveying some experienced genealogical family historians, but in the event did not use the survey tool for this thesis.

The first phase of my fieldwork was an overlapping mix of document analysis, and observations. I continued to use those methods through to the end of the study. I taped some key informant interviews during 2003 and 2004; and there was some follow-up and ongoing communication from 2005 to 2008. Others contributed through email exchanges or during face-to-face-conversations. This chapter now focuses on my combination of selected methods in conjunction with some ethical issues. I then expand on my use of each of the chosen research methods.

### *Ethical Approval*

The document analysis, begun first, required no ethical approval. *Non-participant* observations in places where genealogical family historians gather did not require specific approval. However, I did find myself thinking about some ethical considerations concerning the boundary between non-participant and *participant* observations during the fieldwork. I discuss these further below.

Initially, I needed to seek ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the University of Waikato's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) for obtaining other information from active genealogical family historians. The two methods considered were a survey by questionnaire, and interviews. Bertaux and Thompson warn that:

Problems start when a survey comes to be regarded as the only scientific approach [when] looking at the flows of men and women in social space, [for] the technical requirements of the survey tend to dictate the substantive choices and narrow down the range of observed phenomena – as for example in the repeated focus on men rather than women”<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Bertaux and Thompson, *Pathways to Social Class*, 12.

Bearing this and prior survey experience in mind, I decided to leave any decision about that tool until I had conducted some interviews; and therefore applied for approval to conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews with key or expert witnesses.

### *An Interesting Response*

The response of the Ethics Committee to my application included reservations about two aspects of the proposed interviewing. The first related to the language register I had used in the letter to potential interviewees and the accompanying informed consent form. The committee asked me to consider if these people would understand what I had written.<sup>211</sup>

My written response was to apologise for not making it clear that my potential interviewees were experts in the field, many of them having served as president of the NZSG. I agreed that those with an MA in subjects such as English, History, Education and Classics might find some of the language more difficult to comprehend than would those with a bachelor's degree in social sciences. My initial and unwritten response was that this seemed to me to be a pertinent example of some attitudes towards those who undertake genealogical family history research, as recounted in Chapter 1: an attitude that assumes GFH research is undertaken by uneducated people – using one definition of the epithet uneducated.

The second issue was more complicated. I described one of the proposed interviewees as 'genealogically related' and the committee suggested that a third party should approach that person in case she wished to refuse, without causing offence. I had not realised that the term might be thought a synonym for 'relative' or even 'close relative' - another indication of the gulf between understandings. My response was to outline in detail the nature of the genealogical relationship between us.<sup>212</sup> I also pointed out that another proposed interviewee was a friend of a

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<sup>211</sup> "We feel the information sheet could be rephrased to be more 'accessible' for participants, who may not understand the meaning of some of your terms.... Do you think they will understand when you say that 'interview transcripts will be subject to qualitative analysis... for emergent themes....'" FASS Ethics Committee, e-mail message to author, 25 March 2003.

<sup>212</sup> "The person who is "related" to me is a *fifth cousin once removed* (5C1R)... She and I share one pair of genealogical ancestors who were alive during the early 1700s: I descend from just two people out of the 64 I have at my generation of our common ancestry, and she descends from just two of the 128 she has at her generation (for there are no [known] cousin-marriages to increase the degree of relatedness). So: we are *not related* [via] 62 or 126 other people who were contemporary

member of my immediate family, and perhaps also should therefore be approached by a third party? I suggested that, in both cases, even if someone else approached them on my behalf and they refused, I would know, and they would know that I knew. It seemed to me that this would not achieve the desired outcome of not revealing a refusal to an interviewer. I should perhaps have added that I wished to select interviewees purposively, not randomly. If I had opted for random selection of interviewees, third party involvement might have been appropriate.

From my work life, I knew that many applications for ethical approval are to do with projects where researchers have found out *sensitive* personal information about interviewed relatives, especially when seeking to elicit personal actions, behaviours, facts, opinions and attitudes. I also knew that the area of oral history needs such consideration when the subject is still living; and that some think that oral history is synonymous with genealogical family history research. I therefore elaborated on my interviewing intentions.<sup>213</sup>

The committee granted me permission to approach interviewees directly, and approved my application. However, this issue was a very valid ethical consideration, and I was grateful to the committee for their vigilance. In follow-up work with interviewees with whom I have an ongoing research relationship in addition to a genealogical relationship and/or friendship, I was aware that there was potential for the interviewer/interviewee relationship to affect the personal relationship, and vice versa; and I remained mindful of this ethical consideration during and beyond the interviewing phase.

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ancestors for each of us respectively. I think of her as an “email cousin”. Genetically we may be more, or less, biologically related than we are genealogically - depending on the shuffling of the genes at each generation of descent. This “cousin” and I have met [a few times]. Our primary relationship is a collaborative research one, conducted via email. We each have a number of other such collaborative research relationships with persons related (in differing degrees) to both of us or to one of us. She provides an excellent example for the type of research relationship existing in the [Community I wish to study].”

<sup>213</sup> I wrote: “Perhaps it is not clear to the Committee that I do not intend to interview *any* of these people... about their *findings* about their ancestors or other relations. The focus of the study is on the *processes* of what active discoverers of family history/genealogy call research - what they *do*: the methods and methodology they employ; how they learned the many skills they use; how their researching has changed over time; and any implicit theorising about practice that the interviews may elicit. Because my lectureship is in tertiary teaching and learning, I have a long-standing interest in *how* people learn to research. I have also presented and published in that field about ethical considerations for practitioners in the area of tertiary learning support/ development/ advising.”

I was also aware how involving any person in a research project of this type, can set up expectations regarding 'results'. In order to address that issue I wrote to key informants giving an outline of my preliminary findings from the interviews, early in 2004.

### **The Document Analysis**

My approved plan included a list of documents that I proposed to analyse as a first step. It included a variety of material generated within the worldwide and long existent community that I proposed to study. Although publications in various print forms (books, booklets, journals, magazines) provided the bulk of the documents analysed, I did not ignore material found on notice boards, in leaflets, and in various microforms in repositories visited, and I cite some examples where appropriate. I have already noted my use of spoken contributions from a variety of sources, including lectures.

Towards the end of the fieldwork some programmes were screened on New Zealand television that are particularly relevant to my study: the ongoing BBC series "Who Do You think You Are?" and a New Zealand production called "Here to Stay". I also considered various documents of cyberspace, especially communications received through my involvement with electronic sites and email groups as part of my document analysis.

#### *Purpose and Strategy*

The purpose of an initial focus on runs of magazines and journals, and proceedings of conferences, together with samples of such documents from other years and other geographic locations, was threefold. I sought to read a variety of material to test my belief that the activity/field/subject was complex. I also sought to establish if themes were apparent within that complexity that I could explore further; and I believed such an exercise could raise specific research questions.

I began by reading and re-reading commercial magazines published in England, journals of family history societies published in the British Isles and Australasian conference proceedings. I extended the range of printed documents to include a

selection of booklets published from within the field, and some books and other material. In addition to reading magazines, journals and proceedings; and collecting information from non-print documents; I sought publications *about* the field, and I read some recent scholarly social history, relevant to GFH in Aotearoa-New Zealand.<sup>214</sup>

### *Commercial magazines*

Three-year runs of three English commercial magazines<sup>215</sup> were given close attention in the initial data-gathering phases of this study. I began with commercial publications because they are of interest to many in the wider Community, whether core or peripheral members. Within the A-NZ Community they are purchased individually by subscription or from book shops; or read through magazine circulation groups, or read at or borrowed from the NZSG Family Records Centre (FRC) in Auckland; or shared through branch and group magazine circulation groups. These magazines are read within and beyond the Community for general enjoyment or for specific information about how to proceed and how to interpret.

The magazine I chose as an exemplar, was published at a time when many genealogical family historians were crossing the digital divide and embracing computers and the Internet in greater numbers.<sup>216</sup> It includes regular features under sub-headings: Further Steps in Family History, Sources, Social History, Readers' Articles, and Family History Medley. It also has a section entitled "Network: Tips on using your PC and the Internet to research your family history." The six pages include an article announcing "GenesConnected: an up-and-coming genealogical resource". This venture became GenesReunited (see Chapter 7).

These magazines (and many more like them) are primarily commercial ventures. They are of interest to many in the wider GFH community, including peripheral members and those not aligned with any formal or informal groups. Their readership is not easily identifiable, and may not be stable.

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<sup>214</sup> For example: Bronwyn Dalley and Jock Phillips, eds., *Going Public: The Changing Face of New Zealand History* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2001).

<sup>215</sup> *Family Tree Magazine*, *Practical Family History*, and *Family History Monthly*.

<sup>216</sup> Caroline Davis, ed., *Practical Family History 77* (Ramsey, Huntingon: Michael Armstrong, 2004).

### *Family History Society Journals*

Family History Societies, on the other hand, have a less anonymous membership and readership, and do have considerable stability over time.<sup>217</sup> The journals they publish are a service to financial members, often on a cost-recovery or subsidy basis. They should, I reasoned, better reveal the interests, over time, of genealogical family historians belonging to any one (or more) of the in-and-from communities formed, developed and served by such societies.

Most Family History Society (FHS) journals serve those who both live and research in a particular geographical area; *as well as* those who live in the area, and attend local meetings but have no local research interests; *and also* those who live outside the geographical area but have research interests within it. In this respect, FHS journals contribute to and reflect my concept of an in-and-from GFH community; and they both contribute to, and demonstrate, the practice of the members of each such community and its wider community.

Family History Society Journals of interest to the wider GFH Community are numerous. The NZSG's Family Records Centre (FRC) has copies of journals of many family history societies, especially those in A-NZ Community's wider community. Most pertain to a geographical area. Others focus differently: especially on thematic research. The holdings at the time of one visit to the FRC included an Anglo-Indian journal and Huguenot Society publications. Journals were available for borrowing by members.

Public Libraries also have a selection of such journals on their shelves: many of them donated. While undertaking a non-participant observation in the Family History Section of the (New Zealand) National Library in Wellington, I noticed a journal for Italian American research on display<sup>218</sup>. The cover proclaimed it the best of its genre for the sixth year running. I decided that following up such a claim to establish *how many* such journals then existed (against which it might have been judged) was somewhat beyond the parameters of this study; but have since noticed websites dedicated to this specialist area, and to many of similar ilk.

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<sup>217</sup> Membership of such societies is usually for a year, whereas some readers may not purchase more than one or two copies of a commercial magazine during a year.

<sup>218</sup> *The American Journal of Italian Genealogy* was the one on display, on 26 November 2004.

Suffice it to say, there are many special interest societies and publications in the entire GFH community. The Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS)<sup>219</sup> gives a comprehensive list of its member societies, including national societies in England, Wales and Ireland, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America. Member societies include the Guild of One Name Studies (GOONS) and various individual family name societies; state and district societies in abovementioned places; and non-geographic societies such as the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain, the Quaker FHS, the Railways Ancestors FHS, the Romany and Traveller FHS, and the Association of Genealogists and Record Agents (AGRA). The site advises that there is also a Scottish Federation of Family History Societies. Each of these publishes material.

From this plethora of possibilities, for the initial document analysis, I selected three-year runs (1999-2001) of three FHS journals of interest (available to the A-NZ Community): those published by the Norfolk FHS, the Wiltshire FHS and the Tay Valley FHS. I selected them from journals I had to hand, for their geographic spread within the United Kingdom. I have at some time, read most of all issues of *The New Zealand Genealogist (NZG)* from its inception to the present, and included a closer reading of many during my ongoing document analysis.

I have selected as the exemplar for this category one copy of one journal of one FHS within the wider GFH community. It contains material found in such publications. It is *typical* in its range of subject matter, though unusual in having so much of that range in one issue. Its full title<sup>220</sup> also reveals how some FHS journals have developed. I have not chosen an issue of the *NZG* for review in this way, but have opted to discuss material from that source throughout the thesis.

### *Conference Proceedings*

The proceedings of conferences held by and for members of genealogical and family history societies in Australasia were another source of data for the initial analysis. While FHS journals may reflect editorial interest and preferences (usually influenced by the views and wishes of office bearers and/or the whole membership of a society), conference proceedings combine contributions from

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<sup>219</sup> A listing as at 16 May 2006 was at: <http://www.ffhs.org.uk/General/Members/Alpha.htm>

<sup>220</sup> The full title is: *The Norfolk Ancestor: Journal of the Norfolk Family History Society (formerly the Norfolk and Norwich Genealogical Society)*, New Series Volume Three, Part 9/March 2004.

speakers invited by the organising committee and, on many occasions, those offered by a variety of individuals. Thus, proceedings give a good indication of the subject matter of interest to both core and peripheral members of the wider GFH community. They can also reveal the extent of knowledge that outsiders and those on the edge of the permeable periphery have, of the GFH field and practice. New Zealand and Australia are the main places where members of the A-NZ Community attend such gatherings.

### *NZSG Conferences*

The NZSG, an incorporated society, has long had a policy, of deciding some years in advance where to hold its conferences in conjunction with Annual General Meetings; and of alternating between a large city and a smaller centre - while at the same time allowing flexibility to cater for such things as a province wishing to hold a conference in an anniversary year, or the nearness (in time and place) of international conferences. A further example of such exemplary forward planning was seen when a branch in an area with a small population, and distant from the bulky research resources often voluntarily transported to conferences, wished to host an AGM and conference.

After discussion, it was agreed that a 'research weekend' incorporating the AGM would be a better option than a full conference and this event was duly held very successfully in Oamaru in 2002. In the early years of the NZSG, many local and national seminars and research days were held. Residential conferences began with one held at "The Narrows" near Hamilton, in 1976.

As an exemplar of NZSG proceedings, I have chosen a volume produced for a conference held in the far north of New Zealand.<sup>221</sup> This was a conference held outside a main centre, though close to the residences of a large proportion of NZSG members. It was organised by individuals from a number of NZSG branches, making it possible to host a conference with invited overseas and domestic speakers, *and* to provide some research facilities.

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<sup>221</sup> Vivienne Parker, and Keith Vautier, eds., *Look North: Over the Hills and Far Away*, Proceedings of the NZSG Conference, 4-7 June 1999, Whangarei (Auckland: NZSG Conference Committee, 1999).

### *AFFHO Conferences*

The exemplar for the wider Community comes from an AFFHO Congress held in Perth, Western Australia.<sup>222</sup> This conference, unlike those held under AFFHO auspices in New Zealand and hosted by the NZSG, was organised by a host Society Committee who paid commercial conference organisers to do much of what was *perceived* to be ‘administrative work’. Employees did not understand many aspects of preparing, presenting and publishing conference papers. The 2003 Congress in Melbourne was also organised in this way.

### *Documents Available through Non-print Media*

Material in microform (especially fiche, film and CDs, and now DVDs) is available to members of the wider GFH community. I included some microform sources in my initial reading and analysis of documents. During my non-participant observations in various repositories, I noted the range of material available to Geneals.

Some resources sought by genealogical family historians are now (2007) increasingly available in both print and many other forms. My exemplar is a CD produced by the Wiltshire FHS giving lists of surnames being researched by members.<sup>223</sup> It was designed to enable members to contact each other. It was compiled using free software and volunteer expertise. It requires a certain level of knowledge, experience, trial-and-error persistence, or readiness to ask for help, to use it optimally. Many early CDs were somewhat experimental, for the users, as well as for the creators.

The Genealogical Society of Utah, (the GSU), maintains a very large site with many databases, and has been freely available on the web through home computers and computers available for use in public libraries. In 2007, the continuance of this policy was under active discussion. Many resources are still available in the branch libraries in Family History Centres (FHCs) sited within LDS chapel complexes – staffed by LDS members, sometimes with assistance from genealogical family historians who are not members of that faith. Films and microfiche of records of

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<sup>222</sup> *Let Records Speak*, Proceedings of the 9<sup>th</sup> Australasian Congress on Genealogy and Heraldry, 27 September-1 October 2000, Perth, Western Australia. 2 vols. (Perth: AFHHO/Western Australian Genealogical Society, 2000. Note: The editors or compilers are not named.

<sup>223</sup> *Directory of Members' Interests: 2005*, CD-ROM. (Wiltshire: Wiltshire Family History Society, 2005).

major Christian denominations, and of other groups, are available for a small hire fee to both members of the LDS faith and to the public. Copies of English parish records continue to be the items most often hired, but I was once able to read in an LDS FHC a microfilm of a book with a narrow, specialist interest, one not easily accessible to me otherwise, to learn more about an Irish great-great-grandfather and his Scottish in-laws. It was about block-cutters and the linen industry in Lennoxton of Campsie, Stirlingshire, Scotland.<sup>224</sup>

Digitised facsimiles of original records, and indexes to them, are increasingly available electronically on the worldwide web: especially through various pay-to-view systems. Members of the GFH Community can access them directly using a web browser, or when forwarded by other researchers whose email system is compatible and allows attachments. The GSU has plans to make more of its holdings available online. The (New Zealand) National Library became an Affiliate Library of the GSU in 2007. Space and equipment, are provided by the National Library, and the area is staffed by volunteers who are mainly NZSG members. They request and return the microforms (film and fiche), supervise their use, and, inevitably, engage with the research of library clients.

### **Non-participant Observations**

Non-participant observations were undertaken in places where genealogical family historians gather: places I was able to visit in the course of my own personal family history research, and so conform to the ethical requirements of the non-participation of human subjects observed during my research. Initially, the places where I made observations included some LDS FHCs, public and other libraries in and near Hamilton and Auckland, and a few on-line communities. During the more intensive fieldwork phase of the study, I visited similar places in physical locations in other geographic areas, and engaged further with different on-line communities. In the later stages of my research, there were fewer visits to physical repositories and more observations on-line.

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<sup>224</sup> The GSU catalogue (2007) listed it, thus: "Microfilm copy of original published: Kirkintilloch, Dumbarton: D. MacLeod, 1892. xvi, 248, 52 p. With appendix: Calico printing in Campsie: being sketches of its rise and progress in the parish with jottings and reminiscences concerning employees and employed, trades, strikes, friendly societies, etc. / by John Cameron. - Kirkintilloch, Dumbarton : D. MacLeod, 1981."

Some occasions for observation were serendipitous rather than planned: including one significant conversation with a stranger during a bus trip, and another overheard in a café. Some observations were multi-layered: such as when a University of the Third Age (U3A) group visited a place where I was undertaking personal research, and was also listening, for the purposes of this thesis, to the research experiences of those around me. Chance conversations, with other strangers, one at a GFH 'Expo' in 2007, contributed to my conclusions about the future of GFH in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

### *The World Wide Web and the Internet*

Over the years, terminology has changed along with technology and usage. There are many ways of categorising cyberspace hardware and software, but I am not primarily concerned with technical aspects of the creation or use of these sites. My focus is on the social learning empowered by them. For genealogical family historians, there are many worldwide web pages of interest, some containing source material that includes compiled charts and asserted linkages. Some sites contain large databases while others have little, or limited, source material available. There are both free and pay-to view sites.

I now discuss three avenues for genealogical family history research through the web and the Internet, in relation to some ethical and methodological issues. The areas are: personal websites, web-based sites for information exchange (both free and pay-to-view sites), and subscription email lists. Some email groups and lists are free but have a joining process called 'subscribing'. Some pay-to-view sites obfuscate when inviting 'free' subscriptions.

### *Personal Web Sites*

Some personal web sites are solely for personal information and genealogy while others host on-line GFH communities: including **one-name**, **one-place**, or **one-theme** groups: examples of each are among the special interest groups affiliated to the FFHS (see above). Some personal websites belong to just one person or couple and contain both personal and genealogical information, while others are the work of a number of people. Ancestry.Com, and other such sites, offer space for personal web sites, sometimes searchable by others.

I encountered personal sites in a variety of ways. Search engines such as *Google* took me directly into some of these sites - quite often to a page deep within a site, with no obvious or easy link back to a home page.<sup>225</sup> Others had protective measures put in place by an organisation, or by an individual who grants full access only to vetted or subscribing persons – one of my key informants granted me access to hers.

Some of these sites are very personal, with photographs, data about kin right up to date, and other material.<sup>226</sup> Other websites contain some personal information, but restrict it to giving the name of a compiler of genealogical work on names, places, indexing projects, or one of many other interests. There are some personal websites with the compiler's contact details. This enables an exchange of views and information in various ways, often through email, but can add to problems in the areas of privacy, intellectual property and copyright (see Chapter 7).

Compilers update some such sites, frequently, when in an active phase of engagement with the technology, but some sites are as they were some years ago, and still accessible. Some URLs have 'moved' which may mean the pages have become less public, or, that they have been removed from the web altogether.

#### *Web-based Sites for Information Exchange*

Large free sites such as the GENUKI<sup>227</sup> Project, FreeBMD,<sup>228</sup> and FamilySearch<sup>229</sup> presented few ethical or methodological problems – interaction is mainly with the software that enables the searching of material. I did report one transcription error to FreeBMD and received a personal response to say it had been corrected. I also noted their efforts to educate those who have difficulty understanding that the site seeks to accurately *transcribe*, which means transcribers must faithfully copy all *errors* in the original.

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<sup>225</sup> I noticed that this happened less frequently during 2006 and 2007.

<sup>226</sup> For example: "Mark and Cyndi's Family Tree" is a personal website contains photos, including ultrasound ones from 1997-98, but not beyond: at <http://www.oz.net/~cyndihow/evan.htm> (accessed 2 September 2007).

<sup>227</sup> <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/>

<sup>228</sup> <http://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/search.pl>

<sup>229</sup> <http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/default.asp>

The whole cyberspace GFH community is another CoP within the entire GFH community, with its own further divisions. In the early days, ‘bulletin boards’ and ‘user groups’ were popular. Many of these facilities (especially those hosted without charge by RootsWeb) were like a notice board where a message posted by one person could be read by all who visited the place of posting. Some messages, once posted in public, remained freely available to search engines and searchers, and many are still retrievable well past any use-by date. This is a double-edged sword for active discoverers of genealogical family history: someone newly interested can sometimes make contact with a previously unknown email cousin who has amassed considerable data of common interest and is still interested. However, when early postings to public forums remain accessible many years later, and the poster is not able to revise outdated work or contact information, errors can be fossilised and disseminated. Postings can be a target for those harvesting email addresses for various nefarious purposes.

#### *Email Discussion Lists*

Some cyberspace GFH communities use a means of communication called ‘List-Serves’ by many. The most common appellation now is ‘email discussion lists’, or just ‘Lists’. Lists are less public places to ask and answer questions, although they too maintain archives of messages, with email addresses. A List needs a person with software that enables any member to send a message simultaneously to all other subscribed members of a List; and the ‘List owner’ needs great deal of time, knowledge and forbearance to facilitate a List (see Appendix C). There is no monetary cost incurred in subscribing, or in sharing information – beyond the need to own a suitable computer with an Internet connection.

For the purposes of this thesis, I re-read postings to the Moonrakers<sup>230</sup> and Norfolk Lists from the early days of such List activity, in order to reflect on developments in this area, over time. The former list was facilitated by two men: one in California, the other in Townsville, Australia; the latter was run by American Mark HOWELLS who acknowledges Welsh, Scottish and English ancestry.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> This List is “dedicated to the history and genealogy of the ancient county of Wiltshire, England.” <http://www.moonrakers.org.uk/index.asp> (accessed 2 September 2007).

<sup>231</sup> Mark HOWELLS (see above Chapters 4 and 7) has published many of his interests at <http://www.oz.net/~markhow/writing/author.htm> (accessed 2 September 2007).

In 2004, as part of my fieldwork, I subscribed to two lists that were new to me, but of personal interest: the London and Lincolnshire Lists. The former had so much traffic I had to unsubscribe after one month. I retained my membership of the latter until my Internet Service Provider unwittingly caused my removal early in 2006. I did post some of my own research interests on that List to test the boundaries between document analysis and observation, and between non-participant and participant observation. I replied (off-List) to any who responded to my postings. There were very few, because most of my research in that county has been between 1500 and 1800, while the majority of those posting were interested in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century people and sources. This was one reason I chose that particular List to observe.

### *Methodological and Ethical Concerns*

The methodological concerns I identified in this area of my research were as follows. First, I needed to decide *why* I was visiting a site, or joining a List. Was it solely to read, for the purposes of this thesis, a document or series of documents produced in and by the wider Community as part of my analysis of documents? Was it to undertake non-participant observations as I continued with my personal research?

If I was accessing discussion material for my own personal research and noticing aspects relevant to the thesis as I did so, I concluded that I was being a non-participant observer. But, if I then became involved in discussions about the *nature* of the GFH community, were my email correspondents becoming participants in my observational research? The Genes Reunited Site<sup>232</sup> provides one example of this dilemma. In order to ascertain how the site then worked, what sort of people used it, and what benefits they gained from it, *primarily* for the purposes of this thesis, I had to register as myself and enter some data about my own ancestors. After gaining full access to the site, I was also able to see who else appeared to share some ancestry of collateral kin; and decide whether to contact them or not; and what to do when some contacted me. It did become a significant tool for contacts between me as a genealogical family historian, and other possibly-related-to-me researchers, during 2005.

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<sup>232</sup> Genes Reunited: <http://www.genesreunited.co.uk/> (accessed 19 February 2007).

It soon became clear that whenever anything from such a site or a List proved of personal interest, I had to decide if following it up by asking questions directly related to my thesis meant I had crossed the boundary into *participant* observation - for which I would need to apply for additional ethical approval, if I were to use material in this thesis. I had to decide whether to tell those few with whom I struck up an enjoyable and useful research relationship (in addition to the relationship of email cousinship) *after* embarking on the thesis, anything at all about my thesis. Should I ask them leading questions about what interested me beyond the shared family research? Could I use any observations on our *collective* research strategies and understandings in my findings? The enthusiastic desire of some (including old GFH friends) encountered on-line and in libraries, to engage with my explanation of why I was devoting so much time to my study of the whole GFH field and activity rather than exclusively to research into my own personal genealogy, only served to complicate the issue. Some offered pertinent material. I erred on the side of conservatism and explained I might need to get further ethical approval before accepting any such kind offers.

I did seek formal permission from two other Geneals, both core members, with me and with an interviewed informant, of an informal Cousins-Online-Group (CoG), in order to quote some of their insights into this mode of collaborative and collective research. The approval already granted by the FASS Ethics Committee covered this situation.

### **Interviewed Key Informants**

One of the questions I asked myself before formally undertaking this project was: why do so many people *continue* expending their time, money and intellectual effort on a voluntary activity, *for so many years*. An early decision therefore was to interview Geneals who had been actively researching for at least ten years.

I already knew that *motivation* for undertaking GFH research varied from time to time and from person to person, and included religious and other cultural reasons for engaging with it. I began this study knowing that some were *required* to do genealogical family history research, while for others there were socio-cultural

barriers that *prevented* them from pursuing a specific genealogical interest. However, I wished to focus on practice, not on motivation.

From my paid occupational life, I had a legacy of familiarity with both qualitative and quantitative methods; and a desire to avoid false evidence or findings based on any numerical analysis of qualitative information from too few informants. To interview sufficient randomly selected persons to *properly* generalise about the nature and role of the collective practice of the Community, would have been too extensive an undertaking; and counting attitudes, or agreement/disagreement with prepared statements might not produce answers relevant to my research questions, nor solve my problem.

The possibilities inherent in conducting interviews (open, semi-structured or structured) with key informants seemed to address my concerns and my aims, but before discussing my particular use of semi-structured interviews with key informants, I must outline another notion I wished to explore in this study: one that determined the way I selected interviewees. It also explains the number of persons interviewed.

#### *Different and Changing Foci of Interest*

From my own experiences within the activity I was studying, I knew that individuals, from time to time, focused on a number of different topics and activities. During the early stages of this study, I became interested in the way in which individuals within the A-NZ CoP seemed to *alter* their focus of interest, and therefore their practice, over time. I refer to activities such as: personal individual research concentrating on ancestors, or on descendants of a common ancestor – or on both. My mental list also included: engaging in collective research; undertaking paid research; establishing or developing small businesses related to genealogical research; recording oral family history; recording and writing genealogical family history; teaching genealogical family history; administering or organising societies and groups (both formal and informal); and locating, preserving, transcribing, indexing and disseminating records of use to genealogical family historians.

### *A Mathematical Image*

Initially I thought of these various aspects as ‘facets’ of the wider Community, because they are visible to both core and peripheral members, while remaining connected beneath the surface by the *shared membership* with all others in the Community. For a time I was more interested in the individuals doing the focusing than in the objects of their focus, and explored a little further what I termed an Individual Research Trajectory (IRT), over time, of each potential interviewee.<sup>233</sup> The term ‘focus group’ was already in common use both within and outside academia. I needed an equally apposite term for these Wengerian CoPs entirely within a larger CoP. I settled on *locus groups*.

In the first instance, I had in mind the *locus of a point*, and an image of individual members of the entire Community drawn into and engaging in person, through organised meetings and conferences, or through newsletters or other print media, or on-line: engaging with a group of people who were all particularly interested in the same aspect. As with all metaphorical images this one has limits: not all are equally<sup>234</sup> interested in the ‘point’ or magnet. Participation in any locus group, whether the person is a core or a peripheral member of the whole in Wenger’s terms, changes - sometimes very quickly, over time. There is no consistent pattern of change, with some returning to earlier interests after time spent in new areas. Besides, some genealogical family historians become interested, *and remain interested*, in every aspect of the field, simultaneously.

Wenger’s model suggested that my locus group is just another CoP, but, at the time, I wanted to understand the role of ‘active discoverers’ in the observed locus groups: in contra-distinction to the ‘preservers of the received’ (see Chapter 5). Although imperfect, the metaphor of locus groups led to an important decision about how to use the interview tool.

To complement the document analysis and non-participant observations for this broad and exploratory study of the phenomenon of genealogical family history in-

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<sup>233</sup> Each individual conducts research differently, at different stages of their membership of the Community. The differences are in, at least, historical and geographical focus, strategy (often dependent on financial circumstances), analysis and recording. IRTs are the result of changing horizons of interest. See Chapter 4.

<sup>234</sup> My perceived locus of those gathered around a point or object is not a geometric circle. It has a fuzzy and uneven boundary.

and-from Aotearoa-New Zealand over 50 years, I chose to interview *purposively selected* key informants. That is to say, I opted to begin interviewing persons I believed to be knowledgeable about one or more of my perceived locus groups; and then to continue approaching individuals, as with the saturation element of grounded theory, until I had some useful insights from them about each of the loci I had identified. I did not plan to categorise or count their insights, but I did want to ensure that my putative list of loci was exhaustive.

I was also aware of other factors that needed consideration before selecting and interviewing key informants, if I wished to record discussion about most of the loci on my list. I knew that the wider Community, at any point in time, contains people of different educational backgrounds, people with differing financial circumstances, and some who earn their living from or within the Community. Some researchers of genealogical family history join groups of people with a common interest, while others do not and, over the years I had observed a few people who had tried to pursue their own genealogical interests with no desire for any collaborative or collective engagement, advice or judgement.

### *Choosing the First Interviewees*

With all the above in mind, I chose as my first two interviewees persons known to me who exemplified the tending towards the collective and the tending towards the individual *research strategy preferences*: individuals who also illustrated the *in-and-from places* nature of genealogical family history research. All of the interviewees gave written permission for me to use their names in this thesis.<sup>235</sup>

My first interviewee, **Valma Kent**, has always lived in Australia, but has travelled widely. She is a member of the NZSG, with some research interests in New Zealand. I knew her to be a member of many other societies and on-line groups especially those with a focus on English research. We met because we are distant cousins, and had already collaborated on researching a family of interest. My second interviewee, **Michael Blain**, is a New Zealander who has lived in a number of other countries (England, Zimbabwe, Papua/New Guinea). He did not belong to any formal genealogical societies or research groups at the time of

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<sup>235</sup> I give the full names of the interviewees on the first occasion when I refer to them or quote them, and thereafter mainly use just their forenames.

interview. He had researched his own genealogical family history extensively in the past, but had become more involved in a project that was of a biographical-historical nature.<sup>236</sup> I knew that Michael incorporated research methods of GFH into his ongoing project. He has had many contacts, worldwide, with librarians, archivists and other individuals interested in the subject matter of his project, but ongoing contact with comparatively few genealogical family historians - apart from all those who email him about their genealogical interest in the BBD.

These two key informants therefore provided me with information relating to a genealogical researcher's residence and interests in relation to the location of families being researched, and insights into collaborative research methods; and much more as well. I conducted two follow-up interviews with Michael, and received ongoing contributions of reflection on topics covered in the interviews, mainly via email, from both Valma and Michael.

It had always been my intention to study the NZSG as a GFH community within my unit of observation - the whole A-NZ in-and-from Community, and I next approached the founder of that Society,<sup>237</sup> **Lucy Marshall**. She had been the first president and a long-serving editor of its journal, the *NZG*. Although I knew Lucy well, the interview provided information and perspectives I had not imagined, as well as very useful insights into aspects of the various locus groups whose inter-relationships I wished to explore further.

### *Modified Snowballing*

I then decided to approach other former presidents and long-serving high profile members of the NZSG, in order to ensure that at least one person would provide some data about each of the locus groups I had identified. Although there were elements of snowballing in this strategy, I did not ask any of the early interviewees for suggestions about whom I might later interview, mainly because most possibilities were persons already known to me. Using this strategy of purposive sampling, I was able to elicit data about each locus of interest from my other four

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<sup>236</sup> *The Blain Biographical Directory of Anglican Clergy in the South Pacific* (the BBD) includes biographical information on clergy and deaconesses of the Anglican Church in New Zealand, Polynesia, and Melanesia. For privacy reasons the cut-off date is an ordination date in 1930 and no living people are included. This project is now hosted by Project Canterbury at [http://anglicanhistory.org/nz/blain\\_directory/](http://anglicanhistory.org/nz/blain_directory/) (accessed 2 January 2008).

<sup>237</sup> Hereafter 'the Society' refers to the NZSG.

interviewees: **Anne Bromell, Paul Alpe, Bruce Ralston, and Colleen Main**. I was also able to record wide-ranging discussions of material additional to my prepared semi-structured questions. I use material from the interviews in Chapter 4 in particular.

Only one person did not reply to my request for an interview despite having earlier expressed an interest in this study, but this was not problematic. I had thought there would be two particular loci of interest that she might be willing to discuss, but other interviewees covered one, and her published material regarding the other was available to me. I also knew that I could discover some views and practices of many other key people in the NZSG, through the Society's Journal, and AFFHO conference proceedings - should it become apparent that I needed to further investigate any locus of interest. I have discussed some in Chapter 4.

Most of the interviews were in the homes of the interviewees. One was at my home, to coincide with an informant's conference attendance in Hamilton. Each interview lasted at least an hour. Some were considerably longer. I taped and transcribed them all myself and began analysing as I transcribed, making notes of any new insights and particularly apt ways of viewing the Community and its practitioners. I must reiterate that I was not looking for any statistical evidence regarding the background or practice of these key informants, but rather for their perspectives on practice, theorising, and ethical issues. I also listened to the tapes, and read the transcripts many times when seeking illustrations and understandings during the writing phases of this thesis.

#### *Key, Not Representative*

Another decision made during the interviewing phase was to discard any attempt to interview people whom some might think of as 'ordinary' members of the A-NZ GFH Community. It did not seem to me to be fair or sensible to ask one person, or even a dozen individuals, to represent all of those in this probably false category. How would I choose among the many thousands who were possible interviewees? Furthermore, I have long had reservations about using the term 'amateur' to mean unpaid, or inexperienced or incompetent, and pre-determining what might constitute 'expert' in any field, including the GFH field.

One of the very few theses I discovered at the beginning of this project that did engage with genealogy or family history sought to “identify the current practices and the use of computers in genealogical research by computer-using genealogists in the United States. An additional goal was to identify the extent to which amateur genealogists conducted genealogical research in compliance with the research standards of experts.”<sup>238</sup> Sydney Ann Beckett defined as ‘expert’ only those with a particular status in relation to two organisations. “For this study, even nationally prominent and highly skilled genealogists who have not become ‘certified’ or ‘accredited’ were defined as amateur genealogists.”<sup>239</sup> Her thesis seemed to me to be naïve or political in that aspect of its design.

Another of the few theses discovered that had anything at all to do with GFH, was a study that, according to its abstract, “[set] out to test the assumption that family history research in Wales is likely to be less successful than in England”.<sup>240</sup> This project seemed to me to be based on a futile comparison: one ‘family’ *however* one defines a family, *cannot* live in two places at the same time - not even ‘The’ Parrys of Llidiardau. Even if the aims were to compare *resources* for GFH research, just one missing document in civil or parish records (for the family branch or segment in question) would alter the chances of ‘success’ for a particular family, in either country.<sup>241</sup> I did not obtain the whole work to ascertain if important factors, such as those discussed in Chapter 5, were covered.

Some tangentially relevant theses, begun or completed more recently, have been in the areas of library and information science, or have related to the heritage industry.<sup>242</sup> Valma alerted me to the work of Kylie Veale of Curtin University of Technology who had written to Victoria GUM, and to many other groups accessible by Internet in the wider GFH Community.<sup>243</sup> In June 2004, M/s Veale had posted

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<sup>238</sup> Sydney Ann Beckett, “Current Practices and the Use of Computers in Genealogical Research” (doctoral thesis, Temple University, 1993), abstract, iv-v.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 19. Considered expert were: those certified by the National Board for Certification of Genealogists and those accredited by the Family History Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

<sup>240</sup> B. J. Barber, “Sources for Family History: a Case Study with Particular Reference to Wales, The Parrys of Llidiardau” (doctoral thesis, University of Aberystwyth, 1994), Expert Information Ltd index at: <http://www.theses.com.epoxy.waikato.ac.nz> (accessed 15 July 2004).

<sup>241</sup> See chap. 8, n. 516.

<sup>242</sup> See chap. 1, n. 88.

<sup>243</sup> Victorian GUM (Genealogists Using Microcomputers) Inc. VicGUM<sup>®</sup> is based in Melbourne, and has over 700 members around Australia. <http://www.vicgum.asn.au/> (accessed 29 October 2007). Valma is a member of this Community of Practice within the wider GFH Community.

detailed information about her “PhD Candidacy Proposal” with the working title of: “The Changing Face of Genealogy: An Empirical Study of the Genealogical Community Online”, on that institution’s web site. She seemed to view all her human subjects as hobbyists. She had sent messages to various Lists, including those hosted by Rootsweb. Archived postings easily accessible via a *Google* search revealed that more than one such list resented this approach; and that some list facilitators were ignorant of the parameters of most academic surveys.<sup>244</sup>

I chose my interviewed key informants from among people I knew, primarily to explore locus groups. I did not seek to include anyone to be ‘representative’ of *any* category of particular interest to some social scientists, nor to be representative of divisions foremost in the minds of some: gender, race and class, wealth, size and age for example.

The majority of those interviewed are Pākehā New Zealanders. One or two might prefer the term European New Zealander, rather than Pākehā. A few have kinship links with past and present Māori. All are Australasian, with ancestral roots mainly in the British Isles, and research interests wherever ancestors and collateral kin have lived: including continental Europe and islands of the South Pacific, but mainly in New Zealand and in English-speaking countries. In this respect, my interviewed key informants may reflect the ethnic and geographical composition of the NZSG over its 40 years more than the profile of the whole A-NZ GFH Community. However, most of my interviewees have worked with others seeking to research ancestors or kin in or from many places, cultures and societies; and used many types of records emanating from many countries. The collective experience of my key informants and myself includes being related to, or connected to, or researching individuals and family groups who identify as belonging to many other genetic and/or cultural ethnicities, in many geographic locations.

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<sup>244</sup> “Subject: Kylie Veale Date: Tue, 27 Apr 2004

Hello All,

The above lady is subscribing to many Rootsweb Mailing Lists as she can.

Please do not take any notice of any messages that you receive from her.

There have been a lot of complains [sic] about her from other Rootsweb Administrators/List Owners.

Please be on your guard as to her messages, I have unsubscribed her.

Regards

XXX

Basingstoke, Hants, UK

List Administrator”

The interviews also revealed that the key informants were members of different faith groups (or of none); that they grew up in families belonging to different economic strata and different occupational groups; and there was a mix of educational backgrounds. Five had studied for university or other tertiary qualifications, as had other of my key informants.<sup>245</sup>

In terms of my seeking to have at least one interviewed person to engage in discussion about each of my perceived locus groups, I was particularly intrigued to note that I did not succeed in doing so for one item on my list. I thought that two persons (selected primarily for other reasons) had majored in History at university – but the interviews revealed that neither had.

#### *Questions Put to Key Informants*

My method of interviewing the key informants who accepted my invitation was as follows. First, I determined to ask only a few direct questions to all key informants, to use follow-up questioning where appropriate and to allow each interviewee to speak freely and at length about aspects of particular genealogical interests (past and present).

The two main questions put to each were: What do you do that you call “family history”? Why do you keep doing it? I paraphrased those questions on some occasions during telephone, email and letter communications, during the process of setting up each interview time and place. I began most of the interviews by checking that each had been involved with GFH for a minimum of 10 years, and so learned when, or why, or for what reason each started.

At some time during most interviews, I also asked about the perception of unusual generosity within the community of genealogical family history (see Appendix C) that interested some of my supervisors in the early stages of the project. When appropriate, I asked questions about other areas: in particular ethical concerns within the A-NZ GFH Community, and theorisation within the whole field.

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<sup>245</sup> The list of qualifications of potential interviewees that I cited in my response to the Ethics Committee’s concerns is not quite the same as those of the informants I did eventually interview or include as key informants.

## Cousins Online and Other Informants

During this first phase of the study, it became apparent that there was important information about the practice of GFH obtainable from two other places: from on-line *group communication* about researching a family of interest, in Cousins Online Groups (CoGs); and from my own experience of researching GFH over many years, often collaboratively with my husband and close kin.

The four SELMAN CoG *core members* are Valma KENT (living in Australia and already one of my interviewees), **Jacqui BELL**, and **Richard JURD**, both of whom have lived in a number of counties in England; (Jacqui in France and Italy, and Richard in Singapore as well). I sought and gained permission from Richard and Jacqui to quote some of their questions, understandings and comments in this thesis. Each of the four of us in the SELMAN CoG has also been in touch with other Geneals researching our SELMAN family of interest.<sup>246</sup> This has involved approximately 50 people, over the years. Researchers still active presently live in Canada, America, France, and many English counties. There are also other New Zealanders and Australians on the permeable periphery of this CoP. This is *not* a One Name Study, although we do take note of other occurrences of the surname that links us. Each person has many *other* families of interest in other places, and contact with other researchers – each claiming time and research effort.

### *Other Informants*

My other main informants are my husband, **Graeme Brown**, our three children, our parents and some first cousins. Graeme and I are New Zealanders, We lived in England for most of 1974 and 1975, and briefly in 1986. Our grandchildren are beginning to contribute too, as I observe them reacting to photographs, artefacts and information about their ancestors; and meeting some of their contemporary close relatives, and cousins of various degrees.

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<sup>246</sup> 'Our' SELMAN 'family of interest' is a many-generational family of that name who lived in or near the village of Lacock in Wiltshire, from at least the 15<sup>th</sup> century until the present; *and all descendants bearing many different names*. The wider CoG includes all those descended from anyone (female and male) of that name in that place, and some who have married a descendant (of any name) of someone once bearing that name in that place.

## Reflexivity

Given my own ongoing involvement with the field I was studying, I was pleased to discover, that in the years between my undergraduate studies and this present endeavour, the concept of reflexivity – self-critical reflection on experience and practice - is now even more acceptable as a research tool than during my MA studies.

According to Travers,

The most distinctive feature of feminist qualitative research is the emphasis placed on reflexivity or engaging in reflection about the research process. Studies are usually written in the first person, and often include a lengthy autobiographical account of how the researcher came to a particular topic, and the emotional and other difficulties she [sic] experienced conducting interviews or doing fieldwork.<sup>247</sup>

I reflect that I have indeed written at length about how I came to the topic, but there were no particular difficulties undertaking the fieldwork, including the interviews. Travers sees feminists placing so much emphasis on reflexivity because “it is understood politically as a means of promoting female cultural values in an academy which is still dominated by ‘objective’ or ‘positivistic’ styles of analysis”.<sup>248</sup> I certainly have a commitment to consciousness-raising regarding the value of GFH research, but I appreciate the work of many, both men and women, who have contributed to ‘feminist’ understandings and gender studies over the centuries.<sup>249</sup> I discuss gender issues in the Community in Chapter 6.

### *Limiting My Field of Reflection*

Because I had so much personal genealogical research experience that was of potential use for reflection when describing and analysing the wider and A-NZ GFH Community I determined from the outset of this study to restrict my use of my own ongoing family history research in a number ways. While I needed to be wary of incorporating too much of my own experience, I did wish to use *reflection*

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<sup>247</sup> Travers, *Qualitative Research Through Case Studies*, 137.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>249</sup> This includes Lady Elizabeth (TANFIELD) CARY, Viscountess Falkland, author of the first (known) play written in English, by a woman; written 1602-1604 and published in 1613: “The Tragedie of Mariam: the Fair Queen of Jewry” - the topic of my MA dissertation.

on my own practice and discoveries where it might be most useful, to supplement information from the other methods.

To do this, I first identified areas of personal research that I did not want to put on hold for five or more years, because of the interest of particular relatives, including my late father, then in his 90s. Because of his involvement, I decided I would continue with my collaboration with kin around the world (see above) who were, and are, researching SELMAN families of North Wiltshire, and their various migrations.

Early in the life of this thesis, I began contributing my genealogical expertise to Michael's work on clergy biographies. I decided I would continue with that as well. To date only three of the subjects in his directory are known to be in any way related or connected to me, giving a useful contrast between researching related and unrelated people.

Other continuation work involved the completion of a manuscript about the Lincolnshire antecedents, and the first generation of New Zealand kin, of my emigrating (in 1855) Great-Great-Grandmother Mehetabel (BADLEY) FISK/SMITH. This was for an older relative. Work on the FISK line has continued sporadically but enthusiastically, in collaboration with a 2C1R, for the duration of the thesis.<sup>250</sup>

During this study, there were contacts renewed by others: one sharing ancestry in County Clare in Ireland with my husband's mother;<sup>251</sup> another from a second cousin of mine, reactivating our collaborative work into various antecedents of a couple who left London in 1875, work that we had both left aside for some years. Throughout the study there was also the vexing problem of feeling a need to respond to those who would inevitably discover that I had information about their families – many of them family lines and branches 'belonging' to my husband and

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<sup>250</sup> June Watson is member #13 of the NZSG: I am member #304. We were among the first kin (previously unknown to each other or to our immediate families) to meet through the formation and activities of the NZSG nearly 40 years ago – a point Lucy made during the interview. I acknowledge the collaborative research of Christine Madsen into these families.

<sup>251</sup> My mother-in-law, a many generation New Zealander of Scots, Irish and Norwegian ancestry, accompanied us to the United Kingdom in 1986. We visited Oslo, and many Scottish places with her. Some years later, she met her oldest great-grandchild in Dublin: he born there to New Zealanders who had spent many years in Australia.

children rather than to me. To address that problem I decided not to initiate any new research into those families, nor make any new personal contacts with such kith and kin. Only when someone contacted me, would I respond and perhaps follow up some research possibilities as a way of keeping abreast of the very rapid developments in the field. I knew it would be inevitable that more New Zealanders would discover that I had worked on those families 30-40 years ago, and get in touch. I discuss one such family below. I have already introduced them in Chapter 1, without naming them.

There has been other new correspondence. One exchange has been by old-fashioned letters, with one of my husband's collaterals,<sup>252</sup> living in Scotland. She discovered our interests in the shared name of DRON, during a visit to a FHS Research Centre situated in the county next to where she lives. She spontaneously sent a copy of a photo of an ancestor taken in the 1850s: the earliest-born (1783) direct ancestor of our children for whom we have ever yet seen a photograph.

I have not yet replied to some who have kindly sent me copies of their compiled trees and histories: some adequately acknowledging my early work and others reproducing it differently. I have also learned, belatedly, to be less than helpful to those who write, email or telephone asking for a copy of 'the' [X or Y] tree. Although I reduced the amount of my usual personal research work in these ways, some additional genealogical research was also necessary, or possible, for the purposes of work-related presentations during the life of this thesis.<sup>253</sup>

### *Enhanced Reflexivity*

I have described my reflexivity as *enhanced* because I have deliberately re-visited some research undertaken up to 50 years ago, and observed myself as genealogical researcher against understandings gained from this study, and from previous graduate study. For example, in 2003, as part of my fieldwork for this thesis, I decided to re-visit some places connected with Graeme's MORGAN and TONKS

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<sup>252</sup> Miss Dallas NAIRN is a half third cousin twice removed (½3C2R).

<sup>253</sup> Margaret Brown, "Waves and Ripples: the Wills of Our Emigrating Ancestors," in *They Came in Waves* Proceedings of the NZSG Conference, May 30 - June 2, 2003, North Shore, Auckland, compiled by the NZSG 2003 Conference Committee, edited by Jackie Wallis and Richard J. Hollier (Auckland: NZSG, 2003), 21-46. I collected and collated New Zealand wills of emigrating family members, analysed them, and attempted an overview of will-making habits among persons related or connected to them and to me.

ancestors and kin who had migrated from ‘somewhere’ and Shropshire, to Bilston near Wolverhampton; and emigrated in 1842. Thomas and Mary Ann raised a family of seven surviving children who produced at least 90 known grandchildren, and I estimate that their posterity alive today must number in the many thousands.

These direct ancestors lie buried in a small Methodist cemetery first visited some 30 years ago. The staff at the nearby local library could not give me precise directions. I walked on towards the motorway, anxiously hoping it did not now cover our urupā – and surprised myself, not so much that I had absorbed such attitudes towards burial grounds, as by the fact these were *Graeme*’s ancestors, not mine, and yet I was identifying strongly with them. I concluded that my sense of ownership and identity arose partly because they are my husband’s and children’s ancestors (and therefore mine in genealogical terms), and partly from the research work I had put into learning about them: a feeling also engendered in the past when studying the lives of writers of literature.

I eventually found the cemetery and the 1875 memorial stone in good repair, and noted a there was a very recent burial nearby: evoking questions about how many descendants have remained in the district, and whether I should name these kin in this thesis report.

This outline of some concurrent personal research also serves to demonstrate the range of activity of one genealogical family historian, and her individual research trajectory. It also underlines the practice of maintaining contact with kin who collaborate regarding research: one of the aspects of GFH that surprises those who think GFH is a subspecies of the history of the past.

This discussion of the place of each method in my methodology, and of my rationale for the combination of research methods chosen for this study, concludes this chapter. In the next Chapter, I introduce my key informants and their perspectives and reflections.

## Chapter 4

### Diversity of Interest of GFH Practitioners: People, Places, Sources

But we millions of family history researchers...fall into many more physical categories than our minds would like. My mind wants to spend three weeks in each of the archives of West Yorkshire, Lancashire, Northampton, London, Cornwall.... all within the next few minutes - an impossible task, but necessary due to this driving disease of genealogy.<sup>254</sup>

The writer quoted above belongs to a number of geographical GFH locus groups, and is drawn to each, simultaneously, by his research interests in what he calls a physical category: an English County. It is not the scenery that attracts him. His mind wants to take him to archival repositories in each place. When researching in the records of any one of those repositories, in person or in cyberspace, his mind will take him to family groups of a situated past, his families of interest - and to surprises, frustrations, understandings, and more research. His findings will probably be shared with co-researchers and kin of the present; and they might be recorded for family and for scholars of the future.

Geneals in the A-NZ GFH Community become interested in particular family places, wherever in the world that takes them. They get to know their places as they were, through books and photos, maps and histories, film and cyberspace. They visit them as they are today. They learn where records about people and places are held, and seek out those documents or artefacts in person, through an agent, or in cyberspace. They wonder why their families (in groups or as individuals) came to be living in particular places, and if and why they moved. They learn about how they occupied themselves, at work and at home. They cannot choose their families, but they can choose which families of interest to learn more about: families related or connected to them, and to others whose **horizons of interest** intersect with their own.

In this chapter I focus on the diversity of interest and activity within the GFH Community in-and-from Aotearoa-New Zealand, as it has developed over the past half century - and in so doing define a GFH horizon of interest.

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<sup>254</sup> Bob Packwood, "The Beauties of Armchair Research," *Family Tree Magazine* 12, (2001): 63.

My key informants are genealogical family historians with many insights into the wider GFH community, its locus groups and collective practice; and into their own research interests and expertise. They were all members of the in-and-from A-NZ GFH Community, *and* of other in-and-from GFH communities, when I interviewed them, spoke with them, or emailed them.

I begin by introducing the interviewed key informants through the answers they provided to one question: When did you begin? I then summarise data provided in answer to two questions also asked of them and of others: What do you do that you call research? What keeps you doing it?

This chapter then focuses on the **topics of interest** that have concerned these informants, and other members of the A-NZ GFH Community, and ends with examples of skills acquired by some individuals in order to pursue GFH research.

### **Questions Put to Key Informants**

*“When did you begin researching your genealogical family history?”*

I present the responses to this question in the order in which I interviewed these informants, without intervening comment. My aim is to allow those whom I will quote in this and following chapters to introduce themselves. I quote the interviewees directly or closely paraphrase their responses without altering the spoken language register each uses, except for disambiguation purposes: because I believe to do so would be contrary to the transdisciplinary ethos, for my mediation would diminish their identity and their contribution. I do not necessarily agree or disagree with any of their statements; but I have of course quoted selectively with regard to the aims of this study, to complement data obtained elsewhere.

**Valma** began researching her genealogical family history soon after she retired: about ten years before the interview. She explained that she began because her youngest son showed interest in his family names: her maiden name was STIRLING and her family always thought they were Scottish, although they turned out to be STARLINGS, from Essex.

He left the material lying around and I had information here from my family, and I thought this would be something interesting to do in my retirement... I hadn't quite worked out what I'd do in my retirement, and so I went to a course with the CAE, the Council of Adult Education here in Victoria and the lady giving the lecture said, "Don't go any further unless you are prepared to become addicted". I didn't leave. I continued, and perhaps it's fair to say I am addicted.

**Michael** responded to the question about when he started, thus:

I was the eldest grandson and the eldest grandchild, and I lived not far from my grandmother and had a good relationship... and through her being a people person she wanted to talk about people and family and her background and her history. So there were half a dozen key words, and places that I learnt when I was, you know, 10 or 11, and then when I was little more adult - and she had died in fact, the names started to come back to me and came alive... and I wanted to know what those words meant that were slightly magic for me at one time.

In answer to a follow-up question Michael explained that the key words that fascinated him, were not names of people, but of places:

Plumbland was the one that was the clue - it seemed such a strange word, I couldn't find it on a map - once I learned how to read a map.... It's in Cumberland - a little village. Another 20 years later and I actually visited it and went to the church and saw the graveyard and... so that [early experience] was suddenly anchored in a discernible modern reality.

**Lucy's** interest started when she was about four years old:

My grandmother used to tell me stories. We lived with her, for a period of a year or so, and, I daresay while my mother was doing dinner, she would sit me down on the sofa and say, "I will tell you the story of my life". She was a five year old when she came out from England on a sailing ship and she could remember her family in England. That is obviously not when I started doing research but I do look back to that as what made the lives of previous forebears vivid, to me....

Lucy went on to add that she was "always rather intrigued by the genealogies in the Bible and could remember "my mother and I doing some family trees out of those, and some concurrent lines of the Kings of Israel and Judah and seeing how those worked together..." The first drop-line chart she remembered doing herself was of her mother's kin: "My mother had, to my astonishment, about 40 cousins and various ones would call..." After they left, Lucy would ask where they fitted in. Her parents were each one of eight children, and she would ask if the visitor

was a LAWRY or a SPENCER. “I needed to have that set out, being perhaps of an analytical turn of mind. I wanted to have that firmly in my mind...”.

Lucy also commented that her grandmother had a picture of *her* grandmother on the wall. The people she had heard about were therefore “back to great-great-grandparents, and were quite recognisable human beings with stories”. All those things contributed to her early interest. When in her early teens, Lucy started writing to a great-uncle who was in his late eighties and “had a whole store of things”.

The interview with **Anne** began with a discussion about doing research for others, in her role as a professional genealogist. I then asked about how she had started on her own genealogical family history:

What got me started in doing my own was a trip to England, in 1979, where my sister and I visited an elderly aunt in Gloucestershire. She was in her 80s and she told us stories about my mother's parents and my mother's family – stories that we were completely unaware of in New Zealand. My grandmother had died when I was three and my grandfather never spoke her name again from that day.

My aunt was able to fill us in because.... she knew a lot about that time-period. We had no knowledge of it here in New Zealand, for much of it my mother couldn't remember.

**Paul** shared his reason for getting started, about 25 years previously:

I got started mainly through sport actually, being a sportsman - not a historian at all. I bought a book which was published in 1975 about cricket's centenary, and happened to flick through the book and found a picture in there that had the name, which later turned out to be that of my great-great grandfather. I wasn't aware that he had played in Wellington. So that started my interest about this person. I asked my father and he told me, and I have since found out that his son, Dad's grandfather, also played for Wellington – just one game; but Sam played for Wellington, Auckland and Canterbury.... So it was sport that started my interest.

**Bruce** developed a general interest when he was about 11 or 12, and a reasonably distinct interest by the time he was 13 or 14. He remembered compiling family trees and starting to go to places to find information. In response to a question as to whether other members of his family were also interested, Bruce replied in the affirmative:

My mother was particularly so - it was primarily through her and I suppose, my maternal grandmother. It was all spurred as much as anything that I can remember by a compilation of photographs that my grandmother had in her house, a framed photograph on the wall, that actually had a little family history on the back, written by a member of the family who had died in the 1920s. I don't know that she necessarily had an interest in family history but she had a very large family and she was also very involved - interconnected with the family - so I guess it was a sort of a living family history rather than a study....

**Although Bruce's interest started then, there was a gap after the initial interest.**

It would have been about the time when I went to university in Wellington that I did go to places like the Turnbull Library - because I had heard they were places where you could find out information; and I did pick up a little bit of information from some of their card indexes at that stage. It probably wasn't until I'd finished university and went to Teachers' College in Auckland that again I took an interest in finding places where you might get pieces of information. After a year at Teachers' College I went to Hawkes Bay, and at that stage got involved with the local Branch of the New Zealand Society: I had only just joined the Society at that stage. So that gave me some ideas of other sorts of things to look at, particularly through the [Society's] magazine, and to think a little bit further afield.

**Colleen could date when her interest turned into research, and she recounted what caused her to begin that phase, in 1963:**

My mother very rarely babysat for us because she worked fulltime, and on this occasion she had babysat for some special event that we needed to go to.... and on the Sunday morning she ended up with two of my children in bed with her. 'Tell us a story.' She started to tell them a story about when she was a little girl growing up on a farm, at Whangarei Heads.... the same stories she had told me as a child; and I just thought: 'I can't let this get lost', and so that was what started me off.

Colleen started asking her mother questions about who lived on the farm and what happened on the farm, and it led to her learning that two families of cousins grew up beside each other. The houses were about a quarter of a mile apart and on the same farm. This meant that the cousins grew up more like brothers and sisters than as cousins. Colleen pointed out the implications: "...the children of those cousins are now closer to me than the relationship indicates - they were more like first cousins than second cousins - and still are."

She then started asking her mother more questions, and more, until her mother said: "They are all buried at the Parua Bay cemetery. I'm going up there at

Christmas, I'll look it up for you.” Colleen’s mother wrote down information off the tombstones, and brought it back, “which, of course led to more questions and more questions.” When her mother did not know the answers to all of her questions, Colleen recalled that she said:

Your grandmother used to correspond with cousins who lived in the South Island. You write to Cousin Kitty and to this person, and so on; and so I started a correspondence with these family members. They were elderly and they were interested, and they ended up giving me lots of information and they also sent me handwritten family tree charts in my grandmother's handwriting, that she had given them - no dates, but names; and so I had a skeleton to start from. That was where it started.

Colleen also outlined other events that caused her to start doing more than collecting information. She had received a legacy from a relative whose precise relationship was unknown within the family. There were other names to place, some in family diaries she had received. Other diaries had gone to a distant repository, so on a “purely genealogical holiday” with a friend:

I spent five days in the Otago Early Settlers [Museum] going through [the family] diaries making notes - and there were some letters there as well - and then following things up with newspaper clippings from *Otago Daily Times* at the Library. I didn't have time to do any more than gather information at that stage, but the Museum Curator, Miss Pryde, kept bringing me things and finding this and doing that; and when I left asked: “What are you going to do with all this information? You have got to write the family history for this family”.

I wrote that story over a Christmas holiday, with three young children. We were up at the beach. Ken took them fishing while I wrote, in an exercise book, by hand - no typewriter, no computers. My sister typed it up for me, and we got the photos together, but that's another story.

### *“When Did You Begin?”*

I did not ask my interviewees *why* they started. First, there is a difference between having an interest and becoming an active researcher. Second, I have long held the belief that many Geneals do not know all the factors that caused them to start. Some would know and be willing to share, some would know but might not want to share, while others would have been in the middle of it before they realised, and might therefore not be able to answer such a question. Some of my interviewees did indicate why they started, in the course of recalling when they began to undertake GFH research.

However, it is a question that others have asked: in 1986 the *New Zealand Genealogist* planned a series of “profiles” of members, suggesting reasons given by various others, at the time. Members were invited to write in, so that extracts could be published.<sup>255</sup>

In the wider Community, Ronald Lambert is one who has been interested in this question.<sup>256</sup> He surveyed 38% of the membership of the Ontario Genealogical Society, in the 1990s, excluding branch-only, associate and corporate members, and those with non-Canadian or non-American addresses from his sample. He received replies from 89% of those contacted. (Part I: 3-4.) He asked those OGS members questions about their “reasons for doing genealogy,” allowing up to three reasons. The responses confirm my appreciation that GFH is about the past, the present *and* the future, for 79% gave “to come to know my ancestors as people” as a reason; 73% gave posterity as a reason doing it “for children, grandchildren, nephews or nieces”; and 80% said they do genealogy “To learn about my roots, about who I am.” Meeting living relatives was a reason given by 23%, while 46% said they like to solve puzzles. (Part III, 3-4.)

Lambert also asked why, in hindsight, they had started genealogy. The highest number (41%) gave what Lambert has grouped as ‘family influences’ as the reason for starting. (Part III: 8). He found that “nearly a quarter of the sample... seem to have adopted family history as part of the grieving process” (Part III: 12.)

In his extensive discussion Lambert also put forward stereotypes he had heard or read about, from outsiders and insiders, concerning motivation of genealogists: claims that some are “seeking to embellish their lives through illustrious ancestors”; while others think “age drives people into the arms of religion” as they face their mortality. Genealogists are thought by some to be collectors “interested only in their ancestors’ vital statistics” and yet others think genealogy may be

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<sup>255</sup> Some were published in issues 156 and 157 of the *NZG*.

<sup>256</sup> Ronald Lambert, “A Study of Genealogists and Family Historians Part I,” *The Global Gazette: Canada’s Online Family History Magazine*, no.17 (1998) 1-14.  
--- “A Study of Genealogists and Family Historians Part II,” *The Global Gazette: Canada’s Online Family History Magazine*, no. 2 (1999) 1-18.  
--- “A Study of Genealogists and Family Historians Part III,” *The Global Gazette: Canada’s Online Family History Magazine*, no.2 (1999) 1-16.  
--- “A Study of Genealogists and Family Historians Part IV,” *The Global Gazette: Canada’s Online Family History Magazine*, no. 5 (1999) 1-23.

taken up by those who have relocated often, or, if not suffering from disruption, “are trying to compensate for the disappearance of the society they knew in their youth.” (Part III: 9.) However, Lambert finds little evidence of any of those motivations in his survey responses. Nor was any forthcoming in the abovementioned profiles, published in the *NZG*. They too attest to a diversity of other reasons for starting.

#### *A Surprising Discovery: Starting Young*

The interviews confirmed those key informants had been active researchers of genealogical family history for at least 10 years. However, I was surprised to learn that most had begun to enquire about their forebears, and to add to their conceptualisation of their genealogical families, when they were young children, teenagers, or in their twenties. Valma, taking over GFH research from a son, has often said she wished she had started much sooner. My father did not begin a phase of active discovery until in his seventies. He too often wondered why he had not started sooner. Mark Herber (see Chapter 5) started at 19, Anthony Wagner before he left school.

My email informants also shared their reasons for starting out on the family history way of life. Jacqui considers she “first started family history research properly when contemplating names for their first child.” She liked the way her parents chose ‘unique’ names for herself and her brother, and ‘family’ middle names. She already knew the names of all her son’s “great-great-grandparents and great-great-great aunts and uncles as well as a few from earlier generations.” Jacqui “wondered about the frequency/continuity” of given names, and what others she might find.<sup>257</sup> She also wondered if there was a latent interest on her part, for a Sixth Form careers questionnaire suggested archivist as a vocation. The naming exercise fired her enthusiasm for GFH, and she “has not stopped since [despite] the constraints imposed by [young children].”

Richard started research about 7 years ago, when he read an article in the paper regarding the 1901 Census and its availability on-line. “Once I found my grandparents I was up and running.” Richard knew almost nothing about his past

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<sup>257</sup> Among forenames Jacqui has found in her family of extension, to date, are Hercules, Hayter, Despar, and Wendelin.

kin prior to that, not having asked his parents in time, but an uncle has since been a main source of immediate family information.

An article in a 2006 issue of the *NZG* honours three long-time NZSG members: all had become active researchers as very much younger women.<sup>258</sup> I met many ‘old-timers’ at the NZSG 2006 and 2007 conferences – most of them far from ‘elderly’. The foregoing raises questions to be asked of those who believe and disseminate the view that genealogical family history research is an activity that only or mainly interests people when they are older, *because* they are older.<sup>259</sup>

I believe many take up GFH as a hobby when older because they *then* have the resources, including time and experience – not just because they are old in years.

Many of my informants have affirmed the importance of inter-generational interest: citing parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and older cousins as sources of knowledge, encouragement, and contacts in the wider family. It may be that other Geneals, who have come to GFH late in life did not have parents or grandparents who were themselves interested. Some late starters may have been too busy with employment and other activities to ask older relatives (if any were alive at the time); or, their older relatives may have been too busy to tell younger ones, or to actively pursue unheard of kin.

Some episodes in the BBC television series *Who Do You Think You Are* highlighted this situation. The producers, in a quest for even more compelling viewing, tended to look for mysteries where none existed and on occasions encouraged some celebrities to believe that their older relatives had deliberately kept things quiet. One knew many older people in the street in which she grew up, but may not have realised that some of those she called “Auntie” and thought were just friends, were probably quite close relatives: perhaps great-aunts, or cousins of her parents. The interviewer did not seem to realise that the term may have been more than an honorific.

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<sup>258</sup> Lucy Marshall, “Three Milestone Birthdays in 2005,” *The New Zealand Genealogist*, 298 (2006): 80.

<sup>259</sup> For example, the Convenor of the NZSG Kapiti Branch stated, at a meeting on 26 July 2005: ‘People don’t take up this hobby until they are older’.

It was also clear to me that some persons accused of secrecy may not have known, for example, of infant deaths occurring before their own arrival into a family, simply because *they never asked*, or because they never listened to (or overheard) their parents, or others, discussing such things.

This is not to deny that some people, then and now, would not wish to talk about certain events in the past; nor that others may have had little interest in the past in general. Amanda REDMAN was one in the BBC series who was aware that some information was being censored when she was young. Jeremy PAXMAN said at the beginning of his quest that he was interested, but not excited - he was doing it because it might be better television than some he had seen - but he was moved to tears by some discoveries about his ancestors.

Occasions for inter-generational discussion are also dependent on factors other than interest: some potentially interested family members live far apart and may meet only on formal occasions, such as funerals, weddings and special birthdays, when there is much family news of the present to catch up on, in the limited time available. Other families may live in close proximity but do not discuss certain topics with young children present. There may be young children within earshot for many decades, and so opportunities for inter-generational discussion may be lost to those who *would* be interested. I am convinced that secrecy should not be thought the *default* reason for lack of oral history knowledge within families.

Not everyone is born interested in the past in general, or in long dead relatives, or in knowing how and why people of the present are genealogically related to them. Some may have been told many stories, but did not try to remember them. One NZSG member, belatedly interested, has admitted this, in print: “Whenever my grandmother mentioned anything about her family I closed my ears.”<sup>260</sup>

*“Why Have You Kept on Researching?”*

I next summarise the responses from all my key informants in answer to this question.

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<sup>260</sup> Sandra Cooper, “How I Started,” *New Zealand Genealogist* 249 (1998): 30-31. We met this young woman at a conference, and discovered a relationship, but she did not want to just receive the research of others - she wanted to learn how to research, by doing it herself. I recall that although disappointed at the time not to be able to share my ‘latest find’ of Noadiah, a lad left behind in Shropshire, I respected her approach.

When I asked Valma what it is that keeps her researching, more than 10 years since she began, she replied:

I suppose it's the challenge... I do other things as well, but it is tempting, especially when an email comes in with some information in it... I try to work on it straight away and then get back to them with a reply if I can. It is a great hobby, but you can leave it, you can go away for six months and it doesn't spoil: it's just waiting to be picked up when you are ready.

For Valma, the challenge is to integrate new information about an individual with data already held. She checks if the person is a relative, or can be connected to known relatives, using a variety of records in the public domain and otherwise available to her, and then seeks to extend knowledge about that person and his or her immediate family, and in-laws. Her next step is to share her findings and questions with other interested researchers among her networks of email contacts.

Valma meticulously explores the parentage and siblings of anyone proved to have *married in* to a particular family. She is thus one of many Geneals who already applies Bertaux's concept of rectangular genealogy<sup>261</sup> to her GFH research.

Michael began research into his ancestry many years ago, but left that aside for his work on Anglican clergy serving in the South Pacific. Michael also researches the parents and the grandparents of each of his subjects *and* of the spouse of each. I asked about my perception that he felt he had exhausted what interested him with regard to researching his own family:

Well I did. I found about a thousand family members that are on my computer programme, and that's quite a lot of people, and the more I went the more I learnt how to do it and once I'd got a thousand it was getting extremely obscure and getting more and more on the edge of conjecture and more and more distant from me and my generation, not just in the sense of going back in time.... It had just become a search without meaning by that time.

Michael went on to explain in more detail what it was that had ceased to be satisfying about his earlier research. All his emigrating name-lines had come to New Zealand generations ago, mainly to Canterbury.

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<sup>261</sup> Daniel Bertaux, "Social Genealogies Commented On and Compared: An Instrument for Observing Social Mobility Processes in the 'Longue Durée'," *Current Sociology* 2/3 (1995): 69-88. I discuss this instrument in Chapter 10.

They were just ordinary people. They didn't hit the headlines in any way very much and they didn't have very common names, like Brown, so they weren't that difficult [to identify]. But in terms of getting any identity from them, it was extraordinarily obvious how the war suddenly gave men a profile. And how ridiculous it is that people hardly exist in our nation's story, unless they went out and fought and got killed and suddenly they exist, and I thought, 'What does this say about our values of who people are?' So those sorts of question came up in my mind. I'm interested still and I will find out more one day when I come back to it; and now there's more on the Internet I can expect to find more at another layer, another level. I did put in thousands of hours - it wasn't just a passing interest - over about ten years...

I asked a supplementary question: "And so what kept you going back then?"

Michael had spent so long on his own family research, he said, in part to see how far back he could go, and also

To see how far I could interpret bad documents that showed a person to exist by name in a little place, (and not just these sort of fanciful conjectures of people all said to be descended from 'Greensford the First' or something - the way people talk about their noble pedigree). It was fascinating to see repeated patterns: yeomen farmers, yeomen farmers, yeomen farmers, and peasants, and shepherds - people of that style, along each line of the tree - I kept getting relations who were those sorts of people. There were very few, almost none, anywhere among those thousand who were city dwellers - that was interesting....

Lucy responded to the question by highlighting compulsion and challenge:

Well I think it becomes a bit of an addiction: because you have certain successes or you have certain, perhaps, frustrations - and something keeps niggling at you to try and find it. On the other hand, anything that you solve just poses a further question because anyone you do find, then you say: Who were his parents? It is a jigsaw without borders.... It's like a game of, hide and seek, almost: it goes on, and on and on.

I asked Lucy if there was some disappointment when she finally found some of the ones who had been hiding for so long, having experienced that myself on occasion. Her reply was unequivocal: "Oh no, there's a great feeling, a great feeling of satisfaction - and there are always some who elude you anyway, and something may well become available to enable the work on them to continue."

Anne was also quite sure what kept her researching: "The thrill of the chase." Was she ever was disappointed when she did find those she sought?

No... not disappointed, one of the difficulties, and probably one for [a particular client] too, is that we still would like to find out more [about other aspects of someone taking an alias] - so any disappointment is more that there is still more to do and it may be not possible [because records are lacking] to make those connections....

Anne expanded on the challenge of problem-solving as something that had kept her interested after 21 years of teaching genealogical family history, saying: I'm always interested in what [members of my classes] are doing. It is always a challenge to see if you can solve [their problems]. Anne's focus, in all her genealogical work, was always on: "relationships and where they lived and, if it's possible, to trace why they migrated - what happened in the area...."

Paul had given considerable thought as to why he continues to research family history:

What keeps me going with family history? I guess a couple of things keep me going. One is just the things that I have found from researching that relate to me and my character and the sort of things that I am interested in, like sport: bowls or cricket - I have found that as a theme right the way through. Then on my mother's side: just finding out why they did come out here, where they went to, what life was like? So that has been my history, because I had no [previous] interest in history at all - but it has been quite interesting when you know that some of your family have been involved with it.

I think that, as strong [a reason] as that, has been the fellowship of the people within the Society...in general; but more specifically we have a small group within our Society that gets together every year. We go along to conference and, it wouldn't really matter if there wasn't a conference on, to be honest: we just enjoy the company now, and we've been going to conferences for... - I don't think I've missed one since I first went, which was '85, so that's 18 years. That group comes from right around the country, and we have established a great friendship and fellowship: and so I would say that it's a dual thing - if there wasn't any more family history [to do] we would still be getting together.

Paul went on to talk about that group of people, from a very wide variety of backgrounds, who have had "a lot of laughs - and I think that's been an important thing, and because we are pretty non-judgmental". They have also gathered to support each other in less happy circumstances. "We don't get together that often, but we do have fun when we do, and so it's interesting; and people would walk over glass for each other in that group."

I asked Bruce why he was still actively discovering family history, and he replied:

Because I know that there is still so much more to investigate; and it's not only the facts and figures part but it's the explanation part of it as well.... though it is often the facts and figures which help to give the explanation...

Bruce had alluded to problem solving earlier in the interview, and elaborated on one of the parameters of problem solving and the enjoyment this affords him:

It is an intellectual challenge.... There are a number of comparisons that I've used - none of them are particularly original, but the sort of things that people associate genealogical research or family history with - jigsaw puzzles, and detective work or detective stories: putting forward a range of clues, and then trying to draw a conclusion. So there are those sorts of elements. In fact, I don't like jigsaws particularly, and I will watch a detective story on television more because it is set in an English village than for trying to work out who the murderer was.

When I was gathering information in Scotland... I was travelling on a train to Glasgow and... I can still remember actually writing in the notebook "Eureka" and the date...and when I look back now, I don't know why I hadn't made the conclusion beforehand. There was evidence that I already had from a New Zealand point of view, and there was evidence through a family name from a Scottish source....

Bruce recalled thinking: "Oh yes, 'landed', and all that sort of thing....". He was able to make that particular conclusion because he had both pieces of information in front of him, and knowledge of implications of land ownership. The conjunction of findings and knowledge enabled him to then follow up on what he had just realised. This example encapsulates the satisfaction derived from using data and knowledge to enable the furthering of one's research: a way of thinking and acting familiar to many academic researchers.

Bruce does not feel disappointment when he finds the object of a long search either; but he did reflect on the feelings engendered by sending off for a certificate when experience reminds that it may not further the research:

The other night on the Internet I was looking at Australian material and found something that looked as if it was going to match; and then I ordered the certificate online; and now there's the anticipation of waiting for it, to see whether it is going to match. Is it going to have some piece of information that will help to prove the connection? The feeling of sort of despairing that probably it won't - because she died too early - the registration's not going to have the range of information I need on it. So yes, I still get quite distinct buzzes out of doing things like that.

Colleen succinctly identified two reasons for continuing to be a genealogical family history researcher, “Curiosity, and doggedness...” Colleen’s curiosity was about “Everything! I think too, as, as I have seen my children grow up, I've also looked at family patterns and traits and genetics, and I've seen parallels...and there are some things I still want to know.” She gave an example of a physical feature inherited by some family members but not others, and how “...because of the brother and sister marrying a sister and brother” she did not know which further-back line it came from. To answer her self-set question, Colleen then needed to find someone who was descended from one line and not the other, and successfully traced a relative with the feature, one who descended from only one of their shared lines. At this point in the interview, we both removed our footwear, because I too have a foot peculiarity, inherited from my mother and her mother, though not passed on to my daughter or her daughters. Bill ODDY, in the “Who Do You Think You Are?” series, was another who took off his shoes in the pursuit of GFH: when he met a ‘new’ relation who believed the name-line family have a genetic foot feature.

Richard and Jacqui echoed comments offered by those interviewed when asked why they have kept researching. Richard replied: “Why continue? It is like starting a crossword puzzle and not completing it or only reading half of a book. I guess the difference is that a Family Tree is never totally completed. Branches of the tree can lead to twigs and even leaves and so the obsession continues.”

Jacqui wrote: “It's fun, fascinating, thought-provoking, frustrating, exciting, intriguing, challenging - or in other words, totally addictive! - A 3D or even a 4D jigsaw puzzle. You never know what you might find out next, or where your next line of enquiry will take you.” She commented further:

The facts that were once skeletons in the family cupboard have on the whole become fascinating detail. I enjoy discovering who my family members really were. I won't be able to trace my ancestors back to the cavemen as my eldest son once enquired, but do like adding extra generations! My husband used to ask when would I finish. I think he now realises the answer to that question is never! Theoretically there must come a time when all sources have been exhausted, and all "knowable" facts about all family members have been found - but I cannot envisage such a stage. At that point, I may turn to spouse families.... I also enjoy sharing my growing expertise in this field with others who are starting out - who knows where that will take me, the thought of becoming a professional

genealogist is quite appealing... I enjoy sharing & discussing with other relations. I now find I have cousins in many countries - it's fun to be exchanging emails simultaneously with people in Australasia & USA, which has happened occasionally (addiction does not lead to early nights). It would be great to meet many of these people too.

The above responses give diverse answers to the question about continuance. In the documents of the wider Community, continuance reasons given by GFH hobbyists include enjoyment, competition, and satisfaction from construction and collecting; and many Geneals also exhibit a desire to *learn* more in the sense of extending their intellectual understandings: to learn about others, and *with* others: Wenger's social learning. I begin the next section with examples of diverse topics of interest discussed during the interviews, and of GFH activities undertaken by many in addition to personal research into families of interest.

*"What are some current and past topics of interest?" I asked myself.*

This section contributes to documentation of aspects of GFH that I contend are not widely known, including the thinking of my key informants at the time, about GFH in general, and about their then current research work. Lucy discussed a number of different topics, including emigration:

Why did anybody make that huge decision, when, for most of them, it was cutting many ties, because lack of literacy meant that for some of them there were few letters....

There are a whole lot of social things to explore in relation to occupation and migration. What they did here in the new country; and there again I suppose there were stereotypes, of people coming and taking up the land and breaking in the land, but I don't have that stereotype in my background. I don't have any pioneering farmers.

My great-grandmother evidently had been a governess in England, and [here] they had a governess to look after their [own] children, but she said to the governess, 'You cook the dinner, and I'll teach the children'. So it's interesting to find out what really happened, not just the stereotype.

I commented on Lucy's expressed interest in Biblical genealogies and asked if she had ever been interested in Royal Family genealogies.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> My question was prompted, in part, because I remembered meeting a New Zealand resident 'amateur' genealogist in the 1970s. She had discovered material new to the British Royal family. She was encouraged, by members of the A-NZ GFH Community, to send her findings to the then President of the Society of Genealogists, Lord Louis Mountbatten, and was subsequently invited to tea with the Queen, by way of thanks. The current president is Prince Michael of Kent.

Yes, well it's strange you should ask that. I think I've always been interested in looking at those genealogical tables and sorting them out, and I'd heard about these few people who get a gateway ancestor and are then on to the royal thing. Well, only last month, someone, out of the blue, - sent to two people I email, something on my fourth great-grandmother - all documented back to Henry the Second and Eleanor of Aquitaine. I've always believed that we must all be descended from these people - though why he should be such a desirable ancestor I've never understood. I've just read a novel about Eleanor this last week; and in the middle of it, I thought, oh yes, I do have some books there about the Plantagenets, and Edward the Fourth, and I'd forgotten all about those and well, they'll have family trees there; and I can play around with those. It's just fun - once you get on to them, but it's no particular source of pride or anything.

In addition to outlining how she started the NZSG, and later began her small business (see below), Lucy also covered topics that I discuss elsewhere: gender issues, and the way in which the shared aims of those in the A-NZ GFH Community can break down social barriers, including those stemming from religious affiliations. She also mentioned the pastoral care some gave to others in the GFH Community. Anne, for example, had visited other leaders in the Society when they were suffering ill health or involved in difficult decision-making.

All of those interviewed had visited places with ancestral associations, in New Zealand and elsewhere. Lucy spoke about a visit to Tahiti.

Some of my mother's forebears were part of the party of *Duff* missionaries who were the first Protestant missionaries to go to Tahiti. They were there only eight years after BLIGH. Everything is all interlocked, and it is very interesting because some of the mutineers were found and taken back to Portsmouth, and one of those had compiled a Tahitian dictionary. They had cohabited with the women - that is how they learned the language: it was the pillow talk. Henry NOTT, who was one of the ones who cohabited, had gained a much better knowledge of Tahitian, and he taught himself Greek and Hebrew so that he could work from the original languages.

This group of 21 missionaries included 5 married couples, and I'm most proud of the BONNERS who took two little children with them. They left from London but went via Portsmouth where the local clergyman at Portsmouth had been in touch with a mutineer and had been handed a Tahitian dictionary and so he then gave that to the missionaries who were on their way to Tahiti. I went with another *Duff* descendant to the 200th celebrations in Tahiti, and the point was made, in a special magazine, in French, devoted to this, that the Tahitian Bible (in the same way in which it had happened with the Māori Bible) crystallised their language and it gave a focus for their nationhood. Even when they were colonised by the French, they had their Tahitian Bible.

Among these “uneducated mechanics” sent by the London Missionary Society<sup>263</sup> on the *Duff* was Lucy’s Walter HASSALL, “a silk ribbon maker, who became the one who could do blacksmithing. He was able to be flexible”.

In the context of our discussion about the inter-relationships between the Methodist, Anglican, Congregationalist and Catholic missions in New Zealand at that time, Lucy commented that, “Family history is very educational in that it expands your boundaries and interests, and in subterranean ways [as you learn] who was connected with whom, you make surprising connections. Rather than the official sort of political history, you get more into the extremely meaningful for the time interactions and inter-connections.”

During the interview with Lucy I noted that her interest horizon had changed from seeing printed genealogies and photographs and hearing stories about the grandparents of grandparents, to constructing charts of kin. It had moved from wondering if *descendants* of people among whom her (1840s on) emigrating ancestors had lived, on arrival in Auckland, *still* lived in the same area in the 1960s,<sup>264</sup> to learning more about those emigrating kin and the social history surrounding their lives. As founder of the NZSG she had given more than 20 years of service to the formation and development of the Society, as President and as Editor of the Society’s Journals. She had published articles in the *NZG* including one that was reprinted as one of the Society’s first how-to booklets.<sup>265</sup> She had set up a small business to enable others to obtain publications.<sup>266</sup> She had been a member of local groups and branches, and continues to be so. At the time of the interview, Lucy had returned to GFH discovery: researching the ancestry of a daughter-in-law, and had revisited an earlier interest in genealogies of the distant past. She had written up and charted some of her work, thus preserving it, for specific purposes. However there were some ancestral lines that she had not

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<sup>263</sup> This was a Congregationalist Society, not the Anglican ‘Church Missionary Society’, See Chapter 10.

<sup>264</sup> We had learned, more than 30 years ago, that one of my great-great-grandmother’s cousins (on his second voyage) and his new wife, had acted as chaperones to one of Lucy’s female ancestors (on her voyage out): so we were living proof that descendants of such migrants could meet some generations later. We had corresponded before we first met: in Lucy’s home, built on the very section where my grandparents had had a ‘bach’ in the 1930s.

<sup>265</sup> Lucy Marshall, *How to Compile a New Zealand Pedigree* (1969; repr., Auckland: NZSG, 1979).

<sup>266</sup> This service was called “Lucy’s Books”. Lucy bought FFHS publications such as their Newsletters in bulk and distributed them to those interested.

pursued so vigorously: making me re-think whether ‘inveterate discoverer of past and present kin’ should be seen *in opposition* to other ways of approaching and being involved in genealogical family history. By 2007 Lucy’s interests and practice had shifted focus again: to include a new phase of active discovery through increased email contact with descendants of families of interest, families previously researched as far as the availability of records then allowed.

Michael also talked about what he had learned and what excited him as he read photocopied films of early parish records, obtained through the GSU. What he had to say also illustrates the themes of intellectual challenge, enjoyment, and the need to understand religious history and thinking.

I was reading parish registers that were written in Latin, around the time of the Reformation: trying to decide from Elizabethan hands, about very obscure or complex or difficult coding of abbreviations... It was extremely exciting, to read things that had been written in the reign of Mary the Second, Mary the First, and Elizabeth the First and a little bit of Edward.

In one family line I managed to get back to records that were the family, and were truly expressive of the era. It became very exciting then. Not just for the ancestors but reading around all the others, and the entries, trying to read the minds of the priests or their clerks who were filling in the registers, especially during the period of Cromwell when the Church was at rest.

Can I tell you one funny thing? The Prayer Book for funeral services was banned, and people getting buried were probably more or less just put in a hole. People weren't allowed to pray over them, because, that was banned by Oliver Cromwell's parliamentary government. The dowager countess died in this little parish and suddenly, in a list of just names during the Commonwealth period... suddenly, a line comes up: ‘the funeral rites of the dowager countess were according to the Book of Common Prayer, as previously established...’ I could just *see* everyone: scared stiff of the dowager duchess dead though she be aged 80; and that they were more scared of her than they were of Oliver Cromwell in London.

I was then beginning to wake up to the levels of history and of people's attitudes within society to such things as the Church and the role of the Church in society - against the government or with the government - and the way even then a strong personality could make a stand or a statement, with identity that I could pick up these 400 years later. Wonderful. That for me is extremely exciting.

Michael was talking of the Church of England, in England. We next discussed differing clergy *attitudes* to other matters of interest to genealogical family historians, like illegitimacy, as revealed in the various parish registers Michael and I, and many other Geneals have read:

It was interesting to see the differences because, I would have imagined, if I hadn't got into all these registers, that all the clergy would say the same thing, but they didn't. Some were obviously insistent on stating it in very black and white, and others didn't need to say it: it was true, but everyone knew it was true and what was the truth to do with the human lives.

A new Rector or Vicar would come, and he would suddenly start implementing or enforcing old laws against a morality, and you could see it giving trouble because he would first of all put it all in, in a very big, strong, bold hand, and then the churchwardens or the community must have jumped on him a bit and it got smaller and smaller until he didn't say such things any more. You could feel shifting attitudes, the movements of attitudes. Very interesting.

It was fun for me, again in the stability of a village life over centuries, to see four generations of my family who were churchwardens, and watching them succeeding to their own family members, to be the next churchwarden, and watching their handwriting change, as they sometimes practised their handwriting or their signature in the back of the book, and then watching the hand develop from a tumbly, rigid scrawl into something fluent and adult, and then starting to quaver and shake as they died. I was watching traits of family handwriting developing, traits that I could still see in my grandmother who was, 200 years later, a direct descendant - the formation of some of the letters, with the same sort of thrust in them. For anyone doing analysis of personality through handwriting I'm sure there's a whole study that's worth pursuing through these old church documents.

Thus Michael demonstrates the genealogical hermeneutic in two ways: seeing the past in the present, and the present in the past; and linking his own GFH knowledge to a possible application in another field.

Anne expanded on two pieces of lengthy work she had undertaken, one for a family member, and one for a client, In each case the work was complicated by gaps in knowledge and the need to find the few true elements in the received and remembered oral history of each. Anne stressed the importance of place, and talked about how new researchers needed to learn names of New Zealand places (Pirongia was Alexandra for a time, Wanganui was briefly Petre, and so on); and to check if 'Oxford' was Tirau, or in England or in New Zealand's Canterbury:

The knowledge of Geography is another very important thing. As well as learning what was happening as far as occupations and industry and the developments there are concerned; you also have to learn to read topographical maps to see where the nearest next town was. If they were going on foot, they might have [chosen to go] further because it was flat, rather than [what might seem to us to be a short distance, on a map without contours] to the other side of a mountain.

Anne touched on contextualisation in other areas. “There's a lot of customs you have to learn: what was the norm of the time.... Even reading well-researched historical novels can help with your context.” Anne had visited ancestral places in Germany, as well as in Australia, Scotland, and England.

One of the really interesting things is to look at the occupations down through generations and look at how definite talents seem to occur time and time again. It was interesting to find that, the boy in Germany, who is the spitting image of my son, who doesn't look like any of the rest of the family, has virtually the same occupation, and the common ancestor is five generations back.

Two other aspects we talked about at some length were the importance of unusual names or combinations of names for assisting in the reconstruction of family groups; and Anne's filming of electoral rolls and other sources for use by the GFH Community, *and by others*.

Anne's microfilming work began because of the frustration, in the 1980s of “not being able to get access to the early New Zealand electoral rolls that were housed in the Parliamentary Library.”

I tried to persuade the National Library that they should be doing something about it and they didn't have either the will or the resources.... We<sup>267</sup> went from there to various microfilming companies and, no, they didn't think there would be a dollar to be made in it either - and they were probably right, in those days. But the result of my pestering: a person involved in microfilming professionally volunteered to sell me a microfilming camera and teach me how to use it; and gave me my first few jobs of [that type of] work - microfilming a chemist's publication.

I then contacted the Parliamentary Library and eventually got permission ... to microfilm the electoral rolls. I came off the phone and organised my trip to Wellington [from Auckland].

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<sup>267</sup> The name for the resultant business: BAB Microfilming, arose from the partnership of **Brian** and **Anne Bromell**.

I walked in the door, and was met by the Librarian who said, 'Oh, how opportune that you've come now because I've already had a request from a public library for copies of the rolls and I've told them that you'll be filming them shortly.' They would not let the material out of the Library, but they offered us space. I can't remember how many trips we made to Wellington. Brian came down and helped with the filming.

I asked about the expenses of travelling and of finding somewhere to stay, and Anne replied:

Yes, there was the travelling and there was the accommodation - we would go down for a week at a time, I think we went down for a fortnight the last trip... We started that in 1988, and have now produced, reproduced, every NZ electoral roll that I have been able to find, from 1853 to 1981 inclusive.

Anne had also filmed some Māori Voters' Rolls. I had purchased a set of her microfiche some years ago. I was pleased to be able to say to her:

One of my colleagues [from the Māori Department, at the University of Waikato] was very excited when I said I had those Māori Voting Lists because he was organising a family reunion, a marae reunion, and it was just the right generation for the parents of all the people he knew. I took my fiche and fiche viewer to work one day and showed him (and another senior staff member). One day when we were on strike<sup>268</sup> [the two of us] took the fiche over to the library and printed them out, sharing the cost.

Anne told me the story behind finding and filming these lists in the Parliamentary Library.

Brian would actually do the filming (of the general electoral rolls); I would collect the books together; check them: I had the lists out of the [New Zealand] Gazettes as to what electorates there should be; check them to make sure they were all there; and then put them back. I was transporting them in and out - we were not very far from the Library - but I couldn't resist browsing the shelves, and in the browsing the shelves I found these Māori Voters' Rolls - they are not strictly electoral rolls,<sup>269</sup> [but] I went and asked and Librarians didn't even realise they were there although they were probably catalogued. The Southern Māori [list] wasn't there, and there was a bit on the news just recently - great excitement in Turnbull Library because they had just found the Southern Māori one, mixed with something else - you know, they have never contacted me to tell me... I think I was disappointed about that.... I found the other ones all those years ago, and I would have thought that common courtesy.... they've had access to these others all these years...

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<sup>268</sup> We were members of the Association of University Staff, and involved in a rare withdrawal of labour.

<sup>269</sup> The lists are the names of people who actually voted: they are not the electoral rolls of those entitled to vote.

I too thought that someone would have contacted Anne to ask her to film the newly found list, to complete the set for the benefit of all; but a gulf between Library and Information Science and Genealogical Family History (and one between people from Auckland and people in Wellington) still existed in parts of Aotearoa-New Zealand, in 2003.

Paul is another genealogical family historian who has contributed to resources of use to the NZSG, to the wider GFH Community, and to others. I discuss this further below. Paul's places of interest included the English county of Norfolk, and Ireland. One research story he told was to do with finally learning the '**last surname**'<sup>270</sup> of a great-great-great-grandparent. He had seen the tombstone for this couple, but "it only had her first name, not her surname".

I found a cousin, a distant cousin, who was researching the same Irish family as me - I had been working on this family for 15 years and I made progress laterally I suppose but never really breaking through.

The son (of the ancestor) was a gardener in Orari Gorge in Geraldine. So I knew of him and I knew where he came from, in Ireland: from the Duke of Abercorn's estate - he was a boatman and a gardener on his estate in Baron's Court, in County Tyrone; and I had been there once before and I'd found, on the church on the estate, a tombstone of the MCNALLYs.

Paul had had this information for a long time, but it was not until he received, from a distant cousin, a copy of a letter that his great-grandfather wrote back to a daughter saying where his mother was born, that he was able to learn her birth surname and discover just how far and how often this family had moved around Ireland. One birth certificate of the children gave County Leitrum, but all the other six had something else. "I had always discarded that because it wasn't the majority, but I thought, well maybe it is true." Here too is the genealogical hermeneutic at work: exploring the most likely source first, but not ignoring the exception because competent Geneals follow every possibility. Paul then "looked at the Griffiths Valuations" and found that there were none of the newly discovered birth name in County Leitrum, but there was one Stephen POWER

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<sup>270</sup> This is GFH complex shorthand for viewing the surnames of all those who are the same generation from the researcher, as displayed in a column on a left to right pedigree chart, and noting how many individuals in a generation remain to be discovered: the 'last surname' is usually a female's birth surname. (See Chapter 7.)

(the right name for the father, and with the right occupation) in County Longford, just 10 miles away.<sup>271</sup>

So we went there, went to look at the church there, and in one part of the churchyard it was brilliantly mowed - lovely dark blue things there, and then in another part the grass was higher than my eyes, and it was wet, and I thought - that's the old part.... But I wasn't coming this far without starting to look - well I got in about two feet and got drenched and looked at one tombstone - it was all washed out....

A researcher in the local genealogy centre later found an entry giving an address - and I had taken a photo - but I had taken the wrong side of the street as it turned out. We didn't find the direct ancestor linked directly - but we did find the parents, because he had another brother.

All that quelled my hunger for having to go back any further on that.... There are a couple of others that I'd like to go back on, on the Scottish side.

I asked Valma if she telephoned people she thought might be related, and this led to a discussion of strategies, privacy issues, and more:

No, I don't like ringing people up and I don't like being rung up myself because you are taken unawares. They ask you: are you connected to this person and you can't readily retrieve it from your mind. The other night I had a phone call from a lass, out of the blue, and it did turn out to be a relation of mine. I was at the computer, and maybe she was too, but she was naming names, and I was trying to find these names on the computer and I said, "Well I really can't do it justice over the phone". We ended up talking about all sorts of other things - but I think it's a little bit of an intrusion to a completely unknown person to phone them. It's much better to write to them or email them and then make contact. I have made contact with some lines here in Melbourne and we have actually met them, and that's been quite good and we've exchanged photos and other information, but then they tend to fade away. It's interesting: I'm always surprised when people lose interest - because I don't. Why do they lose interest?

When you are meeting people who are still alive who are sharing the information with you, they're talking about people that you don't know - and because you can't access that information (the only way you can get it is through these people who can give it to you). But then, of course, the privacy problems come in: how far do you share?

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<sup>271</sup> "The Griffith's Valuation, or Primary Valuation of Ireland, was executed under the direction of Sir Richard Griffith to determine the amount of tax each person should pay towards the support of the poor within their poor law union (a division of land)... [and] the resulting survey was arranged by barony and civil parish, with an index to the townlands appearing in each volume." <http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com> (accessed 9 March 2008).

I've marked some and put them into a separate file. Sometimes you've really got to make a conscious effort to make sure they don't get into [a public arena], but some people publish everything, don't they? Right up to the newest baby. It doesn't worry me personally, if it is my information going around but you've got to respect the rights of other people. The next generation are not at an age where they can make a decision about what they want known elsewhere.

During 2007, Valma's comment was graphically illustrated, by an email from a CoG contact of mine, containing within it a jpeg of an ultrasound scan of his pregnant wife. Some of us in the CoG discussed the ramifications by email. How would we record that *in utero* baby? Would our computer software cope if we entered the due date: would it give us an age of minus six months? *Should* we record it? Did he not realise that the image gave his wife's birth date? I reflect that I was slightly shocked by this free exchange of such family data, but the response from a younger researcher was that she should preserve the prenatal scans of her own children, before the images deteriorated. Mark Howells (see chap. 3, n. 226) had such material publicly accessible on his personal website.

Colleen shared a number of research stories. I remarked that I had long ago gained an impression that a lot of her early work was verifying information she had been given. She confirmed that.

Everything single bit of paper with names and dates, I verified. I was not prepared to accept anything that was just written down, because it didn't take me very long to find out that people 'romanced' stories. I was not going to be satisfied unless I had personally verified it for myself, and I knew it was right. I quickly learned, by observing other people that it is very easy to say: the name is right, the location is right and the date must be right, so it must be the right person: and it doesn't necessarily follow at all, not at all.

*Research Strategies: "What do you do that you call research?"*

While those I interviewed were able to tell me very clearly why and what they had kept researching for so long, they found it more difficult to explain what they *do*.

As I wrote in my preliminary findings letter to them, I believe this is because:

We are so familiar with our methods and methodology; with our sources; and with the language we use to describe what we do, that it does not seem out of the ordinary for us. But this is the very phenomenon I wish to record – the scholarship of discovery... is how Boyer and Glassick (scholars at the Carnegie Institute) would describe aspects of our work."<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Preliminary report to interviewed key informants: letter dated 22 March 2004.

I had invited Colleen to place on record how she would approach reading and analysing a certificate,<sup>273</sup> as documentation of what genealogists do that they call research, for the purposes of this thesis. I suggested one relating to Michael's clergy biographies project. Colleen responded:

What I used to do and what I do now are two different things. When everything was manual I used to use a card system as well as a family group sheet. For the card system: I would have a card for every parish or district. So (looking at the certificate): New Zealand, Napier - there would be a card and I would just put marriage of these people and the date so that I had a double reference - for it is surprising how many people lived in [the same] districts.

AGE BY OFFICIATING MINISTER.

District of *Napier* 7360

Condition of Parties— 1. Bachelor or Spinster (or as case may be). 2. Date of Decree of former Wife or Husband.	Birthplace.	Residence. 1. Present. 2. Usual.	PARENTS.	
			(1) Father's Name and Surname. (2) His Rank or Profession.	(1) Mother's Name. (2) Her Maiden Surname.
1. Bachelor 2.	Christchurch	1. Napier 2. Haikora	1. Joseph John Anderson 2. Civil Servant	1. Ellen Anderson 2. Hockley
Spinster	Christchurch	1. Napier 2. Rotorua	1. Augustus William Young 2. Farmer	1. not known 2.

1908, by *Wm Walmley Wainman*, Officiating Minister. Birth N/F

*via H. Sedgwick Napier. domestic duties*  
*Rice. Clerk in Holy Orders. Napier*  
*Wayne. Clerk in Holy Orders. Napier w. J. Sedgwick Napier*  
 at by me at *S. Johns Cathedral Napier* *Frank Wayne*  
 Officiating Minister.

Denomination: *Church of England* 1908

Figure 2. Interrogating a Certificate: part of a facsimile copy of a Marriage Registration supplied for research purposes by the Registrar-General of New Zealand.

Colleen continued:

I would write down the basic information, but I would break it down: who the minister was, who these people were. I would look for the witnesses. I would look to see if there was a relationship between the witness and either of these parties. I would check the spelling - that's one of the very first things - because you frequently, you can have ANDERSEN, ANDERSON. You'd look at the bachelor and the spinster. You'd look at the parents to see if these agreed with the other information that you've already got. Yes, it's really analysing each piece, bit by bit by bit, and not taking anything for granted.

<sup>273</sup> The document we discussed is a facsimile copy of the Registrar General's written-up copy (transcription) of the original registration of the event at District level - not an original document signed at the wedding, and not a certified copy of any one of those.

I remarked that in this case the witnesses were particularly interesting, and asked Colleen what she made of the officiating minister's name: Wm Walmsley Waiapu? Colleen knew that clergy “often took on the title of where they lived”, and this was the case in this instance. I was very familiar with that Anglican practice, but I had spent some time trying to work out who the witness Margarita H. SEDGWICK might be, learning only that she was a generation older than the bride was. Then *Crockford's Clerical Directory* revealed that the Bishop of the Diocese of Waiapu at the time was William Walmsley SEDGWICK. We agreed that others might spend a long time looking for a William WALMSLEY or a William WAIAPU.

Colleen and I noted the ‘not known’ in the column for the name of the bride’s mother. We considered many possible reasons that a woman of 34, then a missionary teacher at Whakarewarewa, would have this gap in her knowledge. How could she *not know* the name of her mother, if she knew her father’s name? Before the interview, I had found two marriages on the FreeBMD site matching the father’s name given on the registration and we agreed that this bride *might* have been brought up by a stepmother, and never told her mother’s name.<sup>274</sup>

On this document, someone has written. ‘Birth N F’ below this omission and we wondered if that person too (a clerk at the Registrar-General’s Office, perhaps) was puzzled and had gone looking for her birth to learn the mother’s name. The bride gave her birthplace, as Christchurch – but it could have been Christchurch in Hampshire, or Christ Church Southwark in Surrey, say, for I did not find her birth in New Zealand civil registration indexes. Nor have I yet solved this mystery, despite recently improved accessibility to records that might have helped.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> A contemporary of mine once asked me to try to find out why her husband had been told, by his stepmother, that he was illegitimate. Certificates proved otherwise, and lifted a burden he had felt for many years. We conjectured that jealousy or insecurity might have caused the cruel falsehood. In another family, two generations ago, younger siblings just *assumed* their older brother was a full brother, because of the affection between him and their mother and themselves.

<sup>275</sup> If this had been research relating to my own family I could do a number of things. If the bride died in New Zealand, I would first check the NZSG’s new burial locator on CD to see if a tombstone inscription helps; then get a copy of her death certificate to see where she was born, and if her mother’s name is given. I could travel to research in good collections of historical New Zealand Electoral Rolls, to see if others of the name came too. I could seek any descendants of this couple for any information they might have. These are all time and money consuming exercises.

During the interviews, the informants revealed many of the things that they do in the course of their research, and because of their research. In this section I present a summary of their GFH research activities based on the list that I compiled for my preliminary report to them. At that time I invited further comment, and there was no disagreement, nor additions to that list. One agreed that it accorded with her perceptions of what genealogical family history research involves. The CoG informants also concurred with this summary.

The genealogical family historians interviewed all seek to discover names of kin, and dates of important events in their lives. They also seek any other information available about each of their ancestors and about many of the descendants and affinal kin of those ancestors. They identified the following practices and activities as ‘research’:

- Contacting known and possible relatives by writing to them, telephoning, emailing, or calling on them – in order to ask questions, share memories, view documents and artefacts, and discuss ‘the family’.
- Obtaining and reading primary source material (manuscripts and facsimiles of original material) and using many different record repositories (especially libraries and archives), using Internet resources, and electronic databases.
- (Sometimes) paying others to act as record agents or genealogists on their behalf, after working out the records to be searched, and the data hoped to be found there. Some have been paid genealogists themselves.
- Visiting places where ancestors have been born, baptised, or married, or have died or been buried; places where relatives have lived, worked, played.
- Researching those places and those lives by: joining genealogical societies and branches or groups within societies; and by joining email discussion Lists.

My key informants also:

- Analyse what they have found through reading general or specific social history in order to place a family or a person in an era or set of historical circumstances.
- Think about what they have discovered and try to make sense of it, and often work laterally to make more discoveries.
- Discuss obstacles to furthering their research with others.
- Work collaboratively with relatives or others to discover data and verify it (or leave it labelled unproven).
- Write up findings on charts (often using dedicated computer programmes), and/or in booklets and books.

Some of those interviewed have organised or been involved with family reunions. Many have made friends through the Community, with friendships continuing beyond any formal structures or informal manifestations of the wider GFH Community. They have, variously, become involved with one-name studies or other projects that use genealogical research skills. They also, again in varying ways, revealed that they take part in some or all of the following:

- Administration of genealogical societies, including running conferences and contributing to indexing projects.

- Some have taught family history or genealogy classes through continuing education programmes. Some do voluntary work in libraries with GFH material.
- All share data and expertise with newcomers to the wider CoP, and with old-timers with new or long-standing obstacles.

Paul is one key informant who has used his computer expertise in a number of ways. In addition to work on the production of CDs, he has given lectures at many conferences, such as one at Upper Hutt in 1995.<sup>276</sup> In 2004, I was in the audience in New Plymouth when Paul made us all acutely aware of the extent of errors of interpretation and transcription in data, transcribed by enthusiasts:

[Some of whom will have] interpreted what they have seen, often difficult to read handwriting.... not checked by an independent person.... If the error rate is 1% of words (one error in 1000 words), ... for a record containing 20 words this means that 1 error occurs on average every 5 records.”<sup>277</sup>

Richard has carried out most of his research “at the computer”:

Research in this way has then led me want more information and to learn more about the lives of those people that at the early stage of research are just statistics. This thirst for information leads to ordering certificates, and this in turn often leads to other family names. Older records (pre 1837) are not as easy to obtain and this means searching Parish Records and eventually visiting church graveyards in search of more information. Modern research includes sharing information on line- this can be carried out simply via email or by joining organisations such as Genes Re-United and talking to people with the same common interest- or should I say obsession!

Jacqui’s research is presently restricted to what she can do on a computer, but she is able to avail herself of a wide range of sources with relative ease.

I am in the process of compiling, for each individual, core information: b/bap m d/bur<sup>278</sup> and census details as appropriate, preferably from original images if available online / obtained by other means, cross-checked to ensure correct details obtained as far as possible and sources noted - to also help identify where further corroboration is required.

Further details are from emigration records, poor law records, wills, directories, newspapers, photos, anything else I come across - to build up comprehensive information

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<sup>276</sup> Paul Alpe, “Demystifying Computers – Family History and Recording,” in *130 Years of Central Government in New Zealand*. Proceedings of the NZSG Conference, 12-14 May 1995, Upper Hutt, compiled by Judy Kirby, edited by Pauline Neale (Wellington: NZSG Conference Committee, 1995), 76-80.

<sup>277</sup> Paul Alpe, “The Internet – Can it be Trusted?” in *Taranaki Odyssey 2001*, Proceedings of the NZSG Conference, 1-4 June 2001, New Plymouth, compiled and edited by Michael Butler (New Plymouth: NZSG Conference Committee, 2001) 100-102.

<sup>278</sup> As with interview transcripts, I do *not* change the language of email informants that is appropriate for that medium: Geneals use these abbreviations frequently: and understand the importance of recording both birth and baptism dates and death and burial dates.

on my database about people *to whom my family are related* - that includes my husband's side, and to find out more about them in the context of social history.... Who were they? What did they do, where, and why? Thus I include all ancestors *and* their descendents in my research. While noting parents of spouses and sometimes their details, I do not expand into these, unrelated-to-me, families as a general rule. There are only a couple of exceptions: where I hope that this expansion will help uncover the 'disappearance' of my cousin line of descent, in due course, or to show where two people related to each other marry individuals related to me, plus the intriguing line of a great-aunt, whose family 'somehow' includes a former Speaker of the House, in Bermuda....

I share, to considerably varying degrees, this information with other researchers / cousins - primarily by email directly, or through websites (eg Genes Reunited), mailing lists (eg Rootsweb), sometimes by letter: to consolidate, corroborate, enhance and expand upon current knowledge of individuals and research practices; and because I enjoy exchanging emails with other people I'm related to, however distantly.

I am hopeful that when I do have the opportunity to visit relevant places and record offices, I will be in a position of knowledge to concentrate on the trickier details that pad out the 'drier' facts of bm&d - which are in themselves nonetheless interesting.

## **Specialists within the Community**

Many members of the A-NZ GFH Community are well known for their topics of interest and for specialist knowledge they have built up and shared over the years: including former presidents I did not interview.

Heather Webber, member #1094,<sup>279</sup> has shared, in *The New Zealand Genealogist* and at conferences, her insights into researching whakapapa. In 1994 she presented a paper on "a family historian's responsibility to iwi, hapū and whānau when collating whakapapa from traditional sources."<sup>280</sup> Heather began with a history of the place of whakapapa in Māori society.

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<sup>279</sup> Heather was NZSG President 1999-2001. During her term of office Heather brought to fruition the centralisation of NZSG resources, (something long seen as inevitable by many old-timers, regardless of where they lived); and served on the ARANZ Committee as Government Liaison Officer 2002-2006. She was also the driving force behind the establishment of GRINZ – the Genealogical Research Institute of New Zealand, now in abeyance.

<sup>280</sup> Heather Webber, "When the Time is Right! - Researching Maori Whakapapa Using Traditional Methods," in *Something of Interest*, Proceedings of the NZSG Conference, 6-8 May 1994, Hamilton, compiled by Vivienne Parker (Auckland: NZSG, 1994), 433-440.

Traditionally, Maori whanaungatanga (kinship ties) were central to a Maori person's well being and were 'based on ancestral, historical, traditional, and spiritual ties.' (Pere, 1991 p 6) The knowledge of whakapapa was important in establishing individual relationships and rights and in asserting influence or credibility.<sup>281</sup>

She then discussed problems that must be faced in cross-cultural research, especially the difference between a Pakeha search for 'the truth', and the Māori role of caretaker of knowledge. Heather also cites Evelyn Stokes and Turoa Royal, concurring with them that: "interpretation of Māori data must be perceived in Māori terms, not forced into preconceived methodologies or systems of categorising knowledge."<sup>282</sup>

Heather listed questions anyone should consider if thinking of approaching a caretaker of whakapapa within the whānau. She concluded by saying, "Time, patience and spiritual understanding, and the purpose for which you wish to use whakapapa, will all have an influence on whether any is given to you."<sup>283</sup> In another paper, presented to the 1997 Congress, Heather addressed the needs of urban Māori, in particular younger people who had lost contact with home marae, and therefore with their whakapapa. She discussed and illustrated the information recorded in civil registration saying, "Death entries of grandparents are particularly useful, as the date of death may lead to succession records."<sup>284</sup>

Verna Mossong, member #26, was NZSG President for two terms. She became an acknowledged expert on passenger lists, and the Society's Shipping Archivist, and was an advocate for Joint Copying Programmes. "Verna had a natural gift as an educator and public speaker. She has spent countless hours advising beginners, attempting to solve problems and responding to postal enquiries. She has delivered talks and lectures to local branches, seminars and conferences, involving travel to various parts of New Zealand and later to Australia and the UK."<sup>285</sup> She was an invited speaker at an English conference in Oxford, in 1986.

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<sup>281</sup> Ibid., 434.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 436.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., 438.

<sup>284</sup> Heather J. Webber, "Town and Country Connections: a Guide for Non-traditional Māori Research," in *Landfall in Southern Seas*, Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> Australasian Congress, February 1997, Lincoln University, compiled by Garry Jeffery (Christchurch: Christchurch NZSG Organising Committee, 1997), 150.

<sup>285</sup> Lucy Marshall, "Three Milestone Birthdays in 2005," *The New Zealand Genealogist* 298 (2006): 80.

I remember Verna's presentation at a seminar that we, and Julie MacDonald, conducted in Hawkes Bay in the 1970s. Verna had a large carton full of books with her and used them to focus on the importance of *sources* in research. In 1994, she conducted a workshop at the NZSG conference in Hamilton and outlined reasons for the genealogical interest in New Zealand passenger shipping records.<sup>286</sup> Her paper covers passenger lists for assisted immigrants, and for those leaving Melbourne (the Victoria Outwards project), and of those bound for specific places (South Africa, Canterbury, Nelson). She listed the purposes for which some sources were *created*, including the Social Security series; and shipboard diaries, ship logs, newspaper reports, and crew lists.

Jan Gow, member #3207,<sup>287</sup> is well known for leading 'Hooked on Genealogy' tours to Salt Lake City and to the UK. She is one who has turned her interest into a business, and, assisted by her husband and others, sets up her "Beehive Books" stall at many conferences and research days, supplying facsimile maps in addition to books, booklets and computer software.

Other former presidents brought yet more skills and interests when leading the Society. Gael Thomson, member #251, was active in Dunedin and Invercargill from 1963. She recounted advice she had given on affording to continue with NZSG membership, from her own experience of letting hers lapse "as a youngish married woman with six children" and noted that the NZSG "started as a national entity and then expanded to create branches and groups to meet the needs of people throughout the country".<sup>288</sup> Margaret Tomsett, member #2879, a South Island resident with all her migrating ancestors arriving in Christchurch, became President after enjoying her work as Overseas Journals Officer. Before the establishment of the Society's Family Records Centre in suburban Auckland, (a location chosen for the volunteer base in the vicinity necessary for staffing such a centre) many members contributed as appointed project and service officers, while living in country districts. They and their teams both learned about GFH and helped members and the public through this policy. Both Gael and Margaret have listed sport among their other interests.

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<sup>286</sup> Verna Mossong, "Why Genealogical Interest in New Zealand Passenger Shipping Records?" in *Something of Interest*, Proceedings of the NZSG Conference, 6-8 May 1994, Hamilton, compiled by Vivienne Parker (Auckland: NZSG, 1994), 154-174.

<sup>287</sup> Jan Gow was NZSG President 1985-1988.

<sup>288</sup> Gael Thompson, "From the President." *The New Zealand Genealogist* 226 (1994): 77.

It did not take current (2008) President, Graeme Constable (member #4338) long to realise how fortunate he was “to have the RGO, National Archives, National Library and the Maritime Museum right on [his] door step.” His interest had been stirred by being asked to undertake ‘sightings’ at the New Zealand Registrar General’s Office in Lower Hutt by a sister-in-law living in Hastings. He also recalled group meetings turning into headstone transcribing sessions in the 1980s.<sup>289</sup> In his foreword to *Forty Years On* he highlights the work of volunteers; the FRC; and the Society’s website “which is now attracting interest not only from New Zealanders but also from people living overseas who have an interest in the country and its people.”<sup>290</sup>

It is not just national officeholders who have contributed specialist expertise to the whole A-NZ GFH Community. Gwen Reiher, member #1813, Convenor of the Auckland Branch of the NZSG for 25 years, an Irish specialist and enthusiast and known for “answering unending personal and postal queries... and for the leaflets on Irish research that she has produced and updated.”<sup>291</sup> She has travelled widely to be consulted about the individual research interests of countless researchers. Gwen has also contributed immensely by her kindness, thoughtfulness and appreciation of the work of others.

Alice Loose, member #4, is one whose contribution has been in areas without geographic or subject labels, and over many years. I quote from an editorial note, in a 1972 issue of *The New Zealand Genealogist*:

From time to time some members are intrigued by an enclosure with their magazine – a brief obituary, birth, marriage or death notice for some name they are researching. The kind fairy godmother is MRS ALICE LOOSE, who combines a phenomenal memory for surnames with a deep-rooted belief that the smallest clue may provide a vital link.

*Thank you Alice, from us all.*<sup>292</sup>

Lucy reported on Alice’s 90<sup>th</sup> birthday gathering in the said 2006 *NZG* article, an occasion attended by Verna and Gwen who had both attained the age of 80. In the book published in 2007 for the Society’s 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, Alice recalled that

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<sup>289</sup> Graeme Constable, “Reflections” in *Forty Years On: The Development of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists 1967-2007*, compiled by Vivienne M. Parker (Auckland: NZSG, 2007), 147-148.

<sup>290</sup> Graeme Constable, foreword to *Forty Years On*, iii.

<sup>291</sup> Marshall, “Three Milestone Birthdays in 2005,” 80.

<sup>292</sup> *The New Zealand Genealogist* 24 (1972): 337.

Early genealogists were, of necessity, self-taught until the formation of the Society. One of our first speakers was Dr Arthur Veale who had come from Dunedin to Auckland to be director of the new Human Genetics Research Unit of the Medical Research Council. He spurred my interest in genetics. I'm glad to have lived long enough to see my grandchildren grow up, to see whom they resemble and how their talents are developing.... Another early speaker was Jonathon Hunt MP who had much to do with our access to adoption information.<sup>293</sup>

Alice attended some of my annual lectures to the Auckland Day Group/Branch of the NZSG, in recent years. On one occasion, I was speaking about pre-1837 sources for English research and shared lists of SELMAN references from some unusual documents. In response to my overhead transparency of "Coroner's Bills"<sup>294</sup> (which give the distance travelled and the amount of the bill in addition to the location and cause of death of named people), Alice asked: "Who got the money?" This perceptive question had not occurred to me, and nor could any of us answer it that day.<sup>295</sup> Sharing thinking and questioning that is helpful to others is an integral part of the general helpfulness that pervades the Community. This too illustrates my concept of a lateral genealogical hermeneutic.

Names of many of those who have served the A-NZ GFH Community over many years come to mind. Moira Neal was a knowledgeable and tireless convenor of the NZSG Scottish Interest Group. Two of her papers are published in the NZSG 2000 conference Proceedings. In the same volume, some of the contribution to the wider GFH Community of many South Island Geneals is recorded. I single out three to emphasise diversity: Jenny Mayne, convenor for the 1997 AFFHO Congress, has been involved with Society's School Registers' Project, and the East India Special Interest Group. Fiona Brooker, then NZSG Treasurer, "roped in" Stuart Brooker, to present ways to use spreadsheet and presentation software that comes with new computers. Ngaire Ockwell, known for her work on transcriptions of many Dunedin cemeteries, included "experimenting with ways of presenting her own family history as one of her passions".<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> Alice Loose, "Through the Looking Glass," in *Forty Years On: The Development of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists 1967-2007* (Auckland: NZSG, 2007), 6.

<sup>294</sup> I was only able to share my knowledge and use of this source because the Wiltshire FHS had appreciated its value, and voluntarily undertaken the task of transcribing and indexing the data.

<sup>295</sup> On such an occasion, an observer from outside the Community could not easily learn that this older woman had been researching genealogical family history for at least 40 years, and therefore had started at a much younger age.

<sup>296</sup> "Biographical Notes on Authors," in *Bound for Canterbury*, 519-526.

### *Skills Acquired by Individuals*

Special skills acquired in the pursuit of GFH also vary from person to person. Some are needed by comparatively few. For example, Joy Drayton taught herself Polish<sup>297</sup> prior to a visit to ancestral places, and one of my Canadian contacts wrote of buying a 'language translator' to be able to translate Hungarian documents. Graeme learned a little Norwegian before we visited that country. A diversity of prior education is worthy of note here. Graeme was already trained in language acquisition (French, Latin, Greek) and Joy Drayton had an MA in History. My contact, however, had less formal education, and 'yard work' had to take priority over her hobby. I estimate that more than half of my key informants can read at least one language other than English: more, if computer languages are included.

Other Geneals have become proficient in such skills as reading Secretary Hand and Elizabethan English; interpreting legal terminology; and understanding documents related to land holding. During an interview I expressed my appreciation to Paul, not just of the availability of the invaluable resource he had spent so much time and expertise on – the NZSG CDs, but also for the way it has been thought through with genealogical users in mind. Paul said that the same format had been kept in each new version, to make it easier for:

A group of people who probably aren't right up with the edge of computer technology... they are dealing with some very old machines.... You find that they will put their minds to it – genealogists are quite adept at that, if they want to get some [information using computers], they'll find out how it works. I've been very impressed by that.<sup>298</sup>

In the context of a work life that included working with students seeking to develop time and study management skills, I could not help but notice how well so many of my Geneal peers prepared for research trips to record repositories and ancestral places, locally and abroad. One Geneal advocated the use of a GPS device to record the position of located homes and graves – against the day the artefacts marking the locations would be lost to generations of the future.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Joy Drayton, "My Great-grandfather and Polish Research," *The New Zealand Genealogist* 264 (2000): 242-245. Mary Josephine (Joy) Drayton, a former Post-Primary Principal, Chancellor of the University of Waikato 1988-1991, was awarded an honorary doctorate in 1993, and a CNZM in 2000.

<sup>298</sup> In Chapter 3 I have noted how some in the wider Community have learned to use CDs despite difficulties encountered with software or hardware.

<sup>299</sup> Heather Bray, "GPS and the Genealogist," *The New Zealand Genealogist* 292 (2005): 81-82.

Geneals work hard to learn *how* to make discoveries and I have sought to make explicit the intellectual work of integration in this thesis. The tedious long searches in civil registration and other indexes, as well as in not-yet-indexed primary material such as church records, newspapers and correspondence files held in archives are part of the GFH scholarships of discovery and integration.

When I interviewed Michael about the difference between biography and GFH, (see Chapter 9) he spoke about a lack of knowledge of the nature of genealogical research that he had encountered when writing church history - having researched both his own families and the contextualised lives of so many members of the families of his clerical subjects, in great detail.

I've been... talking with academic historians who ... are very competent and able, and they know that I have done this sort of work.... They have always been a bit 'sniffy' about it. But because we are all now concentrating on one 40 year period, and I'm part of it and so are they: they find that they want to know about some of the people and the family relations that I have already researched, and they say, " Now, how do I find out about these people? What do I have to do? I have to do what? Say that again. I'll write down what you are saying. Oh, it's rather, more complicated than I realised, you mean, you have got to do the work?"

"Yes, yes, yes."

"And you've done work for one and half thousand families like this?"

"Yes."

" Oh.... Well, can I ask you about this person here who has puzzled me and I don't quite know where they fit in - do you have any clue?"

My study was designed to explore the hidden aspects of the work undertaken by genealogical family historians, and the matrix of diversity presented in this chapter. In the next chapter, I present findings from my document analysis. I focus on what Geneals have in common, despite their diverse backgrounds, topics of interest, range of research strategies and knowledge acquired.

## Chapter 5

### GFH Research Practice: Weighing the Evidence

Every kinship, every fact, every identity we establish is simply a decision we base upon the evidence we have accumulated. Our challenge is to accumulate the best evidence possible and to train ourselves to analyze and interpret that evidence in the most perceptive manner.<sup>300</sup>

In Chapter 4, I have focused on the diversity of individual topics of interest and GFH activity exhibited by my key informants, and by some long-time members of the NZSG. I now discuss aspects of the research practice of Geneals in the whole A-NZ Community, especially that found in documents of the wider Community, and I use some case studies for illustration. My focus is on the area of GFH research practice that Elizabeth Shown Mills identifies in the above quotation: weighing evidence to establish facts and to identify every instance of kinship. I end this chapter by presenting two findings about the practice and the field of Genealogical Family History research.

### Getting Started

When beginning GFH research, a few people will know only the names they themselves were given when younger. One Geneal wrote about this, taking on the persona of her late father, John/Jack GRAY, who was born in 1918, placed in an orphanage in Palmerston North when a young child, ‘befriended’ by two sisters who placed him on farms “as slave labour as I remember aright”, in Hawkes Bay. “When I was 72 my daughter decided it was time I found my family roots.” Jack had a little information, probably false, about his parents, and he himself did not turn up in any records. “I would like to know [he says through his daughter] if I had any relations, and then trace my ancestors. But how do you get something from nothing and just when it is time to call it quits?”<sup>301</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> Elizabeth Shown Mills, *Evidence! Citation & Analysis for the Family Historian* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1997), 43.

<sup>301</sup> Sue Milicich, “Who Am I and Why I Do Not Exist,” *New Zealand Genealogist* 246 (1997): 252-253.

For the majority of beginning researchers, personal knowledge or assurances from parents may be sufficient to take on trust the names of their closest kin: their parents and siblings. Some will already know the names of grandparents, aunts and uncles, and first cousins, and will have met some. A few, including some of my informants, begin with much more information.

Every new GFH researcher, with a focus on distant ancestry or on the stories of less distant family groups, or on both, will find that *genealogical* research is necessary to establish or to prove even apparently simple facts regarding names, births, marriages and deaths. Living kin will not always know, or may not tell, about adoptions, extra-marital pregnancies and neonatal deaths in their own immediate families. Cousins may speak more freely about such matters than those directly involved. Different branches will have received different stories, and may or may not have retained the information, accurately or partially. Publicly available records can give some basic genealogical data, but some will be confusing or contradictory. All these factors affect the way we each begin to discover our own Genealogical Family History, and to analyse and interpret what we find.

The wider Community has long been aware of individual differences and difficulties, *and* of the usefulness of shared source material and research strategies. In keeping with the mixed membership of the Community I have studied, I take my examples of the vast array of published material on sources and methods for GFH research, from a variety of people, and places of publication.

### *Manuals*

There have been a number of general how-to books produced within the wider Community, over the years. A recent one<sup>302</sup> is by Mark Herber who was an invited speaker at the 2003 NZSG Conference. He is a solicitor by profession and a member of the Society of Genealogists. This large volume focuses on British genealogy and family history. Prominent English genealogical family historians have endorsed this work, including Anthony Camp, former Director of SoG:

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<sup>302</sup> Mark D. Herber, *Ancestral Trails: The Complete Guide to British Genealogy and Family History* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Co./Society of Genealogists, 1997).

Researching family history involves the study of many subjects. The starting point is genealogy, the study of individuals' descent and relationships. But where does the ancestral trail begin and how do the many different trails come together to form a coherent picture of past generations and their links to the present day researcher?<sup>303</sup>

John Titford, then Chairman of Examiners, Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies; Chairman, FFHS Education Sub-Committee; and a series editor of the Society of Genealogists' *My Ancestor* publications,<sup>304</sup> wrote in the foreword that:

Genealogy has come of age. Once the preserve of a handful of enthusiastic amateurs and a mere smattering of professionals, it now offers countless hours of enjoyment and fascination to those who like a leisure pursuit offering some degree of intellectual challenge, and a means of making a living to a not inconsiderable army of record agents and paid researchers.<sup>305</sup>

Mr Titford might have added 'speakers on the conference circuit' to those who earn some of their living from GFH because he and Anthony Camp (among others) have been invited speakers at New Zealand conferences. The now customary pre- and post-conference tours also contribute to paid work for some.<sup>306</sup>

Mark Herber draws attention to the problem faced by any textbook writer, claiming that information in this book is correct – as far as possible, at publication. He has therefore wisely chosen to structure his work by beginning with an introduction to genealogical research that encompasses unchanging elements: choice, necessary terminology, and aspects such as status, record, name, continuity (of a family in a place or trade), and luck.<sup>307</sup> He writes in the first person and his audience and voice are well chosen: the intelligent beginner is directly addressed without condescension. After covering the use of personal recollections and memorabilia, he tackles organization of research material, and then general research problems. He surveys the commonest necessary record sources, and gives details of some less common ones.

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<sup>303</sup> Anthony Camp, cover blurb of *Ancestral Trails* by Mark Herber.

<sup>304</sup> Merchant seamen, manorial tenants, migrants, Congregationalists, English Presbyterians/Unitarians, Quakers and Baptists are the subjects of some 'My Ancestor' booklets on my shelves.

<sup>305</sup> John Titford, foreword to *Ancestral Trails* by Mark Herber, viii.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid. In introducing Herber's work, John Titford acknowledges some earlier writers, and their works, beginning with: Stacey Grimaldi's 1828 *Origines genealogicae: or the sources whence English genealogies may be traced from the Conquest to the present time*.

<sup>307</sup> Herber, *Ancestral Trails*, 3-5.

The last few chapters deal, briefly, with tracing migrants and living relatives. His own research has included recent ancestors arriving in England, from Germany, and some of their descendants moving to other countries. For the Community this is very familiar, except that ancestors or kin arrived in *New Zealand*, and their descendants or collaterals have dispersed around the world *from* this country. Anne Bromell's second volume (below) was written partly in response to the ethnocentricity that is inevitable for GFH writers in the wider Community, for many GFH records are place specific.

Also familiar to many in the Community, will be slight disappointment when a specific research problem is not covered in a comprehensive book. For example, his section on German ancestry does not address my own problem: how to locate *descendants* of two of my father's first cousins who migrated from England to Germany before WWI.<sup>308</sup> This personal comment is an indication of the vastness of collective individual difference within the genealogical endeavour of the wider Community, not a criticism of Herber's book and its purposes.

#### *Tracing Family History in and from New Zealand*

There are many differences for researchers in the A-NZ Community and Anne Bromell published two volumes to address these specific needs. This author was a key informant interviewed during this study. In her first volume, Anne takes the researcher of New Zealand families through the general procedures and conventions in a well-illustrated and readable book. She uses her mother-in-law's family,<sup>309</sup> to illustrate many methods and documentary sources for researching a person who arrived in New Zealand in 1839.

The second volume addresses anyone living in New Zealand who seeks to research pre-emigration families. It contains more how-to trace advice, including how to use what is recorded in New Zealand's written and otherwise preserved records, about people who may never have been to New Zealand; and it also surveys useful methods and sources when tracing a family line in its pre-New

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<sup>308</sup> To be fair, I was looking for a magic wand: one that would unite all German civil records in one place; index them; and make them fully searchable and freely available. I do know many ways to begin this quest, and how difficult it will be. Waiting for the release of the 1911 Census, is presently the best option, for me.

<sup>309</sup> This is complex shorthand for: 'one of her families of interest, one that originates with an individual: in this case, *one* of her husband's emigrant ancestors'.

Zealand places of origin. Anne used personal research to illustrate what and how to research in this area. Some of the information put into the where-to-find chapters is now superseded by the vast array of material accessible on the Internet; but I found both these volumes, well thumbed, on shelves in every Library I visited in the course of my non-participant observations.<sup>310</sup>

These are but a few examples of the many how-to publications in the field that are available to members of the Community to assist them in their quest for kin, in England and New Zealand in particular. For Scotland, Ireland, and other countries of interest there are similar and different publications. Websites add to the volume in this genre. There are also published bibliographies of sources – by county and by topic.<sup>311</sup>

### *Weighing Evidence*

I now turn to some of the many publications that focus on what Elizabeth Shown Mills calls *weighing evidence* and begin with her own book on the topic. She states that:

Genealogy is a study to which most people come after they have already mastered other fields. Many of these...are rooted in research and analysis. Yet, the special nature of genealogical conclusions often requires us to modify research principles used elsewhere before we can successfully apply them to our genealogical problems. In genealogy, there is a more rigorous standard than those common in the social sciences where individual oversights or errors tend to cancel each other out in the broad perspective – or those in the hard sciences where experiments will expose errors. In genealogy, a single wrong relationship is multiplied exponentially with each generation beyond the error.<sup>312</sup>

Shown Mills writes that (in her country) GFH research into “the raw stuff of history, [is] inconveniently housed in courthouse attics and obscure archives.” She argues that, “genealogical research – done well – requires a critical approach to knowledge. Answers to questions can seldom be ‘looked up’ in books [and]

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<sup>310</sup> Anne Bromell, *Tracing Family History in New Zealand* (Wellington: Government Printing Office 1988); and *Tracing Family History Overseas from New Zealand*, rev. ed. (1991; Auckland: Godwit Press, 1994).

<sup>311</sup> For example: Stuart A Raymond, *Lincolnshire: A Genealogical Bibliography* (Birmingham: Federation of Family History Societies (Publications) Ltd, 1995). D. Richard Torrance, comp. *Scottish Trades and Professions: a Selected Bibliography (Including a Summary of Scottish Directories)* (Edinburgh: The Scottish Association of Family History Societies, 1991).

<sup>312</sup> Shown Mills, *Evidence! Citation & Analysis for the Family Historian*, 42.

historical and genealogical truths are elusive”.<sup>313</sup> “We must weigh the accumulated evidence – analyzing the individual parts as well as the whole, without favouring any theory.”<sup>314</sup>

I agree with the genealogical hermeneutic expressed in those assertions but wonder if this writer is using “theory” as shorthand for the changing perspectives reflected in theoretical approaches to knowledge (or vice versa), especially with regard to disciplinary knowledge. For example, it is no longer customary to first seek authorial intent in literary writings. Shown Mills may also be referring to fields where there are already many theorists and theories: where students are expected to understand and *apply*, rather than challenge, or approach differently.

Shown Mills gives guidelines for analysing evidence, covering aspects such as drawing evidence “from a variety of independently created sources” and considering the reliability and purpose of a record, and whether those compiling it have first-hand knowledge. She stresses that “assemblage of indirect or circumstantial evidence” can be effective, if the strengths and limits of sources are known. She claims, for competent genealogical family historians, that: “We will labor as diligently to disprove our hypothesis as diligently as we labor to prove it.”<sup>315</sup> I give one example of this strategy in a case study, below. She believes that research, evidence, citation, and analysis are inseparable; and that we “need guidelines and explicit [citation] models – ones tailored to genealogy and to the original sources we commonly use but cannot find discussed in ... manuals aimed at a broader market.” I agree in principle, and with particular dislike of the now ubiquitous APA system.<sup>316</sup> However, Shown Mills suggests such comprehensive documentation of common sources, that footnotes would overwhelm text far too often. For example, I do not think that the inclusion of the name of the sanitary district, for *every* reference to a census return, is essential either for documentation, *or* to enable further research. I take up more of Shown Mills’ understandings, in later chapters.

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<sup>313</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid., 44-46.

<sup>316</sup> Margaret Selman Brown, “The Tyranny of the Conventional.” In *Writing Then and Now*. Proceedings of the Tertiary Writing Network Colloquium, 7-8 December 2000, Hamilton, edited by Barbara Day, Lisa Emerson and Varvara Richards (Hamilton: TWN, 2000), 18-22.

### *Research in Specific Sources*

Some of the publications I have analysed focus on the use of one specific source or record category and Eve McLaughlin's *The 1901 Census and How to Tackle It*<sup>317</sup> is one such. It deals with a record that became available in 2001. Eve McLaughlin was a frequent contributor to the London List observed during the main data-gathering phase of this research. She is the author of "The McLaughlin Guides". There are 19 other titles listed on the back page of this publication, at a standard price of under \$NZ10.00 each. These are widely available to the A-NZ GFH Community. This one discusses a source, and the *standards* of an allied resource, produced by non-genealogists.

After some introductory material about the information that can be expected on a 1901 schedule, McLaughlin covers the potential errors of enumerators, the amendments and additional marks of statisticians, and the specific problems caused by the *transcription* of this source. Some information is now out of date,<sup>318</sup> for images of the schedules are now easily accessible on line; but knowledge that all beginners must acquire includes McLaughlin's warnings about nicknames: "Beware that 'Cissie' although a pet name for Cecily/Cecelia, is more often a name given to a sister... especially in a family of boys; and 'Queenie'... may be any little bossy boots".<sup>319</sup> McLaughlin gives examples of some of the well-known reasons for *recording* errors: deafness, no teeth, unfamiliar dialects, and some who really did not know data asked for." I agree with her assessment that, "Some enumerators were bad writers by anyone's standards" and her feeling that "some enumerators, especially in Norfolk, attended a special school for bad fancy writing".<sup>320</sup>

In addition to enumerator errors, there are problems inherent in any deciphering and transcribing project, even by individuals McLaughlin identifies as having "personal knowledge of the family, or expert skills...[like] expert palaeographers

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<sup>317</sup> Eve McLaughlin, *The 1901 Census and How to Tackle It* (Haddenham Bucks, Varneys Press, 2002), 32.

<sup>318</sup> Also out of date is a 'nifty trick' that was shared throughout the wider GFH Community at this time. Individuals located in *free* indexes could be re-grouped back into the households on the census schedules - by careful study of coded references the compilers thought hidden at the foot of each online page. This saved time and money. The commercial owners discovered the widespread use of tactic, and thereafter changed the codes every day.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

with a good grasp of general geography". This expertise, much of it residing in family history and local history groups, was by-passed by the company that won the contract. Instead, "cheap labour from Her Majesty's prisons" was used. The work "was started much too late" and with "pressure to do things fast rather than doing them well".<sup>321</sup> To compound matters the prisoners were handed random pages instead of consecutive ones, and given orders to omit all abbreviations; the software did not handle NK for 'Not Known'; and some transcribers did not know about Ditto nor its 'Do' abbreviation; nor that some entries gave surname first, contrary to the original instructions.<sup>322</sup>

These shortcomings certainly made searching the resultant indexes difficult for even expert genealogical family historians. The software designers, who did not take account of the specific needs of genealogical users, made some desirable searches impossible, and deservedly attracted McLaughlin's most trenchant criticism. "The vast majority of errors are likely to involve the initial letter of a name.... but [their system] refuses to allow wild card searches unless you put the first two letters. This is plain stupid."<sup>323</sup> Similarly, when seeking inmates of institutions who are often identified only by initials, "it is impossible to search [for them]".<sup>324</sup> McLaughlin thus identifies aspects of genealogical research knowledge and practice in her booklet. The submitted schedules can now be seen more easily, by subscribing to other commercial web sites; but indexing remains a problem.

#### *Internet Research Problems*

Among cyberspace cousins, the occasionally competitive sub-sport of locating kin despite flawed source material has accumulated evidence of the *extent* of errors (recording, transcribing, and indexing) that creates problems for those who research via the Internet.

**SELMAN**s have been found by CoG members under **SALMAN**, **SALMEN**, **SELMEN**, and **SOLOMON**; **ICHMAN**, **SCHWAN**, **SELENSON**, **LELMAN**, **FELMAN**, **SEEMAN** and **SIDMAN**; as well as with the more common and

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<sup>321</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., 17.

*expected* SALMON, SELMON, SULMAN, SOLMAN and SILMAN variants; and of course SELLMAN – though that version seems to have ramified mainly in and from Staffordshire, Shropshire, Sussex and London. ZELMAN reminds that Wiltshire is next to ‘Zomerzet’.

One Wiltshire-born relative married in Essex and had a family there (1791-1815), with his posterity residing mainly in Hertfordshire. Most continue to use the SELLMAN spelling. Jacqui advised that a passenger emigration listing gave SILLMAN, SELLMANN, SELAMN,<sup>325</sup> SELLMON and SILMANN, for connected kin. A Sily SELMAN from Sacock caused the CoG both mirth and frustration that software developers did not understand how often L looks like S.

### *Occupations*

Eve McLaughlin also traversed another concern in her small booklet: “When the census returns were sent to the Registrar General, the statisticians got to work, extracting numerical details of population, age groupings, trade distribution, migration and immigration in various areas.” There was a subdivision of trades into general types, and “the name of the trade was added: ‘boot’ ‘iron’ ‘cotton’ which is helpful” – to Geneals. “Less helpful is the habit of classing slightly similar trades under the heading of one of them.... Breeding of all types is labelled ‘dog’ which is the last animal you would want [near] a duck or canary breeding establishment”.<sup>326</sup>

Occupations are of interest to most Geneal researchers. Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave discovered the concept of Communities of Practice through their interest in apprenticeships. I now discuss three booklets I have used that relate to occupations and apprenticeships. Two of the booklets are the work of archivists: one by a named individual, and the other a guide to the holdings of a particular repository.<sup>327</sup> The third publication is the abstraction and indexing work of a

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<sup>325</sup> This version also appeared in typed indexes to Marriage Licence Bonds. There are many such typing problems with forenames too: ‘Geroge’ for George occurs all too frequently.

<sup>326</sup> McLaughlin, *The 1901 Census, and How to Tackle It*, 8.

<sup>327</sup> Vivienne E. Aldous, *My Ancestors Were Freemen of the City of London* (London: Society of Genealogists, 1999).

*City Livery Companies and Related Organisation: a Guide to their archives in Guildhall Library*, 3rd ed. (1976; London: Guildhall Library Publications, 1989).

Genealogical Family Historian,<sup>328</sup> and challenges even the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS).<sup>329</sup>

London guilds and livery companies regulated and influenced the working and social lives of one of my own families of interest.<sup>330</sup> This case study centred on a name-line illustrates how *identifying family members* is central to the aims, strategies and findings of collaborative GFH research. Each record searched gave small pieces of information to weigh against already established facts to extend the ancestral line, and reconstruct family groups, to our collective satisfaction.

### **Case Study I: Collaborating to Trace COVINGTONs**

I learned from a New Zealand second cousin<sup>331</sup> that an ancestor had married a woman with the comparatively uncommon name of COVINGTON. We were able to reconstruct the families of orientation and procreation of Richard and Ann (EAMES) COVINGTON.

Two researchers in the wider Community later made contact. COVINGTON was the birth name of one, and she had done considerable work in a variety of sources. Our findings overlapped in places but were mainly complementary: a good foundation for a collaborative research relationship. We were able to identify which of two Roger COVINGTONs belonged to our direct line, and which was a collateral.

One ancestor we all shared was Richard COVINGTON (1759-1841) a lighterman by occupation. The Company of Watermen and Lightermen is an ancient one but it has no livery.<sup>332</sup> It does not rank anywhere in the order of precedence of companies.<sup>333</sup> By ordering microfiche copies of its apprentice bindings, to read at an FHC, I was able to continue the reconstruction of the name-line families of interest.

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<sup>328</sup> Cliff Webb, comp. *London Apprentices [London Livery Company Apprenticeship Registers] Volume 28 Farriers' Company 1619-1800* (London: Society of Genealogists, 1999).

<sup>329</sup> In the absence of a citation style dedicated to GFH needs, I have subscribed to *The Chicago Manual of Style Online 15<sup>th</sup> edition*, at [www.chicagomanualofstyle.org](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org)

<sup>330</sup> I restrict my comments to City of London Guilds. Many cities and some boroughs in Greater London had their own apprenticeship systems and records.

<sup>331</sup> I acknowledge here the research work of Beverly (HILLS) ALDERSON.

<sup>332</sup> Aldous, *My Ancestors Were Freeman of the City of London*, 22.

<sup>333</sup> The 100<sup>th</sup> company: Information Technologists, was formed in 1992.

When browsing the shelves of the library of the Society of Genealogists in London, in 1999, I discovered from a listing of 'The Livery of London' in the back of a 1792 trade directory, that Richard COVINGTON was *also* a member of the Farriers' Company,<sup>334</sup> and a citizen of London by virtue of being a freeman of the Company of Farriers (as was a John COVINGTON, later proved to be his brother). Old maps of 1602 and 1799 suggest that these brothers, although living in different counties, worked *across* a section of the River Thames. Specialist maps of parish start dates and probate jurisdictions, together with baptism records, helped trace movements of family groups. Cliff Webb's booklet revealed that earlier COVINGTONs had also belonged to the Farriers' Company.

Apprenticeship records read at the Guildhall Library gave another vital clue: yet earlier COVINGTONs had been freemen of the Haberdashers' Company. It ranks eighth in seniority<sup>335</sup> and its records, together with information from wills, parishes registers and some more esoteric sources, enabled us to take this name-line back to the arrival in London, from Bedfordshire, of the William COVINGTON born in 1670, son of a blacksmith, apprenticed in London in 1687.

While tracing the name-line *back* to our satisfaction, I noted that most members of this family had become members of Companies by servitude (apprenticeship) and patrimony (father a member of a Company at the time of their legitimate births) rather than by redemption (paying a fee). There was also information about name variants, places of abode, and occupations; and evidence of deaths and remarriages. A number of women became 'masters' in some circumstances.<sup>336</sup> I give the results of these searches in a *summary* form, to include some key details:

**Richard COVENTON** (born ca 1759), son of William, was bound a **Lighterman** 7 May 1773 to Edward MASCALL; assigned to a new master, 10 Feb 1775, **free a Lighterman by servitude** 21 Sep 1780. Free a **Farrier** by **patrimony** 11 Sep 1780

His father **William COVINGTON** (born ca 1735) son of Roger, Holborn, London, **Farrier deceased**, was apprenticed to **John LEWIS** 31 Jan 1749/50 turned over to Thomas WOODWARD citizen and farrier, 1751, **free by servitude**, 1757

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<sup>334</sup> Aldous, *My Ancestors Were Freemen of the City of London*, 10. The Farriers' Company is ranked at 55th.

<sup>335</sup> The Lord Mayor of London must belong to one of the 'great twelve' senior companies.

<sup>336</sup> Thus suggesting to me that I should re-visit some Wiltshire research where women were said, in official records, to be blacksmiths and stone masons: the genealogical hermeneutic at work.

His grandfather **Roger CIVINGTON** (born ca 1711 d 1731-50) son of **Mary LEWIS**, Brooks Market, Middlesex, **widow**, was apprenticed to Stephen SWAIN 10 Feb 1727/28, **free a Haberdasher** per William deceased

Roger's brother, William COVINGTON son of William, **citizen and haberdasher**, was apprenticed, as a farrier, to Richard STRATTON, 25 March 1723, and was also made free a haberdasher **by patrimony**, [date unrecorded].

Richard's great-grandfather, **William COVINGTON** (ca 1670-1715) son of **Peter COVINGTON** of **Turvey, Bedfordshire**, was bound to Charles GWIN/GWYNNE 1687, and made free 22 Jun 1694. William became Master to his brother Cornelius, in 1707.

Between 1781 and 1811, Richard became master to his brother John 'COVEINGTON' and to some of his own surviving sons. A few of them also apprenticed sons to themselves, through to the late 1890s. By then only one branch of descendants was still working on the River Thames.

My email cousin had pursued records relating to this family in different directions and had acquired, among other things, a copy of a certificate of 'freedom from the press'. Watermen and lightermen, prized by the Royal Navy for their skills on water, were exempt from being pressed into service. When we were last in contact she was (between family illness and tertiary study) on the trail of a Giles COVINGTON, seeking to prove him related, to us. He was hanged, although he may not have been guilty. A sympathetic museum curator has reunited his skeletal remains, and Giles has become the subject of a book, mock trials, and school projects.<sup>337</sup>

In 2006 I discovered a genealogical connection to a member of the A-NZ GFH Community - a man born and living in New Zealand. We first met some years ago. We now find we are *10th cousins* by our respective descents from one COVINGTON ancestor and his wife. His line remained longer in Bedfordshire, and a descendant migrated directly from there, to a different part of New Zealand, at a different generation.

Many of the ingredients of the GFH way of life are embedded in this case study: researching ancestors and tracing descendants; visiting repositories and learning new facts; collaborating to share research and costs; acquiring in-depth knowledge about some occupational records; and enjoying unexpected discoveries. This case

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<sup>337</sup> See, for example: <http://lcjb.cjsonline.gov.uk/Thames%20Valley/822.html> (accessed 7 March 2008).

study also introduces what I consider is the core imperative of *Genealogical Family Historians*: the reconstruction of family groups. This involves a great deal more than merely collecting names of kin, and is the subject of the next publication I discuss.

### **Family Reconstruction**

Englishman Andrew Todd's publication *Nuts and Bolts: Family History Problem Solving through Family Reconstitution Techniques* engages with the essential parameters of family reconstruction. He explains that his booklet evolved from a talk that one in his audience described as being 'about exactly what family historians do.'<sup>338</sup> When Todd speaks to GFH groups, he asks who among his audience looks for family groups rather than solely for ancestors, and he finds such people are "always in the majority".

He exhorts all to "think... *family* rather than *ancestor* ...[to] recreate the social reality in which your forebears lived"; and states his central theme: "that family reconstitution can solve our major research problems."<sup>339</sup> Todd presents his argument in an original and effective way, and "affirms the satisfaction and usefulness of pursuing collateral relatives compared to the "...rather sterile straight line...approach" he had employed in his own first 18 months of compiling a pedigree chart.<sup>340</sup>

Todd uses some terminology not in common usage in the wider Community, although the techniques are very familiar. He acknowledges that many of his ideas do not come from standard family history literature, but from the more academic literature of population studies. Todd's list of references and his reading list point to the sources for some of his terms: multiple candidacy, perimortal movement, and isonomous couples, for example.

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<sup>338</sup> Andrew Todd, *Nuts and Bolts: Family History Problem Solving through Family Reconstitution Techniques*, rev. ed. (1998; Bury Lancs: Allen and Todd, 2000), [2].

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 1.

His summary<sup>341</sup> of the types of social networks (kinship, economic, religious, huddle and friendship) that he considers “...very important to the lives and movements of our ancestors...”<sup>342</sup> gives labels from Population Studies to concepts well understood by active discoverers of genealogical family history.

### *Hasping and Squeezing*

Other terms appear to be Todd’s own coinage, for example: ‘hasping’ for the complex process of “...binding one person unchallengeably to another in one time and place, so that the connection can be carried backwards or forwards to another time and place,”<sup>343</sup> and ‘orange squeezing’ for getting as much as possible out of a source, especially in “the parish of destination” prior to “[searching] for an ancestor in “their as yet unknown parish of departure”.”<sup>344</sup> Todd points out the “...retrogressive nature of family history research [which means] you unravel lives backwards [from the present]”<sup>345</sup> and first encounter an individual in a place of marriage, or in a parish of birth/baptism *or* of destination/settlement/death if a migrant.

Todd did not comment on the additional complications when writing up such research from furthest discovered name-line ancestor forward to the present, and at the same time, wishing to tell the research story behind any findings. I have introduced his term **hasping** to key informants with whom I continue to research collaboratively, and it has become a very useful piece of complex shorthand when asking each other if a new identification can be considered proven or not. Todd’s hasp takes its name from the “small steel fitting” that locks together “two manually operated level crossing gates in position across a railway, blocking the road. Each is in the right place at the right time, but they are not securely connected”<sup>346</sup> without the hasp.

In his section on ‘Topping and Tailing’ he calls the methodology he employs “the vital hasp if any proof is to be watertight”<sup>347</sup> and criticises pedigrees that “assume

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<sup>341</sup> Ibid., 26-28.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>346</sup> *ibid.*, 41.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

recklessly that a sequence of entries in one parish register is an end-on continuation of a family's existence previously recorded in another." He exhorts his reader to "prove that your ancestor was never in two places simultaneously"<sup>348</sup> and exemplifies with personal failures to top and tail. In one case, a proper tailing revealed that a William, once a candidate to be his ancestor "had had the audacity to *die* a bachelor."<sup>349</sup> Todd would of course know that bachelors do have children: it was finding the date of that man's death that *removed* him from Todd's tree. This wrong candidate was of the right age and birthplace, and family names matched – but, his ancestor, "who flying-saucered into Manchester in the 1870s.... remains unfound."<sup>350</sup>

Such cheerful sharing, of faulty findings now addressed, is found throughout the wider Community; as is the enjoyment of learning in an environment of such unselfish and honest sharing. It is also an attribute of communities of practice as Wenger has defined them. Todd's personal case studies, of entwined families and concealed multiple candidacies describe some of the collective practice I have both observed and used. Research into ancestry, is always 'work in progress', because some, like Todd's great-grandfather, remain determinedly unfound, despite years of research.

Todd invites his reader to choose a *level* of family reconstruction, rating the work at all the stages beyond single-family reconstitution at parish level as more demanding, and requiring some other choices. His brief discussion of those choices – collecting only clear-fit collaterals and choosing to discriminate against female lines, demonstrates how some discoverers of genealogical family history think and work.<sup>351</sup>

Todd also lists variables that will limit the feasibility of any planned reconstruction project: a name's rarity, family occupations, richness of record survival, population density, topography, pattern of land tenure, economic

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<sup>348</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid., 8-9. I think Todd is being pragmatic rather than chauvinist here, because English records are undeniably unhelpful for tracing female kin, especially when compared to major record classes in, for example, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand. See Chapter 7.

substructure and whether a parish is open or closed.<sup>352</sup> For those in the A-NZ Community who choose to research families of interest in England, this is a useful perspective on identification and reconstruction problems in English sources.

### *Identification for GFH Purposes*

Correct identification of each individual is the essential first step before tracing ancestry of those individuals, or reconstructing their families of orientation; and then learning where and how they lived. The following case study demonstrates the work and thinking required when difficulties ensue, and how the identification of the correct family group in which to place an individual is not straightforward. Many in the wider Community refer to such problems as ‘brick walls’.

#### **Case Study II: Sarah BAILEY: an Identification Problem**

About sixty years ago, my grandmother first showed me a photograph of her parents and their nine surviving children, and the space between two of them for the “one who died on the boat”. She also had photos of her own two grandmothers, whom she had never met. Together we decided which was Mrs BAILEY, the wife of bookbinder Henry BAILEY. When my interest became research, I obtained the 1933 New Zealand death certificate of Grandma’s own mother, Mary Ann Sarah (BAILEY) MILBANK. It gave *her* parents as Henry BAILEY and ‘Mary Ann Sarah MENDINGALL’. Her 1848 English birth certificate corrected the family memory,<sup>353</sup> for her mother was born Sarah MINDENHALL.

In 1974, I located and read, at the Public Record Office, then in Chancery Lane in London, the original 1851 schedule matching Mary Ann Sarah’s birth address. The only family group in the vicinity that matched some of my certificate and family information was recorded thus on the official schedule.<sup>354</sup>

1851: 7a Northampton Rd, Amwell, Clerkenwell, Middlesex, England.

Henry BAILEY Head Married **34** bookbinder finisher, born **Paddington**  
Mary Ann BAILEY Wife Married **28** born **Salisbury, Wiltshire**  
Mary Ann BAILEY Dau **6** scholar born Islington, Middlesex  
Henry BAILEY Son **2** born Clerkenwell, Middlesex  
*William BAILEY, Son **6 months** born Clerkenwell, Middlesex*

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<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 10-13.

<sup>353</sup> The family informant *may* have remembered correctly. This variant may have been a transcription error from the person trying to read the official record (itself a copy of the data given at district level), in order to type up the certificate.

<sup>354</sup> PRO reference: HO/107 1517. The Ancestry.Com site *indexed* the two females as ‘Mary Anis’.

Later, collaborative research with a second cousin gave the names of two sons born *after* that census: William (1854) and Arthur Frederick (1857), and established that Henry was born in 1826, in *Holborn*, and his wife *Sarah*, in 1816 in Clerkenwell; and that they did have a son Henry, born in Clerkenwell in 1849.

The items bolded above appeared to be wrong. The William said to be born in 1850 did not show up in birth or death indexes, so his existence was questionable. That family group was not at that address in 1861. I used this example of identification problems at a research day held by the Bay of Plenty NZSG Group, circa 1977, and all agreed that there were too many inconsistencies for me to claim them as mine.

Reconstruction work on this family lapsed, until 2006, when *searchable indexes* to the 1861 census became available online, and revealed a family that looked more like the one sought.

1861: 11 Bath Buildings, City Rd, St Luke, Finsbury, Middlesex<sup>355</sup>

Henry BAILEY Head Married 34 bookbinder, born **Clerkenwell**, Middlesex  
Sarah BAILEY Wife Married 44 born Clerkenwell, Middlesex  
Henry BAILEY Son 12 bookbinder apprentice, born Clerkenwell, Middlesex  
*Stephen J BAILEY Son 10 born Clerkenwell, Middlesex*  
William BAILEY Son 7 born Clerkenwell, Middlesex  
Arthur F BAILEY Son 4 born Clerkenwell, Middlesex  
Emily BAILEY Dau 1 born Clerkenwell, Middlesex

This time, key details matched: only Henry's birthplace appeared to be 'wrong'. The FreeBMD<sup>356</sup> indexes gave an Emily Elizabeth who died the following year; and there was a Stephen James born at the correct time - and a death likely to be his, in 1878 aged 27. Some questions remained: *If* the 1851 family was this family, why was the baby *William*, and not Stephen, and where was the older daughter?<sup>357</sup>

The 1851 birth certificate for Stephen James BAILEY was the hasp. I *had* found my family group on the 1851 census all those years ago: for *Stephen was born at 7a Northampton Rd* – on 24 January - making his age yet another small error in that 1851 schedule.

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<sup>355</sup> PRO reference: RG 9/202.

<sup>356</sup> I could only use the GRO quarterly indexes in person or by paying an agent, in London, when I began; then microform copies of them held in major libraries, including Auckland Public and Alexander Turnbull. The NZSG obtained a set, and volunteers sent batches to members for a small charge. They are now available online on various sites, including FreeBMD.

<sup>357</sup> The new 1861 indexes led to finding her living nearby, in domestic service with a dentist's family.

Genealogical conjecture set in: who did the 1851 enumerator question – a sleep-deprived mother, or her young daughter; or the father, Henry, himself? Did Henry bind or finish books at home, or elsewhere? How reliable was anyone's knowledge and memory, at any time, or at stressful times? They named the baby Stephen, eventually, not William: but as the next son was William, perhaps that name was a possibility before Stephen's birth was registered? Presumably, they named Stephen for his maternal grandfather Stephen MINDENHALL. Did Stephen receive his second name because, in 1841, Henry had been working as an apprentice, and living with a James BAYLEY? James was a master bookbinder. What relation is he – if any? Why did they not name a son for Henry's father, *George* BAILEY? He was also a bookbinder, and had a warehouse of spelling books, according to one source.

Why would anyone *invent* Salisbury in Wiltshire as Sarah's birthplace, and call her Mary Ann? *Who* thought Henry was born in Paddington? Or Clerkenwell? Perhaps the 1851 enumerator just *guessed* what he had written in his notes, and did not go back to check before filling in the schedule?

To further prove that the 1851 group was *not* a different family, I searched 1841, 1861 and 1871 census returns for a Mary Ann BAILEY born in Salisbury – in case two families had been conflated when the enumerator transferred his notes to the official schedule, the way quite a few errors crept in at this point in the whole process. Perhaps there had been an adult Mary Ann with the family on census night – to help with the new baby? As I write this, I consider again whether the adult Mary Ann BAILEY of 1851 *could* be a real person of that name - a more distant relative of Henry BAILEY's – his cousin, or a half-sister-in-law<sup>358</sup> perhaps. There *is* space in Henry's family of orientation for another sister, (who could be named Mary Ann for their mother), but not of that age; and again, *if* such a person ever existed she 'should' have been born in the City of London, not Salisbury.

Salisbury was also a major centre for bookbinding, and I have not yet traced this BAIL(E)Y/BAYL(E)Y family's name-line out of London. Perhaps I should look (again) for George's birth in Wiltshire; after I have incorporated new knowledge

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<sup>358</sup> Henry's father is some years older than his mother, and Henry was not named for his father, so did Henry have an older half-brother called George? I followed up on a likely earlier marriage: it had George marrying as a bachelor - but that term sometimes meant a widower or otherwise free to marry: no hasp there.

of the names of his in-laws (from Colchester in Essex) into my thinking about the forenames used in this family. His wife's father was named William.

Conjecture gives way to speculation: was my Sarah missed out by an enumerator who refused to believe that she was 10 years older than her husband? They did not deny that fact in all other census schedules. And, why is Sarah 'MENDENHALL', female servant, aged 24 on census night in 1841, at the "Rosoman Street Dispensary", with (only) a male servant who is aged 19?

Households on census night can be tantalising manifestations of segments of genealogical families of extension, with some members not visible. This is an example of way the genealogical hermeneutic is set in motion for all who seek to reconstruct family groups: thinking critically about questionable data against knowledge of possibilities, and back to the contradictions and omissions to try to interpret the information; new research, then back to newly revealed possibilities, and more research. This case study also demonstrates *how long it can take* to reconstruct just *one* family group, when sources are not easily accessible, and when one contains multiple errors. The work on this family group is not yet complete, for the gap between the first two children is 28 months, more than enough space for another child. There is a possibility: a Thomas with a birth, and death, registered in Clerkenwell in 1848. One certificate would establish if he belongs or not, but Thomas is not (yet) a 'family name' and the cost presently prohibits confirming this one's parentage. It is not essential for our current research aims: to discover the birthplace and parentage of George BAILEY, and learn when he arrived in the City of London.

#### *Key Identifiers for Placing an Individual in a Reconstructed Family*

Todd gives five key identifiers of any human being: name, date, occupation, abode/s, property ownership, and relations.<sup>359</sup> Again, this is an English perspective; and here Todd does reveal a leaning towards researching male kin of certain strata in the whole population: property ownership in England has a very patriarchal history and bias compared to younger nations in the wider Community.

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<sup>359</sup> Todd, *Nuts and Bolts*, 39.

A few years ago I discussed ‘Identification Factors’ with members of the Auckland Branch of the NZSG. At the beginning of my talk I asked them to think about what they considered to be the factors, in order of importance, for deciding if they had identified a person correctly (that is, placed him or her in the right family of orientation). The List they produced replicated the one I had formulated, but not disclosed to them: **Name, Age, Place, Occupations, Religious Affiliations, and Fertility Patterns.**

Since compiling that list of identification factors, I have thought it necessary to add another, because some families seem to enjoy shifting house, or have that upheaval imposed on them, while others do not. I have called it a **Migration Profile**. There is also one other factor, or collection of factors, that might be added to this list: **Personality Clues** – attributes such as temperament (enthusiasm, optimism/pessimism); abilities such as entrepreneurship; and other tendencies that may be genetic, and/or transmitted by cultural influence from families of extension, and from peers. Appendix A has been compiled, refined, and used over the past 30 years. It gives a summary of the type of knowledge practitioners in the A-NZ GFH Community acquire, for weighing evidence of correct identification.

I end this chapter with two early findings: one concerns the family reconstruction work of members of the wider GFH Community, and the other presents the evidence for viewing the GFH Community as *more* than a Community of Practice.

### **Active Discoverers**

Theory, discussion, and personal practice came together during the first stage of this research project, to prompt an early finding. Boyer and Glassick had alerted me to aspects of the *scholarship* of discovery; and discovery was the GFH activity that had always appealed to me most among all the interests and activities of the Community.

#### *Discoverers or Preservers*

During a discussion about this thesis with Dr David Swain, we agreed that there are those within the wider GFH community who receive ‘family history’ from

older family members, or from printed sources that are often of a secondary nature. Some of these ‘receivers’ are not happy when others find evidence in primary sources that conflicts with what they have remembered or have received.

Some seem to *prefer* to learn about their family history from others, rather than finding out for themselves who their ancestors were, and where and how they lived. Others enjoy the activity of researching beyond the known, and discovering the names of ancestors who must exist, and of other descendants of those ancestors, if any exist. Such Geneals wish to be active agents in the process of discovering and reconstructing family groups; *and* in understanding the lives of kin lived within<sup>360</sup> a family, within a community and within a world of events and possibilities - even when their findings challenge long-held family oral history.

The realisation that there are some who actively seek to find out, and some who prefer to accept and adopt the work of others, led to a further question: what is the role of *active discoverers* within the CoP? I began to use this term in contradistinction to an awkward term ‘received rememberers’. I now call those with a *preference* for this aspect ‘preservers’: they are preservers of received oral history, of memories, artefacts, documents, tombstones (and their inscriptions), buildings, and more.

My thinking about the apparent dualism developed and changed, during the research for this thesis: I found that discoverer *versus* preserver is not a simple or valid binary opposition. There were a number of epiphanies during fieldwork that led to this finding.

When visiting a group associated with the NZSG, at an end of year social function in 2003, I asked a number of individuals about their research interests. I expected to be answered with the name of a geographic area, or with the name of a family of interest, or with an account of the current joys or frustrations of tackling a particularly recalcitrant line of inquiry. I was surprised by how many were no longer actively researching to discover kin. Some indicated that they still

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<sup>360</sup> ‘Within’ subsumes both separated from and estranged from other family members, whether temporarily or permanently in real time. Membership of a genealogical family cannot be *changed*, except in error or to deceive. Bill ODDY did not quite know how to describe an older sister who had died aged five days: but he retrospectively realised that he *had* had a sister; and also how her death had impacted on his parents and on himself.

belonged to the group mainly to meet up with friends, or to listen to speakers on a variety of topics connected to 'history'. All gave indications that they had sought to discover ancestors, previously.

### *A Flawed Dualism*

The simple active discoverer/passive preserver dualism deconstructed further when the document analysis and interviews confirmed the overlap between discovery and preservation for individual Geneals; and it broke down yet again when I realised that not all preservers are 'passive', as the variety of NZSG Projects over the years also attests.<sup>361</sup> Creating and checking indexes is not exactly a passive activity; nor is producing an interactive CD or DVD, or the software for an automated search of online databases such as one available to NZSG members via the Society's website.

### *Discovering and Preserving*

Furthermore, while I had seen myself as primarily as a discoverer of kin beyond the known, I must admit that I have always *preserved* anything with GFH significance. For example, I have an object sent, probably in the 1890s, to my Auckland-born grandfather, from some cousins in Belfast. The sheets of blotting paper, tied within a beautifully decorated paper cover, are still unused.

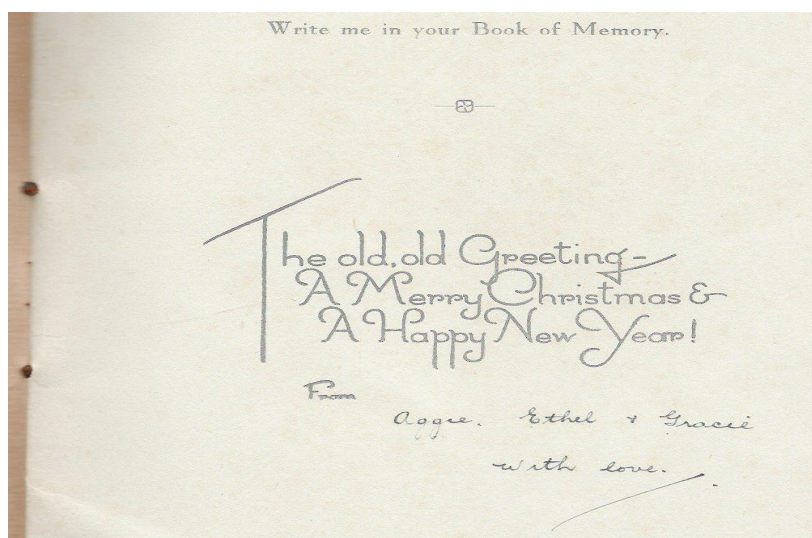


Figure 2. A Genealogical Artefact: an inscription in a book of blotting paper.

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<sup>361</sup> Gail Gibson, comp. *New Zealand Society of Genealogists Projects Register: 2002*, (Auckland: NZSG, 2002). This publication has 199 A4 pages arranged by district showing the status of transcriptions from 32 listed sources.

The GFH significance of the blotting book to me is now threefold. First, it reminds me of the oral history I absorbed from my grandmother<sup>362</sup> and of other artefacts from her husband's family, preserved by her. Second, I can now view the past contacts between various members of three generations of this family in terms of transmission of knowledge and consider how much has been passed on: attitudes to family, and to education, occupations, migration and religion in particular. (A neighbour who had cared for Aggie told my first cousin that Miss Elliott had been fighting the Battle of the Boyne, in her dying days.) Third, it prompts me to want to discover more about that branch of that family, and to *continue* my reconstruction of this family of interest<sup>363</sup>

#### *Research Waiting to be Extended*

'Aggie'<sup>364</sup> was born in Belfast. Her mother and my grandfather's father were twins. She lived in America for three years as a child but they returned to Belfast. She trained in Dublin, taught in Bolton (Lancashire) and died there. I will try to learn what happened to Ethel and Gracie, and if there are kin alive in Belfast, or elsewhere. They may know if Gracie (and their mother Grace) was named for a Scottish forbear whom I share with them. They may have the other half of the Bible. For me, this family of interest, along with many others, awaits time, and promptings from others, to become the focus of active discovery once again.

This example encapsulates how many *places* (each with different histories, cultures and record systems) one small family of interest brings to the research parameters of a GFH researcher; and how artefacts, family oral history, collaboration with living descendants, and even contact with former neighbours, are all important. It also helps demonstrate how a Geneal's research aims and understandings change *over time*.

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<sup>362</sup> When my grandfather died, my grandmother took over the family correspondence with the remnant of his family in Belfast. After her death, my aunt kept the contact alive, and her son (my first cousin) wrote to 'Aggie' before he went to Canada and Scotland for further study. She copied out for him what was in her half of a family Bible: it gave a marriage proclamation date for his and my Scottish great-great-grandparents.

<sup>363</sup> Aggie's grandmother was also Agnes. It took me 18 years to persuade the Registrar General in Dublin to send me the right death certificates for that Agnes (LOGAN) and her husband John DAVIDSON.

<sup>364</sup> We in New Zealand called her "Aunt Agnes" – because she was a cousin once and twice removed from us – until she said she had an Aunt Agnes whom she did not like: could we please call her Cousin Aggie.

On reflection, I now increasingly see myself as one of the preservers of such family artefacts (and stories) as I indulge in ‘show and tell’ with my grandchildren. I now appreciate that the wider Community consists *at any given time* of some with a strong preference for preservation or discovery, or with a mix of both; and that *individual preferences change over time*, both gradually and from day to day.

### *Preserving for Others*

I have also been a preserver in places where I have no known genealogical connections, by taking part in NZSG expeditions to record memorial inscriptions in cemeteries, for the purpose expressed in the Society’s motto: “Preserving our past for the future.” In the 1970s, the old Shortland cemetery in Thames, spread over steep hills, was seriously overgrown. The team from NZSG groups in and beyond the district had first to *find* any grave markers, and then cut through boxthorn shrubs to view inscriptions, after carefully removing moss and lichen. Old kauri headboards required special care; and equipment had to be brought in on the second day to raise some large marble stones that had fallen on their faces. Some inscriptions recorded places of birth (a detail not recorded on New Zealand birth registrations until 1876); and some gave the names of emigrant ships, a piece of data that may have been lost from a family’s oral history.

Thus do I reflect that discoverers also preserve. Discoverers are not ‘active’ all the time. Many pause to record and reflect or to share through speech, and written accounts, from time to time. An early notion: that it might be the ‘active discoverers’ who are the main ‘drivers’ of the Community was not pursued, but not discarded as a possibility.

An early aim of this project was to ascertain if the GFH Community is a Community of Practice as theorised by Wenger. I now summarise my findings in that regard.

## The GFH Community as Community of Practice

In Chapter 2 I have outlined some CoP theory, including Wenger's focus on workplace CoPs and intimated the importance of developments up to 2005 when Wenger expanded his theory to include an emphasis on three crucial characteristics of a CoP: **the domain, the community and the practice**.<sup>365</sup>

### *Domain of interest*

The identity of a CoP is "defined by a shared domain of interest. Membership therefore implies a commitment to the domain and a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people."<sup>366</sup> That the expertise is not necessarily recognised outside the community was still acknowledged. The domain of interest of Geneals is not in dispute, even if not fully comprehended by all who are in any way involved in or with the GFH field.

### *Engagement in Community*

Community is the second characteristic. When: "pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other - they interact and learn together [not necessarily working together on a daily basis]."<sup>367</sup> Geneals can frequently be seen, and heard, engaging in many activities and learning together – face to face, or communicating by letter or via the Internet.

### *Practice*

The third characteristic is practice. A Wengerian CoP is "not just a community of interest, because its members are practitioners who develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems. This is a shared practice and it takes time and shared interaction."<sup>368</sup>

What else contributes to making GFH a Community of Practice? To answer this question I return to some of Wenger's definitions and illustrate from my research

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<sup>365</sup> <http://www.ewenger.com/theory/index.htm> (accessed 25 Jan 2005).

<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

to demonstrate that the A-NZ GFH Community is a large Community of Practice composed of many Communities of Practice.

Communities of Practice are said to **develop social capital, nurture new knowledge, stimulate innovation and share existing tacit knowledge** within an organisation.<sup>369</sup> I leave discussion of the development of social capital for a later chapter, and now address these other three characteristics of Wengerian Communities of Practice with reference to the NZSG 2007 conference, attended by Society members and by others.<sup>370</sup>

### *Nurturing new knowledge*

At the 2007 NZSG Conference, there were many planned opportunities for the nurturing of new knowledge: for beginners in the field, for new Society members *and* for experienced GHF researchers.

There was a Course entitled the TGLT<sup>371</sup> Classroom and a programme in ‘the NZSG Classroom’. The first offered three-hour sessions for comparative beginners on “Records for Locating People”, “Research Methodologies Using the Internet”, “Oral History Skills” and “Ethical Research and Genealogy”. The NZSG Classroom provided concurrent one-hour sessions for some of the Society’s various formal interest groups: Shetland Island, Māori, Pacific Islands, Irish, and Genealogical Computing. These, and some other interest groups (Australia, Channel Island, Greater London, and Cornish) also met at 8.00 am on two days and/or had static, manned displays elsewhere. Other conference sessions focused on how to use the many facilities available to Society members: its Family Research Centre, its projects, record collections and look-up services, its assistance in obtaining documents from beyond New Zealand, and its Journal.

The keynote speaker, from England, contributed to increasing the knowledge of some more experienced researchers, covering specialist areas like Land Tax Assessments and the records of Church Courts. New Zealand speakers addressed the conference themes of Land, Law and Literature. Many presentations focused

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<sup>369</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community\\_of\\_practice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_of_practice) (accessed 9 February 2008).

<sup>370</sup> Claire Dawe, ed., *Genealogy Absolutely Positively*, Proceedings of the NZSG Conference, 1-4 June 2007, Wellington, compiled by the NZSG Conference Committee comprising members of the Hutt Valley and Wellington branches of the NZSG (Auckland: NZSG, 2007).

<sup>371</sup> The Ted Gilberd Literary Trust sponsored this course held within the conference.

on the researching of families in the region where the conference was held. Speakers included staff from New Zealand's National Archives and The National Library of New Zealand.

The nurturing of new knowledge was also facilitated in a gymnasium filled with trade and other displays where experienced genealogists (two at a time, by rota) and an historian were seated centrally to be available for one-to-one discussion. I observed that some asked how to begin. Others came to share well researched but still difficult identification problems with their peers, in the hope of making a breakthrough. As Wenger et al says of members of CoPs: As they spend time together, they typically share information, insight, and advice. They help each other solve problems.... They ponder common issues, explore ideas, and act as sounding boards.<sup>372</sup>

### *Stimulating Innovation*

At the NZSG Conference in 2007 I noted two significant examples of this CoP characteristic. First, there was a presentation about a new initiative: "The NZSG Digital Archive for Family History", a proposed archive for the deposit of researched and written up family histories.<sup>373</sup> Second, two sessions were dual presentations by a senior lecturer and a doctoral student, one in the subject area of Scottish Migration to New Zealand, the other in Music and Musicology.

Other publications for those researching New Zealand families, from here or overseas, include a new venture of the NZSG: a series of 'Gen-Guides' produced "to assist members understand the society and the services that are available to members."<sup>374</sup> One such service is 'look-ups' in the NZSG Pre 1856 New Zealand Marriage Records Collection. Another is a facility for purchasing Scottish

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<sup>372</sup> Wenger, Mc Dermott and Snyder, *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge*, 4-5.

<sup>373</sup> The "Conference Programme & Information Booklet", page 20, advises that Deborah Body, the presenter: "is the Archivist for the NZSG Digital Archive [and] an Information Specialist with the Auckland University of Technology, involved with Human Resources and has a comprehensive understanding of the Privacy Act. The position is a voluntary one.

<sup>374</sup> [http://www.genealogy.org.nz/Gen-Guides\\_54.aspx](http://www.genealogy.org.nz/Gen-Guides_54.aspx) (accessed 9 February 2008).

certificates. There are 20 or so such services listed in recent journals, all run by volunteers.<sup>375</sup>

Ten research guides for geographic regions have also been produced, giving information ranging from the location of Māori Land Courts, through listings of public, church and other record repositories and museums, to information about NZSG groups in each area. The series editor for *Regional Research Repositories in New Zealand* is Heather Bray of Dunedin. In the *Researching in Auckland and Northland* volume, she gives a full page of acknowledgements to staff at record repositories, committee members of NZSG branches and groups, and others.

A different publication serves those who wish to read or write New Zealand family history narratives. The first volume<sup>376</sup> contained well-researched stories, illustrated and referenced, about individuals, groups of migrants (Scots, Chinese, Australians, Māori and English), and some local history centred on families.

#### *Sharing of Existing Tacit Knowledge*

With respect to this characteristic, the 2007 conference provided time and space for much sharing of knowledge including tacit knowledge of facts, strategies, memories and history. In addition to all the complex shorthand regarding knowledge and strategies being spoken, and explicated, there were occasions, both public and private, for sharing the history of the 40 years of the NZSG's existence. I have not quoted from any of the papers presented to this conference, but I include the Proceedings in my bibliography because I believe that the offerings of 2007 NZSG Conference alone is ample evidence that the Community I have studied is indeed a Community of Practice.

#### *A Different Community of Practice*

The whole A-NZ GFH Community is clearly a CoP in Wenger's terms, but it is not a single workplace CoP, nor even a CoP that meets online or at international conferences to share the expertise of others who 'work' in the same field – work in the sense of being paid. In my work life, I belonged to a constellation of CoPs

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<sup>375</sup> That is, they are not *paid* to take on these tasks. Some are appointed after *applying* for a position advertised in *The New Zealand Genealogist*, and I can attest that 'reference checks' are sometimes carried out.

<sup>376</sup> Richard Stedman, ed. *The New Zealand Genealogist's Family Historian* (Auckland: NZSG, 2004).

that functioned in a similar way. I once sat next to a funeral director on a plane trip. He had been to a conference related to his profession: he belonged to a Wengerian CoP, one that helped him in his work, but our discussion of his work (and its relevance for genealogical family historians) did not constitute a new CoP, for we met only once.

The whole A-NZ GFH Community has *within it* many other *overlapping* CoPs. For example, only some Society members regularly attend the AGMs of the NZSG, held during conferences. Some members of the NZSG belong to three or four, or more, Branches and Groups of the Society. Half the membership has never belonged to any local or interest group. There are many places where Geneals (society members and others) ‘meet’ for the purposes Wenger has identified. I have observed and taken part in exchanges about new and existing GFH knowledge at conferences and congresses, at NZSG Branch Meetings, in LDS Family History Centres, at the NZSG’s Family Records Centre, as well as through online communities. Such voluntary gatherings provide evidence that the GFH Community is a CoP: a large, developing,<sup>377</sup> mixed membership hobby CoP. The Lists, Journal and Magazines of the wider GFH Community of the A-NZ GFH Community, as I have defined it, all contribute evidence of this status too.

The entire GFH Community of Practice includes individuals, and groups of people for whom tracing ancestry is an obligation, and/or an enjoyable leisure pursuit. For some it is no more than a duty or a hobby; but for others it becomes a serious study and a way of viewing the world. Similarly, all those who play Scrabble are a recognisable community, worldwide, with a name that is also easily recognised by members and non-members alike. Some play for fun, others hone linguistic and other skills and enter tournaments. Members of non-formalised Scrabble groups may be less likely to know the rules, conventions and organisation of competitive Scrabble. They may not know of the mathematical formulae used to give players national ratings, rankings and expectancies; nor that some earn a living by playing professionally. Outsiders perceive the whole hobby CoP as homogenous when they do not know this.

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<sup>377</sup> Wenger outlined the life cycle of a CoP in “Communities of Practice: Learning as a Social System” in a paper published in *Systems Thinker*, June 1998. It was on <http://www.co-i-l.com/coil/knowledge-garden/cop/lss.shtml> 15 Nov 2001, and still accessible 8 February 2008.

Another question that I explored concerned any special characteristics my in-and-from research communities of practice might have compared to other such CoPs. Is the A-NZ GFH CoP, for example, different in any *significant* ways from other hobby groups?

In order to find out if there might be significant ways in which the A-NZ *GFH* CoP differs from other hobby CoPs, I initiated conversations with someone I came to realise was another key informant, my husband **Graeme Brown** - about another in-and-from New Zealand CoP with which I am familiar: another *large, complex, mixed membership*, hobby CoP.

#### *Two Hobby CoPs: a Useful Comparison*

During my fieldwork I recorded the substance of our conversations, and notes made at the time. We discussed characteristics of two in-and from A-NZ Communities with which we are both familiar: GFH and Rail. The latter hobby is one I have been involved in (as a legitimate peripheral participant), for almost as long as I have been a genealogical family historian. My younger brother has been an active and core member, for many years,<sup>378</sup> of various groups within the constellation of communities whose members have a passion for trains, railways and rail transport (including trams) and rail systems. Graeme has been an active member of the CoP of genealogical family history (as NZSG joint member #304) for some decades - in many roles, but not very often as an active discoverer. My thesis topic and my GFH research were not new to him, nor was his long involvement in his hobby new to me.

Although this limited comparison is with only one other hobby group, it is a large worldwide constellation of CoPs with an equivalent wider CoP for those whose domain of interest is both in, and from, Aotearoa-New Zealand; and it has observable topics of interest, named groups and locus groups (see Appendix D).

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<sup>378</sup> In addition to being a President, Editor, Life Member (2007) of the New Zealand Model Railway Guild, and the managing director of a precision engineering firm, my brother produces high quality rolling stock components to sell to other hobbyist modellers - some of whom earn a living from their modelling. There are many parallels here with activities of past leaders in the GFH field.

### *The Constellation of the Rail CoP*

I use the term ‘Rail’ to include model makers, equipment preservers, historians of rail transport systems, and more. This constellation includes federations of railway preservations societies (like the Glenbrook Vintage Railway); museums of transport, (such as MOTAT in Auckland); and the Model Engineers Association of New Zealand (MEANZ) for miniature railway operators; and regional railway societies.

After listing and comparing characteristics of the whole constellation of railway enthusiasts, and modellers and preservers, according to the activities and topics of interest to its members we discussed whether the Rail CoP is *different* in any ways from the GFH CoP.<sup>379</sup>

Graeme noted that the Rail Community is predominantly male, while there are more females visible in the GFH Community. His hobby is perhaps more about things and mine about people. He observed that rail hobbyists are often people for whom it is a continuation of their working life, while this not so for Geneals - although more than a few move from the hobby to a related job. In this context he used an intriguing expression, saying that, “Few industries have such a fan-base as the Railways.” By that he meant that the transport industry, especially the railways sector, has many who are not employees who take a long and close interest in every aspect of the industry.

I reflected that some academic disciplines have “fan-bases” of interested persons, some of whom actively contribute to the field: for example, parents and caregivers of children with special needs inform the knowledge of both educators and medical specialists - through their day to day care of such children and knowledge gained by being active in on-line and other Communities of Interest. There are fields where some ‘fans’ take a more general interest, and they may or may not interact with academic specialists: biology, archaeology, geography (including tourism, landforms, transport systems), economics, political science and religious studies all came readily to mind.

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<sup>379</sup> Some professional railway workers who are required to help those who organise trips hauled by preserved and restored steam engines, refer to them as ‘crazys’: sometimes with sympathy, sometimes accompanied by obstructiveness. Within the CoP, those who enjoy trains as a hobby are called railfans or even trainiacs. There are thus parallels with the terms ‘Granny hunters’ and Genies used in and about the GFH Community; and with attitudes of those paid to assist hobbyists.

History seems to always have had many ‘fans’. In the course of my participation in some Continuing Education history lectures, I observed others sitting listening intently to the information presented. I would not call such people *active* discoverers of history, and we were not learning *together* except that we were in the same classroom and hearing a few questions, and answers from the expert at the front.

Graeme’s comment led to a further thought: does Sociology have a fan-base? I could not readily name any Communities of Practice where sociological interests are the focus of sharing, and where there is a partnership or understanding between specialists from mixed lay and professional backgrounds, but Giddens’ double hermeneutic is evidence that many individuals do find sociological understandings of family and group life useful.

#### *Is Active Discovery a Difference?*

Graeme and I next explored whether there are ‘active discoverers’ in the miniature railways locus group of the Rail CoP. He said that some buy a ready-made train to run. Some take a plan and build from it or copy it, and there are those who just talk about the old days (of a lifestyle that has changed with the demise of steam and its related activities and occupations.) However, discovery through research is not a major aim for any of these people.

We used Wenger’s concept that CoPs form around what matters, to discuss if *any* hobby *matters* to the world? Graeme thought that it probably would not matter to the future of the world if stamp collecting, or the Rail constellation did not exist. I reflected that GFH, at its best, is an exercise in, and an example of, a study of (past and present): social relations – and that *social relations do matter*. Being an active discoverer of GFH (or an active member of the Rail CoP) may be a very good way to learn and understand social relations, and identity.

#### *Two Significant Differences*

We eventually agreed that despite both in-and-from A-NZ CoPs having so much in common, there are two significant differences between them. First, although the Rail CoP produces many publications, including journals with articles by scholars

and experts, and although groups within the Rail CoP hold conventions and other gatherings: there is no equivalent to the *conference proceedings* published by the formal societies in the GFH Community. Second, the main activity of the GFH community is *research*, and even though a few undertake research within the Rail Community, to enable the preservation of trains for example, doing research is not the focus of the whole community.

These two characteristics, research and the production of conference proceedings, are also to be found in universities and help distinguish universities from other education sectors. The publishing of research that is subjected to peer scrutiny through conferences, colloquia, seminars and other gatherings is a hallmark of academia. Why then, is GFH not taught in universities in New Zealand?

My discussion and presented findings, thus far, contribute to my aim of making explicit some present-day features of the phenomenon that I have called Genealogical Family History, as I argue that the transdisciplinary academic discourse of the field and practice of GFH deserves to be accorded a place in universities in Aotearoa-New Zealand. To solve my overarching problem, I also needed to consider and analyse other aspects of the field and the practice. To that end, the next chapter reports on themes and motifs observed in the field of Genealogical Family History.



## Chapter 6

### Themes and Motifs of Genealogical Family History: The Edge of Conjecture

Cultural identity... is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past.... Far from being grounded in a mere recovery of the past, which is waiting to be found and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.<sup>380</sup>

In this chapter, I continue my analysis of the field and practice of GFH, from my transdisciplinary perspective and insider position, by considering themes and motifs discernible in the A-NZ Community. Theme is another word with a taken-for-granted meaning. I discuss it first.

#### *Disciplinary Themes*

All areas of the humanities and the social sciences define themes a little differently from each other, according to their *disciplinary* perspectives on a shared social world. I have approached my transdisciplinary thematic analysis of GFH through the disciplines with which I am most familiar, and so I begin there.

#### *Themes from Other Disciplines*

Themes for the study of the literature of any culture tend to be about the universality of human experience: experience that is set in a particular *time, place* and *social circumstance*; acted out by skilfully drawn characters, and with the author using specialised techniques for each literary genre. Broad themes for those who study English literature can include characterisation, narrative structure and poetics, while there may also be more specific themes: such as 'selfishness' in Bruce Mason's play "The Garlick Thrust". Literary theorists and critics theorise about the reading and the writing of literature: Bakhtin's "critique of formalism based on an assertion of the essentially *social* nature of language", to give but one example.<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation' in *EX-ILES: Essays on Caribbean Cinema*, edited by Mbye Cham, (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1992), 210-222. See note 397 below.

<sup>381</sup> Lodge, *Modern Criticism and Theory*, 124.

For some social scientists the literary critic's broad 'social setting' begins and ends with the workplace of paid work, and Wenger is presently among them: studying and empowering previously unrecognised communities of practice in workplaces. Bertaux is also concerned with a social setting that focuses on employment - as a marker of social class and social mobility. The 'mobility' is up and down a broad employment scale, with an aim of a sociological analysis of factors believed to contribute to determining life opportunities and life chances in relation to the concept of social scale.<sup>382</sup> While this theme interests most Geneals, it is not a primary theme of GFH itself.

Psychologists are interested in personalities and behaviours, and can be perceived, by outsiders, as voyeuristic when more interested in aberrant behaviours than in so-called normal ways of behaving. Sociologists too are sometimes thought to be unusual by some outsiders for their interest in explicit themes of race, class and gender; sex, violence and death, as they observe and categorise human subjects. Geneals note aspects of these themes<sup>383</sup> in pursuit of their own themes, perspectives and understandings.

Anthropologists no longer concern themselves solely with isolated communities, and now apply their perspectives to urban environments. In the late 1950s, undergraduate studies in that subject at the University of Auckland consisted of physical anthropology, social anthropology of so-called primitive cultures, archaeology and a little Egyptology. The current themes of anthropology can include cross-cultural comparisons, domestic socio-cultural issues, and conflict resolution. Fieldwork through immersion remains a methodological theme. Again, all these themes may interest Geneals, but do not define GFH.

The themes of historians and geographers have also changed over the last half-century. Themes within History have included governmental, military and economic history, the history of elites and workers, of individuals and of movements, and of women and children. My undergraduate Geography included the topics of geomorphology and climatology; 'regional' geography of both

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<sup>382</sup> As a New Zealander with 'family' arriving here from the 1820s, I have always found it difficult to understand the English class system and do not identify with it.

<sup>383</sup> I have, for example, noticed in families of interest *unrelated to each other*, a tendency for suicides to occur in succeeding generations of those families.

physical and human elements - regions within continents or countries; and cartography. Worldwide patterns of communication, agriculture and industry were also themes in a subject concerned with people and their environments. In some institutions, Geography has relinquished physical geography to the natural sciences, and/or incorporated tourism or gender studies. Development geography and migration are also themes for Human Geography. Geneals cannot proceed beyond being collectors or preservers without using understandings from many of these specialist areas of History and Geography.

In general terms, a theme can be a topic of interest, a notion or new idea that someone has drawn to one's attention, an issue often under discussion, or the characteristics that distinguish a sub-genre from a genre, or a sub-specialty from a discipline or field. One theme integral to this study is an affective one: historic and current attitudes *towards* GFH. It is a theme found in other disciplines (old and new), in emergent disciplines, and in specialisms. It is not a theme *of* GFH.

I set out to discover what experienced Geneals do that they call research, and looked for any embryonic theorising behind their practice. In so doing I have uncovered significant past and present themes in Genealogical Family History research.

### **Major Themes of Genealogical Family History**

After analysing my fieldwork results, I identified three major themes that all competent genealogical family historians incorporate into their practice. Family reconstruction of correctly identified individuals as described in Chapter 5 is the first theme. Geneals re-construct specific *genealogical* families and conduct research into aspects of the lives of the human subjects who exist in those genealogical families: families of the past and of the present. Many in the Community take this objective for granted, and so the Community as a whole does not make it explicit to outsiders.

The second major theme for Geneals is similar to that of literary critics and others who seek to understand human experience, as well as events in lives. For Geneals,

it is an understanding of **the human experience of ancestors and collateral kin**, each in their temporal, geographical and social settings - called 'social context', or 'putting the flesh on the bones', that is sought. Competent Geneals reconstruct genealogical families, and contextualise them with knowledge of the *place* of each family of interest in local, regional, national and international settings. This inevitably includes movements of families, and family members, from place to place.

No one walked, rode or drove to Aotearoa-New Zealand. Members of the A-NZ GFH Community find that a constant and recurring theme is **migration** and **movement**. When did our families and family members leave? Leave where: on waka, sailing ship, steamer, or aeroplane? Which of our kin left, 'somewhere', and came to Aotearoa-New Zealand, as children in family groups? Who came as parents? Who came alone, or with friends? Who paid their passages? Who encouraged them to come, or to leave? Did they come directly here from a so-called 'ancestral' home village or city suburb, or was the voyage to New Zealand just one more move in a life of re-locations? How many of their family members had already left, for New Zealand, or for elsewhere? Did they leave loved ones behind – some to come later, and some never to see again? Were they glad to be escaping war, poverty, cruelty or boredom? Did some go back: who - and why? Thus do Geneals examine 'movements' and 'migrations': from their *GFH perspective*.

*"I looked at every single nephew"*

Colleen's grandmother was born in Matura, in 1870, born into a family with members already much travelled. "John went to Australia. He left there and he went back to England, and then he eventually came to Christchurch and to Dunedin" and "two more brothers came out to join him". Uncle Joe, who belonged to the family where two of the brothers had married two sisters, asked them to go back and help him. At that stage, he was running extensive coalmines "right through Lancashire and North Wales. It was underground mining but they also had the farms on the top, ....the land was leased out". Colleen "looked at every single nephew" and "surmised that the reason that Joseph asked John and Horace to go back to England and help him was because they were the only two, of all the nephews, who had farming knowledge". Furthermore, he was getting

older, he was unmarried, and their father had died when they were quite young so he was “like a surrogate father”. The whole family packed up and went back to England when Colleen’s grandmother was four years old, and “came back to New Zealand in 1895, when she was 22.”

Anne also spoke of a grandmother making multiple voyages. “Although my grandparents married in Australia, my grandmother was actually born in New Zealand and my mother was born in Australia, they went back to England at the time of the first world war, and they arrived back there in 1915; and then they stayed there until 1923.”

### *Internal Migration*

What of generations of kin researched back beyond the migrants? Did they all move often, or some more than others? Did they travel on foot, or on horseback, using handcarts or wagons; by canal barge or steam train? And what of the descendants of members of each family of extension that arrived in Aotearoa-New Zealand: who moved around by canoe, commandeered ship,<sup>384</sup> Cobb and Co coach, inter-island ferry, private car, or hired pantehnicon? Where to: and why, and for how long?

Questions about migration to New Zealand are a magnetic point for a locus group within the A-NZ and wider Community. Some remain in this group briefly, while for others, especially those with a number of emigrating ancestors, it becomes, and remains, a major interest. The work pioneered by Verna Mossong on passenger shipping to New Zealand benefits every Geneal who wants to know when a relative arrived (in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in particular), and what alternative sources are useful if passenger lists are no longer extant.

Internal migration within any country of origin is also an integral part of family reconstruction research for the wider Community; because after members of the A-NZ Community have learned where emigrant ancestors came from, research into other migrations and relocations becomes part of the practice of active discoverers of genealogical family history. In the process of locating, and recording even just basic biographical data (dates and places of births, marriages

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<sup>384</sup> Te Rauparaha is a member of our family of extension.

and deaths) Geneals learn about the movements of individual members of their families of extension. Through decennial and other censuses, indexes to civil registration and church records, Geneals trace collateral relatives: including those who did not emigrate with the rest of their family of procreation, and those who descend from siblings of an ancestor at any earlier generation. Some collateral relatives, who become human subjects of interest, descend from New Zealanders who were born here, but migrated to other countries. For example, there are a number of members of the Henry WILLIAMS (missionary) and William WILLIAMS (bishop) families recorded in the BBD. Some were born in New Zealand but later settled in England. An *NZG* article records some extensive GFH research into some family members' pre-1823 life, especially their religious (Congregationalist/Unitarian), political and social life in Nottinghamshire.<sup>385</sup>

#### *Researching Re-locations beyond New Zealand*

Many Geneals trace young people of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who have moved to look for work: some of them returning to the places of their birth or upbringing to marry, and/or to settle. We trace the movements of older family members who may end their lives with children or grandchildren, or other relatives, or strangers, in unexpected places: that is, places not expected by the GFH researcher.

The movements of family members who worked on the land can be traced, through a variety of records, including manorial and land tax records. After immersion in such records, some patterns have emerged: I have noticed young couples in Lincolnshire settle first on what was copyhold land for a great-grandfather (of the husband or the wife), move to a larger economic unit as their family increases and expertise grows – and move again to *places with genealogical family connections*. I touched on some of these aspects in a paper presented to an AFFHO Congress.<sup>386</sup> I have not yet discovered enough *genealogical* facts about the BROWNS and SMITHs of Fowlis Wester in Perthshire and Fowlis Easter in Angus and Perthshire to understand if they were related and how they were connected other than through an 1809 marriage.

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<sup>385</sup> Nevil Harvey Williams, "The Dissenting Background of Henry Williams," *The New Zealand Genealogist* 304: 11-14.

<sup>386</sup> Margaret Selman Brown, "Some Sources for Pre-1837 Research in England," in comp. Joy Roy *Discoveries, Deadends and Databases: proceedings of the 10<sup>th</sup> Australasian Congress* (Melbourne: The Genealogical Society of Victoria, 2003), 27-37.

Consanguinity at an earlier generation may explain their farm tenancy opportunities and relocations, the co-existence of their names in various testamentary and property documents and deeds, and their choice of sponsors at baptisms.

### *Other Themes*

Many topics of interest become themes for GFH research. Families are concerned with earning a living (or inheriting or otherwise acquiring one); and with spending money on food, clothing and housing; education, religion, sport and leisure activities. Each of these areas can become a life-long specialist interest for some Geneals and of particular interest to others - from time to time. I have outlined the specialist interests of Verna Mossong (shipping) Gwen Reiher (Irish research) Paul Alpe (computer applications) and of others, in Chapter 4, and elsewhere.

Local and national politics, peace and war, agriculture, industry, transport and communications affect families and family members. All these areas, of interest to other fields of study, are some of the more popular GFH themes that become specialist interests of individual genealogical family historians. Military history is a topic of interest to many, at present, but heraldry no longer has a large locus group of Geneals discussing the technicalities and benefits of knowledge in that area.

In the course of this study, I have identified some major locus groups with a core *enduring* membership that attract and serve others whose interest in a particular theme may be more fleeting. I have called them locus groups of **enduring preference**. I see them coalescing around aspects of GFH that I do not consider to be at the heart of GFH practice. I summarise what I call *quintessential* GFH in Chapter 11.

### **Enduring Preference Groups**

Competent Geneals always belong to the primary locus groups for any in-and-from GFH Community: reconstruction of family groups; human experience as family members; and migration and movement. Some are also attracted to the

locus groups of those with an enduring preference for **surname studies**; for the **preservation and re-telling of family stories**; and for **sharing research and findings in cyberspace**. Some approach GFH through one of these groups without first developing the knowledge and skills required for GFH best practice.

### *Surname Studies*

Those with a preference for focusing on the *names* of kin identify direct ancestors and kin with genealogical connections to a name. They then reconstruct families of extension in whatever parts of the world such genealogical kin take them. Some tend to be less interested in the social context surrounding each individual and family group. Some research only selected particular families – for many different reasons. Some become local historians of places where ancestors sharing a surname have lived, briefly, or for centuries.

Some collect all instances of a name that interests them without attempting any proof of connection between the bearers of that name. When Bryan Sykes first explored, genetically through DNA, whether all recent (from AD1300) bearers of his surname are related to him and to each other, he announced that he had found that “more than 50 per cent were”, which journalists thought remarkable.<sup>387</sup> I recall that Geneals chorused among themselves, ‘Yes, but he has found that nearly half are *not*.’ The commercial DNA analysis site that has resulted from Sykes’ work still has vestiges of a focus on surnames. Whoever wrote the text for the site still thinks that genetic genealogy is for males. Under the heading: ‘Genealogy Services’, the site asks: “Who can use these services?” It suggests an answer: “Groups of men, perhaps sharing the same surname, who would like to explore and share their genetic connections as part of a Surname Project.”<sup>388</sup> They label other services as ‘maternal’ or ‘paternal’.

Some Geneals do collect many sightings of surnames for the purpose of making and proving or disproving genealogical connections, and the scholarship of specialists such as George Redmonds and Colin Rogers informs their research.<sup>389</sup>

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<sup>387</sup> Robin McKie, “Surnames Track DNA from Medieval Times,” *New Zealand Herald* 17 January 2001 – reprinted from the *Observer*.

<sup>388</sup> <http://www.oxfordancestors.com/genealogy.html> (accessed 2 January 2008)

<sup>389</sup> George Redmonds, *Surnames and Genealogy: A New Approach* (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1997); Colin D. Rogers, *The Surname Detective: Investigating Surname Distribution in England, 1086 – Present Day* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

Some who have a major focus on surnames are also able to see migration patterns over centuries. Lynn Lane is one who wrote to me after seeing my RUMSEY surname interest in the Wiltshire FHS Journal, saying,

I conduct a study of the name in any area and am registered with the Guild of One Name Studies. I have traced my own branch back to 1100: at that time they lived in Romsey in Hampshire. My ancestors gradually moved across the West Country and settled in Crickhowell in South Wales in 1606. Many descendants still live in the area today, including my father.<sup>390</sup>

### *Family Stories*

There are those in the Community who have a preference for learning more of the history of a particular family of interest, and for learning and telling stories about its members of the past and the present. They read social history in both primary and secondary sources and apply understandings thus gained to a genealogical family. They tell or write more of the story of a family of interest as they come to know more of the activities of its members; and some introduce some new stories through their discoveries, or their interpretations. Some become recorders of the memories of older people (related or not) to preserve family knowledge for future generations: GFH oral historians. They too interpret or misinterpret what they hear.

GFH researchers not related to the families they search can also contribute to interpreting or misinterpreting histories of genealogical families. I discussed this in a paper presented to the Melbourne Congress: in the context of what a paid researcher had provided to a distant relative.<sup>391</sup> For example, he/she misread 'singer' as finger, and 'stick fellowe' as sharp fellow, and so attributed sibling rivalry to one of my ancestors and his brother - without checking who actually wrote up the parish registers, and the transcripts of them. He/she also thought a woman unhappily married because "buried in her mother's grave" (the daughter *predeceased* the mother, so whose grave was it really?); and he/she tried to prove a genealogical relationship by treating the forename Amy like a surname, and wrongly thinking it uncommon.

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<sup>390</sup> Lynn Lane, email message to writer, 9 December 1999.

<sup>391</sup> Margaret Selman Brown, "The Best Database of All: the Genealogical Mind," in *Discoveries, Deadends and Databases*, 12-26.

### *Cyberspace Genealogy*

The GFH-in-cyberspace enduring preference group has locus sub-groups within it: including competent discoverers beginning or extending work done in primary sources, *and* newcomers seeking instant connection to individuals and families of the past and the present. Some give up after failing to find ‘their tree’ online; others remain active in a new sort of cultural exchange similar to the ‘pen friend’ phenomenon of the 1940s and 1950s. As one contributor to a commercial GFH magazine put it:

Having one’s name and address in the genealogical directories and members’ interest lists published by various family history societies produces scores of delightful pen friends, all with the same sort of mentality as oneself - an obsession with finding out what gave us the personality we possess.<sup>392</sup>

GFH Societies continue to put people in touch, to collaborate on researching names and families, and on proving or disproving relationships.

Others revere the technology that will organise the names they believe belong to them – some without taking heed of Shown Mills’ directive to find and weigh evidence. Many competent GFH researchers who have the equipment and the knowledge find sufficient satisfaction by working at their computers and feel no need to attend group meetings or conferences, visit distant record repositories, ancestral places, and long lost living kin. They can read books and articles; search databases; exchange charts, photographs and documents; and join discussion groups covering an unlimited range of topic and purpose, in cyberspace.

Each of these enduring preference groups that I have identified forms around people with a variety of underlying aims for taking up GFH: curiosity, search for identity, religious obligation, land claim opportunity, medical concern, and so on; together with their varied reasons for *continuing* to associate with others in any locus group. Particular research strategies they have mastered, enthrall some; others are driven by a compulsion to find out more about a specific person or a topic of special interest. Some have made enduring friendships; others enjoy the social interaction of contributing to projects and the administration of cyberspace groups.

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<sup>392</sup> Midge Clarke, “Connections” *Family Tree Magazine* 7 (1999): 61.

I have found that the wider Community includes people with various preferences who are engaged in one or many GFH activities, through the ever-changing membership of locus groups. I have also found that each group or category exists in a symbiotic relationship with all the others. Resulting synergies benefit both individuals and the Community as a whole. Resulting tensions can be problematic. Some Geneals prefer to concentrate on a particular era or particular country. Some prefer to construct trees of descendants of ‘founding couples’, especially of emigrants, and for reunions. Others engage with all of the above, as time permits.

I have discerned many other categories I could analyse further if my sole purpose was to split and clump members of any GFH Community. For example: some prefer to trace direct ancestors as far back in time as possible, or study family groups and connections in mediaeval and earlier times. There is a select group of scholarly historians, who call themselves prosopographers, and admit to undertaking or using genealogical research.

Linacre College of Oxford University is home to the Prosopographical Research Unit: “an international group of scholars dedicated to the study and promotion, and, where necessary, development, of the disciplines and methods of prosopography,”<sup>393</sup> which they say has been defined as “an independent science of social history embracing genealogy, onomastics and demography.”

“Our chronological range is from Late Antiquity to the fifteenth century [and] our geographical coverage includes much of Europe and the Crusader States. We promote co-operation and collaboration among scholars in the field of prosopography - including those with wider chronological or geographical ranges than our own”.<sup>394</sup> On their website, they acknowledge the seminal contribution of Werner citing him saying that prosopographical analysis concerns itself with the person, his environment and his social status, that is, a person within the context

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<sup>393</sup> <http://www.linacre.ox.ac.uk/Linacre/new/prosopographical-research-unit> (accessed 26 March 2008)

<sup>394</sup> “Karl Ferdinand Werner (‘L’apport de la prosopographie à l’histoire sociale des élites’, in Keats-Rohan ed. *Family Trees*, Woodbridge, 1997) traces the origins of the concept to the 16th century, when it was closely associated with the idea of collective, but individual, biography. Claude Nicolet defined its aim as the history of groups as elements in political and social history, achieved by isolating series of persons having certain political or social characteristics in common and then analyzing each series in terms of multiple criteria, in order both to obtain information specific to individuals and to identify the constants and the variables among the data for whole groups.”

of family and other social groups, the place or places in which he was active and the function he performed within his society. Michael suggested to me that his work on the Blain Biographical Directory is in some ways prosopographical in nature: identifying constants and variables in the data on his human subjects. Another group with an interest in earlier millennia focuses on a type of genealogical research called Descent from Antiquity.<sup>395</sup>

However, my purpose is to distil *more* than what it is that groups of Geneals do, and why they continue to do it. I seek to convey the best practice of the field and to identify the elements of practice that make GFH a transdisciplinary endeavour on the part of members of the Community I have studied. Within the Community, I have discerned some common strands of purpose and of practice that I have called the motifs of GFH. I discuss these below. First, I comment on a theme that at the beginning of this project I thought might have been of considerable significance and importance: the ‘search for identity’.

## **Identity**

My key informants did not use the term ‘identity’ very often. Paul discovered information about ancestors he could “relate to me and my character and the sort of things that I am interested in, like sport: bowls or cricket - I have found that as a theme right the way through.”

Michael mentioned identity when comparing his own personal GFH research with GFH research into the unrelated clergy who are the subjects of the BBD project.

I'm building, as it were, constructing the identity around their career: where did they come from to do this? Where do they go from when they have done this? How did they learn to do this? So it's always the ‘this’; and then the point shapes out with different angles around it - you do get rounded views of people, but it's done by the centring on their professional lives, rather than just the sequence of names.

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<sup>395</sup> “Descent from antiquity... is the project of establishing a well-researched, generation-by-generation descent of living persons from people living in Antiquity. It is an ultimate challenge in prosopography and genealogy.” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Descent\\_from\\_antiquity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Descent_from_antiquity) (accessed 8 April 2008).

Michael also used the term ‘family identity’. Many Geneals will know exactly what he means, for we often express our understanding of a particular family of interest’s collective identity when we weigh evidence of a claimant’s place in a family group. We hear statement and conjecture such as, “Doesn’t sound like my family”, “I don’t think that occupation is very likely”, “No-one else in that family belonged to that church”.

During this study, I attended a reunion for members of another community of practice,<sup>396</sup> where a friend from earlier times explained that he was interested in tracing ancestors, especially some of his wife’s ancestors, but had not proceeded because he wondered how he could ever find out what sort of people they were. What was their personality? What were they like, as opposed to what their life events were?

I conveyed this to Lucy during the interview and she responded, “Yes, but then you can say that of your parents, because you only come into their life at a certain stage and what were they really like... before we ever came on the scene?” Lucy also commented on the thinking needed to picture ancestors as members of a family; and went on to discuss faulty perceptions gained through looking at photos taken or pictures constructed from their older or middle years, noting that immigrant ships carried comparatively young people, who enjoyed, for example, dances on the deck.

### *Opinions on the Web*

One writer discovered in cyberspace during my non-participant observational research used a university-hosted ‘research blog’ to express how she felt about ‘a sense of identity’ when given a CD made by one of her second cousins, with “lots of information” about her paternal grandfather’s family<sup>397</sup>

One of the things I have always found puzzling is the emphasis placed both in public history programmes and not to mention some forms of academic discourse, on the importance of ‘roots’ for giving people a sense of identity; it doesn’t correspond to my

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<sup>396</sup> Those attending had been involved with adventure camps, leadership camps, family camps and opportunity camps held by the Youth Council of an Anglican Diocese for the enjoyment of participants (who came from within and beyond the church community) and for the leadership training of younger members of the church group involved.

<sup>397</sup> Mary’s Research Blog, “Genealogy, History, Identity,” was posted on The Attic (the virtual home of the Department of Museum Studies’ Research Students, University of Leicester). <http://attic-museumstudies.blogspot.com/> (accessed 18 July 2007).

own experience at all and I am suspicious of its underlying essentialism (particularly troubling when people from minority communities are urged to discover their ‘roots’). I now prefer to subscribe to the definition of identity put forward compellingly by Stuart Hall.<sup>398</sup>

I have used Mary’s quotation at the beginning of this chapter. When undertaking GFH research I am constantly gaining more than just my own ‘sense of identity’ from the past. I can construct identities of discovered ancestors from whatever bricolage is shared with me; and then affirm, revise or overturn those constructions as more is learned – from whatever source, using the genealogical hermeneutic. I can also position myself within narratives of the present, and ‘see where people are coming from’. I also see other people positioning themselves within the narratives of the present as they seek to put forward some aspects of their genetic and genealogical identity, and remain silent about others.

The BBC series “Who Do You Think You Are?” took one person at a time and allowed the viewer to follow each subject’s journey of discovery along lines of ancestry, *and* to see each incorporating the discoveries into their sense of who they are and where they belong. Many also shared their discoveries with family members and we were allowed to see and hear some reactions. Moira STUART knew she would find distant ancestors who had been slaves, and medical practitioners among more recent family members; but she needed a little time alone to think through what it meant to discover that she was descended from slaves *and* slave masters.

This series accurately reflects the essence of GFH as a search for personal or family identity, and as a research activity – apart from the amazing speed with which certificates were seen to be obtained, for Geneals must wait much longer for such documentation than did the celebrities being filmed. In those episodes broadcast to date, I have noticed only a few minor errors or suspect assumptions that should not have escaped the notice of the resident genealogist.<sup>399</sup>

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<sup>398</sup> See Note 1 above. Mary did not give a surname in her blog.

<sup>399</sup> For example, a local historian, looking at a list of children transported (with their parents) from Suffolk to the North-East to work in a mill, did not understand the nature of the document he was viewing, and confidently asserted that the younger children would have stayed behind in Suffolk, with ‘someone’. *All* the younger children were with their parents at the next census return. It seemed to me that only those of *working age* were recorded on the other document: it was *not* a census return.

*Identifying* with discovered ancestors in the ways this ongoing series depicts is certainly an element of GFH research, but it is not the sole end or major motivation: it is often more a consequence of discovery. I have discerned motifs that do characterise the practice of active discoverers of genealogical family history, and present them now as another way of thinking about what is unique about this field.

## **Motifs**

Although I have borrowed the concept of motifs from Berger, I have not attempted to make the motifs of genealogical family history parallel those he identified in Sociology. There is some resonance, for example in my debunking of myths about the Community, but the motifs of the practice of GFH research are distinctly different. They belong to its paradigm, discourse and field.

### *Rejected motifs*

Characteristics that I considered as possible motifs included *compulsion*: rejected as a motif peculiar to GFH, because compulsion to find out, or compulsion to improve an understanding or a skill, is common to many communities of practice, both hobby and work place. Similarly, although *competitiveness* is a phenomenon evident in the Community, on occasions, it is widespread in other hobby and academic pursuits, and not a motif specific to GFH.

Some of my informants highlighted the *continuance* element of GFH research—there is always more to do, it is never finished. A magazine contributor commented on the scope of the phenomenon of GFH research, thus:

I'm always surprised when people tell me they've gone as far as they can with their family history. Even after 25 years... I'd find enough to keep me occupied for the next quarter century. Facts, these days, are indeed getting a bit thin on the ground, but for me family history has never been solely about facts. The real spine-tingling, toe-curling, deeply satisfying appeal of it all lies in the 101 tangents one can happily go down before getting to the stage where ironing might have to be a real possibility.<sup>400</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> Diane Lindsay, "Triumphs and Tribulations of a Family Historian," *Family Tree Magazine* 10, (2000): 59.

To continue to enjoy or pursue an activity is not peculiar to the GFH Community. Members of other communities of practice share this characteristic.

I found that GFH research was often undertaken in the *company* of spouses and other family members, including the majority of my key informants; and found evidence of that in the wider Community too:

My brother and I...we began something that was soon to become a passion with me....  
[The archivist went] to get me a photocopy A few minutes later I literally skipped out of the building with a copy of this 900-word account [an obituary] of the life of my local preacher ancestor [their great-grandfather].<sup>401</sup>

However there are other activities where extended and multi-generational families take part together, in Aotearoa-New Zealand: brass and Scottish marching bands, kapahaka groups, fishing, and pig hunting, for example. Some relatives work together in occupational groups. Perhaps the academy is different in this regard, in that *collaboration* with others, including relatives, has not always been encouraged, or not until post-doctoral level.

Others may well perceive different characteristics, for these motifs are not sharply defined elements: others will view GFH from their own background and bricolage of experience. The motifs I have identified as characteristic of the wider GFH Community are those that best describe its complex and collective practice for me. They are **conjecture**, **construction**, and **connectedness**.

## Conjecture

When Michael spoke about being ‘on the edge of conjecture’ the phrase caught my attention and I arranged a second interview to explore the concept. Michael expanded further about being ‘on the edge of conjecture’:

The conjecture puts you in a realm of possibilities; and the possibilities.... if you have enough alert awareness in your recognition and discovery of facts, then the conjectures start to come alive and you then start to fit them against possibilities.

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<sup>401</sup> Keith Rothery, “There’s a Methodist in My Madness,” *Family Tree Magazine* 11, (2000): 11.

If you know your sources, and know where people live inside their sources and are starting with the known and then going back beyond, into the unknown, then you are keyed in to recognise all the expressions, the same personality traits or characteristics of personality. The most obvious one of course is looking at death certificates - and people use this in medical care of families - what did great-grandmother die of - and it is quite alarming when you see your ancestors in different parts of the world dying of the same diseases or same problems as your own [family members] - it's disconcerting...

I asked: "And you can recreate what that meant to a family group to have somebody with that condition, for whatever period of time?" Michael responded: "Exactly. *Whenever* it was: those things still had their social toll on their family, cost to family identity and personal value." The genealogical hermeneutic is at work here in Michael's interpretation of aspects of the past by using knowledge of the present, and vice versa.

### *Liminality*

As well as the conjecture aspect of his apposite phrase, Michael also spoke in a way that reminded me of Francis Pryor's edge of existence, and Michael King's edge of memory - about being on the *edge* of conjecture:

When you get to the edge, that's when things get more interesting because it's not just sort of striding down the middle of the road where everything is visible and familiar. When you get to the edge you know something is going on. You know there are patterns of change or there's a conflict or there is something happening in this life. Then you start to ask, "Is this something that runs in the family? Is this a bankruptcy? Is there a sudden death? Is there a scandal? Is there a tragedy? Are they going through some pressure through parish life, or faith?"

All these things can open up huge arenas of discovery. But to get into that arena and find what - he might have been mentally distressed with Darwinism or something - to get inside what is going on takes an awful lot more work - but you know there is something there - you can pick it.

Michael also said "the edges show where the middle has come from.... because often the middle is not a neutral position, it's an achievement." He was thinking of a clergyman who was only in parish ministry in New Zealand for a short time, and 'disappeared', to be found later in a chaplaincy role in Australia. By reading correspondence in church archives, Michael realised that this was an achievement:

the man had been bankrupted by his son's gambling; and to be able to carry on with his vocation, in any way, was an achievement. Bankrupt clergy could not hold office. Another human subject discussed during the interviews was one who puzzled Michael for a while: a priest whose obituary said he was of a Dunedin family with business interests; but the obituary showed "a certain reticence" about the man's own life. Michael had noticed "a sort of embarrassed silence". A certificate of the man's death registration explained this: he had been divorced.

Conjecture is a necessary tool for furthering and proving research findings; but one has to know the real possibilities before attempting conjecture - otherwise one can go from speculation into fiction. However whenever sound genealogical methodology is used, a fall from the edge of conjecture will have a different outcome: not speculation and false assumption, but discovery – and more conjecture. Conjecture is also a creative endeavour: for each researcher will construct a different picture from the facts and events of lives lived in families.

## **Construction**

Construction is another motif I have discerned in the research work of genealogical family historians. Construction is a mental activity: part of the intellectual challenge informants gave as a reason for continuing to research. In Chapter 5, I have already discussed the GFH work of family group reconstruction, but there are other aspects of GFH construction work.

### *Construction of charts*

Narrative and illustration (including charts) are all necessary to adequately present, in speaking and in writing, the findings of genealogical research, and charts hold a very important place in GFH: for displaying findings *and* as a research aid. The essential charts for genealogical family historians are ancestry or pedigree charts to methodically record two parents for each proven ancestor; and descendancy or drop-line charts, which show descendants and their spouses, in infinite variety. Each of these two basic types of charts is not without its challenges to the genealogical family historian.

Pedigree charts provide only the skeleton of the ancestry of any family group. On paper, such charts can accommodate possibilities in the form of pencilled entries and question marks, but many computer programmes cannot cope with signs of work in progress, and give everything uniform status, thereby concretizing the unproven. I discuss an ancestry chart in detail in Chapter 7.

Most GFH computer programmes *can* cope with recording family complications like widowed people remarrying, sometimes to relicts of their partners, and sometimes to new partners both of whom may also be widowed, and not just once. Drop-line charts to show such connections can be very difficult to draw, and although technology can store the links, it cannot easily print out the resultant *web* of relationships. Sketched charts of segments are often essential to explain, to anyone interested, how a man and his daughter could marry sister and brother, and how a mother and her daughter could marry brothers. For example, in one of our families of interest, David BROWN's daughter married his second wife's brother; and his brother John Gibson BROWN's widow married her daughter's, husband's brother.

The lines and arrows needed to show those complications compounded the difficulties of fitting David's 20 (proven) or 21 (reputed) children *onto one sheet of paper*. Computer software could not help display all the links, including cousin marriages among David's descendants. This family also challenged those concerned with the database of the Petone Settlers' Museum. A programmer assumed that 15 children would be a sufficient maximum for any family, and set up 15 fields. The person entering the data then entered the last five children born to David's second wife, on to his first wife's family group sheet, rather than omit them altogether.

Many software programmes can calculate the relationship of the source person to any other relative entered, and my Reunion software tells me, for example, that the children of Henry Kilminster SELMAN and Emily (SPACKMAN) SELMAN are my first cousins twice removed. What Reunion does *not* tell me is that *that* relationship to me is through their SPACKMAN mothers, and that these cousins of my grandfather are *also* my third cousins once removed through their SELMAN fathers. Nor does it calculate how much closer is my genealogical

relationship to those I discover I am related to through a number of lines, like Richard and Jacqui, than I am to someone with only one pair of shared ancestors.

Lucy spoke about antiquarian conventions of listing only male children on charts, and then rearranging birth order to show descent, for example, when a descendant's line is not through the eldest. Although some may criticise them for their incompleteness, such charts were compiled for a particular purpose: to show hereditary position and rights. We cannot judge the genealogical expertise involved in that endeavour solely by the resultant charts that have survived. There would have been a great deal of genealogical research and weighing of evidence undertaken, before some summary charts were produced.

Some displayed research retains a gender bias from earlier eras. The NZSG still prints and sells an eight generation pedigree chart with the words “The \_\_\_\_\_ Family” on the top left, and yet there are spaces for 128 *different* surnames down the far right column.

Some Geneals rearrange birth order (and exclude some individuals) merely to fit a page, for a particular purpose, *not to disregard those excluded*. Some of us have wrestled with rolls of wallpaper or their computer printout equivalents, but again, each was compiled for a specific purpose, and does not record everything that is known, let alone how it came to be known.

### *Constructing More Than Lists of Names*

Other types of chart construction observed in the wider Community include chronological charts for seeing an individual's life events in relation to the rest of the family, or in relation to world events. Some genealogical family historians list decennial census addresses for the same purpose – to see where family members were residing at known dates, as well as to see the gaps in research done - for those gaps might lead to further research and discovery. Genealogical software programmes have contributed to the number of types of charts. My computer asks me if I wish to create a pedigree, fan, descendant, relative, or timeline chart; and I receive a variety of charts from co-researchers.

Contributors to commercial magazines shared charts that they had devised for particular purposes. Gill Stoker has adapted a ‘spray’ or ‘spider’ chart she has used when teaching for the Open University.<sup>402</sup> She places herself in the centre and ancestors in pairs above and below. She uses this outline as a contents page for related ancestors in a designated folder, and for the purposes of her article, she has written text around the data. Although it does not show an entire family, the chart is ideal for ease of reading and for seeing ancestry at a glance. It is also of interest for what she says about egocentricity and identity – I am central to my family history. Like many genealogical charts, it embodies a convention of males first and on top, and females below; but reversing the convention, or alternating the positions, would affect the ease of reading such charts.

A regular columnist featured two charts sent in by a reader in an article in another issue of that commercial magazine. Kathleen Woodward has captioned six photographs of her son and grandson, herself, and three direct line ancestors. The other chart focuses on the marriages of those photographed, giving dates, places and causes of death for each and for spouses.<sup>403</sup>

I found I had to construct a chart that was part ancestry and part drop-line when I wished to discover the names of a couple whose photographs were in a locket given to a great-aunt, and said to be her aunt and uncle. ‘Aunt’ is a term given to great-aunts and great-great-aunts - and to the wives of uncles; and for the cousins (first, second and also 1C1R and 2C1R, and so on), of one’s parents: to indicate they are of an older generation. There are also family friends for whom ‘auntie’ is an honorific.

I began by listing the names and birth and death years (where known) of all the possible candidates in the category of parent’s siblings or their spouses, on a skeletal tree. The exercise revealed some interesting data, and illustrates again the complexity of the need to weigh elements in family reconstruction, as well as the thinking required, in this case just to decide who might have first owned a locket.

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<sup>402</sup> Gill Stoker, “Egocentricity: a New Way to Display Your Family Tree,” *Practical Family History* 37, (2002): 19.

<sup>403</sup> Christine M Morris, “Charting Success,” *Practical Family History* 76, (2004): 10-11.

By listing those with the most likely relationships, and ruling out all who would have died before my great-aunt was born, just a few of her mother's sisters remained as possibilities. Eventually I solved the mystery with the aid of my chart, together with a scrap of oral history: my said great-aunt apparently blamed her red nose on living in a public house. Her father's father was an innkeeper – but he had died 25 years before she was born. I had found my grandmother staying with one of her mother's sisters, at the Green Tree Tavern in Bath, when she was young. A first cousin was also in the household. This couple was childless, making it more likely that the locket would go to a niece. I obtained their wills and noted bequests to unmarried nieces; and the photos in the locket could be dated to decades that matched the crucial dates.<sup>404</sup> This was not 100 per cent proof that the locket had been that aunt's, but a sufficiently satisfactory outcome while waiting for collaterals descending from other aunts or uncles to make contact, and confirm or challenge my conclusions.

Thus, do genealogical family historians construct more than just lists of individual names, and record more than just vital records or events in the lives of kin. They seek to place each reconstituted family group in its geographical location and to understand what family life was like in its local, national and international context, at the time each lived there.

### *Clothing from History*

Where do genealogical family historians find material to assist in the task of visualising the names on a chart as family members living among other people? General social history is one source. As genealogical family historians take each family line back another genealogical generation, they consider each family's daily life against histories relevant to the time and place.

Many read works such as the Victoria County Histories to gain impressions of life in particular English localities. The Statistical Accounts of Scotland contribute facts, and more, for that country. For example, the 1794 account of the parish of Fowlis Wester, gives clues that might answer questions about our SMITHs and BROWNs, (see p. 168 above). The heritors of the parish included 'Smith, Lord

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<sup>404</sup> Two publications I used for this and other identifications are: Robert Pols, *Dating Old Photographs*, (Birmingham: FFHS, 1992); and Lenore Frost, repr, with corrections *Dating Family Photos 1850-1920* (1991; Essendon, Victoria: Lenore Frost, 1992).

Methven' of the Keillar Estate.<sup>405</sup> I also learned there were three schools in the parish, and much more.

Many highly specialised monographs and books can shed light on the lives of members of families of interest in particular places. On my bookshelf, for example, are publications about the history of farming, industry, religious affiliation and the state, and histories of church congregations, and localities.<sup>406</sup> Michael Gandy's reading list included accounts of occupations. Many, myself included, turn to the scholarship of others to learn about the occupations of kin, and picture their daily life. Research into the French bakery trade by Daniel Bertaux and Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame<sup>407</sup> told me of the unsocial hours that bakers worked. I could then take account of this when wondering why bakers on my tree seemed to marry later than the general populace of their day. These writers contributed more understandings by explaining that many from poorer families began apprenticeships as bakers when too young to work in factories; and lived in with their masters, thus reducing the financial burden on their families. Once qualified, the constant demand for cheap labour in the trade ensured ongoing work. One other comment on bakers' marriages was also of particular interest to me: "The relation between husband and wife becomes at once a relation between an artisan and a shopkeeper who got together as business partners.... but when that bond breaks [the husband] will be constrained to sell the shop, and become a bakery worker again."<sup>408</sup>

These insights helped me picture the *occupational partnerships* between some married ancestors, partnerships rarely made explicit in English census returns. It

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<sup>405</sup> I quote from page 441 of a copy the statistical account of the Parish of Foulis Wester (sic) sent to me some years ago. See: <http://edina.ac.uk//stat-acc-scot> – where the pages are differently numbered.

<sup>406</sup> J. A. Perkins, *Sheep Farming in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Lincolnshire* (Sleaford: The Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 1997).

K. G. Ponting, ed. *Industrial Archaeology in Wiltshire* (Shrewton: Wiltshire Archaeological Society, 1973).

W.F. Webster, transcr. *Protestation Returns 1641/2: Lincolnshire* (Nottingham: The Author, 1984).

F.W. Cooper, *Broughton Rd Baptist Church, Melksham: a Short History*, (Melksham: Melksham and District Historical Society, 1969).

John J. Wilson *The Annals of Penicuik, Being a History of the Parish and the Village* (1891; repr., Stevenage Herts: Spa Books, 1985).

<sup>407</sup> Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame, *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences*, 169-89.

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

also explained why my grandmother's grandmother (the widow of a grocer) was living with an unmarried nephew - a baker, towards the end of her life. I can now view it as an arrangement of mutual benefit, rather than one of charity on his part to help remove her from a place where everyone would know her son was in prison.

### *Clothing from Literature*

Another way in which genealogical family historians construct more rounded pictures of past relatives and family groups is through the influence of literature. Novelists and dramatists can reveal much about daily life and about attitudes towards family, class, marriage, death, religion, education and occupation, today and in the past. Local and national political events also feature in some literary works, whether a writer intends that or not, for example, the military figures in Jane Austen's novels. There is one novelist whose work surprised me. Margaret Oliphant's tale of a Scottish woman who became a mantua maker in London<sup>409</sup> matched my own picture of our BROWN sisters' business in Dundee. They were straw bonnet makers, furriers and dressmakers. It also extended my understanding of their peculiar bequeathing practices.<sup>410</sup>

Dr Thomson (see Chapter 1) might disapprove of another author who brought kin alive in an unusual New Zealand historical novel, for she has given dialogue and *intentions* to them. June Mitchell's *Amokura* includes some of Graeme's kin as minor characters. Having researched their extended family myself, and having read some of the Māori Land Court records she has used, I rate her work highly: both as a novel, *and* as a genealogical picture of lives of people connected to me.<sup>411</sup> However, the veracity of some of the material that was put before the Land Courts a century ago, and documented by them, is now in doubt.<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> Margaret Oliphant, *Kirsteen: The Story of a Scotch Family Seventy Years Ago* (1890; Repr., London: Dent, 1984).

<sup>410</sup> Margaret Selman Brown, "Waves and Ripples: the Wills of Our Emigrating Ancestors," in *They Came in Waves*, Proceedings of the NZSG Conference. 30 May-2 June 2003, North Shore City, compiled by the 2003 Conference Committee, edited by Jackie Walles and Richard J. Hollier, (Auckland: NZSG, 2003), 21-46.

<sup>411</sup> June Mitchell, *Amokura*, (Auckland: Longman Paul, 1978).

<sup>412</sup> The erroneous information given at the time of an historic claim now forms the basis of a current claim (personal communication from a claimant).

## Connectedness

Connectedness is the word that best describes the focus of the practice of the community of genealogical family history research. Practitioners connect with people, places and artefacts. Many publications, societies and sites exist for making connections.

### *Connecting People*

A pervading aim within the entire Community is to discover and prove connections to individual people. Connections sought by active discoverers include the genealogical and genetic connections between themselves and their ancestors; and the connections between themselves and the descendants and other kin of known ancestors.

One email cousin collaborated for some years. He then discovered that there had been a non-marital birth in his ancestry and that he was unlikely to be *genetically* related to the rest of us researching the name-line, after all. It was like a death in the family for that CoG of collaborating researchers. However, the *genealogical* and *familial* relationship that many of his family *lived within*, and the research relationship formed because of it, cannot be removed from history; and his branch remains in our genealogical tables (with dotted lines) and in our narratives. He continues to be interested in researching the family that his grandfather believed was his, and that helped shape the lives of the *next* generations. Present-day connections with researchers of the name he believed was his by blood, also endure: via email and visits in person. We each remain aware that it is a genealogical family history that we research, not necessarily a genetic one.

Those within the Community who focus on received and preserved documents and memories, or on individual kin in relation to general social history, also have to concern themselves with making connections to related people, for they must discover who they are before they can talk to them, or write about them.

The CoGs to which I belong use the term *contact* as complex shorthand for a person, usually related or connected genealogically, who has made contact, or has been contacted, by a GFH researcher. The mode of contact may be in person, by

telephone or letter, or by email via Family Histories Societies, Lists, and through commercial sites in cyberspace. The last-mentioned is currently a very popular and effective method of making contact for the purposes of connecting with living kin, and through them, kin of the past.

### *Connections through Place*

Other types of connectedness are less obvious than the endeavour to make contact with relatives. In the interview, Lucy revealed that forty years ago she was interested in knowing how many early and mid 19<sup>th</sup> century settlers in Auckland might have had present-day descendants still living in that place. Today, the Society she founded has enabled many connections between its members, including connections through place. The co-operative and collaborative activities of the wider GFH Community include much research that is *place* focused, as seen in my discussions about in-and-from Communities.

At an NZSG Scottish Interest Group meeting in Auckland some years ago I was sitting by a woman who asked if anyone knew where Baldernock was, for this locality in Stirlingshire has disappeared from most modern maps. I had succeeded in finding it, in person, in 1986: my connection being that an ancestor was born there in 1785. I was able to share with this new acquaintance photos I had taken of the church built there soon after that date: her ancestor was then the minister, so it was a place of significant connections for her – and her ancestors. More recently, I discovered a new neighbour comes from a parish nearby, and could tell me more about my main places of interest in that area. In both cases, the connections *through place* contributed to forming friendly social relations, as well as to the sharing of knowledge of specific places: further exemplification of a genealogical lateral hermeneutic at work.

### *Connected by Artefacts*

Wenger includes artefacts as part of the cultural capital or repertoire of CoPs. Genealogical family historians create material objects in the course of their work; and are often the guardians of family artefacts, as I illustrated in Chapter 5. I recently observed two men handling a sword that had belonged to their great-grandfather. It connected each of them to his life and times, and to each other.

I reflect that in 1999 I had read churchwardens' accounts written 250 years previously by an emigrating great-great-grandfather's great-grandfather, and was very aware of my connection to both those individuals, by holding something William FISK had once held. In both instances artefacts contributed to my sense of identity as a member of a reconstructed name-line family.

Family Bibles or other religious registers, photographs and portraits, and documents such as certificates, are all significant artefacts for most genealogical family historians. They become symbols of identifying with ancestors, and contribute to 'sharing' those ancestors with contemporary kin too. This is not always a positive experience: a man persistently demanded a family Bible from one of Graeme's first cousins She had been its guardian and custodian for many years, but the man's surname matched the family of interest, and he coveted it.

### *Black Sheep Connections*

The International Black Sheep Society of Genealogists (IBSSG) is a site that connects people, but differently. It has restricted membership. Only those who have found a 'black sheep' in their ancestry, or at one degree of relatedness (uncle or sibling of an ancestor, for example) qualify. The felon, or other undesirable, is permitted to be related by marriage, but at no more than one degree of separation from the 'black sheep'. There is one other exclusion: "A person may NOT qualify under their own activities<sup>413</sup>". This site exists to share sources for black sheep ancestors, and to share feelings about owning and researching them.

The gentle humour abounding in the IBSSG site might deceive any who think seriousness is necessary for best practice. Despite its 'Bo Peep awards' and slogans such as 'A baaad ancestor is good to find', this society is very serious about protecting those with black sheep ancestry, acknowledging that the deeds of ancestors may cause ongoing anguish. This site reminds Geneals that the good and the bad (according to the social mores of their day) all belong to us, and contribute to our identity.

### *Unwelcome Connections*

GFH researchers connect beyond relations, shared places and shared experiences

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<sup>413</sup> <http://blacksheep.rootsweb.com/main.htm> (accessed February 3, 2007).

such as discovering ‘a skeleton in the closet’, for GFH activity also risks connections with unsought others and their unwelcome activities. The IBSSG site’s link to its Genealogy Hall of Shame takes one, not to a surname database of evildoers, but to serious warnings about scammers and Internet security. Postings have included an enterprise successfully sued for deceptive advertising about ‘family yearbooks’:

[This] scam is once again active on the Internet. Operating at <http://familynewsabout.com/> - the only thing that has changed is the movement from the Morphcorp, LLC moniker over to their other troubled company name, Mountain Pacific News Service. Same scam... for your money and gullibility: AVOID IT<sup>414</sup>

This website “is intended to be a ‘caution’ to... the genealogy community”:

“Genealogy scams and suspected scams are quickly ‘vacated’ once the warnings go out.... Unfortunately, once a scammer has your money, it is very difficult to find a way to get it back.... This site is ONE place to check on an offer, there are others, but if you have a suspicion and it isn't already here, drop us a line and we will look at it.”<sup>415</sup> Earlier postings on the IBSSG site had also publicised some scammers:

GenSeeker is BACK, as of 21 December 2002, they are spamming for "free trials" by harvesting YOUR posts to Genealogy.com, and quoting them back to you as bait to pay \$60 for annual membership. BEWARE. As of March 2003, the Genseekers scam, indicated here is being sent out as GENEALOGYGIANTS.<sup>416</sup>

Some postings indicate how serious a consideration the issue is beyond the site itself, suggesting victims go to the FBI website, refer to a Complaint Number, and advise they are new victims.

This warning note completes my analysis of themes and motifs discerned in the field and practice of Genealogical Family History in and from Aotearoa-New Zealand, themes and motifs noticed as I have explored aspects of an activity itself often undertaken with a transdisciplinary approach and perspective. I address issues of concern to the wider GFH Community in the next chapter.

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<sup>414</sup> Ibid.

<sup>415</sup> <http://blacksheep.rootsweb.com/shame/> (accessed February 5, 2007).

<sup>416</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 7

### Issues for the GFH Community: Constraints and Complications

The Internet has proved to be the cause of considerable distress to those researchers who discover that information on their own family [naming living relatives] has been put up onto a web site. [It] is almost always put up without authorisation and frequently...by someone unknown to the researcher concerned.”<sup>417</sup>

In this chapter, I identify past and present *issues* for Geneals and for the GFH Community. Many current issues centre on the sharing of research. Others are to do with cost and access to records, reliability of shared information and practitioner competence. In this chapter, I also discuss gender issues in some detail; and end with an affirmation of the benefits of researching GFH in cyberspace.

### Issues of Sharing

There is a great deal of sharing in the Community: sharing of knowledge, sources, methods and findings. Sharing in the GFH field encompasses moral engagement with issues of privacy, confidentiality, intellectual property, honesty and reliability.

The sharing of *how* to research is rarely an issue, although at least one NZSG group/branch behaved somewhat unethically by removing how-to-get-started components from their programmes and advising new members to *pay* to take courses provided by a few long-time members. This action reduced opportunities for *all* to learn from others at group or branch meetings, because discussion of new research obstacles, and of *new sources*, can benefit even the most competent. On the other hand, very little can be ‘taught’ at a dozen or so meetings a year; and many ‘beginners’ do wish to enrol in a more intensive course; and ‘old hands’ in more specialised courses. The sharing of discovered facts and stories is a more widespread issue: involving the inter-connected areas of privacy, confidentiality and intellectual property.

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<sup>417</sup> Noel Clark, “The Internet - Boon or Bane?” *Essex Family Historian*, (2006): 24-26.

### *Privacy*

Even when information is in the public arena, individuals can perceive it to be an invasion of privacy, if someone researches, records and shares such information about living persons. When visiting England, and with no time to write first, I telephoned a newly discovered second cousin. His first question, with a hint of alarm, was, “How did you track me down?” I realised I had done so through public records: birth, marriage and death indexes, the will of his grandfather (my great-aunt’s husband) and a telephone directory. It transpired that he thought, wrongly, that a first cousin once removed (to us both), who had visited his and other branches, unannounced, half a century previously was my grandfather (his great-uncle). The conversation seemed to be intrusive so I ended it. However, my newly found relative rang back later and invited us to call. We were made very welcome and he was pleased to be given a copy of a photograph of his mother he had not seen before. I had received it from a 1C2R to us both, via my father. Her grandparents had emigrated to New Zealand, although her father had stayed in England, living not far from my ‘new’ second cousin.

Even though I had sought him out without any intention of ‘publishing’ any information, I then had to think about how to respect this relative’s privacy when recording information *from* him,<sup>418</sup> or *about* him and his more immediate family, both in my computer; and also when sharing with email cousins. What should remain confidential to me, and for how long? My CoG informants (also related to this person) expressed a collective view that it is a matter for caution and judgement. In this case, we were made aware of a complicating factor: his daughter was interested in her family history and might therefore welcome contact. All these considerations apply to the use of commercial sites for making contact too.

### *Confidentiality*

Confidentiality becomes an issue for Geneals at many times. Some genealogical discoveries even in *public* records go beyond facts of identity: reasons for divorce or annulment of marriages, for example. Geneals must make decisions about passing on such information. When a variety of information (including speculative gossip) is obtained privately from family rather than from public sources,

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<sup>418</sup> For example: information about a cause of death.

judgement concerning what should remain confidential, *and for how long*, must also be made; as these decisions are likely to have long-lasting consequences, both positive and negative, within the family of extension.

Even information in old newspapers needs assessing before being passed on: assessed for accuracy and for the potential of harmful effect on those reading it without knowledge that the original writer would have been reflecting his or her own personal assumptions or intentions. Was it an exaggerated, attention-grabbing news story, or an editorial from someone with a political agenda, for example? Geneals need to understand Bakhtin's dialogic, and always consider voice and audience, when listening and reading, speaking and writing, about *family*.

What should, or should not, be shared is vigorously debated in the Community. There is a general acceptance of the so-called 100-year rule for privacy (except where information is already in the public domain) although more than a few flout the convention in various ways. As more kin live beyond 100 years, the privacy boundary may need extending, unless people in general become less concerned about others knowing recorded information about them.

Some in the wider Community accept that some matters ought to be confidential to the discoverer, even though the social facts are in public records - unless those most affected are happy about the sharing of such material. In 2001, there was strong debate<sup>419</sup> about the material on one of the CDs produced for NZSG members. This index included data from School Admission Registers up to 1940. Some thought there was a risk of identifying people (still alive) who had been fostered, or had lived in an orphanage as children, and might not want that known. Other records revealed maiden names of living persons – something used by banks as an identity marker. The next version of the CD was released with access to such information suppressed.

### *Ownership*

Much earlier in the Society's history, it had been suggested that charts compiled for the primary purpose of putting NZSG members in touch could be offered to an

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<sup>419</sup> 'Society split in disk info row' was a brief news item linked to a feature article ("Your open secrets" by Kevin Taylor) under a subheading of 'privacy' in the *New Zealand Herald* 3 May 2001.

AFHHO project, without consultation with the compilers. At that time, concerns were expressed in relation to the *ownership* of the data submitted for one project that was designed to put people in touch rather than to disseminate their findings without their knowledge.

During my fieldwork, I read the following on a notice board in the corridor outside an LDS FHC:

The 95 Year Rule

This rule has been around since the beginning of Family History in the Centre. If the person was born within the last 95 years obtain permission from [the] closest living relative. This relative often works to receive the ordinances on behalf of the deceased or designates someone to receive them. In some instances the relative may wish to postpone the performing of the ordinance. Also be aware that acting in conflict with the wishes of the closest living relative can result in bad feeling toward you and the church.<sup>420</sup>

The notice also defined ‘closest living relative’ by listing, in order, surviving current spouse, surviving eldest adult children, and surviving parent. I have noticed that material available on the FamilySearch website also assumes “a family representative” who seems to have precedence in genealogical work – even when a human subject of interest has lived and died centuries ago and has many thousands of descendants. This too raises questions of ownership – ownership of particular ancestors and information about them.

When one of Graeme’s first cousins died a few years ago her daughter gained permission from cemetery authorities to place her mother’s ashes in the grave of Graeme’s (and his cousin’s) great-grandfather. We heard this after the event, and thought it perfectly acceptable - until we discovered that a large plaque had been *fixed* to the old marble headstone. What if *all* that ancestor’s grandchildren, and more of his great-grandchildren, (a 100 or so, all of the same degree of relationship to him as Graeme and his cousin), or any other descendants, had wished, or might wish to be memorialised on that stone too? Who *owns* this ancestor?<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>420</sup> Observation at an LDS FHC, 11 December 2003.

<sup>421</sup> I do not say “this couple” or “these ancestors”, because this man had two wives. Neither name is on the stone. I am not even sure if his second wife is buried with him – because the burial records were thrown out, long ago, with someone’s household rubbish - so I do not even say “their grave”.

I am not sure exactly how many great-grandchildren this man had, partly because I am more interested in researching his ancestors than tracing his descendants, and partly because, when I did the initial work, 20-30 years ago, I did not trace the family forward towards the present, for privacy reasons.

During the interviews, my key informants expressed a range of views about the whole issue of privacy concerns. None had approached it from my perspective, but some agreed that the *compilation* of charts, was an intellectual and a costly exercise (for just *one* of my many family groups: 12 birth, 11 marriage and 12 death certificates), and that the sharing of ‘just’ charts and group sheets, without permission, does not adequately recognise intellectual property rights in this area.

### *Intellectual Property*

The ownership of research findings, and the way many just ‘take’ hard-won *genealogical family history* information (which includes that received, preserved, discovered and integrated) and use it or pass it on without acknowledgement, are current and past issues for the wider Community.<sup>422</sup> I have outlined an instance that concerned me, in Chapter 1. Many do not understand the scholarship and intellectual effort that has gone into tracing individuals and compiling family groups.

Michael noted recently that a professional historian had written a piece for a newspaper on some of the clerical subjects in his directory (the BBD), and used phrases from it, all without acknowledgement that the *research* work of Michael and others (all acknowledged in a comprehensive bibliography and citation system) was almost certainly his main source for the import of the whole article. The site hosting the BBD now asserts Michael’s moral right, as principal researcher and compiler, to be acknowledged as author.

The Norfolk FHS Journal exemplar includes an article on the sharing and ownership issue.<sup>423</sup> Valma shared similar remarks from the *Essex Family Historian* with the SELMAN CoG. I have used it for this chapter’s epigram.

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<sup>422</sup> Sharing and copyright issues were frequently raised on the Moonrakers’ List in the 1990s.

<sup>423</sup> On page 536 of the March 2004 issue of *The Norfolk Ancestor* the following is bolded and underlined: “Would members please note that it is assumed that by submitting a Tree to the *Family Tree Collection* the submitter relinquishes any copyright control over its distribution.”

I asked my SELMAN CoG key informants, in a group message, their latest thoughts about sharing information, something we had discussed previously.

Valma commented:

I learnt very early on to be selective as to what information I send and to whom. Close family, if interested, and people I have learned to trust, are the ones I am prepared to share information with. I am quite happy to suggest ways enquirers can help themselves.

Richard explained his practice with regard to sharing with those contacted through a commercial site:

Genes Reunited contacts can vary- some only last a day, a quick question [and the response] "sorry that is not my family" and it ends there. I have a dozen where we regularly have questions for each other. When I am fully satisfied that they are genuine researchers they may get a look at my tree. I have such great respect for the work that [others] have put into the earlier information, that I usually give a polite reply [to the effect] that: 'I am not prepared to pass on all of the information from my tree since it has involved a lot of work and cost by other people and I am sure [you] will understand - I will however try to help with any queries that [you] have, and to do that I will need to see [your] tree.'

Jacqui had also given a great deal of thought to the parameters of sharing genealogical information, especially through that same commercial site - which claims confidentiality:

With respect to the level of detail I am willing to share, I too am very cautious. Very, very few people have access to my tree on GR. I use it as a means of other people finding me as I really don't have time to search proactively right now, and keeping it up-to-date is time-consuming [because] I edit my gedcom file to remove selected people entirely before uploading. I then use the "hide living relations" option, but these hidden people will still show up on a name search.<sup>424</sup> Once I have established that a GR contact is related & is interested in more than merely establishing that fact, I provide my email address to enable further exchanges. I find that the majority of these are interested primarily in their immediate branch, unlike the 4 of us, and there are probably a whole heap of different reasons for this range of interest. Some of these people I then include in email exchanges within the inner CoG when it pertains to their own line.... Some I have not heard from for some considerable time. Others were never much more than a couple of emails.

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<sup>424</sup> In my view, Jacqui has identified the site's cynical disregard for confidentiality at that time. I could not post any information without including my own birth name and year of birth – and I am the only person of that name born in New Zealand that year, indeed almost certainly in *any* year since civil registration of births began in New Zealand in 1848.

I offer to email people reports of their immediate family group.... However, just exactly what this constitutes also varies. I do not like to hand out research that isn't my own to just anyone! A few pointers in the right direction seem to keep most people happy, it depends how far they've got themselves & what they have access to.

Mark Howells is one in the wider Community who has written about the ethics of sharing, especially the role of computer technology: “that rapacious replicator and diabolic duplicator”, in breaching intellectual property rights. He offers many suggestions about how to protect ownership of research. He also suggests that if “the dark family secret” does not “enhance shared research” then “leave the skeleton in the closet.” Another of his suggestions may seem to run counter to good practice: withholding source citations, but he does it to “encourage others to contact you without giving away all your hard work.” Mark Howells also recommends telling others what is expected *vis-à-vis* sharing.<sup>425</sup>

One Geneal in the wider Community granted permission for something she wrote to be reprinted, but then noted it was “posted to 56 mail lists, a number of newsgroups, and at least five printed newsletters for genealogical societies,” some even claiming authorship of it.<sup>426</sup>

Recently I had cause to be grateful to staff at the Alexander Turnbull Library who did not just copy my material deposited in conjunction with the sesquicentennial competition, to send to a Canadian inquirer, but contacted me through appropriate channels. Otherwise, we might never have known that Graeme’s relative *existed*, and was interested, and wished to share information.

The whole A-NZ GFH Community of Practice contains some Communities of Interest centred on a concern. One concern is preservation of and access to records. During 2007 and 2008, the New Zealand Parliament has been debating a bill seeking to protect identity theft by restricting access to Birth Death and Marriage records. Officers of the NZSG, other interested genealogical family historians, and other interested persons, made submissions to the relevant Select

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<sup>425</sup> Mark Howells, “Share and Beware – Sharing Genealogy in the Information Age,” <http://www.oz.net/~markhow/writing/> (accessed 9 July 2007.) This is a version of an article published in *Ancestry*, November/December 2000.

<sup>426</sup> Barbara A. Brown, “Restoring Ethics to Genealogy,” in the *IIGS Newsletter* (April 1999): <http://www.iigs.org/newsletter/9904news/ethics.htm.en> (accessed 9 July 2007).

Committee (and to individual MPs) about the effects this would have on their practice. The Executive Officer of the NZSG wrote a note entitled “Campaign against the BDM Amendment Bill” in the *NZG*.<sup>427</sup> It outlined actions and concern that “historical research of any kind [would be] severely restricted if the Bill was passed in its initial form.” The Society’s submission to the parliamentary select committee, on behalf of all members, was published in the same issue<sup>428</sup>. The most serious ongoing concern (2008) is that access to all *original* records might be denied; and that *all* researchers will only be able to use *error-ridden* and *partial* second or third-level transcriptions.

### **Reliability of Shared Genealogical Information**

Another issue for Geneals is the reliability of the information given to them by others: some of whom may not fully understand the sources they are using, nor how to record guesstimates or a possible range of birth years computed from conflicting evidence in primary sources.

The IGI is the source of much sharing of both reliable and unreliable information. In the early years, those submitting were encouraged to estimate birth years for known or discovered ancestors, using a rule of thumb whereby it was assumed that a couple would have been born about 25 years before the birth of their first *known* child. The likely range is obviously much greater. Some also assumed that a couple would both have been born in the place they married. Many family reconstructions were attempted before original records had been filmed and made available by the GSU, but have since been extended and corrected; and the IGI now has a wealth of reliable information through a controlled extraction programme. Those new to GFH need to quickly learn to check the source of anything found in the IGI, and elsewhere, before accepting and passing on guesses, estimations and errors.

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<sup>427</sup> Peter Nash, *The New Zealand Genealogist*, (2007): 159.

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*, 215-219.

### *Dishonest Genealogies and Genealogists*

Donald Jacobus (see Chapter 8) referred to deliberately changed genealogies of previous eras in America, but I have not come across this in the A-NZ GFH Community, probably because of New Zealand's later colonisation and smaller size, although I have been told there was an attempt to defraud, by a man calling himself a genealogist, within recent years.

However, dishonesty is still alive in cyberspace. There are books on offer, even on the more reputable sites, about 'your' family: books that turn out to be just lists of names taken from telephone directories. Some peddle fake coats of arms, and the ignorant are encouraged to claim real arms that they have no hereditary or registered right to display, even if the surname does match their own. Some commercial magazines tape CDs to their covers and claim they contain indexes to valuable sources. One I purchased<sup>429</sup> was so slight and limited it would benefit perhaps one person in millions; and the chance of that person buying that magazine is not great.

A new GFH scam was revealed in 2005. American genealogist Don Harrold, hiding behind Proxy Inc., was offering software to generate bogus family trees, for \$75: "The content created is seen by people as being REAL. And SO WILL THE SEARCH ENGINES," he shouted at prospective customers.

Jim Terry, Webmaster of LegacyFamilyTree's Millennia Corporation advised he had asked PayPal to suspend Harrold's account. Many postings were side-tracked to a discussion of the statistical probability of anyone finding a match with the bogus data. Harrold remained unrepentant about his aims to make money with his FakeFamily software. Many joined in and the battle raged. Andrew Millard wrote, "All I know about some of my relatives is that they emigrated to the USA. I have a name and a birth year from UK records but that is all. The fake information you give is plausible and given the way it is constructed is likely to generate matches to vague information in a line I am pursuing. I will have to spend money to verify [a match]. So FakeFamily many well cost me money to invalidate false information." Chris Dunham wrote to Harrold, "If your product works as advertised the results will [not be able to be] instantly falsified as you suggest.

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<sup>429</sup> Garrick Webster, ed., *Your Family History* (2006), No 37.

Even ten minutes of my time is too much to waste for the sake of your bank account.”<sup>430</sup> The cost, in terms of time *and* money, of accessing vital records in primary sources is both an historical and an ongoing issue for the Community.

## **Cost and Access**

During the interview Bruce commented on cost aspects of GFH - in relation to our discussion about the age people start GFH research:

I think one of the things that has always struck me is that genealogy always seemed to be done by ... women with no money... and I think that's very definitely shaped a lot of things that have been done... and why certain projects have been developed because there are ways around the money issue. Here I'm thinking about 20 years or so ago, probably at a period when - vast generalisation, but when most or a lot of women were not [in paid work] so there wasn't an alternative form of income to be able to put towards [genealogical research].

I really quite admire what huge numbers of people have achieved on a shoestring; but probably that shoestring has constrained them in the same way that it has constrained me in some of the things I've done... It's also been a large reason why I have travelled overseas and I know that it's a large focus of why a lot of other people travel overseas and it seems to me it is as good a reason as any - might not work out so well for the spouses... but, it's where people can channel their energy, their spending....

When Paul spoke of his Norfolk research, we empathised over the difficulties of having ancestors in a county where many parish records are in the County Record Office, but have not yet been filmed by the LDS; and where indexes to them have been produced by the local FHS. There are increased costs to accessing them in either place. Lincolnshire, by contrast, has long had a high percentage of the Bishop's Transcripts indexed on the IGI, and items of interest can be followed up in microform copies of the original documents, in an LDS FHC or affiliate library, at a fraction of the cost of a trip to the Lincolnshire Archives - by an agent or by oneself.

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<sup>430</sup> [http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans\\_online\\_genealogy/2005/11/generating\\_fake.html](http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2005/11/generating_fake.html) (accessed 7 July 2007). These quotations all from the unpaginated material: "Generating Fake Family Trees Automatically," *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter* (2 November 2005).

Over the years, commercial interests have obtained some specific records. In the 1970s Achievements Ltd charged me for searches in Pallot's Index, but did not give the dates and parishes covered and did not even indicate how many instances of the name sought were contained therein.<sup>431</sup>

The New Zealand Society of Genealogists, has become (2007) an affiliate library for the GSU, and centres have been established in places like the National Library in Wellington, where all Geneals will be able to pursue their research work of the reconstruction of family groups, at a much reduced cost. NZSG members staff the centres as volunteers. Professional genealogists and record agents will be among those able to use the available records, for clients, and this may become an issue once again.

Within the whole A-NZ GFH Community there have been times of tension, between members of the general public with false expectations of what to expect from volunteers in LDS FHCs. There have been tensions caused by non-members of the Society using Society-generated resources, some of whom will be paid for their research for others. Some Geneals in some *official* Groups or Branches within the incorporated Society continue to encourage non-Society members to use the benefits of the Society without paying a subscription to it.

Another cost and access issue surfaced recently when I learned that our National Archives was taking money from people *just* to tell them that a file containing a will has been missing from their collections for well over 120 years. For those enquiring, the cost is in time and dashed hopes, as well as a monetary one. The archivist, to whom my concern was directed, did not want to consider or consult about whether a note could be placed in the file to the effect that a copy of the will was available elsewhere. Assisting Geneals was not perceived to be a good reason for disturbing the provenance in any way. As a former archivist myself, I agreed with that fundamental principle, but as a scholar and Geneal within the field of

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<sup>431</sup> It would have been to their commercial advantage to include that in their report for I might have overlooked the thinness of substance and paid for the few instances I have since discovered. Instead, I castigated them for a padded report, and for not being able to find the late baptism of the great-grandfather I was pursuing at the time. Ironically, I had learned in the interim that although he was born in Surrey in 1840, he was baptised in 1846 in Shoreditch, Middlesex. I learned this from the GSU's Computer File Index (now the IGI) which was available in New Zealand long before it reached England.

GFH, I will have to seek other ways to address the particular issue. A further access issue surfaced at National Archives when I asked a young woman on reception desk duties how to request records relating to *licensed victuallers* in Wellington.<sup>432</sup> She did not know what one was, let alone how to spell either word. Spelling is important to all in the cyberspace world, when knowing the way a key word can be spelt is the only way to access many resources. For Geneals there is an ongoing challenge of learning how personal names and place names *might have been spelt*, at any point in their existence. Some sources for GFH, including the IGI, use Soundex systems to assist with identifying surname variants.

Many more records are now accessible since the commercialisation of the field, but the risk of wasting time and money when undertaking GFH scholarship of discovery and integration remains. The need for repositories to charge to cover all the many costs of preserving and making accessible historic documents continues to be an issue for members of the mixed membership hobby and scholarly Community.

## **Gender Perspectives**

My approach to this whole issue is grounded in a view taken by H el ene Cixous, who has, “on occasion, repudiated the label ‘feminist’, on the grounds that it perpetuates the hierarchical opposition of masculine/feminine which she is trying to deconstruct”.<sup>433</sup> Thus, I am wary of engaging with instances, or with accusations of gender bias, from any particular feminist perspective.

### *The Politics of Gender Bias*

In a book designed to “put the spotlight on the female line” and to find out how the law and society viewed women, Margaret Ward comments that: “The grip of the male line has been tenacious, and it is often the fault...of the identification of the ‘family’ with the surname it bears.”<sup>434</sup> Ward acknowledges that seeking to

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<sup>432</sup> The London Metropolitan Archives, for example, have produced an excellent guide to the history of this occupation and the extent of their holdings: <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk> (accessed 27 March 2008).

<sup>433</sup> Lodge, *Modern Criticism and Theory*, 286.

<sup>434</sup> Margaret Ward, *The Female Line: Researching your Female Ancestors* (Newbury Berkshire: Countryside Books, 2003), 7.

*learn more* about the lives of female ancestors does not differ a lot “from male-line research... if you think in terms of the records consulted”<sup>435</sup> but she has written of “*the*” female line (and “the” male line) as if there is only one of each for all our *ancestral* research. She accuses, unfairly:

Some people [who] stoutly protest that they *are* following the female line – they are tracing their mother’s family, as well as that of their father. Good for them, but if in fact what they are doing is following their mother’s surname, which is, of course, her father’s name, there you are, straight back to a male line once again and dependent on a surname”<sup>436</sup>.

That is the *consequence* of any patrilineal system: *back* to “a” male *and to a female* – that is two ‘lines’: one male and one female, at *every* new generation. Ward appears to be combining her railing against the system that affects ancestral research with her own thinking about a family descending from a couple. When she writes, “you may be looking for different names in each generation”<sup>437</sup> she is perhaps thinking more of families of *descendants*, where daughters and granddaughters took on their husband’s surnames.

Ward ends her Preface saying, “I have wavered between using the words ‘ancestor’ and ‘relative’ in the text, but please see them both simply as shorthand for ‘a female member of your family, present or past!’” She continues with the following sentence: “I hope you enjoy beginning to follow your Female Line.”<sup>438</sup> The word ‘ancestor’ in the book’s subtitle is therefore somewhat misleading: so is the word ‘following’. Ward’s Chapter 9 is titled: “Timeline 1800-1950: a selective list of some of the important facts and events that touched women’s lives”. The content is very useful for those whose aim is to research and write biographies about female relatives. She has arranged the preceding chapters, thematically: themes of ‘the’ History of Women.

I contend that Geneals think Family. We do not think of *all* female relatives as belonging to *one line*, or all males to one line. We have to draw many lines to connect each identified relative to us. I believe Ward’s book highlights some of the complexity and confusion about GFH research that encompasses ancestry *and*

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<sup>435</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>437</sup> *ibid.*, 9.

<sup>438</sup> Ibid., 6.

descendancy of ancestors. One has to *choose* an individual to focus on when researching ancestry, and *choose* a couple to focus on when tracing descendancy. Research in *either* direction relies on the other.

I felt I should also engage with a statement by a sociologist about this issue, from my knowledge of the area of the GFH field where the complex shorthand used by GFH practitioners hides so much. In the textbook chapter discussed in Chapter 1, Dr Swain claimed that:

A very broad interpretation of [the] consideration the ‘politics’ of genealogical and family history research might lead one’s attention to the rather odd bias of most women genealogical researchers (the great majority in this field...) for pursuing the patrilineal ancestors, the ‘surname line’, when this is simply an artifact of a particular ‘surnaming’ convention and the ‘distaff side is equally ancestral.’<sup>439</sup>

### *Deceptive Charts*

I will address this by reference to a working document I carry with me whenever I might be able to undertake personal GFH research, anywhere. It is called a ‘pedigree chart’, and this version is a ‘12-generation’ one. I use it to record *only* the names of the discovered ancestors of our children: birth, marriage and death details, with dates and places where there is space. I have colour coded it to show the main or last country of residence for each person. It does *not* record any collateral descendants from any generation, so does not in any way demonstrate the scope and amount of work done towards reconstituting all the family groups linked to each of the 400 or so direct ancestors named on it. There is no space for *any* of the additional knowledge I have about any of the named ancestors and the thousands of their descendants.

In accordance with convention (and the convention certainly reveals there was a gender bias at the time such charts were first introduced, probably many centuries ago), couples are recorded with the husbands first and the wives second. In accordance with best practice advocated by the NZSG, I record women by using their ‘birth names’,<sup>440</sup> and I write names in the order spoken. I write surnames, but

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<sup>439</sup> Swain, “Sociological Genealogy: Searching for Gran,” 312.

<sup>440</sup> GFH shorthand for ‘the names they took at birth, or at adoption when a birth name is unknown’.

only surnames, in capital letters. Dates are in the order: day, month, year in full,<sup>441</sup> and I also note which are birth or baptism dates, and which are death or burial dates. Ancestry charts such as this have the father's father's *et cetera* line at the top, and the mother's mother's *et cetera* line at the bottom. Our children, three siblings who share their entire ancestry with each other and with no one else, have their *one* father's father's...line and their *one* mother's mother's...line recorded in that way on this chart. I will call such lines *ff-lines* (for fathers), and *mm-lines* (for mothers). *Each one* of every person's ancestors has just *one* ff-line and *one* mm-line.

The only person I have met in the course of my own GFH teaching, or during this study, expressing a determination to pursue his own surname ff-line, to the *exclusion* of all other ancestral lines, was a man in a Continuing Education course at the University of Waikato in the 1990s. The others in the class, mainly women, expressed their disapproval to him in no uncertain terms, while I assisted him as best I could, in my role as a teacher meeting the needs of students without passing judgement on intentions. As I remember, the surname was sufficiently distinctive for his planned research to be a genealogical exercise, not a one-name collection or study.

I *now* understand, that this man, at the beginning of his research may have had any number of reasons for choosing to *begin* with the name line of his own surname - including a possible gender bias; but I now know that I must consider *many* factors, before I attribute gender bias to *any* GFH researchers. Most genealogists in the wider A-NZ GFH Community, male *and* female, who pursue ancestral lines, have *no other option* but to identify each newly discovered ancestor by the surname given at birth or taken at marriage.<sup>442</sup> In a patrilineal *system*, almost all of those surnames will *always* have come from a male ancestor: the person's father.<sup>443</sup> Perhaps that is what Dr Swain means by 'patrilineal ancestors' in the textbook chapter.

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<sup>441</sup> I have configured the basic CMOS style to conform to that usage throughout this thesis: as that wonderfully flexible system allows.

<sup>442</sup> I am of course aware that a number of ancestors did not marry, or not to the father of the child who is the researcher's ancestor.

<sup>443</sup> The main exceptions are where the name of a biological father is unknown and an individual takes the mother's surname. Foundlings who have been given names at random and those who changed their surname *without telling anyone* are other exceptions.

## The Constraints and Complications of a Patrilineal Naming System

I have also explored Dr Swain's perception of bias by female genealogical researchers, wondering how it can have arisen. I have explored it in terms of a patrilineal *naming system*, affecting both ancestry and descendancy. It seems to me that one reason may lie in his phrase "*the distaff side is equally ancestral.*" As an *individual* I have only *one* 'distaff side' (and one 'staff' side),<sup>444</sup> but as a GFH researcher of direct ancestors back along every line, there is *a* new distaff side (a female with a new surname which happens to be taken from her father in most cases) *every time* I learn the names of the parents of an ancestor. It is no different for male genealogists.

All people *ought* to have an equal number of genetic male and female ancestors (as opposed to 'known about' or discovered genealogical ancestors) - barring virgin births or cloning. However there are some *inequalities* related to gender because of the main patrilineal naming *system* which dominates in the wider Community studied,<sup>445</sup> and I will explore three of them now.

### *1. Some Ancestor Surnames Are More Equal Than Others*

Under a patrilineal naming system everyone will have fewer *male ancestor-surnames* than female ancestor-surnames, because, for example, if I look at my 12- generation chart that begins with our children I can see, that at the 4<sup>th</sup> generation, I have recorded four male and four female birth surnames, the names of their great-grandparents.

At the 5<sup>th</sup> generation, four female surnames from the 4<sup>th</sup> generation have become 'new' male surnames and the four male surnames are *repeated*. There are eight 'new' surnames, of females. At the 6<sup>th</sup> generation, there are 32 different surnames,

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<sup>444</sup> *Wikipedia* contributes: "The term *distaff* is also used as an adjective and is used as a descriptor for a female grouping (e.g., the "distaff side" of a person's family refers to the person's mother and her blood relatives). This term developed in the English speaking communities where a distaff spinning tool was used often to symbolize domestic life. The term distaff has fallen largely into disuse in recent times, although its antonyms of sword and spear to describe a male grouping are even more obscure" (accessed 1 April 2008).

<sup>445</sup> The patronymic form is a less frequently encountered patrilineal system.

including one presently labelled with the surname placeholder <UNKNOWN>. All the 16 females have surnames that appear for the first time, but eight of the male surnames have already appeared, as surnames of females. Thus, if I add together all the surnames listed *at just those three generations*, there are 56 of them. Only 18 belong to men while 28 are surnames of females. Anyone listening to Graeme or to me talk about one of our families of interest, should expect it to be *more likely* that it is a *female* who is being discussed – regardless of the gender of the researcher: simply because there are more surname-lines that begin with a female.<sup>446</sup>

## 2. *We Speak About Them Differently*

However, anyone listening to us might *hear* male ancestor-names more often than other names of interest, for two reasons. First, it is customary, within the Community, to label a family of interest with the surname of the first direct ancestor to bear that name, as convenient shorthand for all the surnames it encompasses.

The second reason for *hearing* a bias towards male surnames is that, under a patrilineal system, more than one ancestor held each male surname over the generations. This *duplication* means that co-researchers will be able to contact us through the surname of a shared ancestor *at a number of different generations*; and more research comes to be concentrated on any family labelled in the way described above.

This is what has happened with our SELMAN family of interest: most contacts beyond my second cousins link to it via an ancestral couple at the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, or 7<sup>th</sup> generation from our children. I link to the name at the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation from them, Jacqui at the 5<sup>th</sup>, Richard at the 7<sup>th</sup>, and Valma at the 8<sup>th</sup> generation. There is no contact, yet, from anyone linking at the 9<sup>th</sup> generation (because we do not know if Francis (II) had siblings); or from the current eponymous ancestor, Francis (I), who is at the 10<sup>th</sup> generation. Some contacts descend from other families bearing

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<sup>446</sup> One male name and one female name are actually the same in surname study terms: STEVEN/S and STEVENS, but research to date suggests it is unlikely that there will be any other *genealogical* connection between the first bearers of those names in our families of interest – *their* ancestors lived in different parts of Scotland for at least 200 years. I have found documentation for about 60 variants of this surname, including STEPHEN/S – and STE'EN, which is the way the name is pronounced in parts of East Anglia; but no MacSTEVEN/S or O'STEVEN/S, yet.

the name in the area, but we cannot prove a genealogical link, beyond Francis (I). When we do, we will probably have to rename him - and Francis II, Francis III and Francis IV - for the most likely candidates to be the father of Francis I are also named Francis. I did not undertake so much research work on my own ff-line because it began with a male's name (my father's) – I did so because so many others were, and are, interested in this segment of my total ancestry and research interests.

Contacts researching any segment of 'our SELMAN family' are both male and female. Most reach the name SELMAN only after encountering a number of other surnames back along the ancestral line that meets at a marriage with a SELMAN. For example Valma links to 'our SELMAN family' via STIRLING, FREAME, and PALMER: names held by her ancestors (of both genders). I cannot see any female bias towards researching male ancestors there, although I do know four *male* relatives for whom SELMAN is their ff-line, who, *initially*, showed more interest in it than in all their other lines. My CoG key informants have wondered why this particular family of extension attracts so many kin, bearing so many *different* surnames, wanting to research it. There is not space for our theories about that here.

Graeme's eponymous ancestors (his one and only ff-line) have been traced to the 7<sup>th</sup> generation, with some co-researchers connecting at the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> generations. Graeme's *mother's* mm-line has also been traced back to the 7<sup>th</sup> generation. My *mother's* mm-line presently awaits work at the 9<sup>th</sup> generation. We do not *talk about* the STEVEN or STEVENS/ JOHNSON//STEVENS/ MEARS or MEERE/ RHYNNE or RING or WREN family; or the DAVIDSON/MILBANK/ BAILEY/ MINDENHALL/COX/FISHER/WARD family line; in the same way we talk about the BROWN and SELMAN lines. That is just a fact of GFH life thrust upon us by a patrilineal naming system. Because a new surname comes in at every generation up every mm-line, both male *and* female researchers have no convenient way to label these families of interest and extension. This is partly why the custom of labelling a family of extension with a surname of interest has arisen. It is because, at the risk of labouring the point, in a patrilineal system *every surname* of interest is a male-ancestor surname at some generation.

Generally, *I would not know* if another Geneal, when referring to ancestors by name, is speaking about an ff-line or an mm-line originating at a particular generation - even if remarks are prefaced, as they often are, with 'this is on my father's side' or 'on my mother's side'. Some give some guidance, saying 'these are my paternal grandparents'. If I heard a man talking about a surname line that coincided with his own surname, I *could* assume that it was quite likely to be his ff-line and y-chromosome line, but this would not necessarily be so. Graeme's BROWNs of Mains and Strathmartine are our family of interest beginning with his father's, father's, father's, father's *mother* – for an ff-line Andrew BROWN married a Margaret BROWN: the first of an mm-line.

Another possible reason for a *perception* of bias on the part of GFH researchers comes about because of other factors related to the patrilineal naming system we have inherited.

### *3. The English Patriarchal System*

Even a cursory glance at earlier generations on my chart, would show a number of couples where the man's forename and surname are known, but only the woman's forename. The bias is not on my part as researcher, the bias is entrenched in the patriarchal laws and customs of the country where many of the discovered ancestors of our children were born: England.

#### *Inequality of Information*

Geneals in the A-NZ Community researching ancestors of emigrants with English roots frequently bewail the inequality of information that was required to be recorded in civil registrations: English marriage registrations required the names and occupations of the fathers of the bride and groom to be recorded, but not surnames of mothers. Early 19<sup>th</sup> century English death certificates did not give the birth name of a married woman: she was described as the wife or the widow of her husband. Those whose research takes them back before civil registration, back into English parish records know how much more difficult some family reconstructions will be if a clerk, ordained or lay, recorded only the name of a child's father at its baptism.

Gender issues do significantly impinge on the usefulness of *sources* for GFH research. Few men qualify to have their votes recorded in Poll Books, but women do not appear in them at all in pre-franchise years. Land Tax Assessments, on the other hand *do* record many women who owned or occupied land. Amy Louise Erickson has pointed out that while wills in her period of interest were *made* principally by dying men, approximately three-quarters of all those who *presented* wills and inventories in court and *filed accounts* in court a year later were women.<sup>447</sup>

During the years when my horizon of interest included my emigrating great-great grandmother's lines in Lincolnshire, I found many instances where the patriarchal and patrilineal systems hid the real roles and status of women. For example, when I came across a nuncupative will of a man I was seeking to place in a family group I realised that the reported evidence of the female witness (who signed with an X) was just as valid in a court of law as was any produced by males who could, or could not, write or sign.

#### *Patronymic Patrilineality*

Graeme's ancestors have been given male-derived surnames too, including his Norwegian ancestors with patronymic surnames: the forenames of their fathers with a son or daughter suffix, his 4xgreat-grandparents Ole PEDERSEN and Kirstine JONSDATTER, for example. There are only *two* males in the direct line between Graeme and Kirstine: the other five are female ancestors. One of those males has been given a non-patronymic name in New Zealand records, but that may be as a result of the information being given in by people from the (different) predominant naming system here: he may have always used or been accorded a patronymic in Norway. Back along one ff-line in that country is a seven times great-grandfather we know only as Jens of [the place] Thaleberg. As Geneals, it was more exciting to be able to name an ancestor using an embryonic locative surname,<sup>448</sup> than to claim how many generations beyond a great-grandfather an ff-

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<sup>447</sup> Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), 14-15.

<sup>448</sup> Basil Cottle, *The Penguin Dictionary of Surnames*, 2nd ed. (1967; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), 9. Cottle gives a good summary of how British surnames have arisen from fathers' names, from localities, from occupations and from nicknames. For Aotearoa-New Zealand it is necessary to add names that once honoured unrelated people (Herewini from Selwyn for example), and also names associated with *events*.

line has been traced. We do not yet know what relation Jens was, if any, to Svend (1695-1759) and his wife Borge (the grandparents of his daughter-in-law) both also surnamed with the locative 'of Thaleberg'.

That small word 'yet' is the key to understanding some gender issues from a GFH perspective. A snapshot of any researcher's current horizon of interest will never tell the whole story, nor will the basic data entered on a work-in-progress chart. I suspect that many antiquarian genealogists have been falsely accused of male gaze because they have had to summarise: their charts are artefacts, *summary* presentations of *all* the genealogical work that was done in their compilation: research undertaken *for a particular purpose*, often for legal purposes: legitimacy, inheritance, voting rights and land ownership, for example. Certainly, when Percival Boyd (1866-1955)<sup>449</sup> transcribed apprenticeship and parish records, and compiled his family groups of Londoners, he even-handedly recorded males and females, (including some COVINGTONs in the City of London) as far as the records would allow him to do so. He did not have *access* to all the records for the family group that interests me: nor to the linkages now proved by the COVINGTON cousins on line group of researchers (see Case Study I).

#### *Other Reasons for Perception of Bias*

If I look at the 7<sup>th</sup> generation column recorded on our children's 12-generation ancestry chart, it is very different from the preceding column recording the 6<sup>th</sup> generation. There are large gaps in the top quarter - only six surnames in the 16 spaces, four of them belonging to males. All forenames and surnames are known and recorded in the second quarter. There are only two gaps in the lower half ('my side' of 'the tree'): the missing names there belong to my mother's, father's, father's, father's mother (whose forename I do know), and to my mother's, mother's, father's, mother's mother.

What factors have contributed to the unevenness so visible on a chart? The gaps in the first quarter of the column are because of the *time* it will take and the *cost* of pursuing the first missing three.<sup>450</sup> There are also factors relating to *religious denomination* and *migration* (possibly Wales to England in this case) – together

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<sup>449</sup> There is subscriber access to his collections through the Society of Genealogists, in conjunction with the Origins network at <http://www.originsnetwork.com>; and to some free via the GSU.

<sup>450</sup> They are near the top of my next-time-I-am-in-the-UK research list.

with my having *no particular interest* in one family in one place; and the cost; and the *generic difficulties* of trying to discover the names of seven more *Irish*, or Scots-Irish ancestors.

The completed second quarter of this column has six Scottish couples, three Norwegian couples and one Irish couple. Scottish women very often retain their own surnames throughout their lives (using them in addition to their husband's surnames). Norway is a small country with good records for genealogical purposes; and a competent researcher traced each line back many generations, some years ago, at no great cost. We have learned the name of one Irishwoman.<sup>451</sup>

Most of my ancestors, recorded on the lower half of the chart, are English and have been given the surname of their fathers. I pursue them equally, regardless of whether they are males or females, *as far as the records, time, cost and interest allow*. The two areas of difficulty are a Scots-Irish line, and two Londoners (Thomas KELSEY, his wife <Not Known UNKNOWN>, and his not-yet-proven parents). They are also on my next-time list.

I was intrigued by how Jeremy Clarkson, when the subject of a *Who Do You Think You Are* episode, demonstrated the complexities of GFH with respect to ancestral names and gender issues. Research into one of his lines revealed that an ancestor had invented and manufactured 'the Kilner jar'; and he rushed off to try to claim ownership of the patent. He identified very strongly with this family of interest, but he seemed to think no one else, of any surname, had any right to 'his jar'; and to simultaneously forget that his own surname is not KILNER. Any gender bias there is rather convoluted.

#### *Gender Issues for Heritage Visitors*

Heritage visitors, and others, do not always take GFH gender issues into consideration when they say that their family has lived in a particular place for centuries. They assume a genetic continuance before it is tested by biological or genealogical proof. If the person making the assertion is still 'local' many family members will have moved away over the years, so the *whole* family has clearly *not* stayed in the village. In some places *all* bearers of the name-line of interest

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<sup>451</sup> Thanks to Elaine Harding, a collaborating New Zealand co-researcher: Graeme's 2C1R.

may have moved away, and the person sharing the name in the present, may actually be from elsewhere, or may have assumed the name in later life.<sup>452</sup>

Perhaps only one line of male descendants has inherited the land or the business that has made living there possible. On the other hand, many of the descendants of female ancestors may well have stayed in the village but by taking different names over the centuries do not signal any connection. Visitors may pass relatives in the High Street of 'their' ancestral village without knowing it: mainly distant relatives, but some they pass by could be their first cousins. I turn now to perceptions of gender bias among those Geneals with an enduring preference for locating and recording descendants of selected couples.

#### *Gender Bias when Writing about Descendants of Ancestors*

A number of members of the A-NZ GFH Community write the histories of some of their families of interest and deposit their work in libraries. It has been my impression from reading such histories in a variety of libraries in addition to the National Library collection, and while judging and examining some for Society awards, that men writing such histories have tended to focus on the men of the family, and that some women have done so too. Perhaps this is where Dr Swain has gained his impression of bias. My impression from reading a sample of these is that more men have tended to entitle their accounts with the name of just a male ancestor, or if writing about a couple have omitted the woman's birth surname (or have not managed to discover it). Both men and women have written about farming families or with other occupational focus, or about families who lived in one locality over some generations - stories that incorporate some local history, and some oral history.

One of the family histories held in the National Archives collection, is *The Descendants of Sidney Frank Beale BOULT*. The author is a woman, and she dedicates it to "the three BOULT men in my life". But, any thought of bias towards male ancestors (other than in the title) is dispelled on the dedication page when Helen Dobson records that in her 14 years of genealogical research, it is the first time she has written about her father's side of the family: this work is at the

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<sup>452</sup> I once met a woman sharing my given-at-birth surname, at an Australian GFH conference; but her father-in-law, like Michael King's great-uncle, had assumed the name to hide his origins.

behest of her brothers.<sup>453</sup> Another book in that collection begins with a seven-generation chart showing just the author's female ancestors. The dedication is to many women; and yet the 'history' is of descendants of a BARRATT and a MOORE family, and explains how some came to be called BARRATT-BOYES.<sup>454</sup>

I have argued above that bias by gender of researcher, of ancestors, is a complex issue and not easily identified, but I concede that when it comes to those in the Community who choose to research descendants of a couple, at some point in their individual research trajectories, bias can be seen on occasion. I have seen many 'family histories' written in Aotearoa-New Zealand, that are histories that begin with a couple, one or both of whom migrated to New Zealand. The authors, men and women alike, often tell a story centred on the chosen couple and their descendants: sometimes down to the present day, and sometimes focusing mainly on the occupations of the sons and grandsons, and the marriages of the daughters. Some write a brief narrative and just list all the discovered descendants: a lengthy and complex task in itself.

One written history I read focused on an ff-line. There appeared to have been a succession of males giving birth for there was no mention of mothers in the early generations.<sup>455</sup> This *may* be due to the fact that female surnames are hard to find in English sources; or it may be because of the sheer impossibility of writing a story about *all* one's ancestors *at the same time*.<sup>456</sup> Such accounts do record much oral history and research findings that would otherwise be lost or inaccessible. A number of those who publish them acknowledge the contributions of others: for example, one compiler uses the word 'anthology' in his title.<sup>457</sup>

Geneals need more engagement with socio-linguists to assist with the need for precision with language. Since writing the essay for the sesquicentennial essay I

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<sup>453</sup> Helen Dobson, comp., *The Descendants of Sidney Frank Beale BOULT* (Ingelwood: Helen Dobson, 1998).

<sup>454</sup> Peggy Moore, *Beginning in God's Own: a Comprehensive Chronicle of Events of the BARRATT Family and Their Descendants*, (Lower Hutt: P. Moore, ca 1990).

<sup>455</sup> Leslie Brian Warren, *The Descendants of Thomas Wood* (Morrinsville: L.B. Warren, 2007).

<sup>456</sup> Shirley Smith, compiler of *Family History of William Rowe Ball and Sarah Kent* (Christchurch: S. Smith, 1990), gives a useful sketched pedigree of each of the families joined by marriage in New Zealand.

<sup>457</sup> David Ward, *An Anthology of the Life and Times of the Brown and Lane Families* (Auckland: D. Ward, 2003).

have consciously tried to name both parents of any child I am researching, or writing about, but it is stylistically challenging to always try to think and write: Andrew and Mary (GIBSON) BROWN's children; or, Andrew's and Mary's children; or, the children of Mary GIBSON and her husband Andrew BROWN.

### *Gender Issues Past and Present*

Gender issues do significantly affect the understandings, research and presentation of findings, of genealogical family historians. An early effort to redress the invisibility of women in many records was the indexing of the *Cyclopaedia of New Zealand* for women referred to in it: some by name and many others just as 'the wife of' or 'the daughter of' a named man.<sup>458</sup>

The mind-set of unconsciously favouring one parent does not necessarily make only women invisible – Graeme recently pointed out that when Prince Edward Duke of Wessex (aka Edward WINDSOR) was talking about Prince Albert in a television documentary, it was as the husband of Edward's ancestor Queen Victoria: the fact that Albert too is his ancestor was not made explicit. However, it is much more likely to be women whose ancestry is not made visible, especially by journalists. A New Zealand national newspaper article, on the front page of its 'World News' section, illustrates my point. When Edward's nephews, Prince William and Prince Harry attended the funeral of their mother's mother in 2004, the article described her as their grandmother, as mother of Diana, and as former wife of Earl Spencer and of Peter Shand-Kydd.<sup>459</sup> The anonymous writer and/or sub-editor did not think it worth discovering and sharing any of the facts that she was born the Honourable Frances Ruth BURKE-ROCHE, on the royal estate at Sandringham (her father being a friend of King George VI), nor that her mother Ruth, Baroness Fermoy, was lady-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.<sup>460</sup> This would have given better familial and historical context to the whole life of the deceased, and her grandsons.

I conclude that there are very few *competent* Geneals, who have a demonstrable gender bias towards male ancestors. Some may actually have a bias towards

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<sup>458</sup> Madeline Morton, comp. *Women Named in Cyclopaedia of New Zealand*, (Auckland: NZSG, 1986). This was published on microfiche.

<sup>459</sup> "Princes Lay Diana's Mother to Rest," *The Dominion Post*, 12 June 2004, B1.

<sup>460</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frances\\_Shand\\_Kydd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frances_Shand_Kydd) (accessed 30 July 2007).

researching female ancestors, not least because each newly discovered female surname leads to another family of interest to be researched and with the potential for more co-researching distant cousins.

### *Bias Towards Collaborative Research*

Geneals choose which lines to research mainly for reasons of time, cost, access to records and *interest*. An unusual name, or occupation, a genealogical artefact, or curiosity about the life and personality of a particular ancestor: female or male, can spark one's interest. If living kin who want to know more about, say, a grandparent of their grandparents, that work will have preference. If there is strong interest from co-researching cousins, other lines may have to wait. I freely admit bias *towards* collaborative research.

### *Building the Context while Flying the Plane*

One collaborating contact, a man related to me along *one* of my paternal grandmother's lines is a retired commercial pilot, who lives somewhere near where that family once lived. When I asked him, in an email, if he knew what route an ancestor, (of mine, but not his) might have taken to reach a clandestine marrying place, he flew his own small veteran plane over the route, and took low-level aerial photographs. They show the ancient pack bridge<sup>461</sup> that would have made a journey on foot possible. Modern technology means I received the photos by email within days. In the course of our exchange of information I noted that we were more interested in the fact that some of the ancestors we do *not* share genetically were *neighbours*,<sup>462</sup> and we were more interested in their lives lived in a small locality, than in the fact we could establish that we are genealogically sixth cousins.

This example epitomises aspects of GFH practice of the past, the present and of the future, including the importance of place and the variety of social networks surrounding both our ancestors and our collaborating co-researchers. In the next two chapters, I discuss the scholarships of practitioners in the wider GFH Community.

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<sup>461</sup> A bridge rescued by the efforts of poet laureate John Betjeman, according to my contact.

<sup>462</sup> An email newsletter from the *Lost Cousins* site has announced a new "Neighbours Feature" that "helps you go beyond the basic facts...in censuses or on certificates by linking you with other researchers whose own ancestors lived in the same locality." <http://www.lostcousins.com/>

## Chapter 8

### GFH Scholarships of Discovery and Educating

To a genealogist, history is a tournament of combining or competing families, whose subtle interplay and manoeuvres, never wholly to be understood, we can only begin to grasp by first analysing and clarifying their genealogies.<sup>463</sup>

My overarching problem is that GFH is not a subject taught and studied in New Zealand universities. I now turn to teaching and learning theorists introduced in Chapter 2, and adapt Boyer and Glassick's concept of the Scholarships of the Professoriate, addressed to academic teachers, in order to illustrate that the field of GFH also exhibits scholarship, especially in the work of its most able practitioners.

I have already illustrated the GFH scholarship of integration, in the two case studies from my own research presented in Chapter 5. The first encapsulates integration of discoveries from many sources. The second illustrates how the scholarship of integration operates every time a Geneal seeks to place just one individual in her or his families of orientation and procreation: proving the connections by weight of evidence, and by seeking to disprove faulty hasps.

I leave my discussion of the GFH scholarship of application until Chapter 9, where I approach it through the potential for reciprocal benefit when academia is aware of GFH transdisciplinary approaches, discoveries, understandings and methods. Most of this chapter is devoted to the GFH scholarships of discovery, and of teaching and educating.

#### The GFH Scholarship of Discovery

Scholarship of discovery is found everywhere in the Community. I asked my key informants how they went about genealogical research, rather than for details of what they found out. Discovery was their aim and their reward.

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<sup>463</sup> Anthony Wagner, *Pedigree and Progress: Essays in the Genealogical Interpretation of History* (London: Phillimore, 1975), 7.

I noted many references to discovery during my document analysis. An article published in the *NZG*<sup>464</sup> epitomises GFH discovery in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. “For the last few years I have been researching the family of my grandfather,”<sup>465</sup> wrote Ian Rawnsley. This article is not a written ‘family history’ about his grandfather. It tells the research story about the identification of his grandfather’s *mother*. Ian Rawnsley outlines how he put together genealogical clues found in a book of poems awarded as a school prize, some remembered family history from an aunt, information obtained from New Zealand death and marriage certificates, and results from searches for migration and other information from many sources. This produced *three variations* of the name of his grandfather’s mother. “Fortunately,” he wrote, “by this stage, through the Internet, I had enlisted the excellent help of a likely relative”.<sup>466</sup>

This discoverer then went on to discuss in detail the discrepancies between information on a certificate obtained from the United Kingdom General Registry Office, and data from that office’s source: the original registration at a local registry. The former gave the bride’s *father* as “Kate Tyler, a publican” while the original had him as George. He eventually discovered *which* Kate TYLER was his. The sub-title of this article is a reference to a book, written by a New Zealander,<sup>467</sup> about the high number of errors in the United Kingdom GRO Indexes. The article includes comments from the book’s author Michael Whitfield Foster about the GRO indexes.

The editor of the FHS journal exemplar sought to highlight the rewards of *persistence* in GFH discovery research. Geneals belonging to the in-and-from the County of Norfolk GFH Community wrote of discovering missing silver, interesting occupations, and name changes. This *Norfolk Ancestor* had stories about various sources and strategies used for discovering ancestors: one on success through focusing on a third cousin of a grandfather; one through contacts

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<sup>464</sup> Ian Rawnsley, “A Further Comedy of Errors: How I found my Kate TYLER,” *The New Zealand Genealogist* 262 (2000): 90-92.

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>467</sup> Michael Whitfield Foster, *A Comedy of Errors: or The Marriage Records of England and Wales 1837-1899* (Wellington: M. W. Foster, 1998). See <http://homepages.paradise.net.nz/mikefost/>

with co-researchers, and one with unrelated people who could remember a man's grandparents and children.

The conference proceedings exemplars also provide evidence of the scholarship of discovery. Individual family members of families of the past do not always introduce themselves in neat packages containing their parents and all siblings. At the 1999 NZSG conference, Anthony Camp presented a pair of lectures, with the short titles: "Spoof" and "Proof".<sup>468</sup> In the latter, he warns of weaknesses even in records that "in themselves prove kinship," including herald's visitations, and wills, where "not all of the children may be mentioned".<sup>469</sup> Nick Vine Hall and Janice Cloud shared bibliographies, for aiding specific areas of Australian<sup>470</sup> and Canadian research respectively.<sup>471</sup>

The AFHHO Congress proceedings exemplar also demonstrates the diversity of GFH discovery: topics traversed in Perth in 2000 included kin traceable through heraldic records; and the use of records with very sensitive personal information of benefit to Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islanders seeking to discover kin.

A Geneal in the wider Community used a commercial magazine to share her experience of one GFH discovery in a County Record Office, accompanied by her teenage children on this occasion:

The air was full of controlled excitement.... The boys looked aghast at this uncool crowd of middle-aged people with their heads in huge books.... Two hours later... I have struck gold.... I resist the temptation to run around the room cheering and giving everyone a high five. .... Incidentally, I've had quite a lot of fun on the internet. ...the trouble is, it's quite addictive enough just going to the record office, never mind playing on the computer.<sup>472</sup>

This Geneal conveys some of the excitement of making discoveries in primary sources in record repositories. In the course of my document analysis, I found many other examples of the distinctive humour, enjoyment and self-awareness

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<sup>468</sup> Anthony J. Camp, "Spoof: Pitfalls, Mistakes, Delusions and Falsification in Genealogy;" in *Look North*, 81-86; and "Proof: Proving the Pedigree," in *Look North*, 87-92.

<sup>469</sup> Camp, "Proof," 88.

<sup>470</sup> Nick Vine Hall, "Australian Goldrushes 1850s" in *Look North*, 339-350.

<sup>471</sup> Janice G. Cloud, "Research in English-speaking Canada," in *Look North*, 137-148.

<sup>472</sup> Lis Cockrell, "How to Spend an Awful Lot of Time and Get Hooked in the Process," *Practical Family History* 40 (2001): 18.

found in the wider Community. I give just a few here. Each author writes in language encouraged or allowed<sup>473</sup> in two of the three English commercial magazines that were part of my initial document analysis.

### *The Carnavalesque*

Bakhtinian carnivalesque, with its power to break down barriers and to express collectivity, is often present at genealogical conferences, at group meetings, and in other places where Geneals congregate. In the four examples below, I seek to demonstrate simultaneously other aspects of GFH practice: the acknowledgement that outsiders (including spouses) may find it a strange hobby; the conjunction of local and oral history with GFH; and the frequenting of record offices, ancestral villages and burial grounds.

All the way home on the train, I had rehearsed different ways of breaking this exciting piece of news [to my husband].... ‘We’ve bought a grave....It’s only a small grave, and it was just there waiting for a descendant to turn up and claim it.’

‘What are you going to do with it...do you want to be buried in it then?’

‘Well, no, that’s not possible. It’s already full up – there’s no room for anyone else, not even ashes.’ I was getting excited at the prospect of all those ancestors entombed in that space. I could hardly wait to find out who they all were....

‘How come other wives go to London and come back with a new cardie or a pair of shoes? I really can’t think of anyone else who would come home with a grave’.....

It had started out as just another day in the life of a local history and family researcher. We all know the feeling, just a few minutes... at the Family Records Centre and maybe an hour or so at the London Metropolitan Archives; harmless stuff really.<sup>474</sup>

I [have] read 60,000 postcards. ... I bet you think I am some sort of crank (you are in good company - my wife does). Well there is a reason to it all. You see I am a genealogist. Need I say more? You have to be just a bit touched to be wandering around the country spending large amounts of money to find out about long dead ancestors.<sup>475</sup>

As I straightened myself, a headstone caught my interest and a couple of names screamed at me for attention. I obliged by forgetting my precarious, helpless position and, balancing on three wheels, I peered at the names etched beautifully in stone....  
...although using a wheelchair in a cemetery can be extremely difficult, it has its compensations.<sup>476</sup>

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<sup>473</sup> I found very few examples of this type of humour in the run of *Family History Monthly* magazines analysed, and assume that editorial policy was the reason for their absence.

<sup>474</sup> Valerie King, “But It’s Only a Small Grave,” *Family Tree Magazine* 6 (2000): 24.

<sup>475</sup> Colin Buck, “Talk About Strange Hobbies” *Family Tree Magazine* 3 (2001): 14.

<sup>476</sup> Stevie J Bass, “Graveyard Searches from a Wheelchair” *Family Tree Magazine* 2 (2002): 12.

My mother [aged 80] remembered a strange fact about her great-grandfather: he passed away on the outside loo whilst she was visiting him on holiday at a tiny village.... I suggested to my mum that we could take a drive down there, where I could take her for a trip down memory lane and I could check the graveyard for more members of the family. (I certainly know how to show her a good time!)<sup>477</sup>

These examples also indicate the significance of death and burial records for Geneals.<sup>478</sup> Newcomers to GFH in New Zealand are often advised to first obtain death certificates for any kin who died in New Zealand, especially after 1875, and to consult burial records.

In a recent *NZG* an experienced researcher relates the story of being invited, by the public television channel of Ireland, to visit a deconsecrated church “now derelict, locked up and falling down” in the centre of Cork City. Kae Lewis’s HODDER family had been “closely associated with this church since the 1660s”;<sup>479</sup> and two family members who had been mayors of Cork were buried there. She had been researching the line for 20 years; and had tried to sight their graves in 2001, but Cork Archives were then using the building, and the crypt was not open to the public. She noticed that, “with the weight of archives on top, the floor had a distinct slope on it and...lost any enthusiasm to pursue the matter.”<sup>480</sup>

The phone call informed her that the HODDER graves were intact, but that “you had to crawl to get to them” and invited her to take part - at the end of the following week.<sup>481</sup> Kae Lewis describes how having “researched the life of an ancestor for so long, [she] felt she really knew him,” and how she “came face-to-face with her own mortality”.<sup>482</sup> The editor thought her longer-than-usual article needed to be presented as one piece.

Two things will come through to you when you read this work. The first is the incredible experience that Kae went through to complete the ultimate genealogist’s

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<sup>477</sup> Neil Woodley, “A Beginner’s Story,” *Practical Family History* 39 (2001): 22.

<sup>478</sup> I was given microfiche of cemetery records and hospital admissions, when thanked for presenting at the Melbourne Congress: a welcome and useful gift.

<sup>479</sup> Kae Lewis “The Phone Call,” *The New Zealand Genealogist* 307 (2007): 309-321.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, 314-315.

journey and the second is the depth of knowledge on the subject based on detailed research.<sup>483</sup>

### *An Archaeologist's Understandings*

Researchers of Genealogical Family History are not the only people interested in death and burial, and in past and present attitudes to mortality. Archaeologist Francis Pryor contributed to the development of my conceptual framework. I found I could relate work in his field to the GFH field, in many ways. An earlier generation of archaeologists believed, according to Pryor, that “A dig should tell a story. It was not good enough merely to list the various finds and features one had found. They had to *mean* something.”<sup>484</sup> Long-time active discoverers of family history also seek to go beyond the listings they make, to make sense of them.

Pryor described his own new approach to his subject as “relating the past to the present in a *satisfying* manner.” He deliberately does not say “in an *accurate* or *truthful* manner”.... His quest is not to understand generalisable Truth when it comes to prehistoric life: “it’s to experience and illustrate life.... I’m concerned with the experience of life in the past and how it can affect our own lives in the present.” He believes that the existence of families “and *the living of life within a family*, [is] one fundamental human experience that we can be sure we share with our Neolithic and Bronze Age forebears.”<sup>485</sup>

There are two areas where I would enjoy an exchange of views with Pryor. He has concluded that ‘Chronocentrism’ - a form of ethnocentricity - using past communities and culture “for one’s own ends, whether to legitimise spurious political history or to give false roots to modern ideology [is] the cruellest thing one can do to a past culture...a form of intellectual and spiritual imperialism...”<sup>486</sup> I do not disagree. But in his discussion of what prehistoric artefacts can tell us of that world, he makes a comparison with some practices of the present in a way that suggests Hirsch’s fallacy of the homogenous present. “Prehistoric barrows and mortuary structures were far more than mere memorials. They were not in the least like modern gravestones.... They were the means of communicating with the

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<sup>483</sup> Richard Stedman, “From the Editor” *The New Zealand Genealogist* 307 (2007): 305.

<sup>484</sup> Pryor, *Seahenge*, 35.

<sup>485</sup> *Ibid.*, 133. My emphasis. I agree that this is one truth that *can* be learned from seeking to understand discoveries of things past.

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*, 312.

higher forces that played a key role in the management of the landscape and peoples' daily lives."<sup>487</sup> How does Pryor *know* that all such communication is entirely lacking today?

Those in the wider CoP who have been involved with transcribing tombstones, or who have sought data from memorial stones around the world, have been in a position to observe the behaviour of people visiting cemeteries for both genealogical and non-genealogical purposes. Many people do still visit graves to communicate with more than just past memories; and many of the stones were inscribed for a *future* readership, a type of deliberate communication from beyond the grave.

Pryor will not have been on a picnic to Waikumete Cemetery, a custom recently revived in Auckland, or on an exploration of a cemetery in conjunction with an NZSG conference. There was a day trip to the Eastern Cemetery in Invercargill, in 1996, and there have been visits by torchlight to the Barbadoes Street cemetery in Christchurch. He will not have accompanied genealogists on expeditions to record monumental inscriptions; and may not have read genealogical magazines and journals that highlight these aspects of practice thought unusual by both outsiders and some insiders.

Even in affirming the close relationship between people and places, and expressing his new perspective on archaeological history as the need to “think in time-depth [and] see how the lives of people and the landscapes in which they lived gradually changed”<sup>488</sup> Pryor has demonstrated how very difficult this is to do when acculturated to other ways of thinking. He has an ethnocentric and perhaps even chronocentric view of Christianity and a narrow definition of ‘church’, apparently thinking ‘the’ Christian Church somehow always synonymous with an English “country parish church, at Christmas”. He chides those arriving there on such occasions in their “expensive four-wheel drives” for typifying “the English class system in action”.<sup>489</sup> This reveals both a lack of theological understanding about burial records and of customs of more recent times. Many in Aotearoa-New Zealand do bury artefacts with kin, for a variety of

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<sup>487</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid., 77.

reasons. The apparent lack of grave-goods is more to do with a Christian belief that God will supply all necessities for any afterlife, than “because we are taught than all men and women are equal in the eyes of God.”<sup>490</sup>

Geneals learn that burial ‘in woollen only’ in England in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries was a regulation enacted to boost the rural and national economy and not for any religious reasons: the well off could pay a fine for burial in linen, to show their status. Some people of the present still seek to demonstrate status through funerary practices. I believe Genealogical Family Historians still have much to learn about how the beliefs of past kin might have affected their descendants. “Transdisciplinarity leads to an open attitude towards myths and religions, and also towards those who respect them in a transdisciplinary spirit.”<sup>491</sup>

Pryor also wrote, of his methodology, “I have long been a believer in the old archaeological adage: always work from the known to the unknown. So...we followed the...[previously excavated] ditch eastwards...”<sup>492</sup> That adage has long been adopted by most active discoverers of genealogical family history who would also enjoy reading about the success that ensued on that occasion. In his textbook chapter (see chap. 1, n. 83) Dr Swain seeks to refute GFH advice to start with the known, but he seems to be defining ‘known’ differently - in the context of recording GFH oral history and discovering predominant stories, and as a synonym for ‘truth’.<sup>493</sup> GFH discovery must start with *something* known, and travel towards truths that will never be fully ‘known’, and people who will never be fully known: Bakhtin’s unfinalizability.

Many Geneals would identify with one of Pryor’s personal anecdotes. He wrote, “I managed to scrape the money together to buy two reports on the excavation of the Glastonbury Lake Village which were published in 1911 and 1917...and there, in the list of subscribers, was my great-grandfather, who wasn’t an archaeologist at all.”<sup>494</sup> Geneals could also read his account of the occasion when a team of archaeologists “measured and recorded 4,833 pieces of wood”<sup>495</sup> and compare that

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<sup>490</sup> Ibid.

<sup>491</sup> The Charter of Transdisciplinarity: Article 9.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>493</sup> Swain, “Sociological Genealogy: Searching for Gran,” 310.

<sup>494</sup> Pryor, *Seahenge*, 189-190.

<sup>495</sup> Ibid., 195.

with the painstaking work that some undertake, both as individuals and as part of a community of practice that helpfully records and indexes for others.

One phrase remains singularly memorable to me. Pryor incorporated his work on a newly discovered North Norfolk coast site into this book and described the Seahenge of 5000 years ago as, “the landscape on the edge of existence”.<sup>496</sup> He argues that it was a special place for those who *dared* to go there. Dr Pryor is not an academic teacher, but *Seahenge* gave me a great deal to think about in terms of the scholarships of the field and practice of GFH, and I have dared to use his insights and those of other non-credentialed experts in this thesis.

I next discuss the scholarship of teaching in the wider GFH Community. This includes some history of GFH subject matter existing in parts of the wider Community. I include comments from more recent practitioners who, when they write and talk about teaching GFH, reveal some history of transdisciplinary GFH academic discourse, and the beginnings of theorisation of the subject, from their different insider perspectives.

## **Teaching GFH**

This aspect of GFH might be more appropriately termed the GFH scholarship of **educating**, because there is more to teaching than classes, schools, and expert-at-the-front. “Transdisciplinary education revalues the role of intuition, imagination, sensibility and the body in the transmission of knowledge.”<sup>497</sup>

Master craftsmen taught their apprentices, who learned by listening, watching and doing.<sup>498</sup> Librarians often teach, one-to-one and in small groups, as do many others in a variety of work situations, including those undertaking the often unpaid and unrecognised teaching work involved in raising children. There are many experienced and caring teachers, working in all sectors of the profession, and there have been many teachers and educators in the wider GFH Community.

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<sup>496</sup> Pryor, *Seahenge*, 278

<sup>497</sup> The Charter of Transdisciplinarity: Article 11.

<sup>498</sup> ‘Learn by Doing’ was a catchphrase during my years (1959-1960) at ATTC - the Auckland Teachers’ Training College.

A few have sought to trace the history of the field of genealogical family history and to begin to theorise about the practice. Many teach more than skills and strategies to others. I begin with a book by an American who worked as a paid genealogist.

*Donald Lines Jacobus*

Jacobus introduced his 1930 book about genealogy, declaring that:

The interest itself is not of recent development, but is inherent in human nature. The most primitive peoples make much of the ties of kin. The Bible is full of genealogies. The aristocracy of every age and land have recognized the importance of keeping a record of their pedigrees.<sup>499</sup>

In his “own democratic land” Jacobus thought it “proper that the interest should not be limited to families of special distinction [doubting] whether such a thing in all its branches and ramifications can be found”.<sup>500</sup>

Jacobus distinguished those who enjoy the pastime of tracing ancestors for successive generations; those who find pleasure in connecting their ancestors to historic events; and those who derive the greatest amount of pleasure because they trace their own ancestry and become proficient in criticizing and analyzing the information that they derive from printed and primary sources. He noted some themes pertinent to this current study: discovering a wider family as an enjoyable pastime; the awakening of “various historical or sociological interests”;<sup>501</sup> self-directed research in original records; and the need to sometimes pay people to access records.

Jacobus wrote as a paid professional genealogist claiming not to speak for the profession as a whole, but writing for those seeking to enter the profession, as well as for “novices, whether amateur or professional” who, he hoped, would find some chapters intriguing, “even should they chance to disagree violently”.<sup>502</sup>

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<sup>499</sup> Donald L. Jacobus, *Genealogy as Pastime and Profession*, rev. ed. (1930; Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1986), 9.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

<sup>502</sup> Ibid.,10.

He attempted to expose examples of the fallacy of the homogenous past when he discussed perceptions of religiousness of American colonial families. He also usefully debunked some notions about language of the past (the way ancestors of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries may have spoken, for example) demonstrating how some ideas might have been acquired when historical novels were thought to exhibit verisimilitude.

In his chapter on ‘Genealogy and Eugenics’ Jacobus expands on what must have been a particular interest to him at the time he first wrote his book. He opens this chapter by attempting to place genealogy among other fields:

Genealogy stands midway between the law and the biological sciences, and its relation to the latter is vital and far-reaching. Eugenics, in particular, is dependent on genealogy for much of its data. In breeding dogs and horses, each individual is registered, and the pedigrees are preserved. We have been less particular with regard to human mating. This is evidenced by the statistics of crime, of imbecility, and even of divorce.<sup>503</sup>

Despite such sweeping and time-warped opinion, (moral and biological) Jacobus does go on to criticise “eugenical students”, and the “many family histories... produced by enthusiastic novices, whose enthusiasm is too often the only qualification they bring to the task.”<sup>504</sup> I read his criticism of the “man who would seek advice or services of a trained expert in any other field of human activity [but] considers himself quite competent to compile a history of his family”<sup>505</sup> partly against his own position as a paid professional – but also against my knowledge of high standards reached by unpaid experts.

However, Jacobus does criticise incompetent professionals, particularly any one of them who might be constrained “by the ideas or instructions of his employer.... to omit any facts which the family might find discreditable.”<sup>506</sup>

*Anthony Richard Wagner*

Another practitioner to write about the history and theory of the field was Anthony Wagner (1908-1995). I must confess that I came late to his first book, thinking it likely to be too English to contribute to my early, New Zealand-

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<sup>503</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid.

<sup>505</sup> Ibid.

<sup>506</sup> Ibid., 103.

focused, genealogical research. One of my key informants had a similar expectation and experience; but affirmed that it is a book with more than just historic interest.<sup>507</sup>

In *English Genealogy* Wagner traces a history of “modern scientific genealogy” that “originated” in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries: a sophisticated interest, linked with family pride and a love of history, catered for by professional genealogists; but one not untouched by snobbery and fraud. He outlines some history of attitudes towards the field:

It came to be widely thought that pedigrees were proper only to distinguished families... owners of land and their progeny. This limitation in England was not a narrow one. The heralds, antiquaries and county historians were happy to include the pedigrees of minor landowners, wealthy merchants and professional men in their collections....<sup>508</sup>

Wagner’s horizon of interest and expertise extended much further back into England’s past than do the horizons of many genealogical researchers for whom GFH is a new or narrow pastime. According to an unnamed obituary writer, Wagner’s “passions were for medieval heraldry,<sup>509</sup> and above all for genealogy.” While “others might link it with vainglorious snobbery and sneering class-division, he knew it as a source of reliable and objective information essential to any wider tracing of social and economic patterns”.<sup>510</sup>

In 1975, Wagner published another book. I have quoted from it at the beginning of this chapter. It is his perspective that interests me: history as competing or combining families. In *Pedigree and Progress: Essays in the Genealogical Interpretation of History* Wagner begins with a personal definition of both ‘pedigree’ and ‘progress’, and when discussing reasons for knowledge of kindred, uses an illustrative example of interest to the A-NZ Community:

When the Maori chief Tamarau appeared before the New Zealand land commission, he supported his people’s claim to certain lands by reciting for more than three days

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<sup>507</sup> Conversation with Bruce Ralston, 8 February 2004.

<sup>508</sup> Wagner, *English Genealogy*, 2. Such limitation may not have been narrow: but it was not wide.

<sup>509</sup> For most of his working life Wagner was a Herald at the College of Arms, holding the post of Garter Principal King of Arms between 1961 and 1978.

<sup>510</sup> “Obituary: Anthony Wagner” *New Zealand Genealogist* 234, (1995): 224. The obituary was reprinted from an article published in *The Economist* of 3 June 1995.

pedigrees and ramifications comprising thirty-four generations and more than fourteen hundred names.<sup>511</sup>

I am mildly horrified to realise that I could do that too – inflict that much ramification of pedigree on anyone prepared to listen.<sup>512</sup>

In his book of essays Wagner also shared his belief that “sociologists and local historians should combine to throw light on [remnants of earlier naming patterns]” and he emphasised the role of genealogists in an understanding of history, because “all history is full of myth.”<sup>513</sup>

In this publication Wagner reflected on “the myth to which [he] was brought up, which treats social classes as distinct, self-perpetuating hereditary corporations.” “I have called this”, says Wagner, “the conspiracy of the conservatives and the revolutionaries to pretend that social mobility has been much less in the past than in fact it always was.”<sup>514</sup> According to the same obituary writer, Wagner’s “conservatives wished to believe that the same families had always been noble, which showed their merit; while revolutionaries wished to believe that the same families had always been poor, which showed that their poverty was their oppressors’ fault and not their own.”<sup>515</sup>

Wagner wrote about how his own middle class professional ancestry was given to him, in “summary pedigrees”; and how, while still at school, his “researches had ferreted out relationships of greater variety and interest” – both higher and lower on the social scale than expected. Wagner had long wondered if his family pattern was unusual, but declared that, “experience as a genealogist has long since convinced me that it is not.”<sup>516</sup> Active discoverers of genealogical family history can also revise the received wisdom of popular belief and generalised history in this area, through genealogical research into lived-lives. I have explored some

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<sup>511</sup> Wagner, *Pedigree and Progress*, 2.

<sup>512</sup> Some of the earlier generations in my entire family of extension would have to be regarded as not yet firmly hasped, but I could recite some hundreds of the names among the 5000 records from basic sources in one database alone. I could explain which SELMANs are linked by conjecture, documentation, or weight of evidence; which of them are duplicates (a child appearing in both birth mother’s and fostering grandparents’ family groups, for example); which are still ‘work in progress’; and which are *not* likely to be part of this particular family of extension.

<sup>513</sup> Wagner, *Pedigree and Progress*, 7.

<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>515</sup> “Obituary,” *The New Zealand Genealogist* 234 (1995): 225.

<sup>516</sup> Wagner, *Pedigree and Progress*, 10.

aspects of “summary pedigrees” in this thesis. I have also learned to listen to the oral history, including myths that new contacts bring from their branch lines, before I share what I have heard. This is to be able to record where each story has arisen to help check the veracity of data contained within it.

Some echoes of Jacobus may be heard when Wagner writes of “selected stock” and of “outbreeding”<sup>517</sup> but it is in the context of seeking to understand how a new class might originate. Wagner is inevitably aware of English class differences, but when discussing how some families are more difficult to *trace* than others says that the difference, “is not the station but some accident of nomenclature or record”.<sup>518</sup> This has been my experience too: and the reason for my critical comments in Chapter 1, on Barber’s thesis. Jacobus and Wagner were influential members of the wider GFH Community of the past. They have taught through their discussions with peers and through their publications. I now turn to some whose teaching, in the present, is in different media.

### *Michael Gandy*

Michael Gandy is a well-known presenter. He has addressed conferences in New Zealand and on two occasions suggested background reading to help understand genealogical discoveries.<sup>519</sup> He introduced his second paper<sup>520</sup> with a note to the effect that he had listed most of the books as an appendix to a talk at the AFFHO Conference ‘Landfall in Southern Seas’ held at Lincoln University in 1997. I have collated the details from both in Appendix B. Gandy also has some warnings to share, in his inimitable manner:

“One day your sister or your son is going to ask: ‘How’s the research going?’ ‘Found anything interesting?’ They don’t want to know much, and you’ve got about a quarter of an hour.... Keep the material up-to-date... you should have... at hand:

- The tree. This is what they want to see. An old fashioned tree like in history books. Not too big.... What do you most want to tell them? Have your spiel ready and the right tree available.

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<sup>517</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid., 274.

<sup>519</sup> I believe I recall that Bruce Ralston, NZSG member #1147, President 1989-1991 (and an interviewed key informant) had once compiled such a list for the *NZG*, some years previously.

<sup>520</sup> Michael Gandy, “What Were They Like? Some Reading for a Rainy Day,” Bound for *Canterbury* Proceedings of the NZSG Conference, 13-16 May 2000, Christchurch, edited by Christina F. Williams and Brian D. P. Williamson (Christchurch: NZSG Conference Committee, 2000), 1-11.

- A full ancestry chart...How far back does it go? ... You don't have to have one of the printed trees which show up the gaps. Draw your own and design it so that the illegitimacies don't show,
- The evidence. No one is interested in this except you and other family historians but it has to be drawn up properly. Certificates, censuses, parish registers, other extracts....
- The heirlooms. The juicy bits. Are there photographs, medals, a diary? Copies are fine.
- Lastly the family history ....You write this slowly over a period of time ....Say what they did, but don't say why they did it or what they thought about it unless you have direct evidence. Put in background history but don't write a History of the English-Speaking Peoples and How Our Family was Present at Every Major Event....

The last chapters are the most personal, because they are about you. .... Put the notebooks away in an envelope and mark it 'My Life History: not to be thrown away.' They'll keep it and in thirty years time they'll probably enjoy reading it."<sup>521</sup>

Gandy is a history graduate and some of the books on his list arise from that background: his recommendation of Laslett, Hibbert and Fischer, for example. There is also autobiographical history in the rural and urban memories of Flora Thompson and A. S. Jaspar, respectively. Some titles are history from other perspectives: Cobbett's published opinions about his rides, and Tressell's ragged-trousered philanthropists defy even broad categorisation but delineate Gandy's quirkily catholic reading. Some titles on the list reflect Gandy's personal interests: his London, and his music. He uses Anon's *Hampstead and Highgate Directory 1885-6 (Reprinted in 1985)* as an exemplar for the many directories now available as facsimile books or in microform. They are, says Gandy, "like a map of the area in which our ancestors lived...we can see [their] neighbours...shops, churches, theatres, municipal slaughterhouses"<sup>522</sup>.

Other titles on Gandy's List demonstrate the breadth of interest family historians have in topics such as farming, the armed services, houses, shopping, leisure activities and occupations. His list includes a booklet about the trade of being a wheelwright, and he recommends seeking equally good books about other trades "written by old craftsmen who had run their own businesses and knew...from the

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<sup>521</sup> Michael Gandy, "It Gets Easier every Day," in *Bound for Canterbury*, 498-499.

<sup>522</sup> Gandy, "What Were They Like? Some Reading for a Rainy Day," *Bound for Canterbury*, 6.

inside”.<sup>523</sup> He also affirms the use of the ‘Shire Albums’ series, and of old films and television: to ‘see through their eyes’.

Gandy’s list is multidisciplinary. I first read Mayhew’s observations on the labouring poor in London as recommended background reading for papers in Victorian Literature. His work, and the reports on sociological investigations by Charles Booth and Maud Pember Reeves are perhaps not yet so well known in the wider GFH Community, where reading generalised and specific histories is still the default option for those seeking to contextualise their findings from secondary sources.

However, Booth’s work is now available on the World Wide Web.<sup>524</sup> His schema for classifying occupational groups, although now seen to be limited because based on male occupations, nonetheless does enable active discoverers of GFH to place particular families, in terms of social stratification, in parts of London at that time; and to begin to understand the webs of family networks that may have enclosed, or liberated, those families.<sup>525</sup>

Some members of the wider Community would be familiar with the work of Pember Reeves because of her earlier New Zealand connections. Her strong desire was to understand social situations in parts of London, in order to help improve conditions. Gandy remarked to his New Zealand audience: “however hard these poor people [her subjects, working-class women with husbands in regular work] tried, they simply couldn’t manage on the money.... – and these are utterly decent people. This is why your grandparents emigrated.”<sup>526</sup> As illustrated above, active discoverers of genealogical fact tend to have a particular interest in mortality, and Pember Reeves’ discoveries concerning the role of burial insurance in the families she studied can combat the historicist fallacies about callous attitudes to infant deaths in large families still heard from time to time.

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<sup>523</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>524</sup> <http://booth.lse.ac.uk/> (accessed 10 February 2008).

<sup>525</sup> My own surprise was how high up his classification system came one of my emigrating great-grandfathers: a semi-skilled artisan from London. There were many groups below him (and his parents, and his wife’s parents and other kin), according to Booth.

<sup>526</sup> Gandy, “What Were They Like? Some Reading for a Rainy Day,” 8. Gandy’s rhetoric suggests an assumption of more homogeneity of ‘class’, occupation, and migration motivation among the grandparents of those there that day in his A-NZ GFH audience, than is likely to be the case.

Gandy's brief published notes are in the form of an annotated bibliography. He ends with a small sub-heading: "Novels/Films/Pictures".<sup>527</sup> I agree with him that reading a "novel about real life can shed light on social conditions"; and that location and careful use of props in film may tell a family historian more than made up dialogue. Some of my key informants expressed similar views.

Of all the books on Gandy's list, I found M. Dorothy George's *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* most engrossing and rewarding.<sup>528</sup> Her work on occupations with their extraordinarily graduated hierarchies and specialisations could inform the work of demographers, sociologists and historians who still use broad occupational groupings as their main measure of social mobility. It is especially valuable for Geneals with interests in that time and place. Dorothy George's skill in systematically taking the reader back to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and forward to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in order to demonstrate continuities and explain changes, while focusing on the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, is an historical hermeneutic that genealogists could seek to emulate when thinking and writing about their own families of interest.

I found another example of Michael Gandy's many ways of educating Geneals in an article based on a lecture given in Rotorua and Papakura, during a post-congress tour. It is about GFH research into Irish people in London. He makes the political point that it is a common mistake "to talk of Irish emigration to England [for] not one Irishman emigrated to England throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century! All movement either way across the Irish Sea was within their own country." Gandy concludes with four pages of useful sources for tracing people born in Ireland who may have lived in England in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>529</sup>

Gandy has also contributed to commercial magazines, including a regular column called "Through Their Eyes", in *Practical Family History* magazine; and since 2004 has been Editor of *The Genealogist*. He is thus not without educative influence regarding subject matter and perspectives, through his teaching in publications well known to the wider Community, as well as on the lecturing circuit.

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<sup>527</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>528</sup> M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*, (1925. repr., London: Penguin Books, 1992).

<sup>529</sup> Michael Gandy, "English Records for Irish Family History," *New Zealand Genealogist* 244 (2005): 81-89.

### *On-line Teaching*

Since the advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web, some of the teaching in the Community now takes place through online Lists. Roy Stockdill is one who enjoys this role, locally, nationally, and internationally through the Genuki site:

I posted this guide in several parts to the WEST-RIDING Internet genealogy list, in the hope that it would not only help newcomers to genealogy and family history to become more experienced in research techniques, but also to answer some of those questions that seem to get constantly asked in online genealogy mailing lists. Though intended principally for researchers with ancestors in the historic West Riding of Yorkshire, I hope some parts of it, at least, may prove of use to a wider audience.<sup>530</sup>

The Lists that I have subscribed to for either personal or thesis purposes have each relied on a few such core members with considerable expertise, and a desire to share it with others. I single out just two in Appendix C.

During my time as a subscriber to the Lincolnshire List, the facilitator, a tertiary teacher living in America, maintained the focus on GFH research in Lincolnshire and was particularly adept in encouraging others to contribute to on-line discussions. Each month, postings about different aspects of GFH research in-and-from the County of Lincolnshire were encouraged, as the tagline on the second example in Appendix C demonstrates. The teaching in such Lists often includes List etiquette, and suggestions of other sources or other Lists to use.

I was very impressed by Lou Mills' understanding and acceptance of the way many 'used' the List he gave so much voluntary time to maintaining. He was realistic in his appreciation that Geneals, during particular phases of their research, find many new names and places of interest. They subscribe to many potentially relevant Lists, deal with the flood of emails by scanning the subject lines, and unsubscribe when their horizon of interest changes. Not all join a List to make it their permanent home away from home, because, like Bob Packwood in Chapter 4, there will be many competing homes throughout their GFH lives.

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<sup>530</sup> Roy Stockdill, "Newbie's Guide to Genealogy and Family History," at <http://www.genuki.org.uk/gs/Newbie.html> (accessed 21 July 2007).

### *Teaching Classes*

Teaching courses is an aspect of teaching and learning GFH that I canvassed with some of my key informants. I discussed the difficulties of teaching genealogical family history to classes of paying students with Bruce and Anne. Bruce was a trained teacher, Anne a self-taught teacher: both had been teachers of Continuing Education courses in GFH in the Community, as had I.

Bruce and Anne both highlighted the problems of teaching groups with diverse aims, and with diverse ancestral origins. Most classes consisted *mainly* of people wanting first to learn the names and parentage of their emigrating kin, and dates and departures places. If one or two others were recent migrants, we all agreed, we would then have to include strategies for accessing very different sources. If a class also had a member wanting to learn her whakapapa, another desperately seeking birth parents, a few wanting to write up oral history rather than discover and document genealogical history, together with one wishing to collect descendants of one emigrant ancestor for a reunion, then we would be stretched to even begin to satisfy all these demands in a short course.

### *Concentric Circles of Family, Community, Society*

Bruce explained how he took care to advertise a focus on New Zealand GFH. He arranged for classes to be held fortnightly, to leave time for obtaining information and documentation such as oral family history and certificates, so that the participants could learn more in class time - about whatever people, places, sources and strategies then came over the horizon for each. Bruce strove to broaden the understanding of his continuing education students beyond the essential discovery of names and life events of kin. I shared with him my own experience of first teaching a university extension course I had called: 'Constructing an Identity'. I thought: 'This is university (not High School Night Class) I had better not just talk about *how to* - but all they wanted to know was: where to go, to get what information, and how to find this - they were not really ready for theorisation, despite the academic backgrounds of some.' Bruce agreed saying, "Yes, I would try to throw in concepts that I had thought might be interesting, ...in terms of the concentric circles of family, community, society - but I don't know that people necessarily understood [because they wanted to first discover their relatives] and often with relatively preconceived notions of what

they were expecting to find.” Bruce also agreed that such continuing education students would often be people with quite a lot of oral family history already.

In a recent publication there is an article Bruce first wrote for the *NZG*<sup>531</sup> with origins in a paper he presented at the AFFHO Congress in Sydney in 1988 where he gives the results of his research into finding evidence of Pākehā genealogical history activity here before the formation of the NZSG in 1967. Bruce mentions publications from the 1860s, including one translated from the French by an Oamaru surgeon. He found 105 New Zealand residents mentioned in Burke’s *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Colonial Gentry*, published 1891-95; and found the names of some New Zealand members of the earliest Australian Society. He argues that the first real growth of interest came in the 1950s.<sup>532</sup>

#### *A Garage Full of Microfiche Viewers*

Anne took me into her spacious garage and opened some tall cupboards. They were full of microfiche viewers, because 21 years of teaching GFH had taught her that hands-on experiential learning was the best method. Anne’s students, meeting in her garage, learned concurrently how to use their family knowledge, primary source material on fiche,<sup>533</sup> and the equipment needed to read them, in order to make some discoveries and then plan which sources to next access. The added benefits of learning in this way among people who can enjoy each other’s genealogical discoveries and help assess the findings is impossible to quantify.<sup>534</sup> Anne also encouraged course members to telephone her between classes although she was careful to make sure they did the research themselves, and that she did not do it for them.

Anne generously took her microfilmed electoral rolls along to many conferences and research seminars, making them, and her expertise, available to all - for many members of the A-NZ Community cannot afford to travel to libraries that have

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<sup>531</sup> Bruce Ralston, “1967 and All That,” in *Forty Years On*, 133-141.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid.

<sup>533</sup> Most of the microfiche cards would have been produced by BAB Microfilming, and by the NZSG.

<sup>534</sup> I have employed similar methods, carrying boxes of books, booklets, maps, fiche and a fiche viewer to and from each class; often helped by family members. Dianne Yates arranged suitable storage space for the first courses. When I invited the late Gael Thompson (former NZSG President) to co-tutor a later course, we were able to address both general principles and sources in response to questions, and give more time to each class member’s diverse interests and research planning.

copies of this vital source, nor pay agents to read them on their behalf. Bruce was one of those at Conference 2007 available to help with researching, of army records – a consequence of his position at the Auckland War Memorial Museum. When working at the National Library he had made written histories more accessible to GFH researchers by having them indexed under the surname of the principal human subject, instead of by title.

### *Less Formal Teaching*

I have observed other types of teaching in the Community, including some very good one-to-one exchanges. But I have heard some giving false or misleading information, or failing to ascertain what the person they have *volunteered* to help actually wants to learn or discover. Such people seem to want to be teachers in the sense of telling others what to do and how to do it, based on what they themselves did. Some of those observed lacked any appreciation of how different each person's research aims, obstacles, and useful sources can be. They do not know their audience, so their voices offend, or amuse. I heard one person suggest a very wild goose chase: finding Bishop's Transcripts to help with Scottish research. The self-appointed teacher was quite unaware of the ecclesiastical structures of the established church in Scotland, let alone why some are called by the oxymoron United Secessionist.<sup>535</sup> Another reference book I often consult for GFH work is the ODC: *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*":

United Secession Church. The Church formed in Scotland in 1820 by the fusion of the 'Old Lights' and the 'New Lights', the two groups into which the Burghers divided in the later 18<sup>th</sup> cent. In 1847 it united with the Relief Synod to form the 'United Presbyterian Church (q.v.).<sup>536</sup>

Within the more informal online groups, there are also teaching opportunities: for fossilising myths and errors, or for teaching well. In the SELMAN CoG, for example, we *collectively* seek to accurately document places of birth, marriage, death, and residence for the purposes of identification and reconstruction. Jacqui compiled a simplified yet complex chart to show the relationships between the Inner CoG and the other actively collaborating or enquiring researchers. She

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<sup>535</sup> Competence in Scottish research includes knowing that many broke from the established Church of Scotland at the first and second secessions and at the Great Disruption of 1843. The effect on GFH research is that only about one half of the population is likely to be 'found' in the records of the Church of Scotland between that date and the start of civil registration in 1855.

<sup>536</sup> F.L. Cross, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. (1957; Reprinted with corrections, (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 1392.

shared it first with Valma, Richard and me. Jacqui designed another chart for a particular purpose: to show how her research has linked her husband's Scottish family to one of her own mainly English lines – through two present day researchers, living in Australia, who are related to each of them. The CoG values her computer expertise; which reminds us all how different, technologically, GFH research has become. Computer science is now among the list of fields that engages Genealogical Family Historians.

I found myself striving to explain to the CoG why some data about me, in the first chart referred to above was misleading,<sup>537</sup> and why I wished us to use particular conventions, if the software would allow them. I also shared my knowledge and experience of the problems of Old Style/New Style dating, in an email of 11 November 2005.<sup>538</sup> I include it here as a case study.

### Case Study III: Precision in Recording

Francis (I) SELMAN<sup>539</sup>

*birth:*

Is there room for "from *about* 1640 to 1660"? I think abt 1645 to abt 1662 might be better - signals we do not have any idea except from the baptisms of his known children - but it is likely he was born during the commonwealth interregnum...

*death/burial:*

Will your programme accept the correct buried 28 Jan 1695<sup>96</sup> Old Style date?

This is very important. Back then Francis was buried near the end of the year that began on Lady Day in 1695 and ended in March 1696. That year later became 1695 for the first 9 or so months of it and **1696 for January**, February and most of March....

If we leave it as 1695, some will think it was 1694/95. If we write 1696, then we risk people thinking he died in 1696/7 - and a spread from 1694 to 1697 can be serious in some dating issues.

(I would use the form 1900-1902 if I believed it had to be *one of those three* years - so wouldn't want to use 1695-96 for this burial.)

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<sup>537</sup> My birthplace was not the house where I lived for my first 20 years, but a 'nursing home' (now an old peoples' home) in a neighbouring suburb. The houses in our street had been re-numbered both before and after my residence there, so some might assume, wrongly, from birth and death registrations, that I lived in the house in which my grandmother died five years before I was born.

<sup>538</sup> I learned about OS/NS dating from GFH research, applied and refined it during my MA studies into the dating of a play (see chap. 3 n. 249), and have used it for GFH work ever since.

<sup>539</sup> We use 'Francis I' because Jacqui, Richard and I descend from Francis and Elizabeth, Francis and <Not KNOWN>, Francis and Love, Francis and Hester – and then George and Ann *or* Thomas and Sarah; and Valma descends from the first three couples, then Thomas and Ann.

I continued to write about this *one* couple (presently at the ‘top’ of our shared ancestry tree or pedigree chart) with suggestions about recording the marriage of Francis I:

*marriage:*

We have *no idea if and when* Francis and Elizabeth married.

Because Elizabeth could have been 40ish at the birth of their last known child - Sarah 1692 - she could have been born as early as 1652 and married from about 1673. (This does not alter the possibility of Francis being older than her - but does tie him to a post 1670ish marriage to her.)

I would not want to guess any more narrowly than **cir. 1670-1688** (the latter date the year of first known child's baptism - Francis II in Nov 1688).

I think the 1665 on the chart at present is left over from the way some computers just take the first date in a range. (Reunion always asks me what date I want it to calculate on and gives the option of none.)

Some in the outer CoG, who made contact with one or more of us in the inner CoG, especially through commercial websites, appeared to be in a collecting and sharing phase, without specific aims for any end use of such data. Some did not respond to my questions about *why* they had such inaccurate dates for some shared ancestors, including Francis I, or why “Elizabeth the Ghost”, was still inhabiting one of their (and our) family groups.<sup>540</sup> One of the teaching strategies employed by all of us in the inner CoG is to *not* send findings, but to ask new contacts if they wish to have the pleasure of making their own discoveries before comparing what they find with our current collective work-in-progress. The main reason for this is that we have come to realise that we learn so much more by making the discoveries and the connections ourselves, more than by just checking and adding the data that others send.

### *Learning*

Teaching implies learning. Tom Angelo, another practitioner in the field of tertiary teaching advising, has thus defined higher learning:

Higher learning is an active, interactive, self-aware process that results in meaningful long-lasting changes – in knowledge, understanding, skills, behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and/or values – [changes] that can not be attributed primarily to maturation.<sup>541</sup>

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<sup>540</sup> Someone’s error in reconstruction of family groups had given one Elizabeth SELMAN two sets of parents, and she appeared on the IGI as two people, for many years.

<sup>541</sup> Thomas A. Angelo, “A ‘Teacher’s Dozen’: Fourteen General, Research-based Principles for Improving Higher Learning in Our Classrooms.” This material, published in the *AAHE* (American Association for Higher Education) *Bulletin* in 1993. My primary source is some ‘handouts’ given to HERDSA members at seminars.

Kenneth Westhues has offered a course about ancestry, history and personal identity at Waterloo University in Ontario, Canada, from 1999 to the present. His website conveys a sense of the value of shared higher learning as experienced by his students, as well as their individual learning about identity and self-development. I quote just a few of the anonymous comments about meaningful learning from students who took the 2006 course.<sup>542</sup>

The course gave me the strength and confidence to pursue my ideals and truths in a non-confrontational manner. I have gained such a strong awareness in withholding judgment on anyone, including myself, until I have had an opportunity to understand everything involved. I would recommend this course to anyone willing to look back on their history in order to move ahead with enthusiasm and vigor.

An excellent course, really connects things for you, has you put yourself and your family *into* history. Learned a lot more than I expected. Weakness was the amount of research needed and not enough time to do it all. This could be a full-year course.

Awesome! Favourite class in my 4-year university career. I have been recommending it to others in my other classes. I will be doing more research out of class, to see if I can extend the knowledge I have now about my family.

During the Sociology in Practice course I audited at the University of Waikato in preparation for this project, David Swain demonstrated his use of sophisticated software for dealing with GFH qualitative data.<sup>543</sup> At the conclusion of the lecture, the students spontaneously clapped. This is not ‘normal’ practice for undergraduate students in New Zealand universities. Dr Swain was not sure what had catalysed such a response. Dr Jo Barnes commented that she had also noted student appreciation when introducing aspects of genealogical family history into Social Science Research courses, and I had had similar responses when using a variety of GFH material in student academic orientation programmes, including some for postgraduate international students.

It seems to me that all these appreciative responses were a combination of the application of GFH methodology, perspectives and technology to other areas of knowledge, the acknowledgement that family history is an important part of

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<sup>542</sup> These comments were at <http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~kwesthue/> in 2007.

<sup>543</sup> David A. Swain and Jo Barnes. “Using and Integrating Specialised Computer Software in the Management and Analysis of Large-scale Qualitative Research,” in *Reinvigorating New Zealand Sociology: Practices, Projects, Politics and Protests*. Proceedings of the Sociological Society of Aotearoa New Zealand Conference, 17-19 November 2000, Hamilton New Zealand, edited by Jo Barnes (Hamilton: University of Waikato, 2001), 163-174.

personal identity, and, perhaps, the glimpses into a lecturer's genealogical background, experience and enthusiasms.

### *Meaning*

Angelo links learning with meaningful long-lasting changes. For Wenger, meaning is about *experience*, not about meaning “locked up in dictionaries”, nor about “meaning as a grand question”.<sup>544</sup> Meaning is located in a process: the negotiation of it involving two constituents, participation and reification.<sup>545</sup> “They are a duality not opposites, they interact but do not define.”<sup>546</sup> “In this interplay, our experience and our world shape each other through a reciprocal relation that goes to the very essence of who we are.”<sup>547</sup> Many in the wider GFH Community experience meaning in such a way, as they learn.

I admire scholars who remain open to learning both from others and from their own work. Professor Bryan Sykes humorously explained what one new genetic finding meant to him, at a personal level. He discovered that the executive head of Oxford University also belongs to the clan of Tara and shares exactly his own mDNA sequence, giving them a shared maternal ancestor of the more recent past. “For better or worse I now feel very differently about the Vice-Chancellor.... were we to have a severe disagreement, it would be hard for me to take it seriously. It would be like arguing with my cousin.”<sup>548</sup>

I suspect Bryan Sykes will not be able to resist one day confirming this genetic discovery with genealogical research into the precise relationship, using GFH methods. It *means* something to Geneals, to discover shared relationships and connections. The relationships become part of personal identity.

Above, and in earlier chapters, I have made both explicit and oblique references to competence. Teaching and learning are often associated with assessment of knowledge and practical competence: appraisal, judgement and examination. Although I have been putting forward best practice in support of my argument that GFH deserves a place in academia, I am well aware that in a mixed membership

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<sup>544</sup> Wenger, *Communities of Practice*, 51.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>546</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>547</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>548</sup> Sykes, *Blood of the Isles*, 108-109.

CoP, there will always be some whose present work would not achieve a pass mark. Individuals within the Community do judge some others as less than competent.

Wenger's new emphasis on competence does invite a cautious comment on aspects of competence within the Community. My caution arises from my career in the academic teaching and research specialism of tertiary learning advising and development - where students are judged by potential and by competence at graduation, not at entry level: the work is grounded in theory and practice that is developmental, *not* remedial (see chap.1, n 28). I always hesitate to judge anyone *forever* incompetent: that is one of my disciplinary legacies.

### **Competence within the Community**

Lack of knowledge and lack of skill are easy to identify and respond to by those involved in GFH education. What is more difficult is addressing anyone's inability to comprehend what is *not known*, for this takes much longer, especially when the ability to think quickly may also be lacking for any number of reasons. For example, I have observed the difficulties caused when New Zealanders, especially those with generations of ancestry here, and/or from faith backgrounds that are not Christian,<sup>549</sup> seek to trace ancestors labelled 'non-conformists' in England. Teaching individuals with ancestors who belonged to so-called 'dissenting' groups and congregations brings particular challenges. There is not *time* in teaching encounters, or in formal or informal conversation, to do more than cover the GFH consequences that there *may* not be any records to find - no baptism records for most Quakers and none of infants of Baptists, for example.<sup>550</sup> Trying to explain the relevant history of the Church of England and its historical attitudes towards all those who did not conform to its canon law and practice, at various times, is particularly difficult, but a necessary part of the scholarship of teaching and education in the A-NZ GFH Community set in its wider Community.

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<sup>549</sup> This also applies to some Christian faith communities whose stance is non-ecumenical, or whose membership contains more of those who seek to convert than those who wish to have a conversation.

<sup>550</sup> Some Quakers are baptised as adults, especially if marrying someone whose faith group demands baptism before marriage, for example. I have found examples of Baptists baptised as infants in another denomination going through a second ceremony as adults. See Chapter 9.

There is a difference between lack of knowledge and understanding, and *errors*. One mistake made by a CoG contact delayed us restoring a newly discovered branch to the main stem, and it cost time and money to re-check the parish registers. The error came about because two children of one ‘breeding pair’<sup>551</sup> had been baptised on the same day, but this contact had not noticed that the many ditto marks across the page referred to a brother of the one on the line above, and so denied the existence of the second one.

Another distant email cousin had obtained family records, including Canadian certificates that she shared. One had a birthplace that although very badly spelt, I recognised from old maps and other primary sources. It enabled us to prove her relationship to all of us in the CoG, and learn about the emigration of a relative who up until then was ‘untraced’. She was a competent GFH researcher, but had lacked detailed knowledge of old names of very small places that enabled us to connect her to us. The reconstruction of not-yet-related families in a geographic area, ready to be hasped (or not) to proven or accepted family groups, should such a vital piece of information come to hand, is a strategy of competent Geneals. The integration of such discovered information is even less likely to be available to those outside the Community, than other work-in-progress: but it does exist.

However, I reflect that those of us who consider ourselves to be competent, *need* those we deem to be less than competent: and not just cynically (because they might have the all important family Bible, certificate, or piece of oral history). They *are* researchers and they are (distant) relatives. Despite our different life trajectories, education and purposes, we are members of the same GFH Community – and the same family of extension. A general reluctance to exclude on the basis of a lack of demonstrated prior ability is one peculiar characteristic of a field that otherwise parallels academia in many ways.

In this and the previous chapter I have discussed a number of issues and concerns in the Community: proper acknowledgement of sources and respect for

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<sup>551</sup> An acquaintance with a multi-denominational background, researching alongside me in an LDS FHC used this expression when seeking to accurately reconstitute family groups from filmed parish registers: two couples with the same forenames and surname were presenting her with an identification problem.

intellectual property, sharing and teaching wisely and ethically, the reliability of research findings, and the competence of practitioners.

Taken together, these aspects signal that GFH is a field of enquiry that is entitled to be knocking at the door of academia. In the next chapter, I discuss the challenge of GFH to matters epistemological.

## Chapter 9

### The GFH Scholarship of Application: Usefulness and Challenge

The Best of men or but men at Best  
And Liable to err amongse the Rest.<sup>552</sup>

In the previous chapter, I have discussed the scholarship of discovery found in the field and practice of Genealogical Family History, and explored aspects of the teaching of the subject. I now discuss GFH in relation to the Carnegie scholarship of application.<sup>553</sup> I consider ways in which GFH can be applied in other areas of knowledge; and how it can challenge understandings about *family* that prevail in the public domain (of which academia is a part) in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

One of the characteristics of Wengerian communities of practice mentioned in Chapter 5 is the development of social capital. The social capital developed by the wider GFH Community arises from the *centrality* of family when viewing human subjects, and the transdisciplinary approach, perspective and best practice in the field. The methodology and findings of family reconstruction and the understandings gained from studying migrations of related individuals are the most important contribution, in my view; but GFH social capital also includes understandings gained about mortality, identity, colonisation (by in-laws, and by nations), gender issues, religions and morality.

The quotation at the beginning of this chapter is from a family Bible: where a great-grandfather has recorded events and thoughts. I discuss some further below in a chapter that draws together disparate strands of the GFH Scholarship of Application, linked by a perspective that always focuses on lives lived in reconstructed families.

First, I ask: what *use* is Genealogical Family History? I summarise the usefulness of GFH in everyday life; and then consider its usefulness to a wider world of knowledge.

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<sup>552</sup> This epigram was hand-written in a great-grandfather's Bible. I think "or" is how 'are' would be pronounced in a Wiltshire accent.

<sup>553</sup> Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, 21-23.

## The Usefulness of Genealogical Family History

According to a well-known saying, an educated person is one who can entertain him/herself, entertain a stranger and entertain a new idea.<sup>554</sup>

### *An Entertaining Hobby*

Genealogical family history as a hobby and as serious study undertaken in leisure time continues to afford millions of individuals worldwide the opportunity to entertain themselves, in many senses of the word.

Through GFH research, individuals can acknowledge and *accept* their identity in terms of where their ancestors came from; and begin to understand how others identify themselves according to knowledge of facts and myths – and lack of knowledge - about *different* ancestry. They can also be entertained by the romances and tragedies discovered, by some true stories that are stranger than fiction, and by enjoyment of the scholarship of discovery and integration.

### *Entertaining Strangers*

Michael Gandy has warned about entertaining family with details of personal research (see Chapter 8), and I would not inflict such entertainment on a stranger. However, I have found knowledge gained through GFH has been invaluable when a stranger seems to wish to engage in conversation on long journeys, or in other places. On one occasion, I found myself seated by a Scotsman: a world president of a well-known international charity: probably more used to being seated by its royal patron. Rather than ask about his work – for he was going to speak about that after the dinner, I tried what is usually a safe conversation facilitator in Aotearoa-New Zealand: “Where are you from?” It is safe because if we do not know the place, we can ask more about it, without seeming impertinent. On this occasion, the stranger was from Perthshire, and knew well the precise locality where one of Graeme’s families had lived in the 1830s. Conversation flowed.

Place is one of a Genealogist’s essential identification factors for reconstructing families of the past. It is also very useful in the present. In a small country like

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<sup>554</sup> Most sources attribute this saying to Sidney Herbert Wood, some time principal assistant secretary of the Ministry of Education of the United States of America.

New Zealand, knowledge of the localisation and distribution of 19<sup>th</sup> century surnames becomes absorbed quite unconsciously, and one can venture to connect with strangers through names recognised - after places and time frames have been established.

### *Entertaining New Ideas*

Individuals who sit in darkened rooms reading microforms; who sit by their computers on sunny days, early in the morning and late at night; who meet with others to discuss their research strategies, obstacles and findings; are entertaining themselves as they educate themselves about the lives and times of past and present kin. Geneals entertain many new ideas as they metaphorically turn the pages of a census return noting in a decennial snapshot the names, occupations, ages, relationships, and birthplaces; and learning about the neighbours, and the neighbourhood, of kin.

Geneals of the A-NZ GFH Community can empathise with our various ancestors in their family situations, according to our own experience, or lack of it, as we try to stand in the shoes of others: the long voyages, the hard times of unemployment, being always pregnant or breastfeeding, losing loved ones through untimely deaths, and so on. One area often overlooked is the relationships of our various ancestors to the faith communities of their day.

### **Critical Empathy for the Faiths and Affiliations of our Ancestors**

I draw a distinction between *personal faith* and allegiance on the one hand, and *religious affiliation* on the other. Some, then and now, have a personal faith and an allegiance to one or more named faith groups. Some have a personal faith, but have not aligned themselves to any named group. Some who belong to named groups do not have a personal faith, or not one that is similar to most others in the group they have joined.

Some people are born into a particular faith community. Some marry into one. Some choose to join (or to remain active in) a particular faith, or a particular denomination within a broader grouping. I use the word *denomination* for all

*named* groups. I use the word *sect* only for small historical groups; but I have observed manifestations of ‘sectarianism’ in many large faith communities whose official stance is that they alone are right, and hold all religious truth.

Some people appear in official records linked to the names of denominations, regardless of whether they have ever been members or adherents, or associated in some way, with that denomination (see below).

Cutting across all denominational boundaries are other groupings. Within any faith community, will be those who seek to convert, and those who seek to converse; and there will be those who have studied the teachings of their own faith community, and of others; and those who believe what they are told or expected to believe, or disbelieve, without questioning. Within any family of extension there will be those who seek to persuade others to their way of thinking (some unconsciously, some aggressively), and those who remain respectful of the beliefs of others.

Within academic and general discourse there are other categorical terms in use that complicate any effort to seek to understand what our ancestors might have believed, and why they appear to have an allegiance to any particular grouping: puritan, non-conformist, dissenter, sectarian, catholic, protestant, for example. They are all terms used by people with a particular perspective, who may have inherited or adopted their current understanding of what the words can mean. They may just use the terms without knowing the nuances for their readers or listeners.

### *Sectarianism and Secularisation*

An interviewer asked Peter Berger about ‘secularisation’.<sup>555</sup> He remarked:

I think what I and most other sociologists of religion wrote in the 1980s about secularization was a mistake. Our underlying argument was that secularization and modernity go hand in hand.... There was some evidence for it, but ... Most of the world today is certainly not secular. It's very religious...the one exception to this is Western Europe.

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<sup>555</sup> Peter Berger, “Epistemological Modesty: An Interview with Peter Berger” at <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=240> (accessed 11 February 2008). This article was prepared for: *Religion Online*, by Ted & Winnie Brock, with permission from: “The Christian Century,” October 29, 1997, 972-978.

I do not consider New Zealand to be part of Western Europe. From a GFH perspective, New Zealand is very different from countries there with a *constitutional* link to a particular denomination: such as the Church of England in England, and the Lutheran Church in Norway. It has long seemed to me that the desire of many early Pākehā emigrants to New Zealand was for a *non-sectarian* society: a place where no religious grouping (no matter how large or long-existing) had pre-eminence in civil matters.<sup>556</sup> Some today think that non-sectarian always means ‘secular’. It does not. Freedom to *choose* an allegiance – *or* to have none, was a founding precept for many.<sup>557</sup> Many Jewish people of ability were attracted to the official and general tolerance of settler New Zealand, even though it was not a universal characteristic.

Despite Canterbury being conceived of and perceived as an ‘English’ (and predominantly Church of England) settlement, and Otago as a Scottish one, intermarriage subverted the intent; and there has always been a mix of allegiance in New Zealand towns and cities.<sup>558</sup> In the interviews Colleen spoke about a family member who is a subject in Michael’s Directory: an Anglican lay reader emigrating in the early days of the *Otago* Immigration Scheme: ordained an Anglican priest later in his life.<sup>559</sup> His daughter became a member of the Brethren and Colleen said there was “great upset within the family as the diaries show. She refused to have their son baptised in the Anglican Church”, so “there was this rift, and yet the family still visited.” *The family still visited*.

Religious affiliation is one of the key identifiers for discovering kin through GFH research. Knowing which records to search is an important part of GFH methodology. For those who seek to place ancestors in a familial-religious context there is much to be learned, including the reasons for discovered changes in affiliation. There can be many changes of affiliation during a long life, some of

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<sup>556</sup> The Education Act of 1877 that brought about a more uniform system of schooling, with the slogan of ‘free, secular and compulsory’ education, gave freedom *from compulsion* to be educated by any one faith group, even if not freedom *to learn about* religion within school hours.

<sup>557</sup> I explored this in research contributing to my essay on Andrew BROWN of Kapiti – a young Scotsman who gave up university studies with the intention of becoming an episcopalian minister (in Scotland or in England), and who was influenced out of any particular denominationalist allegiance, into humanism by, at least, William Wordsworth and Robert Owen.

<sup>558</sup> The Scots were a mixture of Church of Scotland, and other groupings often termed collectively termed ‘Free Church’. The Presbyterian Church developed later.

<sup>559</sup> Colleen was able to add to the BBD work-in-progress, at that time.

them dependent of influences from earlier generations of kin, some as a result of changes to the laws of the land in which the human subject of interest lived.

As a genealogical family historian I have gathered knowledge and impressions of dynamics of denominational and individual difference within families of interest, employing my genealogical hermeneutic to this area of lived lives. I have for example, correlated the known denominational allegiances of siblings in two large families in two different countries and decades with their choice of sibling witnesses, and with their choice of marrying places (not ignoring the spouse family background of each). My findings were that different allegiances mattered little in those two families. Family came first. However, I have also noted the rifts and harm done, whenever fundamentalists (be they denominational or atheist evangelists) have claimed privilege for their strongly held beliefs; or when large faith groups claim exclusive rights.

In my work life, as a theorist and practitioner in the field of tertiary learning and teaching advising/development, my mantra, irritating to some, was: “It’s not that simple.” As thesis writer, I have not found it a simple matter to explore this particular area of the discourse of Genealogical Family History in Aotearoa-New Zealand: what Francis Pryor called “the difficult topics of religion and ideology.”<sup>560</sup>

My approach has been to try to maintain critical empathy for the faiths and allegiances of human subjects, and for the epistemological perspectives and beliefs of those who have attitudes towards *groups* of human subjects. I do not always succeed.

### *Particularising*

Before returning to matters of religious allegiance, I take a detour into migration and ‘nationality’, in response to a paper<sup>561</sup> presented to the 2006 NZSG conference, by Dr Jock Phillips. It gives “a summary of a major research project”, at the heart of which was “a scientific sample of death registers – over 14,000 individuals who came by boat from the United Kingdom to New Zealand in the

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<sup>560</sup> Pryor, *Seahenge*, 133.

<sup>561</sup> Jock Phillips, “Who Were New Zealand’s Founding Pakeha? In *Settling the Waikato*, 254-269.

years 1840-1945.”<sup>562</sup> There are tables giving data on the national and regional composition of immigrants; their occupational backgrounds; religious denomination at death (see below); and gender ratios and age on arrival.

I had always thought that New Zealand was different from other British colonies because of the *mix* of emigrants from particular countries: having had a higher proportion from Scotland than Australia, for example.<sup>563</sup> Dr Phillips affirms this impression in his paper, recording that “while the Scots were consistently over 20 per cent of New Zealand’s UK born, in Australia they were never more than about 15 percent.”<sup>564</sup>

As a Genealogical Family Historian, I am often a particularist: seeking to explain exceptions to general notions or findings that *might* be caused by individual difference, or by other factors. When reading this paper, my GFH particularist questions were to the fore – as they had been when listening to the presentation. I look forward to reading the proposed book, to better understand the context of the tables and statements in the paper; and to answer some of my particularist questions. For example, I read that, “there are some problems with the death registers data – their reliability was dependent on the knowledge of the person filling in the death certificate.” His audience in Hamilton knew that all too well. (The Kaikoura death registration of a great-grandfather of one of New Zealand’s most well-known citizens contained 14 “not knowns”.)

Death ‘certificates’: I do not think this means the cause-of-death-certificate issued by a medical practitioner? It must be the *registration* of a death - unless the Ministry for Culture and Heritage paid nearly \$300,000 for certified copies of registrations?

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<sup>562</sup> Ibid., 254. Some of the tables appear to relate to the united kingdoms of England and Wales (including Northern Ireland), and Scotland; and others to include the whole of the island of Ireland.

<sup>563</sup> I recall that at the AFHHO Congress in Canberra in 1986, the organisers would not allow two things to be accommodated into their programme: an ecumenical church service and a session for those with interests in Scottish GFH research. I use ‘ecumenical’ in the one-acting-on-behalf-of-all sense. The latter group did hold a clandestine meeting at Canberra. Ecumenical services have been conducted by Anglican, Methodist, Catholic and Presbyterian clergy at NZSG conferences.

<sup>564</sup> Jock Phillips, “Who Were New Zealand’s Founding Pakeha?” in *Settling the Waikato*, 257.

### *Applying the Presented Findings*

Dr Phillips' first table of findings shows the "national composition of UK emigrants to New Zealand"<sup>565</sup> and he states that, "We must assume that those who died in New Zealand were an accurate cross-section of those who came here".<sup>566</sup>

I decide to check this parameter of this study against detailed knowledge of our 19 direct ancestor emigrants. The registers "include the large numbers of migrants who came to New Zealand after stopping for some time in Australia."<sup>567</sup> Well, the sample studied could have caught William BREEN or BRIEN and his wife Lucinda KIRKPATRICK or KILPATRICK from the borders of Co. Fermanagh and Co. Tyrone who died in Dunedin, having come to New Zealand goldfields after some years in Geelong near Melbourne. It will not have captured George FISK, who spent two years in Victoria. He drowned after falling from the *SS Rangatira* in 1866, and was buried by soldiers at the Opunake Redoubt: a death never registered. Even if his death had been registered it would *not have recorded his birthplace*, nor when he arrived in New Zealand, for those details were not required until 1876. His widow also died before such details were required; and her death registration (as Mehetabel wife of John SMITH) has not yet been found.<sup>568</sup>

Would Andrew BROWN, the focal subject of my 1990 essay, and his son who was also a direct ancestor, make it to the scientific sample? They left in 1839. Certainly not Andrew, who was born too soon (in 1797) and died *in London* in 1854: his death registration there gives his occupation as 'farmer in Wellington, New Zealand.' David BROWN, although born in England, may have visited his grandmother and many aunts in Scotland. He is said to have sung Gaelic songs to his children – and his father grew up where Gaelic was spoken according to the 1794 Statistical Account. But, he would be counted as English for the 'national composition' study. His second father-in-law, Thomas MORGAN, died in 1875, too soon for his birthplace to be recorded. *If* he was born in Wales, as some

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<sup>565</sup> Ibid., 256.

<sup>566</sup> Ibid., 254.

<sup>567</sup> *ibid.*, 254.

<sup>568</sup> I suspect that a whole page of SMITHs is missing from the Registrar-General's index of registrations sent from other registries. Her death *may* have been registered at the Auckland District registry.

descendants claim, he could have had quite an effect on the reported low percentage migrating from that country (raising it from 1.6 to 1.9?). He lived near Birmingham for some years before sailing from London. In Table 7,<sup>569</sup> English and Welsh birthplaces are combined in one table, so it matters not for this study. It matters to his descendants.

By my calculations, 12 of our 19 emigrating ancestors could be among those sampled. These are only our direct ancestors. Knowledge about their siblings, parents, children and other migrating relatives has also been amassed: some of *them* might be represented in the study. We know details about religious affiliation too. William and Lucy BREEN were married Church of Ireland (Anglican) and became Baptists; George FISK was not baptised until he was seven (in a Church of England, in Norfolk). We still do not know why. He seems to have 'left' the Church of England - in London or Australia or New Zealand, and become nothing in particular. Mehetabel, baptised and married Church of England, became a Methodist after her re-marriage, but was buried in the Anglican section of the Otahuhu cemetery.

#### *Another Particularist Question*

Andrew BROWN of Kapiti contributes to more GFH particularist questions. He was a Scotsman, and proud of it, he said on the hustings before his election to the first Wellington Provincial Council. He had lived in Scotland for about 20 years, then London for 20 or so years and in New Zealand for 15 years, at the time of his death. He emigrated from London. So too did Julius JOHNSON (ca 1857-1933) who settled in Dunedin. He was born in Christiana (Oslo, Norway) and trained as an engineer in Germany.<sup>570</sup> The BREENs of Northern Ireland left from Plymouth in Devon, England for Geelong. Ancestors from Lincolnshire and Wiltshire also left from London. Death registrations would certainly give a more accurate picture of birthplace than would passenger records. But, is birthplace, or place of upbringing, always co-terminus with nationality? Or is it not that simple?

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<sup>569</sup> Ibid., 265.

<sup>570</sup> We have a copy of a police passport, to confirm the oral history and the entry he wrote for the *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*. This couple, the son of Lutherans and the New Zealand-born daughter a Roman Catholic from Ireland and a Free Church Scottish father eloped to Port Chalmers (by train) *partly* to avoid marrying in the church of her mother.

At the same NZSG 2006 conference, after her presentation,<sup>571</sup> Rosalind McClean asked for information from Geneals about their Scottish emigrant ancestors, without defining ‘Scottish’ except through an assumption that Scots are born in Scotland, and emigrate from there. Dr McClean’s contributions to the TVNZ series *Here to Stay* coincided with a stance within History that seems to argue that cultural mores are caused by birth place: without due consideration of a family line’s length of time in a place, and other factors. There was no acknowledgement that as a nation *many* New Zealanders do *not* derive *all* their transmitted culture from kin influences found in just *one* place, one race or one culture.

Dr Phillips emphasises aspects of this in his paper, after exploring regional differences within Britain and Ireland:

Those who came to New Zealand from the United Kingdom were not from one cultural background but from many. The extent to which the country was peopled by flows from particular regions of the United Kingdom and their tendency at least in the early years to find homes close to family or fellow countrymen (sic) must have given 19<sup>th</sup> century New Zealand a certain regional and multicultural character.

So 19<sup>th</sup> century Pakeha would have been a more diverse society in its culture and habits than it subsequently became.... It may be that as New Zealand once more confronts a more radically multi-cultural future there is value in contemplating its multi-cultural past.<sup>572</sup>

### *Qualified Empathy*

I return to the topic of this section: the beliefs and affiliations of our forebears. One of the tables in Dr Phillips’ paper gives percentages of Religious Denomination at Death of Immigrants from England and Wales in the time periods: 1840-52, 1853-70, 1871-90, and 1891-1915. I assume those dates refer to birth years. He concedes that: “the figures are rough” because they are derived from the denomination of the person who officiated at the funeral or who completed the death certificate”. But, I do not think New Zealand *death* registrations have *ever* asked for the religion of the deceased, nor that of the *informants* who gave in the details to be registered? Some who “completed the

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<sup>571</sup> Rosalind McClean, “Living in New Zealand but Really in Scotland? Scottish Women’s Changing Worlds Between 1840 and 1920,” in *Settling the Waikato and Beyond*, 132-139.

<sup>572</sup> Phillips, “Settling the Waikato,” 269.

certificates [registrations?],”<sup>573</sup> at district level, or received them at national level *may* have added denominations to the registration (perhaps taken from lists of those permitted to conduct marriages in New Zealand.) Any two householders could conduct a funeral and oversee a burial. Burial details were not required until 1876. Using death registrations for scientific data is not a simple matter.

Dr Phillips’ findings highlight the representation of particular groups compared to the countries of origin from which those in the sample are thought to have come. I find myself in general agreement with the argument that national characteristics such as versatility, enjoyment of unrestricted access to the New Zealand bush, and “patterns of swearing and yarning and excessive drinking and even fisticuffs were brought to New Zealand by [some] rural inhabitants of Britain,”<sup>574</sup> hearing echoes of Fischer’s folkways. I agree that rather different attitudes must have arrived with the unusually large number [compared to numbers in Britain] of [other groups].

It is when *all* those individual others are grouped as “dissenters, especially Methodists, among New Zealand’s immigrants” and when Dr Phillips states that one might wish “to speculate on the long-term impact of this cultural baggage” that there is more criticism than empathy. The terms ‘cultural capital’ or ‘social capital’ would not have given away attitudes (signalled by ‘baggage’), towards faith and/or affiliation that lie behind the generalisations, or not quite so readily.

The *various* Methodist church groupings changed quite often, between 1840 and 1915. The Primitive Methodist Church, the Wesleyan Church and the United Methodists merged in 1932 to form the Methodist Church of Great Britain. The ‘Prims’ were not so prim as other Methodists, I am told, by historians of that denomination.<sup>575</sup> There were local and regional differences. Some Methodists *were* to the forefront of the temperance movement, seeking to improve social conditions for the women and the children, and for the men who were victims of a binge-drinking culture: but they were, and are, seen by others as kill-joys and wowers. Other Methodists have been to the forefront of intellectual and political movements, like pacifism: and so not viewed kindly by the military establishment.

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<sup>573</sup> Ibid., 264.

<sup>574</sup> Ibid., 268.

<sup>575</sup> The Primitive Methodist Church, founded in 1810, sought to recapture aspects of ‘original’ Methodism. Members played an important role in the early trade union movement.

Many have *enjoyed* the music, the sports clubs, the picnics and the theological discussions of some Methodist churches: a lifestyle more affordable when income was channelled differently. Perhaps Methodists are over-represented in the statistics presented in this table, because their life-styles led to longer lives and an increased likelihood of being *counted*. Perhaps Methodist clergy and lay officiants were more *available* to the whole population, to take funerals, than some other denominations? It's not that simple.

The denomination of the widowed spouse or of the executor (who may or may not be a relative) often explains who officiated at a funeral. Today, those who have no allegiance ask friends to recommend, and are not concerned about denominational labels. Were our emigrating ancestors so different, unchanging and homogenous?

Geneals need to understand what religious affiliation meant to their ancestors, in their particular families and in the particular places where they lived, at particular times, in order to know what records to search: to learn more about their daily lives, including who visited, despite, or because of, religious factors. If something about their personal faith is gleaned along the way, that is a bonus – but in my opinion, the two should never be confused.

### *Morality*

Another 'use' of understandings from genealogical family history is an appreciation of widely varying attitudes towards morality. I was fortunate to receive some data from great-grandfather's Bible that had gone to Canada with his youngest son.<sup>576</sup> In addition to a list of birth dates, some of them rather approximate, including his own,<sup>577</sup> there was acknowledgement of another child (possibly/probably his own) and some statements regarding personal faith. I was impressed by this ancestor's theological reasoning, in the area of salvation through faith, works or grace.<sup>578</sup>

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<sup>576</sup> I had been inside the house where the Bible is kept with my father, but a second cousin did not realise how important reading such an artefact would be to me. I did not see it. On a subsequent visit, my father (although legally blind at the time) had overseen the videoing of it, including some of the annotations. On his return, I transcribed what was readable on the video.

<sup>577</sup> I do not like to disagree with great-grandfather, but I do not think he could have been baptised a year before he was born.

<sup>578</sup> Great-grandfather wrote, for example: "Redemption – if Christ died for all then all must be saved - there could none be in hell since... Redemption ass[ures]."

Despite his lack of higher education, his phonetic spelling and local dialect, I was able to determine some of his views, and place him in his family of extension with its strong links to Congregationalism and its semi-separatist roots.<sup>579</sup> His paternal great-grandfather (who died only 15 years before great-grandfather was born) lived in an extra-parochial district (not a parish) and so could pay tithes directly to the King, not to the local parish clergyman. Perhaps Antimonian beliefs, or even Ranter practice in his locality two centuries previously, influenced him too. Those of us who research this family will not be surprised if we eventually link his ancestry to one of the many Society of Friends families bearing the same surname, in the vicinity, in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The Moravians were also active nearby for a time.

The recording of an illegitimate child in this Bible not only provided much genealogical conjecture followed by research, leading to discovery,<sup>580</sup> but when the child died of diphtheria as a toddler, it was great-grandfather's *wife* who registered the death, causing me to retract an earlier statement that we might never know if she knew about the child.

Geneals learn to obtain as many relevant certificates as they can afford to establish facts and overturn suppositions; and learn to question whether generalisations about attitudes to morals are indeed general, and whether they change from time to time, from family to family, or from situation to situation: Hirsch's warnings against homogenisation of the past, and the present, are well heeded.

Genealogical Family Historians can also collectively provide evidence that the always-inscrutable past is indeed a fallacy. I next explore some aspects of the allegiances of a few of our many forebears that demonstrate this.

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<sup>579</sup> At times, Congregationalists in England were encouraged to support *both* the established Church of England, and their own congregation. Similarly, at times Methodists belonged to the Church of England *and* to a Methodist Society.

<sup>580</sup> Annie's birth certificate gave no father. Great-grandfather's *sister* registered the birth in London. It is *possible* that the child was fathered by one of her brothers, making her a grandchild; but her birth is carefully positioned on the page with his other children – not with his recording of older grandsons on another page.

*You Cannot Choose Your Ancestors' Faiths and Affiliations*

When reading copies of papers<sup>581</sup> associated with a Baptist church attended by ancestors and kin of a daughter-in-law of the above great-grandfather, I came across correspondence between the deacons and a man they wished to call to be pastor of their congregation. Joshua Russell replied saying,

I understand that your Church has adhered to the practice of what is called strict communion. My dear wife is an Independent, a member of the Rvd William Clayton's Church at Mill Hill Middlesex, and as such she has constantly communed with the Baptist Church at Maze Pond, Southwark, of which I am now a Deacon, and I believe her to be desirous of walking in all the Commandments and ordinances of the Lord, and as conscientious in her interpretation of them as I am in mine. I therefore could not take oversight of any Church where she would not be received at the Lord's Supper and respected and treated in all respects as the Minister's wife including her being present at Church Meetings but without voting at any such meeting.... I have no wish whatever to influence your decision on this point....<sup>582</sup>

The Baptists at Broughton Road in Melksham,<sup>583</sup> "after due discussion" cordially agreed to receive Mrs Russell in the way her husband had politely hinted they should. This example demonstrates the particular intellectual and social partnership between one husband and wife. It reveals historic relationships between some Baptist and some Congregationalist or Independent congregations. For scholars studying such groups it implies that insistence on adult baptism by immersion and 'confession of faith' might not have been the main qualification for membership of a Baptist congregation, at the time - for Congregationalists have mainly practised infant baptism. Mainly: 'it's not ever simple'.

Comments in the minute book reveal the minister's (and/or his wife's) close knowledge of the people whose membership is recorded, and annotated: their names and marriages, residences, occupations and their geographic mobility; and also reveal attitudes towards their behaviour and their faith. The fluidity of denominational allegiance is also obvious. A Geneal is given immediate entry to the discourse of a faith group through such records, and inklings of what it meant

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<sup>581</sup> The typed transcription was sent many years ago, by Carolyn Bingham, one of my first collaborating researchers, a 4<sup>th</sup> cousin. She extracted membership data from this congregation's first Minute Book, beginning July 1774.

<sup>582</sup> The letter is dated: 10 November 1834.

<sup>583</sup> There were other Baptist chapels, general and particular, in and near the town at various times. I understand that the Particulars were not so 'strict' as the General Baptists.

to be associated with such a group at the particular time. I give some examples from a List of Members annotated from about 1832:

Elizabeth TUCK: Baptised 21 October 1798 Died 31 August, 1832 aged 89 years, having been a member for 54 years. Her end was peaceful. The City.<sup>584</sup>

Betty PRUID: Suspended. Mr Honeywell's Meeting.

Francis JENNINGS: November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1831. Broughton road. Excluded. Joined the Quakers.

Sarah DAVIS (Now JENNINGS) Dismissed to United States.

Elizabeth MOXOM: Baptised by W[illam] K[EENE]. Was servant at Mr EVANS.

Now Mrs E. TEAGUE Dunkiln's Farm, near St Brevels, near Monmouth, Glos.

Dismissed to Coleford 16 April 1849.

Mary DAVIS By letter from Portsea. Became Sevingite. 6 February 1831<sup>585</sup>

Thomas WILSHERE: Baptism.<sup>586</sup> Dismissed to the Church at Athlone Ireland, 7 August, 1847

Flower SPENCER: June 1846. Pollards Buildings, Died July 1854, 2 months after his wife.<sup>587</sup>

Martha PERRY: Devizes. Widow. Kept a School.

For Geneals interested in families with connections in that particular place, there is a wealth of data to pursue: marital status, movements, and reasons for exclusions from membership. For example, I am reasonably sure that one entry made in 1831, but with later annotations, refers to the wife of a 4xgreat-uncle: "Hannah ADAMS: Forest Wife of Samuel ADAMS Weaver America". I do not know if they both went to America, nor when. Samuel and Hannah are both in Melksham in 1841, (on the same page of the census return as Joshua Russell, 'Bap. Min.') and there, still or again, in 1851. Did Samuel go alone to America in the 1820s or 1830s, and return? Or did they both go and return? Might that explain the eight-year gap in their discovered-so-far children? Is the gap because there were infant deaths; or are there other children to discover who were not baptised as infants, and/or born in America? Or, did they go after 1851? The genealogical hermeneutic intrudes. I also note that it is not clear if Samuel was a formal member, or not. In Congregationalist records in nearby Lacock there was a

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<sup>584</sup> This name is still given to the central part of Melksham: a town that also has the Forest, the Spa, the Acre and the Ark, and a distinct sense of humour.

<sup>585</sup> Neither *The ODCC*; nor *Wikipedia* could help me learn more. Sevingite might be a transcription or typing error. It could even be a small local sect waiting to be re-discovered.

<sup>586</sup> I believe this expands to: 'became a member of this congregation, by [adult] baptism'; whereas others were received or transferred ('dismissed') as local members 'by letter' from or to another congregation.

<sup>587</sup> Flower is not uncommon as a man's name in these parts.

similar pattern: more women than men as members, with some husbands described as adherents, or not mentioned.

I found it enlightening to immerse myself in these records of a faith community of some distant relatives who lived in a different time and place: a different world. Michael King, from an Anglo-Celtic Catholic background, entered into the past and present worlds of his BELGORAJ connections in a number of countries: Jewish migrants from Europe to England to America, and on to Australia and New Zealand. He honoured his great-uncle's memory at his grave in Hamilton, New Zealand, with what he felt to be an appropriate ceremony.

#### *Comments from Key Informants*

My key informants contributed other understandings in this neglected area of GFH thinking. One acknowledged an upbringing in a faith community, saying he was not what one would call an active churchgoer. He related a visit to an ancestral church.

I rang up the lady from the Church, and said, "Can we have a look inside?" She said, "Oh yer, yer, come down and I'll show you around." So when I went back the next day, she came to open up the church, and said: "Oh I should have remembered your name, because we walk over your ancestor every Sunday." Well, I didn't know what she was getting at then; but in the aisle of the church, there he was - and his wife and his daughter buried there as well - a big stone, and so that was pretty awesome to find them buried in the middle of the church. Obviously they must have been [important] people in the community to be buried inside.

This key informant agreed that GFH researchers are not able to avoid exposure to the records and history of faith communities. The commercial magazine exemplar warns prospective Geneals that, "You will learn more about the organisation of parishes and the church than you thought possible".<sup>588</sup> Geneals, including those who would prefer to take what they think is a non-religious stance, find they cannot ignore these aspects of ancestors' lived lives if they seek to work towards a comprehensive understanding. Francis Pryor recorded how one dig whetted his "...appetite for ideology and the afterlife" to help understand his Bronze Age human subjects.<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>588</sup> Peter Watson, "Just For Starters: First Steps in Family History" *Practical Family History* 77 (2004), 3.

<sup>589</sup> Pryor, *Seahenge*, 1.

Michael and Lucy (see Chapter 4), coming from very different ends of a continuum in terms of church organisation (parish/congregation), each discussed moral issues in relation to the prevailing societies of the time, with critical *empathy* for the human subjects they discussed. Lucy also highlighted the role of GFH in bringing together people from different past and present religious affiliations:

I remember being at a meeting of the Irish Group [of the NZSG] and, somebody remarked: “Look at all these Irish faces around here, and so we looked around and there were the little skinny ones and the round moon ones.... And somebody, an Irish speaker, I think, remarked how these people, some from the North and some from the South, could meet [at an Irish Special Interest Group]. It wasn't like the two exclusive Irish clubs in Auckland apparently. We all just mixed quite happily, despite [our different religious backgrounds].

When seeking to learn more about those who have contributed to the conceptual framework of this thesis I noted that few explicitly claimed any religious affiliation, although a number have worked in institutions with connections to various faith communities. I learned, for example, that Peter Berger had been an associate professor at a theological seminary; and that from 1981 was a “University Professor of Sociology and Theology at Boston University.”<sup>590</sup> Ernest Boyer studied and taught in many schools, colleges and universities, including Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania, “a Christian college of the liberal and applied arts and sciences”.<sup>591</sup>

Elizabeth Shown Mills’ place of work is Samford University, “founded by Baptists in 1841.... A learning community allied with the Alabama Baptist Convention. The university welcomes students of all denominations and faith traditions”, and claims appreciation of “diverse cultures and convictions.”<sup>592</sup>

David Hackett Fischer teaches at Brandeis University near Boston: “the only non-sectarian Jewish-sponsored college or university in the country.... a community of scholars and students united by their commitment to the pursuit of knowledge

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<sup>590</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter\\_L.\\_Berger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_L._Berger) (accessed 11 February 2008).

<sup>591</sup> “The College is committed to an embracing evangelical spirit rooted in the Anabaptist, Pietist and Wesleyan traditions of the Christian Church. Our mission is to educate men and women toward maturity of intellect, character and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership and reconciliation in church and society.”

[http://www.messiah.edu/boyer\\_center/about\\_boyer/](http://www.messiah.edu/boyer_center/about_boyer/) (accessed 23 March 2008)

<sup>592</sup> <http://www.samford.edu/> (accessed 27 Jan 2008).

and its transmission from generation to generation.”<sup>593</sup> Kenneth Westhues teaches at Waterloo University, which has “developed in [a] distinctive direction. The University of St. Jerome’s College founded in 1865... as a Catholic liberal arts college became “federated” with UW in 1959.... Anglican, Mennonite and United Church bodies established their own colleges —Renison, Conrad Grebel and St. Paul’s — with ‘affiliated’ status.”<sup>594</sup>

I see a parallel between being ecumenical rather than inter-denominational; and having a transdisciplinary ethos rather than an interdisciplinary approach.

Etienne Wenger’s personal website included an open letter to President Bush about the war with Iraq.<sup>595</sup> GFH has the potential to bring people together to understand different cultures, faiths and histories, and to see that families are in-and-from every place, not forever within national and other boundaries. In my opinion, the most profound usefulness of GFH is a contribution to community and world peace through the way it contributes understanding of other cultures, faiths and ways of life to those who trace kin and seek to learn as much as possible about them.

I now return to a focus on social learning. To demonstrate the potential for genealogical family history methodology and understandings to contribute to disciplinary knowledge, and to other fields of enquiry, I have selected just three inter-related areas from my own academic background where I have observed how much GFH has to offer: biography, literature, and language. I begin with biography.

### **Biography and Ethical Judgement**

In 2004, as part of my day job as a lecturer in tertiary teaching and learning, I attended a TWN (Tertiary Writing Network) Colloquium. In the same month and

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<sup>593</sup> <http://www.brandeis.edu/about/> (accessed 27 January 2008).

<sup>594</sup> <http://www.communications.uwaterloo.ca/history/briefhistory.html> (accessed 27 January 2008).

<sup>595</sup> <http://www.ewenger.com/personal/index.htm> (Accessed 27 Jan 2008) The letter “In defense of goodwill – a community perspective” is dated: 2 Mar 2003.

the same city, I attended the Sociology Association of New Zealand's conference as part of my fieldwork for this thesis. Biography crept into both conferences.

TWN conferences attract scholars from diverse fields who have an interest in tertiary writing. The theme for the 2004 conference was "Writing for a Change" and writing biography is an endeavour that seeks to change the understandings of readers' about human subjects. It is also an activity without a home to call its own, so academics engaged with it must situate themselves in a presently recognised subject area.

### *Compassionate Truth*

At the TWN 2004 conference, I was pleased to find myself listening to a keynote address from Associate Professor Harry Ricketts from the Department of English, Film, Theatre and Media Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. He spoke about his experience as a biographer and about literary biography in general. He discussed speculation as part of the task of trying to bring central characters and their world to imaginative life, but without the writer of fiction's freedom to invent: "So speculation and conjecture are fine, but they must be backed up by some hard or at least reasonably plausible evidence."<sup>596</sup>

In his published paper, Harry Ricketts wrote about the biographical territory that

Our best-known literary biographer Michael King staked out for himself in his essay collection *Tread Softly for You Tread on My Life* (2001), particularly in the opening essay entitled 'Biography and the Compassionate Truth'. What King is concerned with here is the role of morality in biography. Should the 'ethical biographer' (his phrase) tell all? Are there circumstances in which material should be withheld? If so, what circumstances? Do the same rules apply for dead subjects as for living subjects?<sup>597</sup>

These are both areas of particular interest for genealogical family historians.

Geneals must exercise judgement when gathering, recording, and sharing biographical information: of the living and of the dead. Harry Ricketts ends his paper by quoting a literary biographer, and records what many Geneals *experience* about the kin they seek to get to know:

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<sup>596</sup> Harry Ricketts, "Some Dos and Don'ts of Literary Biography," in *Writing For a Change*, Conference Proceedings of the Tertiary Writing Network, 2-3 December 2004, Wellington edited by Derek Wallace (Wellington: 2004), 192.

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

What Holmes does or tries to do is immerse himself so fully in his subject, their life, their work, their period, that in this pursuit of the ‘living effect while remaining true to the dead fact’ a miraculous kind of imaginative jump occurs and the reader feels in touch with ‘that fleeting figure’ .... To bring the past alive in the present: that is the aim.<sup>598</sup>

At question time, when asked about someone’s work on a living person, Harry Ricketts revealed that he thought truth (in the sense of telling *all* discovered facts) was important. Some in the audience pointed out that when multiple people are involved in any biographical finding, there is potential for harm to an innocent third party through disclosure. It was not clear to me if the unspecified biographer in the mind of a questioner had been commissioned in some way to work on a biography, or if she or he had proceeded independently. In my opinion, the two scenarios would call for different ethical judgement.

This territory, of compassionate truth and of ‘moral engagement’, to apply Westhues’ term in this area, is of particular interest to those in the GFH Community who write family biographies or family histories. It will increasingly be important for those who communicate their conjecture and speculation about kin, in any way, in cyberspace: especially when discussing kin who are more closely related to others than to themselves. Individuals being identified in GFH family reconstruction are always individuals who have parents and ancestors and (usually) cousins of some degree; any of whom may have descendants, siblings and collateral kin. When seeking to tell the compassionate truth GFH researchers need the skills of judging *distance*: distances of time, place *and* of family relationship.<sup>599</sup>

Competent genealogical family historians become attuned to how well various speakers and writers take cognisance of the fact that subjects of biographies *belong in families*. I use those words here in contradistinction to Giddens’ families ‘living’ in households, and now add to my braided narrative some reflexive comment on my observations at the New Zealand sociology conference of 2004.

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<sup>598</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>599</sup> For example, we thought about and *spoke about* the probable suicide of one of Graeme’s great-great-great-great-grandparents, in Scotland in 1858, *differently* after meeting one of his great-granddaughters in New Zealand. Geneals understand the abbreviation 5xGtGrandparent, but I expand it here to make the point more forcibly.

## A GFH Challenge to Socio-Political Biography

At the 2004 SANZ conference there was a plenary session entitled “Connecting the Antipodes: working on Australia and New Zealand”. The conference notes were full of promise for my interest in cultural transmission:

The idea of aligning the experiences of New Zealand and Australia is as obvious as it is under exercised. How to compare and to connect, and to interpret cultural traffic across the Tasman without submerging or identifying two quite distinct sets of stories? This session brings together enthusiasts for these possibilities, with an eye especially to future research prospects.<sup>600</sup>

I might not have noticed that the panel, chaired by a man, consisted of five men, had not one panellist used the phrase ‘the man himself’ so many times during his allocated time. Darrell Bennetts spoke about his research into the man William Pember Reeves, who was born in Lyttleton, some weeks after the arrival of his parents in this country. That appeared to be the sum total of his genealogical research into the life of an important New Zealander, who, Mr Bennetts averred, ‘is owned too much by history in this country’. He refers to Reeves as an ‘Antipodean Social Scientist’ in a different conference paper, one with the following abstract:

William Pember Reeves was one of colonial New Zealand’s foremost public intellectuals. An administrator and theorist of the social laboratory, Reeves’ thought articulates the interests of both Imperial centre and colonial periphery. This paper will discuss the ways in which his thought connects the politics of colonial itinerant labour to the migration of British Imperial cultural values and ideas.<sup>601</sup>

At the plenary session at the 2004 conference, Mr Bennetts indicated he was surprised to find that William Pember Reeves looked not just to Britain, where he lived in later years; but had made frequent trips to Australia during his many years in New Zealand.

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<sup>600</sup> I quote from the Programme Notes for the SAANZ Conference, held 26-28 November 2004, Wellington.

<sup>601</sup> Darrell Bennetts, *Classical Modernity and Colonial Imagination: William Pember Reeves, Antipodean Social Scientist*, Abstract, The 6th Annual Conference of the International Social Theory Consortium, National University of Singapore, 2005. [www.fas.nus.edu.sg/soc/documents/abstracts.pdf](http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/soc/documents/abstracts.pdf) (accessed 6 February 2007).

I was surprised that he gave Mrs Maud Pember Reeves no more than a passing mention at a sociological conference, given her own public profile as a sociologist, and after the session asked the young social scientist what he knew about her. Very little, it transpired. I did not know much more: but I knew that a biography should not ignore a wife, nor their respective wider families, especially as she and her relatives had worked *with* her husband – the man himself.

That evening I spent an hour or so exploring the lives of William and Maud through the Internet and learned a number of facts which could have been of great interest to some at the conference gathered in Wellington. It was not particularly easy genealogical work – the peculiar use of the middle name Pember as a quasi-surname has fooled many into thinking it was Maud’s maiden name; her use of Maud instead of Magdalen has confused others; and *Google* decided that I must have meant ROBINSON when I carefully typed ROBISON. However there was plenty of material to sift through, and later I was able to supplement my initial findings from other resources.<sup>602</sup>

Magdalen Stuart ROBISON was born in Mudgee, New South Wales, Australia, on Christmas Eve 1865. Her parents, William Smoult ROBISON and Mary Magdalen SAUNDERS had married there: here was one *obvious possible* reason for some of the trips William Pember Reeves made across the Tasman. Although Maud’s parents were in New Zealand by 1868 when her father was manager of a Bank in Christchurch, there could well have been other affinal kin to visit. I have not taken the time to trace significant event dates for Maud’s relatives, to ascertain if some of the trips could have been to attend family funerals or weddings. That is beyond the purposes of this thesis. Nor is my purpose to criticise Mr Bennetts for what he did not know: it is to point out that he had *no desire to know*, no compulsion to find out, to seek to understand, to learn about his human subject *against family background*. I was not aware that any other attendees thought Mr Bennetts’ focus on the political man, *in isolation from his family*, in any way peculiar. No competent genealogical family historian could approach biography in this way.

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<sup>602</sup> My sources included on-line encyclopaedia, and CDs and microfiche produced by the NZSG.

A further comment in the context of the 2004 conference in Wellington: readily available biographical data reveals that Maud married at 19, and enrolled in a BA at Canterbury University College to study English, French and Mathematics *after* the birth of their first three children. Maud's studies and her work as 'lady editor' for the *Canterbury Times* were concurrent with her life as a mother, wife, daughter and sister. Her mother looked after Amber and Beryl<sup>603</sup> when Maud went with Ellen BALLANCE to England in 1894. Maud's sister Effie LASCELLES worked with her on the sociological survey of London poor. All this is the stuff of history and sociology and genealogical family history and gender studies. Why was it so lacking in a political-biographical study indicating an interest in cultural transmission? Maud could not continue with her university studies when her husband became a cabinet minister and they moved to Wellington in 1894, simply because the Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) did not then exist.<sup>604</sup>

Maud's family ties were not just in Australia and in Christchurch: one of her brothers was at one time private secretary to William Pember Reeves, the politician, in Wellington: something a socio-political scientist should want to know. He was Registrar of VUW from 1915-1945. All this might have been of interest to the 2004 conference held there: and the relationship of her brother's wife to writer Katherine Mansfield might intrigue others. As Lucy said in the interview, through GFH research you are taken in subterranean ways into the interactions and inter-connections of the time, which are more meaningful than the official political history. *Why* did someone so interested in William Pember Reeves, not look for such familial connections, and roles and relationships within both the wider family and the socio-political community?

I believe it is because GFH is not part of academia. The consequence is that GFH transdisciplinary knowledge is not presently aired in academia, let alone respected, used, and acknowledged there.

### *Biography of Occupational Groups*

Michael and I discussed differences and similarities between personal family history research, and our genealogical work for the BBD, on persons unrelated to

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<sup>603</sup> The first child lived only a few hours.

<sup>604</sup> Those who have made an art form of using life histories to 'prove' that all opportunities for women were controlled by a homogenous patriarchy could take note.

us. For Michael, one significant difference was the tendency of genealogical family historians to de-contextualise families in a different way: for some, a family can appear to have an existence solely within baptisms, marriages and burials, and without connection to other people in the world in which they lived:

People doing family genealogy- at times I feel that they are inside a family bubble, a bubble of their own family world and it is held together inside their own thoughts, and this bubble sort of rolls back through time and they look though the wall and take notes and then come back again. But I think the work we are doing on this area - it's not in a bubble because it's much more spread into the earth all the time. It's much more trying to read context, all the way, and less of the 'following my family'. I think this is really for me what the [BBD] project is all about - what sort of imprint have they left in the sand?

On the other hand, Michael has also noted how some biographers tend to ignore the fact that a human subject has parents and grandparents, and in-laws if married; and do not attempt to trace them.

My conjecture I think builds on fact [facts discovered through records in church archives, and through genealogical research], because the conjecture puts you in a realm of possibilities; and the possibilities, if you... have enough alert awareness in your recognition and discovery of facts then the conjectures start to come alive and you then start to fit them against possibilities....

But if you are going to write a biography, and not [find out about their families and their cohort], I think you have lost out on the meaning of the person in their time, and in their life influences.

There can be many strands of influence, from the kith and kin Michael seeks to find, and to place in a wider social context, on any person. He spoke of his disappointment when reading about a New Zealand architect whose clergyman father was mentioned, but, apparently, with little effort to discover wider family influences.<sup>605</sup>

When I obtained the book and read the brief biography of the architect for myself, I did not immediately notice what Michael had sensed; but after applying GFH methods I realised three things. First, this was a book about an architect and architecture, and the chapter heading: "Clere's life – a heritage transplanted" probably referred to architectural, not family heritage. Second, the genealogical

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<sup>605</sup> Susan Maclean, *Architect of the Angels: the Churches of Frederick de Jersey Clere* (Wellington: Steele Roberts, 2002).

details given at the beginning and in an appendix entitled “Clere family tree” are typical of the mix found in such works: some oral history of past generations and charted knowledge of the descendants of the human subject; combined with some evidence discovered in the course of excellent research into the chosen topic.

In this book, the oral history of the past includes the names of the architect’s father and mother and four surviving siblings; the name of the mother’s father (and his occupation), and comment on how the name de Jersey came into the family. After some genealogical investigation of my own, another realisation dawned. I began to wonder if more was known than was recorded, and if tactfulness was a guiding principle for this one page of family background.

Michael reiterated that his aim with the BBD is *not* to produce a ‘family tree’ (ancestors and descendants) for each of his subjects. When we discussed his policy of tracing back no further than to grandparents, he explained further:

It is not just a stacking up the generations, in an historical quest for long, long lines. The line does not matter so much. You allow each place, and each time and each grouping to show what it can show you for its own reasons rather than for them being a stepping stone to rushing back a generation.

Michael records the parents and grandparents of both the clerical subject, *and* if married, his or her spouse or spouses (Bertaux’s rectangular window of genealogical observation).<sup>606</sup> He thus focuses on seven individuals in each human subject’s family, and a further 14 (or more)<sup>607</sup> if the subject was married. He does not record great-grandparents even when famous or worthy of infamy. He does not record all children and grandchildren either, although he and I may trace them to help establish desired data: the genealogical hermeneutic of going back to come forward, and vice versa.

If a human subject is not yet hasped to parents, then Michael will record known or likely siblings in his work-in-progress files, until parentage is discovered or confirmed. His disappointment over Henry CLERE, therefore, is because for BBD

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<sup>606</sup> Bertaux, *Current Sociology* 43, 2/3: 76.

<sup>607</sup> When any of the subjects, or their spouses, or parents or grandparents married more than once, Michael records data for additional in-laws.

purposes, data is missing for 11 of 14 people: (or more, if any one of them married more than once), as I suspect.<sup>608</sup>

Another key difference we discussed was the number of human subjects researched, with respect to persons migrating to and at some time living and working in Aotearoa-New Zealand. While my personal research into the lives of my children's *emigrating* ancestors (and some of their siblings and first cousins) centres on about 30 individuals, their ancestors, and their tens of thousands of descendants and affinal kin, Michael had, at the time, more than 1500 individual subjects in his database, the majority of whom were migrants. Therefore, the trends and patterns he has noticed are from a much larger sample of migrants. He believes his methodology would be suited to an analysis of other occupational groups:

I really do think if I had been a teacher, or a chemist, or a GP, - if I'd been professionally involved in that way I could just as validly have responded to that professional group as I have to the clergy, I really do. I think the same pleasure in discovery and contribution to the history or raw material for historical analysis in our nation's story is provided by any such study. I am able to do the clergy - but it could have been pharmaceutical chemists.

I note that Michael identifies the need to be professionally involved with an occupational group studied this way. He agreed that he is exploring himself and his own choices in doing such work. I commented to Michael that:

I see a parallel with the ability of a family member to research his/her own family and be able to say almost by instinct: yes, that seems to hold true for my family; and you being able to say: yes, that resonates, that's possible, that's likely. It seems to me there's a similarity there in being an insider.

This conversation presents a challenge to research paradigms based on a distrust of the use of individual, personal data as evidence, or on an assumption that outsiders will always conduct 'better' research.

Many of Michael's clergy subjects were born into clergy families. I asked him if there were any of his subjects who illustrated Bertaux's perception that children can choose to reject family expectations. I had in mind some of Paul Thompson's specific comments, in their jointly edited book, such as: "The assumption in

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<sup>608</sup> GFH method also questioned speculation in the book about the dating of family migrations, within England.

family systems theory that influence can be handed down *either* through imitation *or* through rejection of a previous generation's pattern is particularly important". Thompson argues there that, "It is equally important to recognize that most families offer not just a single tradition, but a choice of models."<sup>609</sup> Michael answered my question indirectly by discussing one clergyman for whom he could not find *any parents*.

He left such a trail of destruction, argument, and impersonation wherever he went - into his 80s he was writing letters of complaint for something or other. He had a meteoric career, but never stopped; until his death the meteor continued - flaming around the world: two wives, four continents and on he went - and remained elusive as to his parentage. I found him a brother, I found him a sister-in-law, I found all sorts of people around him; and then my colleague in Australia said: 'We've decided that he must have been illegitimate and therefore, in the terms of the day, he [should not have been] ordained.'

This exceptional human subject might, therefore have been affected by a family situation not often encountered in this project, for that reason. Michael continued to consider his colleague's conjecture, saying:

Now I would like to know, and I don't know the answer, when did the rule [about illegitimacy as a bar to ordination] change and how strictly was the law interpreted, and how much was it thought to represent the mind of the church of the day - or the society of the day? Those are the sorts of social questions that do become ancillary to the whole pattern - but they are contributors to the picture, and I'd like to know - because he stands out as so different in every way.

Michael added that he also wants to know the hobbies of his subjects too. "In the obituaries you sometimes get a clue to the hobbies of the late priest and I put them in if they are interesting, and they often are, because some things recur, and some things are unexpected." We then discussed the hobby of a fictional cleric in *Barchester Towers*,<sup>610</sup> for Vesey Stanhope spent much time chasing butterflies in Italy until a new Bishop demanded he come home and do some work. We agreed (drawing on our combined insider knowledge) that both these characters were very likely to have come from real people known to Trollope, writing fiction set in such a milieu.

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<sup>609</sup> Paul Thompson, "Family Myth, Models, and Denials" in Bertaux and Thompson, *Between Generations*, 32-33.

<sup>610</sup> Anthony Trollope, *Barchester Towers*, (1857; repr. London: Penguin Classics, 1987), 85.

I now turn to some literary figures, to explore how GFH can present a challenge to literary critics to revise or confirm their criticism and appreciation of the skills and knowledge of creators of fiction.

### **GFH and Literary Criticism and Appreciation**

Jane Austen creates a believable character in *Pride and Prejudice* in Mrs Bennet who bewails the injustice of the laws of entail<sup>611</sup> - laws that will turn her and her daughters out of their home if she is widowed. Austen herself understands the law, as well as its ramifications, and allows Jane and Elizabeth Bennet the intelligence to do the same. As a genealogical family historian, I sought elucidation of entail law, because I could not fathom why the heir, Mr Collins, bore a different surname from Mr Bennet. I had assumed strict male primogeniture would prevail, as in the British royal line of succession (with religious affiliation exceptions).

Eventually I found the answer, not in conventional academic sources, but from a website devoted to anything to do with Jane Austen: a discussion and information forum known as “The Republic of Pemberley.”<sup>612</sup> A contributor informed the forum that *that* particular male entail worked differently. Property did not go to the daughters in the generation where male posterity had failed: instead, the family line is traced right back to the time of the original will, and then succession proceeds through the eldest sister of the first heir.<sup>613</sup> Austen would have known the nature of the entail, and is thus not in error in naming Mr Collins as the legitimate heir.

However, I do not consider Austen has the *focus* of a genealogical family historian. Take the Lucas family in *Pride and Prejudice*. There is a considerable age gap between Charlotte and her sister Maria and their younger brothers. As genealogist I automatically wonder if there were infant deaths, or if Sir William

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<sup>611</sup> Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 23, 54-55.

<sup>612</sup> “The Republic of Pemberley” at <http://www.pemberley.com/> (accessed February 13, 2007) When I first accessed the website it stated bluntly that academics were not welcome. I took this to mean that the tyranny of expertism might spoil their enjoyment of their created world. The ban has since been lifted.

<sup>613</sup> This is also a good example of one of the purposes of some antiquarian and contemporary genealogy: tracing legal heirs.

Lucas has married twice, making Charlotte an older half-sister. Austen does not comment on the age gap, leaving me with the impression that it is just for the literary convenience of having Charlotte depicted as an ‘old maid’, rushing to marry Mr Collins. It also puzzles me that Charlotte and Elizabeth are particular friends when there is 10 years between them: though I might account for that by acknowledging the smallness of the village, and Elizabeth’s intelligence and maturity.

I can understand the lack of some familial reality in Austen’s works - her novels stop short of children being born to the main characters, for bringing about marriages is the focus of Austen’s plots, and her style is to keep characters to a minimum. Some Austen devotees found this unsatisfying. They contributed sequels (of dubious literary quality) to the fore-mentioned web site. Austen herself had left notes about how she saw the futures of Mary and Kitty, an indication of her awareness of this element of Bakhtin’s unfinalizability.

However, I cannot understand why, in *Pride and Prejudice*, when Mrs Bennet’s brother and his wife make their customary Christmas visit to the Bennets, there is no mention of the young Gardiner children.<sup>614</sup> Who was looking after them? Surely, Christmas was not a time affectionate parents would leave their four young children with servants. Jane had taken charge of them at Longbourne when Elizabeth accompanied her uncle and aunt on a summer tour to the North. I conclude that Austen does not think in genealogical and familial detail: she introduces or foregrounds children only when needed for the plot. They were probably there, but did not need to be mentioned. The same applies to many human subjects of GFH research: they exist, but are not mentioned, in past records, or present written and oral discourse, for a variety of reasons.

Literary critics could add to their appreciation of Austen’s literary skills if they realised that Mrs Bennet shows further realistic *partial* understanding at the end of the novel. She is overcome by thoughts of Elizabeth’s new social status, and speaks of Darcy and Elizabeth needing a special licence.<sup>615</sup> Austen, a daughter

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<sup>614</sup> Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 124-130.

<sup>615</sup> *Ibid.*, 337. A *special* licence from the Archbishop of Canterbury was not needed, for Elizabeth was marrying in her home parish and so fulfilling the residency requirements. They could have married by banns or by *ordinary* licence: more minutiae acquired or needed by GFH researchers.

and a sister of clergymen, would have known the legal and social facts about marriage licences; and how complicated it can be for those involved to understand what canon law requires.

Austen's novels have had a number of film versions, and as Gandy has pointed out, there is potential to gain impressions of the historical and geographical backgrounds of real families through this medium.<sup>616</sup> In the interview, Bruce spoke about watching television and films for the geographic settings rather than the plot. Members of the SELMAN CoG have commented similarly,<sup>617</sup> especially on the use of the village of Lacock and its Abbey: in a film version of *Pride and Prejudice*, for the *Antiques Roadshow*, and for the Harry Potter series. The village of Lacock now belongs to the National Trust who seek to keep it as much as it would have been in times past: an ideal place for filming historical drama.

#### *Filmic Licence*

Andrew Davies, of *A Very Peculiar Practice*<sup>618</sup> fame was the scriptwriter for a BBC production of *Pride and Prejudice*. He does not think in accurate genealogical-familial detail. The Gardiner children, the four little cousins of the Bennet girls are portrayed exactly as in the novel regarding age and gender, but he has Jane write to Lizzie about what dear exhausting little children their “nephews and nieces” are. The main point of this Austen novel is that all the Bennet girls are unwed – and *there are no nieces or nephews*. Genealogical family historians are familiar with families that span cohort generations. Davies might think children of the same generation should be very close in age.

Another of his errors in the BBC film also concerns the Gardiner family. When Lizzie introduces her uncle and aunt to Mr Darcy, Andrew Davies has her saying: “This is my aunt, in whose home Jane stayed when in London”, but it is *not* Mrs Gardiner who is her blood relative. In the novel, Mr Gardiner is a deliberate contrast to his sister, Lizzie's mother, as a vehicle for indicating that educating sons and not daughters was a practice with significant consequences for *both* men and women. The implication is that Mrs Bennet has suffered from her lack of

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<sup>616</sup> Gandy, *Bound for Canterbury 2000*, 11

<sup>617</sup> This was a CoG email thread in October 2006.

<sup>618</sup> Davies, *A Very Peculiar Practice*. Sevenoaks Kent: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988. His production of the *Pride and Prejudice* television series was made in 1995.

early education, and has passed on her empty-headedness to some of her daughters, while her own brother is one relative Lizzie may safely introduce to the well-educated master of Pemberley. This understanding is lost when Davies makes Mrs Gardiner the blood relative. Further, there is no indication that young Mrs Gardiner was of higher status than Edward Gardiner – and so Lizzie would not refer to the Gardiner’s London residence as her aunt’s home, as Davies has her do, but as her uncle’s home, especially when he is present.

A more recent film version has made Mrs Gardiner far too old – her faintness at Pemberley, that made her take her husband’s arm, was most likely caused by another pregnancy. Jane and Elizabeth Bennet express Austen’s awareness of GFH fertility factors, Elizabeth worrying that their uncle has “distressed himself” financially, to arrange Lydia’s hasty marriage; and Jane saying: “He has children of his own, and may have more. How could he spare half of ten thousand pounds?”<sup>619</sup>

### **A GFH Challenge to Literary Biographers**

Steven Johnson mentions the novelist George Eliot using web imagery as “shorthand for a moment in time, a way of evoking an era and its particular obsessions” in her case as “a way of understanding social struggles”.<sup>620</sup>

*Mary Ann/e EVANS/ [LEWES]/CROSS aka George ELIOT*

Sources in cyberspace were disappointing in the sense that knowledge of familial aspects of the life of George ELIOT was not well researched or understood.

One critic commented that she was left little in her father’s will (implying it related to a falling out between them when she did not want to attend church). But, says the Geneal: he could bequeath only personal estate: not heritable or customary right to real estate; and, who was alive at the time of his death, and how did Mary Anne come to be recorded as ‘an annuitant’ on the census after his death. Using methodology learned and practised as a collaborative CoG researcher

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<sup>619</sup> Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 268-269.

<sup>620</sup> Johnson, *Emergence: the connected lives of ants, brains, cities and software*, 22-23.

I discovered, without cost,<sup>621</sup> that after the death of Mary Anne's de facto husband George LEWES she married John CROSS (who probably had the middle name of Walter – and been married previously) under the names of both Mary Ann EVANS and George ELIOT. She named a son of George LEWES as her executor when she died soon after, leaving nearly three million dollars in today's money.<sup>622</sup>

### *Thomas Middleton*

During my MA studies, I analysed all the family relationships represented or mentioned in the many plays of Thomas Middleton (1580-1627). At the time, I was surprised that no literary critics had drawn out certain implications surrounding Middleton's own marriage.

A brief life of Thomas Middleton states that, "He was the son of a bricklayer who had been raised to the status of a gentleman",<sup>623</sup> revealing a woeful ignorance of meanings behind the terms used to denote an occupation in conjunction with freedom of the city through membership of a livery company. (See Chapter 5) That prized freedom meant permission to set up a business or trade. The armigerous William Middleton might be described as a property developer today. The influence of his widow, and her second husband, a grocer (a failed importer/distributor) on her son Thomas is well documented. So is Thomas's marriage to London-born "Magdalen (Mary) Marbecke (1575-1628), granddaughter of the famous Protestant musician John Marbecke and niece of the chief physician to Elizabeth I, Roger Marbecke. She was the daughter and co-heir of Edward Marbecke (d. 1581) one of Six Clerks in the Court of Chancery." Her brother, actor Thomas Marbecke (b. 1577) was working for the Admirals Men in 1602," as was Thomas Middleton.<sup>624</sup>

Literary critics have accepted that Middleton collaborated with many other men (including Shakespeare) but do not seem to have considered that Middleton might have written some of his plays and masques *with* his educated wife. My reading of his sudden maturation in dramatic writing skill soon after his marriage, is that he

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<sup>621</sup> My sources were the FreeBMB site accessible via my computer and UK Probate Abstracts, on microfiche, available at the National Library in Wellington, and elsewhere.

<sup>622</sup> New Zealand dollars. Another essential GFH tool is a currency converter.

<sup>623</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Middleton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Middleton) (accessed 3 April 2008).

<sup>624</sup> I quote from the Oxford Middleton Project: <http://thomasmiddleton.org> (accessed 3 April 2008).

benefited, *at least*, from dialogic conversations with his wife and her family: not just from ‘contacts’ through them. There may be no evidence, but I conjecture that he at least read some scenes with her or to her; and discussed characterisation of his many female characters. The GFH strategy of drawing up a chronology for key people and family events, also alerted me to the possibility that Thomas may have had some half-siblings.

Genealogical family history thus challenges all literary critics and biographers to *genealogically* check and consider both facts and assumptions, about their human subjects who belong to *families of extension*.

### **GFH, Language and Socio-Linguistics**

The challenge here is to all Genealogical Family Historians, and to teachers of Language in the wider Community. For most, this means the English Language in all its many dialects, accents and forms over many years. I have touched on the complications of tracing kin who spoke other languages in Chapter 4. There are two areas where GFH research can challenge the skills and understandings of Geneals for whom English is their first language.

#### *The Challenge to Use Precise Language*

The English language has the capacity to use the indefinite article (a / an) to mean only one, *or* to mean one representing many. My contribution to the scholarship of application includes an endeavour to be precise with my use of articles. The concept of ‘a family biography’ remains useful for making clear the distinction between genealogical family history and the history of ‘the’ family, or the sociology of ‘the’ family. A book with *The Wiltshire Strattons* in its title is claiming too much when I cannot find *my* STRATTONS, also of Wiltshire, mentioned in it.<sup>625</sup> The difference between referring to ‘a family’ and ‘the family’ is a very important aspect of conceptualisation within and about the field.

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<sup>625</sup> Richard Flower Stratton, *A History of the Wiltshire Strattons*, (Castle Cary, Somerset: Castle Cary Press, 1987). The author acknowledges that he has incorporated most of *The Wiltshire Strattons*, written by James Stratton of Chilcombe Winchester, in 1902, into his own book.

Another element in the discourse of the GFH field is the use of personal pronouns, especially possessive ones. Whereas in Te Reo Māori ‘we’ are forced to decide if ‘we’ includes or excludes the person or persons *spoken to*: in English ‘we’ can cause misunderstanding with ‘our’ less helpful language in this regard: claiming ancestors as if they do not also belong to thousands of others, both known and not known to us.

My ‘fairly successful’ example in Chapter 1 illustrates the need to know and *accept* that language changes, if seeking to know past kin as people. Some words fall into disuse; new words are invented. Old meanings of words change - some subtly, others inexplicably. Some lose the original link with their derivation: an auditor is now more likely to *read* than to *hear* explanations - but still makes judgements. I recently found a potential ancestor said to be a ‘broker’ in the 1740s. GFH habitual caution, and further research and weighing of evidence led me to realise he was a pawnbroker, not a stockbroker.<sup>626</sup>

GFH researchers often consult booklets about old trades, if a modern dictionary does not help. FHS Journals sometimes publish what the recorded causes of death on certificates of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century might mean today. Many Lists answer questions from ‘newbies’ who meet words no longer in common use: relict and message, for example. Details included in death notices and obituaries change over time. Ways of expressing attitudes to illnesses and causes of death have changed too.

Scholars in the fields of socio-linguistics and discourse analysis could contribute a great deal to the understandings of Genealogical Family Historians; and could find an unending supply of GFH linguistic puzzles waiting to be solved, that could contribute to their own field.

There is one further challenge I have considered in the course of this thesis. The whole transdisciplinary field of genealogical family history research presents an *epistemological challenge* to the academic community, with respect to the canon of current academic subjects, as presently configured. I take up the ramifications of this challenge in Chapter 10.

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<sup>626</sup> If I eventually hasp John YARP to one of my family groups, I will record on my charts the remarriage of his widow to a Frenchman who was soon after found guilty of bigamy, and sentenced to be branded rather than transported or hanged - because he was a ‘gentleman’.

## Chapter 10

### The Epistemological Challenge: on which Door should GFH Knock?

Countries recently settled, such as Australia and New Zealand, do offer a unique sociological opportunity to look at the way in which new social, religious, legal and government structures and records are developed, implemented and enforced.<sup>627</sup>

When analysing the proceedings of the Perth Congress, I had considerable difficulty ascertaining who among the presenters held full-time paid jobs in spheres apparently unrelated to GFH; who were professional genealogists; and who undertook GFH as a leisure pursuit - even though I had attended and presented myself. There were 41 offerings, mainly from various genealogists; but others from oral historians, a publisher; a filmmaker; archivists; librarians; a conservator; and a worker at a cultural heritage research institute. Some presenters were concurrently employed in universities, but they were not easy to place in traditional subject departments from the content of their papers. Alan Grey, whose words I quote above, is described as a scientist from Christchurch, yet the topic of this paper was the keeping of records. He presented two refereed papers: one on surnames in pre-18<sup>th</sup> century Sweden, and one on what can be learned of social networks and family life from probate records: evidence of his GFH horizon of interest at that time. Alan Grey thus demonstrates the transdisciplinarity of GFH research, and some recognition of the scholarly nature of it. Why then, does the GFH discourse remain outside academia?

### Why is GFH Not Yet Studied in New Zealand Universities?

I believe there are some general and specific reasons why GFH has not moved from its current position into academia, why it remains a pastime or hobby *and* a field of serious study; a CoP, and more than a CoP: a transdisciplinary field and endeavour. I address the general reasons first.

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<sup>627</sup> Alan R. Grey, "Record Keeping in a New Land," in *Let Records Speak*, vol. 1, Proceedings of the 9<sup>th</sup> Australasian Congress on Genealogy and Heraldry, 27 September-1 October 2000, Perth, Western Australia. (Perth: AFHHO/Western Australian Genealogical Society, 2000), 305-327.

### *An Inevitable Vicious Circle*

I asked myself: What prevents *any* emergent discipline, or any transdisciplinary field of study from claiming a place in the academy? The most obvious answer is that the claimant has not yet attained a place. It is not there simply because it is not there: a self-perpetuating vicious circle requiring human agency to break it.

I believe that the primary reason for the present status of GFH is lack of knowledge where it matters. As Shown Mills has demonstrated, many competent Geneals do not advertise their leisure study of GFH among librarians and archivists; and I have noticed more than a few who work in academia who could be described as closet Geneals. This is a consequence of the legacy of past attitudes. Some in positions of policy-changing power have not yet divested themselves of such attitudes. One said to me, after I had embarked on this thesis: “Oh are *you* into *that*?” I am still not sure if she was criticising me, or GFH, or both – or was just surprised that I should have an academic interest in a field so often belittled.

The ignorance is not all in one direction. Many of those within the Community, including some in leadership roles, have been ignorant of benefits that could accrue from GFH becoming part of academia, and have not considered the possibility. Also, the way the Community itself has developed has masked the considerable *academic* input from many already active within the Community with prior or concurrent tertiary learning: they find the GFH Community to be *another* place for intellectual activity and satisfaction and contribute from their other fields, sometimes unconsciously. GFH encompasses many points of view and tertiary-educated Geneals who become enduring core members of the Community tend to focus on GFH as a transdisciplinary endeavour, not on their first or current discipline, when speaking to, or writing for other Geneals, as Alan Grey has done.

### *Vested Interests*

Leaving aside difficulties of epistemological placement, and allowing for natural inertia or resistance to innovation, there is also the possibility of vested interests militating against admission of any ‘new’ subject or field to consider. When, for example, new languages seek admission to a university’s teaching curriculum,

those who presently teach a language fear loss of student numbers. Who would fear GFH as a ‘competitor’? Those who teach in what they believe to be aligned fields? In my opinion, because GFH is an activity that draws from so many areas, any loss would be across many subjects, and Geneals wishing to major in GFH at university (including mature students who might not otherwise enrol) would increase overall numbers, and enlarge the classes of the supporting subjects they would choose.

Concerns may be at a higher level: universities might not wish to admit a field that does not neatly fit into a current area, and one that might not immediately attract government funding. A new subject would cost money: human resources, library books and microforms, and access to web-based resources. As well as these factors faced by any aspiring discipline or field of study, GFH has some further specific characteristics that militate against admission.

### **Disciplinarity: GFH and History Sub-sets**

Where among the schools, faculties, departments and other divisions would GFH be placed? Would the myth of it being a sub-set of a sub-set of history (see below) prevail among those ignorant of key differences? Would an emergent discipline like Library and Information Science see value (for itself) in a joint assault? I know I am being anthropomorphic: it is the *collective* ignorance or interests of individuals that values and judges and acts as gatekeeper.

### *Teaching*

Who would teach GFH? How could personal research into real families be *assessed* when some identification and reconstruction is so straightforward, while other researchers have individuals so difficult to discover, identify and place? How would the essential spirit of sharing, and an individual choice of topics and methods be retained? I address these issues further in my concluding chapter.

### *Who Has Tried to Stake a Claim?*

In the publication to mark the first 25 years of existence of the NZSG, the last page has two headings: “In the Genealogical World” and “The Volunteer as the

Society's Unsung Hero".<sup>628</sup> In the first, it is noted that the NZSG was the first overseas member of the FFHS, in 1977, a foundation member of AFFHO in 1978, and had representatives at the inaugural ARANZ meeting, and good relationships with government departments and with various institutions. "A particular opportunity to support more academic study came when the History Department of Massey University offered a course in the history of the family." The Society sponsored a prize for the best essay, for some years.<sup>629</sup>

Australian Nicholas John Vine Hall (1944-2006), recorded his intentions in the proceedings of an AFFHO congress:

Other specialized fields of history that we genealogists often come into contact with are legion.... The branches of history I hear mentioned most often are biography, ancient history, military history, naval history, art history, church history, social history, historical demography, architectural history, genetics, medical history and local history. The curious thing is that family history is one of the few branches of history that has not yet become established as an academic discipline in its own right within our universities.... Well! We are working on it!<sup>630</sup>

The Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies (AIGS) website, in an obituary, informs that:

Nick commenced his full time role as genealogist and family and maritime historian at the age of 26 years when he became Director of the Society of Australian genealogists in Sydney. For 27 years he was 'Resident Genealogist' on ABC radio stations, reaching an estimated one million listeners. He published many works on genealogy, family history and maritime history. He was the major driving force in saving the Australian Census.<sup>631</sup>

Before he took up his GFH way of life and career, Nick Vine Hall worked in sales and marketing for a sugar company. He was therefore pressing claims for recognition of GFH, as a branch of history, *from outside* academia.

Elizabeth Shown Mills, whose publications and ideas I have engaged with elsewhere in this thesis, has also tried to have GFH accepted by academia. In cyberspace, another American Genealogist engaged with a letter Shown Mills wrote in

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<sup>628</sup> Bruce Ralston and Kay Guthrie, compilers, *New Zealand Society of Genealogists: 1967-1992*, (Auckland: NZSG, 1992).

<sup>629</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>630</sup> Nick Vine Hall, "Genealogy and the Writing of History" in *Bridging the Generations*, Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> Australasian Congress on Genealogy and Heraldry, 8-11 May 1986, Canberra, compiled by Geoffrey Burkhardt and Peter Proctor (Canberra: The Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra, 1986), 391-392.

<sup>631</sup> <http://www.aigs.org.au/nickvinehall.htm> (accessed 5 November 2007).

2007, where she stated: "As a genealogist, I have spent 30 years arguing the value of family history as a scholarly discipline, a profession".<sup>632</sup> The letter was in response to an article: "The Family Tree, Pruned: its Lure is Powerful - but Genealogy is Meaningless, Relatively" by one Richard Conniff (pedigree as yet unknown) - an article that *The Smithsonian* had published in its July 2007 issue. The cover page had used the words "Why Genealogy is Bunk", and both Randy Seavill and Elizabeth Shown Mills were responding to the article, and to the cover. Shown Mills' letter continued, "What Richard Conniff mocks and excoriates in his essay ("The Family Tree, Pruned") is not genealogy. It is "family tree climbing" of the basest ilk and posturing by non-genealogists who have not bothered to learn the difference between fanciful claims and reliable research."<sup>633</sup> Shown Mills refers here to the lowest of her three categories of genealogists: tree climbers, traditional genealogists and generational historians.<sup>634</sup>

Randy Seavill claims to be "a native San Diegan, a graduate of San Diego State University, a retired aerospace engineer, a genealogist and a family guy".<sup>635</sup> He does not make it clear if he has read all the many books and scholarly articles by Shown Mills, but he certainly grasps what I consider a major problem with her categorisation of genealogical family historians, in his response to her letter:

It strikes me that most of us start out as "family tree climbers" grabbing every branch and leaf on our ancestral tree to find names of relatives. Then most of us figure out that we'd better write down our sources and organize our collection of names, relationships, dates and places, and we gradually become "genealogists." This then stimulates our desire to find out more about these people and the times they lived in, and we become "family historians." Throughout this process we continually learn more about history, sociology, law, research techniques, etc. and move from a casual tree climber to an addicted family history researcher.

I am still, in many ways, a "Family Tree Climber." I enjoy the hunt for new ancestors.... Most of us do. But I am also a Genealogist and a Family Historian because I go beyond the "name search" to flesh out my ancestor's life as best I can from reputable sources.<sup>636</sup>

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<sup>632</sup> I quote from her letter to the editor of *The Smithsonian Magazine* September 2007 that Randy Seavill posted to <http://randysmusings.blogspot.com>, 29 August 2007 (accessed 8 October 2007).

<sup>633</sup> Ibid.

<sup>634</sup> Shown Mills, "Genealogy in the Information Age: History's New Frontier," 272.

<sup>635</sup> <http://randysmusings.blogspot.com>, (accessed 8 October 2007).

<sup>636</sup> Ibid.

### *Pre-Judging Competence*

I left my discussion of some competence issues until Chapter 8, until after I had scoped the variety and complexity that is the field and the practice of GFH. Shown Mills has no doubt met a few Geneals who do not have the interest or competence to ever go beyond collecting occurrences of a few of their ancestral names. I recall a man telling all in an FHC how many thousands of names he now had 'in his computer'. He was learning the technology of how to capture data from the IGI, using software that saved time and transcription errors. I suspect that he lacked the skills, at the time, to make accurate linkages between the captured names, but I could not know from my observation if he was going home to attempt to do so. Nor can I know if he has *since* learned all that is necessary for identifying individuals and reconstructing families.

One problem with Shown Mills' categories is that she judges beginners, *and* the less competent, *and* those, who like Randy Seavill, enjoy the hunt for 'new' ancestors, to be the same. She places them all in her tree-climbing category, and *leaves them there*. Similarly, she does not allow her 'traditionalists' to be called generational historians of families, even though they are learning some history of some families of interest: generation after generation.

All those who proceed from GFH interest to GFH *practice* must 'collect' and *identify* named individuals. We cannot avoid it. Shown Mills knows but does not explicitly acknowledge that names are essential building blocks for every genealogical family historian, and we must discover them before possible kin can be linked to known kin: to those we prove to be kin by her own weight of evidence methodology. Only then can we set them in their backgrounds or context. She seems to criticise those who prefer to discover information about as many kin as possible rather than to write 'histories' about a few; but she *cannot know* the extent of the scholarship of integration achieved by all those studying their many family groups in order to reconstruct them accurately, *and then* to flesh out their lives.

I gave some history, in Chapter 1, of my experience of hearing and seeing published GFH research criticised because it did not conform to expectations of Historians. That was not an isolated set of events. In 1995, a second TGLT essay

competition was held. Whereas the 1990 essays had been for writing *family biography*, in 1995 there were five ‘themes’: children, women, occupation, rural life and urban life. Only 24 entered. I suspect many could not *divide* families of three or more generations into one of these categories. I was among them. It seemed to me that the term ‘family history’ was being used as a synonym for the history of the family life of some related individuals (in the minds of those organising the competition). The judge, a historian, found them well-written and well-researched, but commented that:

Family histories should always be structured around a theme or argument, and should attempt to illustrate some aspect of New Zealand life which is important in the wider social history of the country, because it can then make an extremely valuable contribution to our knowledge of the past.<sup>637</sup>

Many New Zealand families of extension are rural *and* urban, and encompass a variety of occupations. Those were History’s 1995 themes. Sargisson seemed unaware that GFH is a *different* subject. I tend to view women, and children, and men, as individuals and family members, not as categories, and as individual family members influenced by many other people and situations. At the 2007 NZSG conference, just before the after-dinner debate, on the topic that ‘Historians take Genealogists Seriously’, Dr Jock Phillips remarked, almost *sotto voce*, that they are different subjects.

Randy Seavill understands that Geneals can have horizons of interest that change frequently. I believe that the main problem with Shown Mills’ attempts to have GFH accepted as a scholarly discipline, is epistemological: her desire is to be accepted *as an historian*: as what she calls a ‘generational historian’ meaning a specialist *within* the discipline of history. This is despite her description of genealogy, in her letter, as an “adjunct to medicine and law and a personal exploration of past societies”.

Her attempts are thus doomed to failure, not least because the letters she most often uses after her name (CG, CGL, FASG), *for very valid reasons*<sup>638</sup> are not ones recognised in academia by the discipline of History. I did not include a run

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<sup>637</sup> Patricia Sargisson, “Judge’s Report,” *New Zealand Genealogist* 239 (1996): 192-193.

<sup>638</sup> Certified Genealogist, Certified Genealogical Lecturer, Fellow of the American Society of Genealogists. See <http://www.ancestry.com/learn/library/article.aspx?article=10370> (accessed 13 April 2008).

of any of the journals that Shown Mills puts forward, in my initial document analysis: because migration between the United States of America and New Zealand has never been systematic or voluminous. However, some of those journals do find their way to Aotearoa-New Zealand: an issue of the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly: a Journal for Today's Family Historian* was on display at our National Library recently (2008).<sup>639</sup>

Shown Mills' use of the word "adjunct" leads me to a discussion of an earlier American attempt to place GFH in academia, one in which she was also involved. In 1986 Robert M. Taylor Jr. and Ralph S. Crandall compiled a volume of articles written by scholars from a variety of fields, scholars who also practiced - or at least understood, some genealogical methods and intentions.<sup>640</sup> The editors were said to be "professional historians who have worked closely with genealogists and the results of their work", and members of the Indiana Historical Society and the New England Historic Genealogy Society respectively.

This volume sought to argue for the contribution genealogical research can make "to 'new' social history [with its] due attention to the lives and institutions of common folk." The "description and analysis of family historical development" is seen to intersect "with other subfields of social history".<sup>641</sup>

In their preface Taylor and Crandall stated that "the family is being accorded its rightful place as a significant variable in the evolution of society" and that, "another group, largely outside the classroom, has been engaged in the genealogical reconstruction of families". They note the "substantial upsurge of practitioners in the 1970s" and the "extraordinary expansion of socio-historical research in [their] colleges and universities."<sup>642</sup>

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<sup>639</sup> The *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Volume 93, No 3, September 2007, includes articles on some of my topics of interest: genealogy and law; and the records created by various church groups, for example.

<sup>640</sup> Robert M. Taylor Jr. and Ralph S. Crandall, eds., *Generations and Change: Genealogical Perspectives in Social History*, (Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1986).

<sup>641</sup> *Ibid.*, introduction, xi.

<sup>642</sup> *Ibid.*, xi-xii.

Robert Charles Anderson, in a chapter about the place of genealogy in the curriculum of the social sciences<sup>643</sup> picks up the theme of the “barrier of misunderstanding and mistrust between genealogists and virtually all varieties of academic researchers that has led on too many occasions to the misuse of genealogical materials by scholars not sufficiently skilled in genealogy.”<sup>644</sup> He surveys relationships and reasons for the barriers noting how the field (from his viewpoint) became “dominated by amateurs”.<sup>645</sup> This writer then compares genealogy with mathematics, the queen of subjects, for he contends that both “concern themselves with relations among a group of basic elements” and that “they may be studied for their own sake (pure) or for their value in studying other subjects (applied); and they range across many subject areas”.<sup>646</sup> However he defines genealogy narrowly, saying “it studies only one type of relationship, the biological and marital relationships among individuals” and so argues for a position analogous to a branch of mathematics, “a princess of the social sciences... not so exalted... but ... a great advance on being a handmaiden.”<sup>647</sup>

Many of those contributing to this book, despite their considerable contribution to the history of attitudes towards GFH, appeared to be afflicted by what I call the subset syndrome.

### *The Subset Syndrome*

Nick Vine Hall is not the only influential Geneal who has unquestioningly assumed GFH to be a sub-set of history in general. This myth is believed and expounded even by academics long accustomed to GFH research. When Geoffrey Burkhardt, a lecturer in Education and a long-time prominent member of the wider Community spoke at the Melbourne Congress in 2003, about his extensive work on Schools of Arts and Mechanics Institutes, he twice stressed that Family History is a subset of Local History.<sup>648</sup> The genealogical research that informed his conference paper seems to have been concentrated on one place where just one

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<sup>643</sup> Robert Charles Anderson, “The Place of Genealogy in the Curriculum of the Social Sciences,” in *Generations and Change*, 79-88.

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>645</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>648</sup> Geoffrey Burkhardt, “The Records of Schools of Arts and Mechanics Institutes: A Most useful Source for Family Historians,” in *Discoveries, Deadends and Databases*, Proceedings of the 10<sup>th</sup> Australasian Congress, 23-27 April 2003, Melbourne, compiled by Joy Roy (Melbourne: The Genealogical Society of Victoria, 2003, 38-49.

of his families had lived, although he had studied Mechanics' Institutes much more widely. He may well have explored other family lines in other times and places in detail. However, his lecture gave the impression that he always sees families *contributing* to local history rather than *constituting* it.

Can one have a local history without families? Is there a locality somewhere, where *all* the people are unrelated, unconnected individuals: except by living in that particular place - on a stage called history?

Others who have approached GFH as a subset of History include Michael Drake and Ruth Finnegan and their colleagues who taught family and community history at the Open University in England, and who produced text books for courses that appear to have been discontinued or diminished since their retirements.

#### *A Subset of Community History*

I analysed the course's textbooks<sup>649</sup> during my document analysis. The indexes to the four substantial volumes in the series entitled "Studying Family and Community History: 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries" had very few references to genealogy or to family history. The aim appeared to be to draw people away from 'family trees' or genealogy, as quickly and dismissively as possible, towards 'real' history, which could include oral history. Their focus was on community history in single locations, not on families who will not stay put.

However, I have read items posted on GFH message boards by Geneals who recommend their texts to members of the wider English in-and-from Community, so their legacy in the area of clothing the human subjects of GFH with Social History endures.

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<sup>649</sup> Ruth Finnegan and Michael Drake, eds., *From Family Tree to Family History* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1994).

W.T.R. Pryce, *From Family History to Community History* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge in conjunction with the Open University, 1994).

John Golby, ed. *Communities and Families* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge in conjunction with the Open University, 1994).

Michael Drake and Ruth Finnegan, with Jacqueline Eustace, eds., *Sources and Methods For Family and Community Historians: a Handbook* (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 1999).

### *Family History as Personal Oral history*

There are many within the Community who choose to write about a selected family of descendants of an individual or a couple, without attempting to discover what influences there may have been from people more distantly related or connected. This includes people who may have lived close by, or at considerable distance; and contemporary kin, or kin who have transmitted attitudes and characteristics down many generations. Many outside the Community think GFH is a subset of Oral History, within History. Allied to that attitude is a belief that GFH is *mainly* about capturing the stories of the past, and that Geneals should write about individual relatives using the social history provided by experts.

If I reminisce about the occasion when, as a child in the 1940s, I found someone's ration book on an Auckland suburban street, and handed it in, and was praised (excessively it seemed at the time) for my action: that is personal oral history. I recall wondering, at the time, why my mother gave me just packets of jelly crystals to take to school for the food parcels our class was sending to England: that too is personal oral history. If I find out the cost of such an item in comparison to my father's income at that time (a period of unemployment before starting a business with a first cousin of his first wife/my mother, with money borrowed from her mother/his mother-in-law); and also try to learn whether it would have been a welcome or generous contribution, I am venturing into one aspect of social history.

Now, when I reflect on my GFH discoveries, having since learned that my immediate family was *already* sending food parcels to Somerset, (to the family of a great-aunt of my New Zealand-born father: relatives whose names and location I did not know as a child) I think as a genealogical family historian. I now view my mother's offering knowing the complex web of my family's situation in Aotearoa-New Zealand during World War II. As a Genealogical Family Historian, I do not think that GFH is a *sub-set* of any type of history.

### *Data Contributors*

Elizabeth Shown Mills identifies another view of the work of Geneals, when she writes: "Will we accept a role some others propose for us – that of Data Sweeper,

mere drudge labor to boost the productivity of ‘real’ historians?”<sup>650</sup> Andy Gritt of the Institute of Local and Family History in the Department of Humanities, University of Central Lancashire University, might be one of her “others”. He appealed on the worldwide web for information for his research project on “Social mobility c.1850-2000”.

As part of a long-standing interest in the history of people’s working lives and the social history of work and the family, I am looking for volunteers to provide some key data. Family historians are in a unique position to be able to provide this information and without your support this research will not be possible.<sup>651</sup>

The role of Geneals is seen here as supporters, as providers of information, to someone who views families as units able to be categorised. I considered filling in Dr Gritt’s form, but many considerations deterred me. First, there was not nearly enough space for all the “unemployment, part time employment and unpaid work (e.g. housework, voluntary work)” that I would need for myself, let alone for my 14 closest direct ancestors, my siblings, my/our children (but *not* my husband and his parents and close ancestors - Dr Gritt did not want to know about them). He wanted data “to allow analysis to be done on the occupations of individuals compared with their parents.”<sup>652</sup> Is it really that simple?

Second, Dr Gritt stated that “the only information [he needed was] occupations and dates”. Did this mean I, and my family, would be “tabulated into bleak summaries, and used for clumsy approximations”<sup>653</sup> - based on *his* interpretation of what each occupation involved, if I filled in his form? How was he going to *count* meaningful influences on ‘employment’ unless he allowed for consequences of *individual* physical or mental illness and accidents within a family, and personality and behaviour factors, all of which affect employment for all family members? (I found a grandfather’s first cousin, aged 21, recorded on the 1871 census, and described there as “greatly deformed from birth”.)

Third, what would I do about recording half-siblings at any generation? Did Dr Gritt not realise the *number* of multiple marriages consequent upon early deaths of

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<sup>650</sup> Shown Mills, “Genealogy in the Information Age: History’s New Frontier,” 261.

<sup>651</sup> Andrew J Gritt, “Research Project” at <http://www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/class/humanities> (accessed June 2007).

<sup>652</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>653</sup> Sykes, *Blood of the Isles*, 112-113.

marriage partners in the past, nor the modern reality of blended families. Remarriage of a parent brings influences, positive as well as negative from step-relations, influences on the employment opportunities of children, and more. Has he not read Bertaux on rectangular genealogies?

Fourth, was he going to use dates to periodise a history of employment opportunity? What would he do if he noticed how much generations overlap? Has he thought about how members of *younger* generations can affect older generations with respect to employment? In New Zealand, some mature students attend university *after* vicarious contact with that world through their children.

Fifth, my great-grandparents lived in New Zealand, in London, in Belfast, and in Wiltshire. Graeme's lived in New Zealand, Australia, Ireland, Norway and Scotland, and one briefly in London. Did Dr Gritt really want to include *all* such individuals in his project on *British* social mobility? What difference would it make to his findings if he included only some of our children's ancestors?

Perhaps Dr Gritt did not realise that powerful search engines transport Geneals with knowledge of Boolean searching techniques deep into websites intended for a local audience. He is not alone: I recall another request for information from an academic in an English tourism department. His survey included a question about how much time people spend visiting places, to undertake genealogical research, in England. There was no suitable box for me to tick, for the upper limit suggested was one week.

### **Disciplinary: GFH and Geneals as Sociological Objects**

Some sociologists tend to view both GFH and Geneals as objects for their own studies. Michael Erben revealed and acknowledged this when he wrote:

The intention of this paper is to establish the importance for sociology of genealogy. Genealogy has been a practice in many cultures and throws light upon the way in which families have conducted themselves in the past. It additionally demonstrates the cultural and ideological importance of the establishment of pedigrees and descents for particular families, subcultures and societies. Further, genealogy is becoming an increasingly popular and highly time consuming recreational activity and as such is a phenomenon

worthy of sociological research. It is also to be noted that a number of important historical works utilising genealogical research have been much under-used by sociologists. They provide a useful source for sociologists seeking to explain the extent and consequences of family life and kin relations in periods of particularly marked social change.<sup>654</sup>

Mr Erben defines “Genealogy [sic] as (a) a synonym for a line of descent or a pedigree and (b) the investigation and production of pedigrees,” and the “important historical works utilising genealogical research” he cites are from scholars like Horace Round (1930), and Anthony Wagner (1950).<sup>655</sup> Erben thus views their prosopographic studies from his viewpoint as *sociological historian*, looking for their potential contribution to the history of such sociological and anthropological topics as the role of kinship ties in social structure, and family intimacy. In his article, he seeks to trace developments over centuries in these and other areas. Mr Erben was not seeking to come to terms with GFH methodology and understandings. He had read some scholars who used genealogical method and was interested in “utilising” their findings.

In this thesis, I view genealogical family history, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, differently: for its own methods, topics, times and places, under-theorised though it may be, from within its own cohesive field and practice.

### *Genealogists as Sociological Object*

Much of Ronald Lambert’s work on GFH appears to have been on genealogists as objects of his sociological categorisation, despite his own involvement with the GFH Community. His survey of some in Ontario (see Chapter 4) was designed to contribute to his academic work and interests: “Some of the findings reported in this and the following articles also appear in papers intended for different audiences, most notably sociologists.”<sup>656</sup>

David Swain uses the title ‘sociological genealogist’. He acknowledges the difficulties inherent in trying to convince academia that researching one’s own ancestral families is valid academically, for he undertook a research project that “involved two distinct tasks: achieving institutional acceptance of such research as

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<sup>654</sup> Michael Erben, “Genealogy and Sociology: A Preliminary Set of Statements and Speculations” in *Sociology* 25(2) (1991): 275-292.

<sup>655</sup> Ibid.

<sup>656</sup> Lambert, “A Study of Genealogists and Family Historians Part I,” 11.

legitimate for an academic sociologist, and developing the theoretical, conceptual and methodological framework within which to pursue it.”<sup>657</sup>

In the textbook discussed in Chapter 1, Dr Swain refers to the academic genealogical understandings of Daniel Bertaux, but he has not conveyed the most significant GFH aspect of Bertaux’s work: he refers to Bertaux’s genealogies as ‘square’, and mentions only siblings. Dr Swain and Dr Barnes also used the word ‘square’ in an earlier paper.<sup>658</sup> Bertaux’s word in his 1995 paper is *rectangular*, for he needs to have similar *numbers* at each generation,<sup>659</sup> and achieves this by including in his window of observation not just the siblings of each individual but *also the spouses* of each – the in-laws.

Including the parents of spouses not only gives Bertaux the numbers he seeks for sociological quantitative analysis, it also captures what my key informants know: that the spouse’s family is important for understanding social mobility, and much more, about the people who are their relatives.

### *Fictional but Real Families*

George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* demonstrates the web of relationships that influence families, going even further than Bertaux in her inclusion of some characters whose genealogical status mirrors that found by Geneals in real families. Eliot constructs accurate, extremely complicated, familial connections between the many characters in *Middlemarch*, connections that are realistic for Geneals who have reconstructed families of extension. Among the gamut of relationships is the connection between Dorothea’s two husbands: Edward Casaubon and Will Ladislaw. “That is a young relative of mine, [is] a second cousin<sup>660</sup>: the grandson, in fact ... of the lady whose portrait you have been noticing, my aunt Julia,” explains the former to Dorothea and her father. The young man is even more careful about relationships and is irritated when her father and a friend each call Casaubon his uncle. A minor character describes another part of Will Ladislaw’s

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<sup>657</sup> Swain, Carl Davidson and Martin Tolich, eds., *Social Science Research in New Zealand: Many Paths to Understanding* (Auckland: Pearson Education, 2003), 130, 306.

<sup>658</sup> Swain and Barnes, “Using and Integrating Specialised Computer Software in the Management and Analysis of Large-scale Qualitative Research,” 163-174.

<sup>659</sup> I was puzzled initially by the example showing only three children at the most recent generation; and wonder if it is because of 20<sup>th</sup> century average family size in Europe.

<sup>660</sup> Casaubon uses ‘second cousin’ to mean first cousin once removed: a common but imprecise usage, then and now.

“queer genealogy” as having Bulstrode, the pawnbroker turned banker, ‘grafted’ on to it. Bulstrode was married to Will’s grandmother but was not his biological grandfather. Eliot portrays her criticism of cultural ignorance, through the language of some of her characters.<sup>661</sup> One of her sub-plots hinges on a dying wealthy bachelor having many relatives, some close, some more distant and one kept out of sight.

In *Mary Barton*, Gaskell does not avoid the duplication that confronts Geneals; and is ignored by many novelists. Her use of forenames accords with reality: ‘Thou must leave off calling her “little” Mary, she’s growing up...’ ‘Well, well, I call her “little” because her mother’s name is Mary,’ replies John Barton.<sup>662</sup>

Charles Dickens wrote historical novels, setting much of his work in the times of his father’s generation. He too provides believable material with which to clothe ancestors who lived in similar times, places and social circumstances. For genealogical family historians, the picture formed from impressions gathered from such sources adds to material in a generalised history, which may contribute to understanding aspects of lives, but from a non-familial viewpoint.

### *Untidy Families*

Bertaux’s use of a ‘window’ of observation does not resolve the difficulties of reducing a web of kin networks to diagrammatic form: multiple re-marriages bringing children and grandchildren into a blended family are hard to fit on a sheet of paper, but the complexity is the reality. Bertaux criticises the ego-centred pyramids of ‘traditional genealogy’.<sup>663</sup> Certainly the *ancestry* of any one person when charted can be contained within an inverted triangle, but the *descendancies* of most individuals (with the biological help of their various partners), over even just three generations, resemble misshapen trees: on drop-line charts some branches lean to one side, some wither, and others spread unevenly.

Bertaux claims a symmetrical form when “all descendants of a given person, usually some king, lord, or perhaps robber baron, are traced down, making an

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<sup>661</sup> George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, 104, 106, 221, 773.

<sup>662</sup> Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 44. My mother’s family had ‘Big Ivy and Little Ivy’ for a mother and daughter, and ‘Jim’s Annie’ and ‘Arthur’s Annie’ for a sister and a sister-in-law.

<sup>662</sup> Mitchell, *Amokura*, 96-97.

<sup>663</sup> Bertaux, *Current Sociology* 2/3 (1995): 75.

upright pyramid with EGO at the vortex.”<sup>664</sup> Even the summary representations on charts of the past, among those I have seen, do not have this shape. They present lines traced and individuals foregrounded for particular purposes. Māori genealogies committed to paper show lines back to a migrating ancestor, through both male and female ancestors, indicating lateral alliances but omitting many collateral kin. Some of my English and New Zealand families, even over just three generations, are not particularly triangular, and family groups with siblings marrying siblings might be better described as re-entrant polygons.

I have also noticed how GFH thinking has changed: *siblings* who share ancestry replace the EGO of Bertaux and anthropologists; descendants of all ancestors - including the humble and the boring, are traced down *as far as possible* (for we never find “all descendants”). Descent from a given *couple* is now a more acceptable concept than descent from one man; and the descendants traced down are more likely to begin with yeomen and women, husbandmen and women, agricultural labourers and domestic servants, or artisans once apprenticed to master craftsmen or their widows (see Case Study I).

Few sociologists have presented papers at genealogical conferences despite the sociological understandings that could be helpful to the imperatives of the Community, and the potential for reciprocal benefit. One exception is Dr Claire Toynbee who has written articles for the *NZG* and who spoke at an AFFHO Congress in 1997.<sup>665</sup> Her main topic on that occasion was the social mobility of men who migrated to Wellington, New Zealand, knowing, “as a genealogist and a sociologist [that] the necessary data would not be easy to find for women.”<sup>666</sup> Dr Toynbee learned through her membership of the NZSG of the usefulness of the 1880 Freeholders’ List. She calculated that “the number of people owning land... amounted to more than half the male population over fifteen years of age”, and that around 10 percent were women – even in a time when *married* women could not own property.”<sup>667</sup> No historian or sociologist had used this source often

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<sup>664</sup> Ibid.

<sup>665</sup> Claire Toynbee, “Social Mobility over Three Generations: Immigrant Experience 1840-1880,” in *Landfall in Southern Seas*, Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> Australasian Congress, February 1997, Lincoln University, compiled by Garry Jeffery (Christchurch: Christchurch NZSG Organising Committee, 1997), 85-93.

<sup>666</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>667</sup> Ibid., 87.

consulted by Geneals in this way before. Few Geneals take the time to calculate and analyse the fuller implications of finding a name in such a source.

Dr Toynbee's findings gave statistics against which Geneals can judge their own families of interest. She concluded her paper on the importance of land owning for social mobility in the early decades of settler New Zealand with reference to migration of family groups, in stages. She acknowledged the benefits of co-operation between sociologists and genealogical family historians, saying:

Greater cross-fertilisation of ideas between academics and genealogists has considerable potential and should be mutually reinforcing. Knowing about New Zealand society is a tremendous advantage in helping genealogists develop their own hypotheses about their ancestors' patterns of behaviour and movements, helping them track them down more easily by making imaginative reconstructions of their lives.<sup>668</sup>

Seeking and learning details about each married-in spouse and about the spouse's parents and grandparents as well as the siblings at each generation, is one hypothesis that experienced Geneals have tested and found useful: even those who would not use that terminology.

A sociologist recently proposed extracting genealogical data about 19<sup>th</sup> century migrants to New Zealand from published family histories, to explore and compare the later life trajectories of those who emigrated and those who were left behind.<sup>669</sup> My question, as a genealogical family historian, was: "What do you mean, left behind?" It's not that simple. I turn to personal GFH, as evidence of discovered and integrated knowledge informing my question, in a final case study.

#### **Case Study IV *Who Was 'Left Behind'?***

My grandfather *Ted*, was born in Lacock in 1871, the ninth child of ten (or of 11, if little Annie was his half-sister). He went to Swindon before 1891 and left Wiltshire for New Zealand in 1909 (Auckland, Rangataua, Three Kings, Campbells Bay).

What happened to his siblings?

*Fanny* married when Ted was only two and went to Cumbria, Toronto, Winnipeg, St Paul Minnesota, New York; then Birkenhead in Cheshire, and Liverpool in Lancashire.

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<sup>668</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>669</sup> Personal Communication.

*Harry* went to London before Ted was born, but was already in New Zealand when Ted arrived – having lived in the Isle of Dogs, and in Rosario Argentina (where he worked for the Spanish railways), before settling in Taneatua and Whakatane (with a nephew by marriage). Harry had also been to the West Indies, back to visit siblings in England with his second wife; and to Japan and Canada when again a widower. Harry was the third husband of his first wife. Ties with his one stepdaughter appear to have been cut.

*Lizzie* was in service at Lacock Abbey and in Bath and London before she married - to a brother of Harry's first wife. *Lizzie* settled in Poplar, London.

*William* died at 22 so we do not know what diminutive nickname his family used.

*Polly* came to New Zealand too, living in Whangarei after some years in Surrey, and in Swindon - where Ted boarded with her.

*Jim* worked in London, and Corsham in Wiltshire. He departed for Auckland, about 1912, with his wife and four children. They left a son in Corsham, another in Dorset, two daughters married in Germany, and a son in the Midlands - who soon went to Canada with his uncle Jack.

*Fred*, the family net-worker, went to Swindon, and settled there: a timber inspector for the Great Western Railway.

*Walter* became a policeman, served in Devizes in Wiltshire, and with the London Metropolitan Police. He retired to be a publican in Southampton.

*Hetty* married, and lived in Bath in Somerset. Her husband willed that her 'family papers' be preserved.<sup>670</sup>

*Jack*, born when Ted was five, worked with his Uncle Jim in London, then in Stratford on Avon; and emigrated, with his nephew (one of Jim's sons), to Canada.

*Annie*, who might be a half-sister, was born in 1882, and died as a small child.

So, who was 'left behind' in Lacock when Ted emigrated? Only William and little Annie – in the village graveyard: not much data on their futures is available. But a great deal is known about the movements and migrations of their siblings, *and* those of *their* aunts and uncles, *and* of family members of earlier generations; *and* of generations of collateral descendants. It is untapped work-in-progress in the minds, folders and computers of a cyberspace community of GFH researchers.

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<sup>670</sup> I trust they are in an attic in Bath, waiting for me.

### *GFH Research Strategies*

Knowledge of rectangular and other-shaped genealogies aids research and reconstruction. In census returns, Geneals notice that some *affinal* kin are helping in times of need, such as when young children become ‘orphans’ through death or other circumstance, because we have traced the genealogical links.

It is also a common strategy to read wills of any who are related by marriage, and might mention other human subjects of interest. A CoG contact (researching his wife’s SELMAN kin) located the will of a widow of a son of key ancestors: a couple with eight known children who were all baptised as adults (in two different parishes on five separate occasions).

The wider CoG had collectively traced this couple’s SELMAN, PALMER and COLLAR grandchildren over the years; but the married names of two daughters had still eluded us; and we did not know if George and Ann had had any children. Ann’s will indicated they did not; but she named her late husband’s surviving brother (my 5xgreat-grandfather) and his three surviving sisters: giving small legacies to each of them - and two new married names to us. Her will was dated around the time of her husband George’s eldest brother’s death; and one other brother predeceased him. Ann named many of her own kin and godchildren and so provided further contextual information about her life lived in a genealogical family of extension. Her youngest brother-in-law who went to Essex was still alive, but not mentioned, raising a new question: which came first – the distance or the alienation?

How can the knowledge, and the application of the benefits of such methodology and findings in these areas, and in others, be incorporated into academia? Can academia accommodate the *collective* research that is typical of the Community? Where in the canon could such a *different* field be placed?

I conclude this chapter by identifying trends I have noticed during the course of this study, trends that signal that the time is right for a forward-thinking university in Aotearoa-New Zealand to incorporate into academia the transdisciplinary field and practice that I have called Genealogical Family History.

## Trends

I have noticed a number of trends in a number of areas. I have chosen to record attitudes in this study, because I believe they are one of the most influential factors relevant to the problem I seek to solve, although difficult to survey or quantify. The attitudes include tact and discreet silences, as well as loud criticism. I have sought to identify changes in attitude and I have noticed some new attitudes towards practitioners of GFH, and towards the field itself.

### *Respect*

There has been a gradual change in attitude towards GFH from a number of quarters. While ignorance of the discourse remains, negative attitudes towards GFH and its practitioners in the A-NZ Community is fading. It has become so much more *respectable* to trace family genealogically that some now even apologise for *not* doing their own, including some of my former university colleagues. Bruce had noticed this trend too.

Given New Zealand's demographic profile, there may soon be an increased pool of retirees, including retired academics. Some of those interested in any of the elements of GFH will be able to bring their disciplinary skills to the transdisciplinary endeavour that is Genealogical Family History.

### *Ethnicity and Public Figures*

The changes in attitude affect prominent people. They are now asked about ancestral people and places, and what they say is now reported in the public sphere. Some New Zealand Members of Parliament appeared in the *Here to Stay* series broadcast on New Zealand television during 2007. The producers allowed them to acknowledge *some* strands among their individual ancestral tapestries woven from many migrant lives and journeys. I assume much that they each said about their diverse heritage was not used in the final cut, because the series was very 'once over lightly' and appears to have been designed to highlight and confirm someone's stereotype by nation. Perhaps some professional historians who contributed may have ancestry from *only one place*, (or think they do), which is why they too appeared to contribute to the myth that New Zealanders can be neatly divided into groups, based on a *single* country of origin.

On air, Helen Clark, Prime Minister of New Zealand since 1999 and currently leader of a Labour-led minority Government, mentioned her fourth generation descent from Shetland Islanders. Foreign Affairs Minister Winston Peters (a Minister outside Cabinet, because his present party is not a formal coalition partner) talked about his mother's migrant Scottish ancestors who reached Waipu via Nova Scotia and Australia. He has Māori ancestry, and was a minister of Māori Affairs, under a previous administration. Retired former Minister of the Crown Doug Graham talked about some Scottish forebears up his ff-line. One assumes each had a mother and a wife, although acknowledgement of their existence was not broadcast, nor their ethnicity.

A new (2007) cabinet minister, Shane Jones, appeared in the 'Dalmatian' episode of *Here to Stay*. He has long identified as Māori, and is fluent in Te Reo Māori. In the NZSG Conference Proceedings exemplar *Look North*, there is a paper by a Swiss-born academic from the University of Auckland's School of Languages and Literatures. Hans-Peter Stoeffel refers to the ethonym Dalmatian being used especially in 'the North' to refer, in New Zealand, to a person from Dalmatia who settled in North Auckland.<sup>671</sup>

Charles Chauvel became a member of New Zealand's current Parliament in 2006. His maiden speech (in Tahitian and English) focused on his family and his ancestry, expressing respect for both his Rai'atean and his Scottish heritage, and noting that his father was born in France.<sup>672</sup> In the New Zealand Parliament there are other MPs with Polynesian ancestry, and other Māori members of Parliament representing various parties, elected by people on the General Roll. The New Zealand Māori Party, formed in 2004, currently holds four of seven designated Māori seats, elected by those who choose to be on the Māori Roll. The party has two co-leaders. I believe one acknowledges some Australian ancestry and the other some American ancestry. Ethnicity and nationality are not simple matters to Geneals in the A-NZ GFH Community.

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<sup>671</sup> Hans-Peter Stoeffel, "The History of the European Languages in New Zealand in *Look North*, 273. NZSG member Hazel Petrie gave two papers about Croatian New Zealanders at this conference. "Married to a New Zealander of Croatian and Māori ancestry, she took up genealogical research as a therapeutic strategy when her children where pre-schoolers... which led to university studies in History and Māori Studies" and an MA in History. *Ibid.*, 179-223.

<sup>672</sup> This speech is in Hansard: *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, Volume 633, 4578-4581.

Other public figures illustrate the woven strands of ethnicity in Aotearoa-New Zealand too. The present (2008) Governor General is Anand Satyanand: a former judge and ombudsman. He was born and raised in New Zealand. His grandparents had emigrated from India to Fiji, and his parents took up residence here.<sup>673</sup>

Archbishop Whakahuihui Vercoe (1927-2007) is another example. When asked about his surname, for an article in a church magazine,<sup>674</sup> he explained that his grandfather, Henry VERCOE, was a Cornish farmer who settled in Ruatoki. In the same issue of “Anglican Taonga”, the same writer records Archbishop David Moxon saying, “One of the lovely things I’ve found as I get older is to discover my taproots, for example... my mother’s great-great-grandparents James and Mary PREECE, the Urewera missionaries.... Bishop Selwyn refused to ordain James PREECE, because he could not read New Testament Greek. Somebody said I was his revenge”.<sup>675</sup>

Thus are some leaders in Aotearoa-New Zealand, being heard speaking more often about the plurality of ancestral places, and their choice of which strands to acknowledge. Thus is ‘race’ as a cultural concept rather than a genetic ‘fact’, becoming more *visible* and *audible* in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

#### *Rapid and Accelerating Change in Cyberspace*

One of the most significant trends I have observed and experienced is the use of the Internet and the World Wide Web for GFH research. Competent researchers can now achieve exponentially more, and in shorter time, thanks to the speed and ease of using online databases. The advent of cyberspace has contributed to the growing proportion of GFH researchers whose focus is on tracing living kin, from estranged close family members to tenth cousins thrice removed.

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<sup>673</sup> I summarise from the announcement of his appointment, at <http://www.scoop.co.nz> (accessed 12 April 2008).

<sup>674</sup> Lloyd Ashton “Hui Vercoe: the making of a ‘radical bishop’” in *Anglican Taonga* Spring 2006: 18 [The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia] Commission on Communications, Christchurch, 2006.

<sup>675</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. When he was younger, David Moxon had traced his surname, he then believed, back a very long way. This article gives a different place and time period. The ‘when older’ comment therefore refers to a new horizon of interest in some of his maternal relatives, rather than to his long-standing general interest in GFH, including his children’s whakapapa.

On the other hand, inexperienced and untutored researchers can more quickly miss evidence of events because of indexing errors; and can assume equal veracity for accurate and error-ridden sources, stories and documented facts, and speculation or weighed evidence. They can make further false assumptions if unaware of the social context within which particular ancestors lived. Because of the large numbers now accessing commercial sites, the cost of GFH research may decrease, in the future, and it will be interesting to see if this improves or compounds genealogical understandings and misunderstandings.

#### *Closer Co-operation with Academics*

In addition to the instances noted at the NZSG conference of 2007, I have observed a trend in the wider Community for university departments to acknowledge that particular areas of knowledge and particular records have relevance for both academic and GFH researchers, and that there is scope for reciprocal exchange of information.

For example, the University of Glasgow was responsible for the conception of a project called *The Correspondence of William Henry Fox Talbot*, while additional development, and the hosting of this project, has since been undertaken by Knowledge Media Design, De Montfort University (Leicester).<sup>676</sup> Draft transcriptions of nearly all the 10,000 letters to and from Talbot (1800-1877) “the Wiltshire polymath best known for his invention of photography”, were up on the site by September 2003.<sup>677</sup> Corrections are invited<sup>678</sup>, and assistance with queries offered.

Roehampton University in London hosts The Hearth Tax Project. Their goal is to publish the best surviving hearth tax return for every county in England and Wales that has not already had a satisfactory return published.<sup>679</sup> This will benefit Geneals whose interests stretch back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century in England, as well as academic historians. The project relies heavily on volunteers, and on public funding.

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<sup>676</sup> <http://foxtalbot.dmu.ac.uk/> (accessed 25 July 2007).

<sup>677</sup> Ibid.

<sup>678</sup> Their stated openness to engage in dialogue means I will feel able to advise them that they have assumed a wrong occupation for a great-great-aunt of mine.

<sup>679</sup> <http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/hearthtax> (accessed 20 Jan 2008).

### *Genetic Genealogy*

Another significant trend within the wider Community is the increasing interest in, and use of, 'genetic genealogy'. At an NZSG conference dinner in the late 1990s I was seated by another Society member who discussed why he was then considering using DNA testing to further his research into his ff-line. He had reached an impasse - due to the combination of a common surname, lost or non-existent records, and migration from *somewhere* to New Zealand via Australia. For the first time I saw the possible benefits of this avenue for some GFH research.

A website with a great deal of relevant information succinctly summarised the possible genealogical benefits of having DNA tested:

Genetic genealogy gives genealogists a means to check or supplement historical record with information from genetic data. A positive test match with an individual may:

- provide locations for further genealogical research
- help determine ancestral homeland
- discover living relatives
- validate existing research
- confirm or deny suspected connections between families
- prove or disprove theories regarding ancestry.<sup>680</sup>

The site also listed drawbacks, including cost and concerns over privacy issues, and pointed out that:

Y-DNA and mt-DNA testing each only trace a single lineage [a person's ff-line or a person's mm-line]. At 10 generations back an individual has 1024 ancestors and a Y-DNA or mt-DNA test is only studying 10 of those 1024 ancestors...plus same sexed siblings for male Y-DNA or all siblings for the mt-DNA.<sup>681</sup>

Over the past three years in particular I have observed many more members of the wider GFH Community discussing the above concepts, benefits and drawbacks *knowledgably*. I have almost decided to use this research tool myself, to discover if it can help confirm or disprove three of my present conjectures. The first is that my own mtDNA, about 200 years ago, left a small village in Berkshire, near its borders with Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, to spend three generations in London, before sailing to New Zealand. The weak hasp is my assumption that

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<sup>680</sup> <http://www.brainyencyclopedia.com/encyclopedia> (accessed 26 July 2007).

<sup>681</sup> *Ibid.*

Sarah (COX) MINDENHALL (aged 69) - *or* an enumerator for the 1851 census gave “Appleton, Bucks”, for her presumed and likely place of birth: Appleton with Eaton in Berkshire.

Second, because co-researching Geneals in the SELMAN CoG have noted the higher than average ages at death reached by many ancestors and collaterals in that family of interest, I might ask one of my brothers to have his DNA tested, because the above web site avers that certain ‘haplogroups’ have been linked to longevity.<sup>682</sup> Third, Graeme, or one of our sons or grandsons, might one day wish to know if their ff-line BROWNS came (genetically) from Scotland, or from ‘elsewhere’. It is possible that the present eponymous Andrew BROWN married a cousin of some degree and came from the same parish: but, he may have been born in a different shire or country.

I suspect that if I do use this new avenue, I may learn no more than which of Bryan Sykes’ clan mothers I can claim, unless I use the most expensive and comprehensive option and am put in contact with others searching similar groups linked to a name and a place. However, I am quite likely to be able to make contact with such people through on-line Lists and commercial sites, for many people will have explored such *genealogical* avenues before turning to genetics.

### *Looking to the Future*

I am well aware that my foregrounding of Genealogical Family History as a rigorous, complex undertaking; and my resistance to unhelpful categorisation and generalisation may give the impression I do not see a place for quantitative analysis in GFH as transdisciplinary endeavour. It is not that simple.

Pool, Dharmalingam and Sceats identified their aims and purpose, as researchers and writers of historical demography, in the first chapter of their book:

The job here is not to report every permutation and quirk of family life, however fascinating they might be, for that is the task of the novelist, but simply to record the ‘averaged-out’ family experiences of members of New Zealand society at different periods.<sup>683</sup>

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<sup>682</sup> [http://www.brainyencyclopedia.com/encyclopedia/g/ge/genealogical\\_dna\\_test](http://www.brainyencyclopedia.com/encyclopedia/g/ge/genealogical_dna_test) (accessed 26 July 2007).

<sup>683</sup> Pool, Dharmalingam and Sceats, *The New Zealand Family from 1840*, 9.

Those averaged-out experiences will be of interest to Genealogical Family Historians for comparative purposes: their particular families in relation to the average. During the interview Lucy reminded me that she and I have sat alongside each other and heard invited speakers say that people in the past “didn't know their grandparents” *because* “the average age of death was about 40”. Lucy said, “They thought that *everyone* died at 40.” Lucy had “averaged out the age of [her] forebears, and found that some lived to their 80s and 90s, but because one woman died at 26 that pulled the whole average down - for 50 of them”. We agreed that *average* age of death is comparatively meaningless for *our* purposes.<sup>684</sup>

In Chapter 1, I introduced some families of interest among the many in our families of extension. One was the STEVENS/DRON family of Kinross and many other places. The average age at death of the parents was 83. The average age at death of their 12 children was 53. The median, in a range from 82 to “infancy” (which I have counted as if she died at 1 year of age) is 61 years. From both general and genealogical knowledge, I know that many other factors have to be taken into consideration before such figures can *mean* something: life styles, infectious diseases, *infant* mortality, and so on. The *median* age and the range are much more meaningful to me as a Geneal, than an average.

#### *Further Research*

I was surprised by the length and complexity of my discussion of gender issues in relation to GFH research in Chapter 7. I am not surprised that it is not exhaustive: it has already prompted further investigation of assertions and assumptions, and the need for quantitative analysis. For example, in Chapter 5, I discussed a genealogical artefact to illustrate some inter-related aspects of GFH practice. I have tended to uncritically accept statements that more women than men undertake GFH research; and that women are more likely to be the repositories of oral history. When thinking about this in relation to that small family group in Belfast and Auckland who kept in contact, and gave and received gifts, I now see other variables that I should have considered. I needed to apply the GFH technique of constructing a chronology for the persons involved, and discover who was alive at the time, and of an age to be interested in GFH research.

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<sup>684</sup> To be able to do the calculations, Lucy needed to know accurate dates of birth and death for 50 kin proved to be genealogical ancestors. Only an experienced genealogical family history can know how much time, and rigorous scholarship that will have taken.

On the surface, there *is* a preponderance of female Geneals. Cousin Aggie of Bolton is the family member of her generation (in Belfast and America) who kept in touch. But, it's not that simple - she had only sisters, and her only surviving aunt may have had only daughters. All her uncles, except the one who came to New Zealand appear to have died young. Among the 14 New Zealanders who could be interested in GFH, over three generations of this small family: four out of the five *active discoverers* of this name-line (some living, some dead) are female; and another female was a preserver and very interested. On further investigation, I see that only five of the 14 possible were males, with one male of the five an active GFH researcher.

But, most significantly, *I cannot know* if two more men were, or would have been interested, because one died at age 50, and his father, the emigrant, died at age 48 – long before I was born. So, that becomes one male of three possible. (One of the three male grandchildren was too young when others began to research, and one still not interested at all.)

My great-grandmother, who married into this family, died just four days before I was born: she must have encouraged the contacts with her husband's family, before and after his death, and written to them. She was born in New Zealand: but I do not know if she ever tried to learn more about the families of her own parents and step-father who all died when she was young. Her daughter-in-law (with whom she lived for more than 20 years) and two grandchildren (both females) and were all interested in GFH – as were both grandsons-in-law (though mainly in their own kin). The other two granddaughters have been interested in aspects, one as a preserver of photographs.

So, in this small family, assertions about females being more interested and/or retaining memories must be weighed against factors such *as the numbers of each*; who was *alive* at the time, and male/female *life expectancy*.

#### *Scope for Collaborative Projects*

Dr Jock Phillips introduced his paper to the 2006 conference saying it is surprising that, “there has been no systematic effort to discover just who were the founding

ancestors of the great majority of New Zealanders who first migrated [here] from the United Kingdom.”<sup>685</sup>

The NZSG has had a long-term project to record such discoveries, for *all* first migrant family groups, not just those from ‘the UK’, though not a systematic one. It has been called the First Families or Pre-1900 Families Project, and material in it has been used for putting descendants in touch, but not often to provide data for other projects (see chap. 2 n. 148).

I have also given some thought to other GFH projects that would benefit from transdisciplinary and collaborative research. In an earlier chapter, I wrote about revisiting a family place where a local historian had attempted to construct a census for the locality. In the interview Bruce spoke about some work he did on constructing an 1880 census for a Taranaki town: for all New Zealand censuses schedules in the 19<sup>th</sup> century have been destroyed, All names and relationships and other personal data is lost; but genealogical skills could be used in a reconstruction project. The current (2008) NZSG Education Officer, Lily Baker, has spoken of her dream: to trace what happened to all those who were displaced by the 1931 Napier Earthquake.

It seems to me that there is scope for projects such as these to be worked on by the Community and the Academy together. I discuss the place for such a possibility in my concluding chapter.

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<sup>685</sup> Phillips, *Settling the Waikato*, 254



## Chapter 11

### A Place for Genealogical Family History

The Universe is a continuum; but our knowledge of it is departmentalized.  
Every learned Society is a pigeonhole, every University a columbarium.<sup>686</sup>

In this concluding chapter, I first summarise what I set out to do and then discuss the originality inherent in both my topic, and in the methods and methodology employed in conducting my research. I then present my overall findings of the essential characteristics of Genealogical Family History; and give possible solutions to my problem.

My overarching research question has been why GFH is not an academic subject. My problem was that GFH as a transdisciplinary scholarly endeavour has been misunderstood and misrepresented. I have hypothesised that this was partly because aspects of it remain hidden. I have explicated some of these aspects in some detail in this thesis.

My approach to finding a solution to the problem has been transdisciplinary: my perspective and point-of-view is above and beyond present disciplines and their departments, while acknowledging that the transdisciplinary ethos and view must be approached through existing disciplines. I have drawn on my understandings from what was my disciplinary knowledge before and during this project: Geography, English Language and Literature; and the pedagogy and practice, which includes development of theory, of teaching a variety of students and subjects in all sectors, including the field and specialism of tertiary learning and teaching advising. I have drawn on some understandings from the main disciplinary contributors to GFH: history, geography and sociology. GFH also derives understandings from, at least, biology, law, religious studies, linguistics, demography, computer science and information technology.

My positionality with regard to my research has been that of an insider: for my alternate career was, and is, and continues to be situated in the Aotearoa-New Zealand Community of Practice of GFH research.

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<sup>686</sup> Jay Michael Barrie attributes this aphorism to Aldous Huxley, at <http://www.geraldheard.com> (accessed 13 April 2007).

I have explored and raised questions about attitudes and trends; practice and practitioners; themes, motifs and issues; the scholarships of GFH; and the epistemological position of GFH as transdisciplinary field of enquiry. I have set my problem in a history of the relationship of GFH with other fields, for that history continues to affect both the status of GFH, and academic choices for genealogical family historians of the A-NZ Community. I have used reflection on my own practice in my analysis and in case studies. I have allowed my key informants to speak with their own voices; and sought illustration and evidence from the wider GFH Community, past and present.

I am well aware that by attempting a broad exploration, from a mixed disciplinary background, and by using the language registers of GFH from time to time, some readers will experience the sensory overload that Steven Johnson likened to being in a city. This has not been entirely unintentional, for GFH, as I know it, is diverse, complex, collective, collaborative; under-theorised by its own scholars, but a challenging place to be in: physically, temporally and epistemologically. I do not seek to be mimetic, but consider my excursions into metaphor add to the originality of this thesis as I continue to build bridges between disciplinary understandings and the transdisciplinary endeavour presently sited in a large Community of Practice with its many locus groups.

### **Originality**

This thesis is original scholarship because I have chosen to study a neglected field and to study it from within, focusing on particular hidden aspects. My unit of observation and analysis: the in-and-from Aotearoa-New Zealand GFH Community, set in its multi-national wider community as part of the entire GFH Community (over time and in different places), has not been the subject of any earlier research or analysis. I now summarise my original contributions to knowledge, in a number of other areas.

### *Social Learning*

My focus is on social learning. In that respect, I have contributed to Wenger's Communities of Practice scholarship that underpins this aspect of this thesis. In

particular I have developed the concept of an *in-and-from Community of Practice*, which could be used for studying other large mixed membership hobby communities where there is a constellation of CoPs within an all-encompassing one; as distinct from a concept of constellations of CoPs with quite disparate domains, to which individuals may belong. Wenger discusses “boundary relations and the demands of multimembership” across and between CoPs in *organisations*; and the positions of “communities in marginal or peripheral positions within broader constellations and broader institutions.”<sup>687</sup> These areas of CoP theory are particularly pertinent to the genesis and the future of the topic of my thesis.

I have conceptualised, researched and written from my position as a Genealogical Family Historian. I have chosen literature and scholarship from within the field and beyond: from academia, and from scholars who think, work and write outside of universities. I have thus added to the small body of writings of insiders who have sought to begin to theorise the practice and the field of the phenomenon I call GFH. I believe that scholars from a variety of current disciplines and fields will find some notions and insights applicable to their own areas of interest, and worth developing.

I have chosen methods of research and analysis from the humanist social sciences and have been original in aspects of my conceptual framework, and in my methodology, as outlined in Chapters 2 and 3. As part of my transdisciplinary endeavour, I have included concepts from the meta-disciplinary field of tertiary teaching and learning, because all academic subjects are taught, as well as studied. I have analysed the GFH scholarships of discovery, integration, application and teaching/educating; and I have drawn attention to the importance of voice and audience when undertaking GFH research or writing. I now outline what I consider to be **quintessential GFH**, allowing that *tolerance* is a fundamental characteristic of the transdisciplinary attitude and vision<sup>688</sup> and that others in the present and in the future, will perceive GFH differently.

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<sup>687</sup> Wenger, *Communities of Practice*, 168-169.

<sup>688</sup> *The Charter of Transdisciplinarity*: Article 14.

## Quintessential GFH

The *subject matter* of GFH is the many and various family groups of the past, and of the present; individuals known to be related or connected in a myriad of ways to each other; and to others past and present – families often related to the researcher, but not exclusively so. The human subjects of GFH are always persons known to have existed, known by name or by their relationships.<sup>689</sup>

The *practice* of the field is the construction of family groups that have existed, over time. The practice includes the weighing of discovered evidence relating to identification factors, in order to accept, or reject, or to record as unproven the place of each person in a family under re-construction. The practice is also all the *thinking* necessary (including conjecture) when integrating what has been learned, discovered, and uncovered; and when applying a genealogical hermeneutic.

The first major *focus* of the field and practice is on existence in genealogical families, not on residence in households. All members of a family group, living or dead - or yet to be born at the time of construction - constitute each family of orientation or of procreation: ‘family’ as a social construct. The focus is on parents, on children, on siblings, on partners and in-laws, and on cousins of every degree: on relations and connections.

While any members are living, *no* family of interest has a neat and tidy boundary: and there are ethical and methodological issues. Only after at least a century has passed, and extensive research has been done, can the names and relationships of a family group, the essential building block for GFH research, be committed to paper, as ‘complete’ – but complete *only* with respect to life events such as birth, death and marriage, for that is only the beginning of GFH research. The people studied by genealogical family historians are more than their names and recorded life spans, and more than the relationships that connect them genealogically. GFH is a complex undertaking.

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<sup>689</sup> By this I mean, that I continue to seek, for example, the parents, who *must* have existed, of Stephen MINDENHALL; and any siblings Stephen *may* have had. I seek the parents and any siblings of Love [‘UNKNOWN’] who bore and raised children with a Francis SELMAN.

GFH families are links and segments in chains and webs of overlapping and intertwined families of extension. Each segment of each family exists over time, in places, and within a social context. Geneals trace families who lived in historical time, and individuals and families who live in present time. They are traced to many places: places of birth, marriage and death, places resided in, places of work and places visited. They are tracked from place to place, and this is a major focus of GFH research and practice: the movements and migrations of members of genealogical families.

The daily lives of GFH human subjects are also studied through knowledge of the places they have lived in, knowledge obtained in many ways and from many sources, including census returns: families in their homes *and* households. Geneals learn the ways their many and various kin severally occupied themselves in their day to day locatedness: in the home, in schools and workplaces and in a wider world; in faith groups, friendship groups, hobby groups; when fulfilling or evading civic and religious law and duty; and as members of the global village.

Some GFH *specialist* interests arise from the geographic places of researched kin, with all that that encompasses: the landscape, political history and distinctive culture of the island called Ireland, for example. Some kin are caught up in local, national or international political or intellectual movements. That leads to an interest in those areas. Some specialist interests arise from use and knowledge of particular classes of records: probate documents for example. Some interests evolve from one of the key identification factors: an interest in onomastics and one-name studies of surname ramification arising from GFH attention to names and naming patterns, for example. Generations of families linked to an occupation may prompt an interest in, say, apprenticeship systems and records, and the training for and regulation of particular trades; or in the vicissitudes and successes of a particular type of farming. Some specialist knowledge is catalysed by one of many obstacles to successful research: poor recording, transcribing and indexing, especially in cyberspace.

Other areas of GFH special interest are shared with those found in other subjects: thematic or periodised social history; the beliefs, customs and problems associated with religious affiliation; the laws of equity and succession, land ownership, and

social justice; new knowledge from genetic biologists, social psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists.

The knowledge and the skills needed to research, analyse and integrate all these inter-related aspects of family existence and living are considerable. Many Genealogical Family Historians research collaboratively with relatives, with friends, and with acquaintances and strangers, in a complex and ever-changing Community of Practice.

Some record their discoveries on charts, in dedicated computer software, in booklets or books – some do not. Whatever the research and recording choices exercised, full participation in the GFH research community is characterised by enjoyment, collaboration, and a generous helpfulness that leads to increased knowledge, including self knowledge (called identity by some) and more empathetic understanding of past and present others.

As in academia, some in the Community take on roles of leadership, administration and project management; some develop an interest in the editing and publishing of journals and conference proceedings. Some make money out of lecturing, writing or selling ancillary products to the Community. Some do all those things at one time or another. There are also those who become paid genealogists or record agents, in small or large businesses. Many librarians and archivists find that the majority of their clients are genealogical family historians.

Those in the GFH Community who actively research the lives of relatives cannot choose their ancestral kin, nor the times, and places, and social circumstances of those ancestors and collaterals. They can choose their own individual research trajectories and changing horizons of interest; and they can choose their own specialist interests and practices within the Community. They can move to the periphery if circumstances change, and return to the core when that becomes possible.

However, those in the Community who are academically minded cannot study Genealogical Family History as a transdisciplinary field of enquiry within academia.

### *Why a Place in Universities*

At the beginning of this project, and since, other academics have suggested that GFH was merely something one learned *how* to do, in their eyes making it a subject more suitable for teaching and learning through continuing education or polytechnic courses. However, I have come to the point of view that although GFH is under-theorised from within, its domain and rigorous practice is worthy of academic study. I have come to the conclusion that GFH is too vast, too diverse, too complex, and too *difficult* to be taught properly as a subject in a first degree. This was a most unexpected finding.

### *Surprising Conclusions*

One of the difficulties of studying a field and practice that I know so well has been to remain open to critical analysis of my own notions held at the outset. If my findings have surprised me, I believe I have achieved the necessary critical thinking in sufficient measure. In Chapter 4, I indicated my surprise that most of my key informants began their research at a very young age, or wished they had; and that I found none had been trained in (and so disciplined by) academic history.

In Chapter 5, I have outlined how my false dualism of preservers and discoverers broke down to reveal that, surprisingly, members of the GFH Community are both, from time to time and at the same time.

I was *not* surprised to find how difficult it has been to convey the complexity of genealogical research, hidden as it has been for so long under assumptions, myths, ignorance and belittling; with practice hidden in archival repositories and libraries, and in front of personal computers: the GFH thinking that cannot be seen. The field and practice is more complex than I thought: I am surprised how many terms and phrases I have had to coin to do justice to the ways in which genealogical family historians *think*, research, and report their findings.

### *New Terms*

In addition to my concept of in-and-from Communities of GFH Practice, I have identified various *locus groups* within the entire Community to suggest that they are sometimes in tension but need each other. I have introduced the term *family of*

*extension* to distinguish the conceptualised genealogical family from an extended family viewed by others. I have written that sectors of an entire family of extension become *families of interest* at times and over time. The serendipitous nature of personal GFH research means that a Geneal researcher has an ever-changing *horizon of interest*, often dependent on interest from collaborating others. I have used the terms *surname of interest* and *name-line* when discussing the family of extension connected to or by a particular surname. I have written of ff-lines and mm-lines to point out how symmetrical ancestry is: yet descendancies and naming patterns are not.

The terms *Geneal*, *Genealogical Family History* and *Genealogical Family Historian* were coined for this study; and I have analysed what I consider to be the domain, the practice, and the specialisms quintessential to the field of GFH. I have signalled the need for a specialised citation system that goes further than, and yet not so far, as the comprehensive referencing advocated by Shown Mills. A way to record *how* dates have been computed, and a way to succinctly indicate when a hasp is one achieved by weight of evidence, are particularly desirable.

The exercise presented in Chapter 10 produced one more surprise: of the six most *active discoverers and preservers* of GFH for the DAVIDSON family of interest, five had attended university or teachers' college, and the other, born in 1886, had been asked to take up a teaching career. I should not have been surprised: I have been arguing that GFH is an intellectual endeavour.

### *The Last Surprise*

The last surprising conclusion resulting from my study was the realisation that the best place for GFH to enter academia might not be at undergraduate level – but through a *post-graduate* centre. If a post-graduate centre in GFH Studies were to be established, graduates from others areas could continue their higher education, by enrolling in masters and doctoral degrees where each could integrate their GFH preferences with their own bricolage of prior study and current competence. This could be a place where teachers and researchers of GFH could engage with scholars from other disciplines, could develop GFH theory and practice, and apply it to other areas of knowledge - with reciprocal benefits.

Not everyone needs or wants to study GFH in an academic context: cyberspace sleuthing and modern penfriendship will continue. Hobbyists will continue to produce booklets, and scrapbooks, and computer records displaying results of their work. The hobby aspects of GFH will continue to attract many, but when academic theorists of GFH are able to communicate new understandings about the nature and practice of the subject, better informed hobbyists will become part of a fan-base able to contribute to an area of academic discourse.

Some genealogists and family historians in Aotearoa-New Zealand trace genealogies for Māori whakapapa knowledge and for land claims; and some trace relatives for LDS religious ordinances. Some are interested in the oral history about some of their relatives; others trace surnames. Some write family stories or family biographies for private or general publication.

One significant overheard conversation took place near the Law School of Victoria University of Wellington. A young woman was explaining why she was going to take a break from her law studies. She felt it was more important to spend time with her aging grandmother, and to record her memories: the degree could wait. Family memories would not. This aspect of GFH will always be the most important for many in the Community. Many will continue to record and write family histories, from their various perspectives.

Many members of the Community are engaged in ‘work in progress’ that keeps them so occupied and intellectually challenged that they cannot, yet, share their findings of specific detail or of patterns noticed. This is the area of GFH that is particularly invisible to academia, and yet it is the area that I believe has the most to contribute: it stands in need of reciprocal contribution from a number of established disciplines brought together with a transdisciplinary ethos and vision.

## **Gateways**

Many Geneals whose preference is for family reconstruction could have written *biographies* of individual family members, and addressed one of the themes of the 1995 competition (see Chapter 10). However, there is more to GFH and to family

biography than linked *individual* biographies. There is also more involved in recording discovered knowledge of families for a present or future audience than pages of family group sheets and fold out computer-generated trees suggest. Most Geneals are wise enough to heed Michael Gandy and share the *research* story behind identifying and becoming acquainted with ancestors and collateral kin, with like-minded co-researching siblings, spouses and cousins of various degrees.

One of my long-held beliefs confirmed by my study is that GFH does not *belong* to any other subject. It is a subject in its own right, presently studied in Aotearoa-New Zealand in a mixed membership Community of Practice that has many overlapping groups within it, groups that have emerged or been set up for a variety of purposes.

#### *Why not History?*

History is a possible gateway, but it could so easily swamp a new subject by its status, its own history and preference for generalising. GFH might be used within History only for case studies to support grand theories, and remain a sub-set, or an object of study. However, at NZSG Conference 2006 there were encouraging signs that History is changing towards an appreciation of the place of the particular. Jeanine Graham wrote: "I hope to demonstrate that the historian's tendency to generalise and the genealogist's to particularise, can be a rewarding combination if we share a common goal".<sup>690</sup>

*Written* 'family history' needs a new genre, one that enables the researcher to share *both* the research methods, joys and obstacles, *and* the view of the lived lives of a family constructed in the process - be it the story of a name-line, of descendants of a couple, of a migration, or of a family in a locality.<sup>691</sup> Written genealogical family history needs charts *and* narrative, conjecture *and* weighed evidence, life events *and* historical context. The current paradigms of History will not readily allow that. GFH needs a new vehicle for sharing its particular

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<sup>690</sup> Jeanine Graham, "Distant Conflict / Local Impact: Exploring the Effects of World War I on Families in New Zealand" in *Settling the Waikato and Beyond* Compiled by the 2006 Hamilton Conference Committee, NZSG, Auckland, 2006, p 211. She thanks fellow academic historian Peter Gibbons for "his insistence on the importance of individual family stories", p 219.

<sup>691</sup> I have experimented with 'diglot' versions, but the reasoning behind each presented fact took up to four pages to explain. Case Study II illustrates the reasoning required when facts cannot be easily established.

discoveries and methods, and the patterns its practitioners already see from their collective and unique perspective.

### *Why not Sociology?*

During this study, I considered Sociology as a possible home for GFH, and used Berger's concept of motifs when analysing the characteristics of GFH. But, I have found categorisation to be prized above other approaches by some sociologists, and would not wish GFH to become a battle site between quantitative and qualitative methods, nor to remain an *object* of study through the lens of this other subject. Two reputable Dictionaries of Sociology<sup>692</sup> did not include Genealogy as a key word, elaborating only on Foucault's metaphorical use of the term.

However, if GFH as a subject was allowed to define 'genealogy', and had equal status, an alliance between Sociology and GFH could be a rewarding combination enabling sound quantitative research to test assumptions and understandings about 'families' held by Geneals, and by the public at large. GFH would need to be allowed to raise its specialist questions at the outset: complex questions to do with occupations, ethnicity, personal faith and allegiance, family size and longevity, and individual difference *within* each genealogical family group; questions often prefaced by a "not in my family" response to a generalisation or categorisation.

### **In Conclusion**

I ended the research for this thesis with the realisation that sociology and history are each such very different subjects from GFH, despite shared interests in family and social relations, or family and the past, that placing GFH in either would be inimical to its development.

I did not expect to come to the conclusion that GFH is too complex and too *different* to be studied properly, not even as a major subject in an undergraduate degree awarded by another discipline. Nor did I expect that when weighing the practicality of where and how to introduce a new subject to the canon, I would

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<sup>692</sup> Gordon Marshall, *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: OUP, 1998); and Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill and Bryan S. Turner, *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Penguin, 1994).

find myself coming full circle: and considering afresh the major disciplines of my own tertiary study: Geography for its sense of place, and even English Language and Literature for its links to biography.

I conclude that Geography, with its interests in social space, could be a good option for a temporary home for the fledgling subject of GFH with its primary focus on the family lives and migrations of human subjects. Geography is a strong contender because place is such an important element of GFH: the places where kin have lived, the places they left, the places they settled. Geneals identify with ancestral places. Tourism now comes under Geography in some universities – and there is a heritage industry promoting tours to ancestral places. Gendered space must be understood in GFH research – women are often invisible in both church and civil records; and men's visibility is often affected by their occupation.

An understanding of gendered space can contribute to a better analysis and interpretation of a particular family's story. Knowledge of economic geography, agriculture and industry, transport and communications, weather and landforms, all contribute to better understandings of lived lives. Geneals use a variety of maps as an important research tool.

However, the major obstacle to leaving GFH in the care of any other discipline would be its essentially transdisciplinary nature: the need it has to use understandings from so many other fields: especially from all types of history, from the social sciences, from religious studies, and from law, linguistics, biology of genetics, and the new world of cyberspace.

#### *GFH as Transdisciplinary Academic Discourse*

I believe GFH, as an academic endeavour, should be focused on the genealogy aspects: the active discovery of people of the past and present who were and are related to each other; and on family: genealogical families of interest and extension. The discovery and reconstruction of their lives as members of families requires understandings from many subjects. That is quintessential GFH, for me: a transdisciplinary field in a space between and across the pigeonholes of current disciplines, a subject with unique methods and with unique ways to view and use understandings from other areas of academic knowledge. It is an endeavour that

needs supporting as it develops its own moral and ethical engagement with its human subjects and as it seeks practical ways to research its human subjects using its own methodology and yet-to-be developed theory and body of literature.

It is my considered opinion that GFH could not enter academia as an object of any other subject, and retain its essential characteristics. However, I am aware of the difficulties of establishing GFH as a subject in its own right, and discuss the main one here.

### *Who Would Teach GFH?*

New subjects all have to consider who could teach and provide leadership in a new subject: a matter of practicality. A scholar from a multi-disciplinary background with experience of GFH and commitment to its development as a subject in its own right would be well equipped to teach GFH. As Shown Mills has pointed out, and as I have found, there are many people already researching in the field who have studied in other areas, and have adapted to the demands of the singular methodology and perspective of GFH.

Experience in *extensive* GFH research would be essential. When a lecturer in a field associated with my work life was told my thesis topic, she promptly told me I needed to go to the Borthwick Institute in York to further my own research. I do not have any families of interest in that part of England and would be unlikely to learn much of direct interest to me there. I already knew how their holdings could benefit others, and how much it would cost to access them. Such tyranny of expertism, from any quarter, would not be helpful in developing a new discipline.

I chanced to meet an older woman, well educated for her generation, who had enrolled in a U3A course with the intention of learning how to write up her researched family history. At the time I met her she was still feeling aggrieved by the response from a young female tutor, asking my acquaintance why she thought *she* would be able to do that. A copy of the completed work was lent to the tutor, who commented only on the incorrect format of one reference, but kept the work.

*Extensive* practical experience of undertaking GFH research, and membership of the Community, would both be essential for an academic teacher of GFH.

Appropriate teacher training and teaching competence are essential elements too. Above all, a transdisciplinary approach of rigour, openness and respect is required.

I met a young man on a bus<sup>693</sup> while on my way to do some fieldwork in Auckland. He was clearly a high achiever, aware of subtle cultural differences - saying that he is viewed as a “Westie” in New South Wales. He was friendly, fluent and non-ageist. He was about to enrol at an Australian university, in sociology. He also expressed an interest in his own family history and had been to a place in England where one ancestral line had originated, and was disappointed that the area had changed so much from how it would have been a century ago. He still believed a myth of the preservers of memories: that if you do not ask the older family members you will not be able to discover information about ancestors.

He affirmed a lot of what I found myself saying about my work and my thesis, and volunteered that genealogical family history research work takes a long time and compels one to continue; and for those intersecting reasons he would have to leave it aside, reluctantly, while a university student. In time, he would make a very good lecturer in GFH. Genealogical Family History is about the past, the present and the future, as is this thesis.

#### *A Solution to My Problem*

A freestanding *post-graduate* centre would be my optimal first step for establishing GFH as a place where theory could be developed, where application of GFH understandings to the work of others could be tested, and where collective collaboration both within the Centre and beyond to the Community would be maintained. I have suggested some projects in Chapter 10. Out of such a Centre might come an undergraduate course: in Genealogical Family History.

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<sup>693</sup> The conversation took place on Tuesday, 8 February 2005.

I reflect that I am seriously on an edge of conjecture. If such a thing should come to pass, I predict that it would be successful, and that the awkward name I have used throughout this thesis might revert to Genealogy – without the negative connotations of the past; and I acknowledge that this is but one solution.

*Is There Another Gateway?*

To return to the beginning: Michael King, biographer, professional historian and research fellow, was once sought out by a genealogical family historian who introduced him to one particular family of shared interest, a family traced back along a corridor of time to a situated past and also to the continents and islands where present-day kin now live. Michael King wrote up the story of his uncle's father's life and migrations, the story of David Belgray's genealogical search and discovery, and the story of his own encounter with people of different times, different places and different faiths.

Michael King, journalist, historian and biographer, has been a university Writer in Residence. One practical option for introducing the discovery, writing and theorisation of the Genealogical Family History transdisciplinary discourse to academia, suggests itself. A university, perhaps in association with the New Zealand Society of Genealogists, could set up a position for a Genealogist in Residence, in a welcoming Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. This would allow Genealogical Family History (Genealogy, Family History and Family Biography) a small place between the present pigeonholes of academia, a place to bring together competent people of goodwill towards GFH, who could work to develop the prototype I have started to construct during this journey of exploration.



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## Appendix A

### **Genealogical Identification Factors: Name, Age, Place, Occupational Group, Religious Affiliations, Fertility Patterns, Migration Profile and Personality Clues**

This List of Identification Factors has been compiled and used over a period of 30 years, after discussions with the NZSG Bay of Plenty Group (later Tauranga Branch) of the NZSG; with the Auckland Day Group of the NZSG; and most recently with an NZSG Education Qualifications working party, meeting in Wellington.

Genealogists use these key identification factors to determine if they have accurately discovered the previously unknown names of ancestors and their descendants; and placed kin in their correct families of orientation and procreation. The names themselves are the first of the factors to be used. When weighing evidence to support placing a name in a family group there is a great deal to consider.

#### **Name - Surnames**

Whose surname will a child receive? Is this likely to be a patrilineal customary usage? Will it be a patronymic system, as in Wales or Norway? Or is some other usage possible? Will a hyphenated name be the names of the parents – or an inherited one already linked? Is there likely to have been a deliberate change of name that can be explained and accepted? Are the spelling variants attributable to clerks with different accents, to illiteracy, or carelessness, or to some other circumstances?

Generally, a spelling linked to a specific individual and used in a reliable document is enough for that version to become the one used for reference, with any variations noted in some way. If it is a very common name, or if the name is problematic for reasons like suspected anglicising, then three or more verifying sources may be needed. Sometimes a name has two equally common forms, and there is no custom to date (of which I am aware) that gives guidance here. For example, the name STOW is equally often rendered STOWE, and on reflection it seems my own heuristic has been to use the form most frequently used by the relative bearing it who is closest to me - in this case a grandmother who was always STOW. Research focusing on her grandfather, Richard Davis STOW or STOWE, exemplifies some of the genealogical methodology and interpretation surrounding names and other identification factors and will be discussed further below. When an individual such as he is given both major versions on different occasions, he can be labelled STOW/E to indicate that. And thus, with one DAV(E)Y/DAVIE family, it can immediately be understood by the GFH Community that members of that family have been found under DAVY, DAVEY, and DAVIE. When there are vowel shifts the string of possible names increases exponentially. Some One Name Study enthusiasts list their interest under more than one variant, but consider it as one name for the purposes of their work.

When a name has developed over many centuries a different way of choosing a form by which to identify any individual becomes essential. Research into ancestors with variants of the name WILTSHIRE progressed back through WILSHIRE/WILSHERE to WIL(L)SHER and WILSHEAR (suggesting that a Will may have been a shearer), so that my heuristic is that case has been to use each earlier form for the first individual to have been baptised or have his/her birth registered in a new way; and note variations for that individual. In this family-line it would not have been sensible to call the earliest descendants of Will the Shearer by the name of the county in which they lived, for the “T” may have only come into the name WILSHIRE because those around were used to the similar-sounding county name. Nor would it be sensible to call all descendants SHEARER. Generally, place names are bestowed as surnames when someone migrates *away* from a place; and no kin of that name-line are known to have resided beyond Wiltshire.

In genealogical research, the action of locating a fact about an individual (such as the name to place on a chart) almost always leads to the discovery of other information and interpretation, and also to further research, for once new variants are discovered, family groups with gaps or possible branches can be revisited to see if individuals with the new variant can be located and placed.

## Name - Forenames

The discovery of the forenames of relatives similarly enables the placing of the individual in a family; leads to reflection about why a particular name was given; and gives clues to further research.

Genealogists learn about naming patterns, and use them to both prove and extend knowledge of both parentage and family groups.

The most common use of this tool is with Scottish forenames. The dominant pattern was patrilineal; although I have identified a reversed form of this in Angus in Eastern Scotland where some (possibly those with matrilineal Pictish ancestors) appear to have used a different form, one where the eldest son is named for the mother's father, the eldest daughter for the father's mother, and so on.

Genealogists learn to note those who have a name previously unknown in the family and are alert to the possibility of it being an honorific should it have been a minister's first baptism, for example. The tendency to attribute scandal is something that genealogists must monitor in such situations. For example, a child named John Gipson Brown MILLEN was considered by the MILLEN family as a possible ex-marital child; when a more likely explanation is that migrant families came to regard neighbours as substitute families and would name children for those who were their close friends. The neighbour on the Pauatahanui arm of the Porirua Harbour in this case was John Gibson BROWN (born in London, in 1819, son of Andrew BROWN and Mary GIBSON). The four daughters of John Gibson BROWN were born before and after the MILLEN child, making any ex-marital affair *publicised* by such naming most unlikely. Further investigation into the rendering of Gibson as Gipson and Gypson should be entertained. A temporary cold in the nose should not be thought sufficient to account for the variant spellings in different family groups, different generations, and different places.

The use of more than one forename has both methodological and sociological significance. Very often the second or third name has been given to honour a relative; and a mother's or a grandmother's maiden name may be thus discovered. One child of John Gibson BROWN and Mary Ann Henry MITCHELL was named Magdalene Shirer BROWN – her maternal grandmother was discovered to be named Magdalene SHIRER. The custom of having more than one forename has been associated with the upper classes; and an early or increasing use might indicate upward social mobility.

Fashions in naming are another aspect to consider. Names linked to events may tell something about those choosing them. Names may indicate religious or political affiliation – or may serve to prove that using family names is more important than avoiding external connotations. Thus strongly Protestant families maintain their share of children named Mary, Joseph and Francis, for instance; and the Lincolnshire family who named a son Monk cannot be assumed to approve of the actions of their contemporary, Cromwell's General MONK.

Genealogists have adopted and promulgated conventions to avoid errors with names, most notably the rendering of surnames, and only surnames, in capitals. Genealogical convention also encourages researchers to record names in the order they would be spoken: and not to write STEVEN, Andrew James (Andrew James STEVEN) - it could so easily become Steven Andrew JAMES.

## Place

The second factor commonly employed to identify an individual is the place of a recorded event. Genealogical family historians quickly learn that such assertions of general understanding, like "people did not shift much back then" need to be treated with scepticism because they find family events scattered along canals, in railway towns, and in villages that look to hiring fairs in a market town.

Further understandings of the relationship of place to event, and to historical possibilities, are also required. I am still puzzled how Hannah/Anna/Anne COLLER/COLLAR could have married in Wiltshire on 18 Jun 1829 and had a son baptised in Herefordshire on 21 Jun 1829. As I write, I wonder if the child was already some weeks or months old and he and his mother both fit to travel; and the marriage arranged so that the clergyman did not have to comment on legitimacy status at the baptism. This conjecture might also explain how a young woman who was likely to have been in domestic service married a well-to-do farmer.

When some of a family are found to be baptised in a particular place, then that is the first place to look for other family members. It is commonly received wisdom within the Community, however, that a first child may be born and/or baptised in the mother's home parish, and this is therefore kept in mind.

Competent genealogists understand that a burial may be some distance (and some days) from the death; and a baptism many miles (and years) from a birth, and use the identifications factor of place and date or age (see below) in accordance with this knowledge. Genealogical conjecture is also employed to understand any variations from the apparent norms.

When an Elizabeth SELMAN died at St George's Hospital, Belgrave, London, in 1855, her death was registered at the St George Hanover Square district registry. But she appeared to have been buried back in her home village of Lacock in Wiltshire. The possibility of this being correct relied on knowledge of when railway or other systems existed to transport the body; and on research to determine if any other Elizabeth SELMANs could have been the one buried in Lacock at that time. The informant for the London registration was her Lacock-born aunt; and the clergyman who had previously employed Elizabeth as a nursemaid may have felt obliged (and able) to cover the cost. However, it is only conjecture that she went with his family to London, - and who paid remains speculation. Another researcher, a member of the Auckland Group reported a similar death/burial distance in the same era, thus helping confirm the Lacock burial.

When local historian Barbara Macmorran wrote in a book about local history, that Andrew BROWN of Kapiti met Octavius HADFIELD at Waikanae in 1839, I wrote a letter to ask how this could be when Andrew was on board the *Aurora* at that time, still many nautical miles from New Zealand. She had assumed a (Thomas) BROWN here with American whaler William MAYHEW was our (Andrew) BROWN: who did know HADFIELD, later. Andrew had a brother Thomas, so her confusion led to the conjecture that this Thomas may have been his brother - because Andrew had dealings with Mayhew; and the BROWNS came from Dundee - a place with whaling connections.

Some methodology has been developed within the Community that is dependent on place. A circle search to trace a missing baptism or marriage is a common practice, because although many did travel far from home, many more did not, and the most sensible place to look is in neighbouring parishes. Family historians understand the concept of marriage horizons and look for pre-canal and pre-railway marriages within a day's walk. However, if the event took place over a County boundary, the records are likely to be held in different places. And, ease of travel will make some more distant parishes more likely than nearer ones, as will the status of some places as market towns. Invisible links between non-contiguous parishes may exist because they come under the same Lord of the Manor, enabling some to obtain work, and marriage partners more easily in such more distant places. I suspect this is how my STOW/E kin first moved north from Salisbury.

## **Age/Date**

When looking to identify a name in a place the next consideration is the age of the person in a source compared to the known or likely age of the subject. Genealogists commonly use data on certificates and census returns to compute probable birth and marriage years in particular. The possible position of a child in a family is used to refine birth year and parental marriage possibilities; and other information is also used for age or date parameters. I note that all those who have registered an interest in one of our Scottish families (the STEVENS of Fife, Perthshire and Kinross) on a commercial website, have assumed that the Richard STEVEN/S who married Janet FORSYTH (b 1769) is the one baptised in Adbie in Fife in 1761. However, Falkland parish is one of few in Scotland with very good burial records and Richard's age given there makes him older than that, and so he probably belongs to a Strathmiglo family with sibling forenames that match some of those he and his wife gave their 13 children.

## **Occupation**

The next most commonly used factor for identification is occupation. One JARVIS family in London could be quickly traced back to the County from whence they originated because they had been undertakers for four generations and carpenters before that, and were so designated in Directories. One

of them may have become an undertaker in the sense of project management, for he belonged to the Upholders livery company, and oral history said he arranged the Duke of Wellington's funeral. If a professional person appears to belong to a family of agricultural labourers, or vice versa, the genealogist will scrutinise the evidence very carefully. And although occupations are more useful identifiers for men they can lead to discoveries of female kin. Young men were often apprenticed to uncles on either side of the family; so when a stone mason or two appear in a large Victorian family of carpenters, it may be that they learned their different trade from their mother's brother or uncle.

In addition to using occupation as a primary identification factor, certain occupational groups have extensive records that can lead the researcher to many more relatives and to information about them. The armed services, the professions and trades requiring apprenticeships, are all examples. Certain occupational groups appear more frequently in probate records, another source for discovering kin and facts about them.

## Religious Affiliation

Another identification factor to consider is the religious affiliation of a family or of an individual. In both New Zealand and the British Isles (and in many other countries) Civil registration of a person's birth marriage or death does not begin until the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century; beyond that, church records are the major source for this data, and a great deal of genealogical work is done using them. Apart from helping confirm membership of a particular family, the records of a particular denomination can provide both data and interpretation of actions. However, there is little point in attempting compile a family group from infant baptismal entries if a family is known to be Baptist or Quaker. To use these records optimally, it is essential to know what is in the records, the start and end dates of classes of record, and any gaps in them.

When religious affiliation is known then the bestowal of certain honorifics will be confirmatory: where it is not known, it may provide a clue for further research.

In English research in particular, where the Church of England is the established church, the law of the land must be understood to make sense of why a non-Anglican family appear in certain records of that denomination. English and Scottish differences may need to be understood: the person observed at an LDS Library wondering where Scottish Bishops' Transcripts could be found clearly had a lot to learn about the practices of the (Presbyterian) Church of Scotland which does not have bishops. Another person thought the BTs were written *by* the Bishop, and was puzzled by a discussion about what information might have been deliberately withheld from the Bishop (by the clerk, ordained or lay) who was required to copy out entries in the Parish Register each year to send to the Bishop.

## Fertility Patterns

When attributing children to parents and placing them in family groups one of the most important factors is a woman's childbearing span. While most women married after the age of 21 and ceased bearing children after the age of about 42, a genealogist will allow a first child at 12 (the legal age for women to marry in earlier years) and a last child at 48 to 52. For men, the span is commonly 20-60, but 14-90 is not impossible.

When a family group sheet is being compiled, initially from baptism records, there is very often the situation where father and son have married women with the same Christian name, thus giving the appearance of one couple having children for 50 years. The same illusion may be created when a man marries a second or third wife with the same forename as the first. The application of a sensible child bearing possibility can lead to the discovery of the later marriage and so to correct identification of parentage and composition of each family group.

Another fertility factor often used by active discoverers relates to the spacing of children. Commonly a first child will be born within 6-15 months of a marriage and (in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in particular) children will be born at eighteen month to two-year intervals for some years before the gap between children becomes 3-4 years, with the occasional 5-8 year gap at the end of a family. This knowledge is used to

question any gaps in a family, and to work out if there is room in a particular family for a child who looks as if he/she might belong there: some gaps can be explained by miscarriage, stillbirth or unregistered infant death – but others may require more lateral thinking. For example, in the family of a William FAIRGRIEVE and Elizabeth CATHIE in Edinburgh there is a gap of 3 years between the first and the second known children. The family's use of the Scottish naming pattern was evident but inconclusive.

When the question was raised with a collaboratively researching relative the reply eventually came back (after more research on her part) that the father had been away in England with the militia during those years. Years away working, or in prison, or adventuring, are therefore possibilities to keep in mind to explain gaps. In William's family of orientation the conjuncture of a gap in births and in the naming pattern had led to asking why there was no child named Peter for the maternal grandfather. The explanation that further research afforded was that there *was* a son Peter, but he was born prior to civil registration, into a family that did not patronise the Church of Scotland and its records, and he was away from home on both relevant census nights. But he did exist, in the noticed gap, and his having the same occupation as his father helped locate him and learn that he became locally famous as a landscape gardener.

There are yet more understandings needed by genealogical family historians when using fertility factors. If a family is upper class then the practice of employing wet nurses could affect the interval between children and make a child a year for some years quite likely. Genealogists who have researched many family groups also probably have some impressions about relative fertility of different lines; and whether that might be explained by factors other than class custom, or late marriages.

## **Migration Profile**

Some families seem to enjoy shifting (or have it imposed upon them) while others do not. To discover what happened to Charlotte BATH who was born in Chelsea, London in 1841 of Wiltshire parents; lived in Dover in Kent in 1844; migrated to Tasmania in 1862 where she married Thomas BURT: it is useful to know that both her sisters also went to Tasmania, and that one (Mary Ann) then travelled to and lived in Melbourne, and went back to London, before emigrating to Gore in southern New Zealand, in the 1880s; while the other (Agnes) was in Southland by 1865; and to know that their mother Ann was also in Gore for 15 years before her death in 1900; while Ann's twin brother died in Whitby, Yorkshire in 1873. Agnes moved from Riverton/Bluff to Invercargill, and Mary Ann to Auckland - from which place her daughter (another Agnes) re-visited Australia. The whole world must therefore be possible for Charlotte's later residences; and in writing this, the possibility that the younger Agnes went to Australia to make contact with her aunt Charlotte, has occurred to me, for the first time. This illustrates the aspects of genealogical methodology referred to as 'making links' and 'putting it all together'; and the strategy of coming back to earlier work with fresh eyes.

## **Personality Clues**

Individual personality, abilities, attitudes, temperament can be important for genealogical family history research too. Sometimes a whole family has a particular sense of humour, a strong sense of civic duty, a love of sport, an open home, and so on. When instances are noted, they too can help in the weighing of the evidence of all the identification factors needed to place each individual in her or his family of orientation.

## Inter-related Identification Factors: a case in point

The factors outlined above are rarely used in isolation. The identification of Richard Davis STOW/E as father of Alexander STOW and child of a Thomas and Sarah (DAVIS) STOWE illustrates the inter-related nature of the use of all the identification factors when compiling family groups and discovering ancestors.

His name was first discovered on his son's birth certificate, an event which took place in Melksham, Wiltshire in 1842; and was next found on his own marriage certificate: 1839, at the Parish Church of St Peter and Paul (better known as Bath Abbey), in Somerset. He was an innkeeper and grocer. His death in Melksham in 1849 gave his rounded down age but removed the possibility of discovering, from the 1851 census, a more precise age and his birthplace. The clerk in London transcribed his name onto the death certificate as Richard *David* STOW, which warns of transcription errors and reminds of the lack of skill of some undertaking such duties.

However there was a Robert STOW still living in Melksham in 1851, a bailiff and a Chelsea Pensioner, and his birthplace on census returns was Potterne, in the same county. The IGI (then called the CFI) revealed that Robert was indeed baptised in that parish, but there was no sign of Richard – under STOW *or* DAVIS. However, other avenues having returned nothing, a professional researcher was employed to look at the original records and he reported that Richard Davis STOW was indeed baptised at Potterne, in 1790 (a close enough match to his age at death), to a Thomas and Sarah STOW.

This couple appeared to have been having children past Sarah's likely fertile years, but marriages of Thomas, first to Sarah DAVIS and then, as a widower, to Sarah TACY, limited the first family satisfactorily for biological considerations. Thomas was described as an agricultural labourer in the 1841 census return, whereas his son had described him as a gentleman in 1839. Some say that 'gentleman' was a term for the elderly retired, and that might explain why his son called him that. However, social appearance might have been sufficiently important to Richard for him to give his father such an occupation. Richard's conviction for using bad flour on at least one occasion, as a young man, was learned from records indexed by the Wiltshire FHS. Thus, an apparent contradiction becomes of interest not just for an attempt to assess the occupational truth, but also for other social and familial aspects, like Richard's general honesty, to be considered in the process.

After some years of research, hampered by following a wrong Sarah as a result of a failure to check burial records, Richard's mother's baptism in a neighbouring parish of Mardon was discovered – the child of Richard DAVIS and Mary PALMER. She had had an older sister also named Sarah who had died young: the commonness of the custom being yet another piece of knowledge required for this type of research and analysis. The DAVIS migration from Mardon to Melksham can be documented through an analysis of the parish registers, and it would appear that her father was of yeoman class, perhaps explaining the apparent upward mobility of this grandson.

Richard's religious affiliation changed during his life, leading us from Church of England records to those of the Methodist Church whose Bible Class Records exist for Potterne. The Methodist baptisms of his sons in Melksham usefully and inexpensively gave their birth dates. His brother Robert was a member of the Congregational Church for a time, which helped locate some of his children. Those records possibly illustrate his fall from someone's definition of grace, when he was dismissed, apparently without blessing, from that church congregation. Active discoverers need to absorb minutiae such as the meaning of being 'dismissed' from one Congregational Church to another. It was generally used like a doxology, as shorthand for 'dismissed *with* our blessing'. Not knowing this could lead to false understandings of character and actions relating to an event in the life of an individual. (Similarly, 'cut off *with* a shilling' meant: this person has *not* been overlooked – that is all he or she is getting, whereas if a person were not named to be given a small amount, he or she might pretend to have been left out accidentally.)

Richard's family of procreation was restricted in size by the age of his wife Charlotte: 35ish at their marriage, and about 40 when their third and youngest child born, illustrating the need consider age and fertility together; but their belated marriage presents a mystery. Why, when Richard was 49 and with a home and income, did they wait until she was so very pregnant - marrying 18 days before the birth of their first child? Can Richard have known that his direct ancestral couples bearing his surname, also proved fertility before marriage, for at least five generations? If so, it may explain the delay, but not the

length of it. Members of the Auckland group suggested parents who disapproved or needed her: and her parents and his father were all still alive and aging.

Charlotte exemplifies the complexity of the most important of the identification factors: name. She was known as Charlotte Sutton Mannings, with her many siblings baptised in the Wiltshire parish of Pewsey, haphazardly, as: SUTTON, MANNINGS, SUTTON MANNINGS and MANNINGS SUTTON and bearing various of those names on into the future. Her parents might be thought to have disagreed about their name for her father was buried as a SUTTON MANNINGS while her mother, 10 years later, died as a MANNINGS SUTTON. However, *every* instance may just have been clerks confused about how to index a double-barrelled but unhyphenated name.

Her birth year is not certain because her parents appeared to have been of sufficient status and/or persuasion to have most of their children baptised 'privately' and accepted into the church at a later date. They lived near the church, so distance does not explain their custom; and as all 10 children lived to adulthood, few of the baptisms with later reception dates can have been because of maternal or infant immanent death. The registers need further scrutiny to decide if this family was unusual, or if the clergyman at the time (or the parish clerk) was careless with his record-keeping, or favoured separating the two parts of the sacrament of Baptism.

Charlotte's religious affiliation in her widowhood appears to be important in that it enabled her to benefit from an eleemosynary charity not available to any on parish relief, after she retired from carrying on her husband's grocery business. In 1861 one of Charlotte's three sisters was visiting, from southern Wiltshire. Next door was an Ann L STOW, independent and born in London. She is likely to be the wife of Charlotte's eldest son.

Charlotte was not located where expected in 1871, and knowledge of her family's various migrations between neighbouring counties gave possibilities for both extending and limiting the search area. She was found in Somerset with an unmarried nephew, a baker. This would have been an arrangement of mutual benefit – she could have sold his bread during the day while he slept; and it removed her from a place where people knew her eldest son was (or had been, in 1861,) in prison, probably for debt. He has not been traced further, yet. Her youngest son succumbed to TB at age 27 and has been located on the 1871 census, staying near where his maternal grandparents had lived.

Charlotte's husband, Richard, had also been before the authorities as a young man: and so influences from both genetic disposition and upbringing could be considered to explain the behaviour of their eldest son. Richard's misdemeanours related to bad flour and under-standard weights: and we might also wonder who reported this, and why.

Thus do all the identification factors, come into play when active discoverers engage with the scholarship of discovery, *and* the scholarship of integration, and seek to fall from the edge of conjecture into sound genealogical analysis, not into unproved or unprovable speculation.



## Appendix B

### Michael Gandy's 'Reading for a Rainy Day'

- Flora Thompson, *From Lark Rise to Candleford*  
Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*  
Philip A Wright, *Old Farm Implements*  
George Sturt, *The Wheelwright's Shop*  
George Ewart Evans, *The Pattern Under the Plough: aspects of the folk life of  
East Anglia*  
Rowland Parker, *The Common Stream*  
Elizabeth Melling, *Some Kentish Houses*  
Richard Gough, *The History of Myddle*  
M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*  
Gillian Tindall, *The Fields Beneath*  
Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*  
Dorothy Davis, *A History of Shopping*  
Alison Adburgham, *Shops and Shopping*  
Colin MacInnes, *Sweet Saturday Night: Pop Song 1840-1920*  
Anon, *Hampstead and Highgate Directory 1885-6*  
Arthur Morrison, *A Child of Jago*  
A. S. Jasper, *A Hoxton Childhood*  
Charles Booth, *Survey of London*  
Maud Pember Reeves, *Round About a Pound a Week*  
Robert Tressell, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*  
Christopher Hibbert, *The English: A Social History 1066-1945*  
David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America*  
N. A. M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: an Anatomy of the Georgian Navy*  
David Newsome, *The Victorian World Picture*  
Osbert Lancaster, *A Cartoon History of Architecture*  
David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar  
in Elizabethan and Stuart England*  
John R Gillis, *For Better For Worse: British Marriages 1600 to the Present*



## Appendix C

### ‘Lookups’: a Practice of the Wider Community

#### Wendy’s Offers: 1997.

This email message from an Australian member of the Moonrakers’ List, was posted 30 Apr 1997 – in the early days of cyberspace activity. It is typical of the ongoing helpfulness of members with knowledge and resources, on many Lists.

Subject: THINGS I CAN LOOK UP (#21)  
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 1997

.... Guess what? This message will be the end of the Monumental Inscription [lookup] offers....

I will still do lookups if anyone wants them from the old [listings] – it is just that we are coming up to the good letter ‘z’!!

....

As usual:

1. Please quote the fiche number back at me when making a request .
2. I extract all occurrences of the name you have requested.
3. I do the lookups in the order of receipt and I don’t mind how many times a person makes a request.
4. You can request lookups from the old lists – doesn’t make any difference to me....

This List member listed the 24 parishes whose records on microform were in her possession, before she signed off. She also signalled that she was quite clear in her own mind that her generosity was not unrewarded – she felt she received as much as she gave:

I have been interested to see that other Moonrakers are doing offers too. That is wonderful. Anyone who is thinking of doing this – I would encourage them to give it a try. Just offer something small to start with – and take it at your own pace. I have found it to be a most rewarding experience. I have made good friends in the group – I have had lookup offers made to me on the quiet, and I have learned heaps about the families and places of Wiltshire. I promise what ever you give, comes back to you. Go on – be brave and give it a try folks. I have enjoyed sharing with everyone. We must have a grand collection of sources available between us.

## Lou's Advice: 2005

Email: Sent 17 August 2005 to the ENG-LINCSGEN List

Hi, Missing Lincs,

...This note is for those of you who do lookups for others.

1. Protect your own time. Set limits. Often the first discovery for someone can lead them to ask for more. If you have the time, fine. Add the second request to the end of your queue.
2. Keep the playing field level. By this, I mean that you should work in a first-come, first-served order. Just because someone tells you how poor they are or how isolated they are or their medical problems should not influence the order in which you do lookups.
3. Give the person a full source reference, even if you are providing an image of something.
4. If there's some doubt about your finding, let the person know.
5. Most of you know that a lookup can often find several possible matches, like finding "John ROBINSON" in the 1841 census. Let the requestor know about alternatives.
6. If the lookup requires a trip to the Archives, tell the requestor that their response will be delayed. I have found offices closed for repair or from a death in a staff member's family.
7. If a lookup is too demanding, say "No." If you can provide an alternative for the requestor, then do so. "I can't spare the time to find all the ROBINSONs in the 1841 census of Lincolnshire, but you could purchase the surname indexes from the LFHS."
8. Pat yourself on the back from time to time. You are doing a wonderful thing by helping people. Relax and enjoy a glass of good port and some chocolate, or whatever pleases you.
9. Don't worry if you don't hear anything after you've sent off tonnes of information. Some people just don't reply. You don't need to resend the data. Move on to your next good deed.
10. Know that we all Thank You for what you do. If I could pin medals on you, I would. You make this list a valuable contribution to our family histories.

Lou

L. R. Mills, ENG-LINCSGEN List Administrator

==== ENG-LINCSGEN Mailing List ====

August's theme is: What advice do you have for "newbies".  
What mistakes should they avoid? Where else should they look?  
What errors can you share?

## Appendix D

### A Constellation of Rail Communities of Practice

Graeme Brown and Margaret (Selman) Brown compiled this taxonomy 2 Feb 2005 and refined it 14 September 2007: to compare the Rail CoP with the Genealogical Family History CoP.

#### Strands of *activity*

- Train Spotting
- Train Riding
- Preserving trains (and railways and other artefacts)
- Modelling of trains
- Operating models of trains and railways

#### Involvement with *allied objects of interest*:

- Trams, cable cars and bush trams
- Buses
- Traction and stationary engines
- Equipment
- The permanent way (ballast for example)

#### Strands of *interest*

- Engine types:
  - Steam
  - Electric
  - Diesel
- Railways
  - Particular places
  - Particular systems
  - Particular networks e.g. NZR, and overseas ones such as the GWR
  - History of railways, such as the Manawatu Railway Company

#### Examples of Named Groups

- New Zealand Railway and Locomotive Society Inc
- New Zealand Model Railway Guild
- Kapiti Miniature Railway
- Steam Incorporated
- Mainline Steam (a private trust)

