BREAKING THE BARRIER: A HISTORY OF MĀORI SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS ENTANGLEMENTS AT AOTEA FROM 1889

NGĀ PAE O TE MĀRAMATANGA

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Breaking the Barrier:

A History of Māori Spiritual and Religious Entanglements at Aotea from 1889

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Ko Aotea te moutere rongonui

Ko Hirakimata te maunga tapu

Ko te Moananui o Toi Te Huatahi te moana

Ko Rehua rātou ko Te Rangituangahuru, ko Ranginui, ko Te Awe ngā tupuna

Ko Ngāti Rehua te hapū

Ko Ngāti Wai, Ko Kawerau ngā iwi

Ko te tuatara, Te Mauri me Tukaiaia ngā kaitiaki

Ko Māhuhu-ki-te-rangi te waka

Introduction

This paper examines the impact that Christianity, and Mormonism in particular, had on local Māori at Aotea (Great Barrier Island) from the late nineteenth century to the present. It focuses on their conversion to the Church of Jesus Christ Of Latter Day Saints in 1889, and explores how this transition from a world lived in a significantly isolated and traditional setting, involved a radical alteration and transformation within which locals embraced, resisted, and negotiated, new Christian ideals, values, and doctrines that disrupted earlier ways of life. This brief essays draws on a small collection of oral interviews undertaken with whanau and pakeke who have deep rooted connections to Aotea. At the heart of these co-constructed life narrative discussions are significant insights that reveal the various ways in which individual iwi members dealt with the loss and rapid displacement of their reo and mātauranga. They also portray how they navigated the reshaping of tikanga in the face of new spiritual discourses, and how they now reflect on the historical construction and deconstruction of hapū and iwi identity following the introduction of Mormonism to Aotea.

Customary Rights to the Land

A brief outline of the island's history is crucial to backgrounding and understanding the breadth and depth of change that impacted generations of lives at Aotea. There are several stories of battles and conquests at Aotea. The most significant conflicts established Aotea hapū as they are today. During the mid-seventeenth century, Rehua and his son Te Rangituangahuru arrived at Te Ahuriri on Aotea with an ope taua [war party] from Puhoi, Mahurangi. They were drawn to Aotea following the death of Ngāti Manaia woman, Te Koro. Thus began the first phase of the raupatu. Her name has been commemorated as the first phase of the conquest, which occurred on the East Coast of Aotea, Te Rangi i Whakaea te Matenga o Te Koro [the day that the death of Te Koro was avenged], the same name used today.[1] (See Appendix A)

[1] Life narrative interview with Michael Beazley, 29th December 2016. Interviewed by Kelly Klink. Tape held at Waikato University History Programme.

After this significant event, two crucial peace-making marriages were made between the two remaining hapū on the island. In keeping the peace, first, the Ngāti Taimanawaiti chief, Mataa, gifted his sister Waipahihi to Rehua. Second, Taipikingarangi, the leader of Ngāti Te Wharau, offered his daughter Rangiarua to Te Rangituangahuru.[2] The following whakapapa shows the lines of connection and descent to the author:

Mataahu	Mataahu[3]
Rehua - Hinurere	Rehua - Waipahihi
Te Rangituangahuru - Rangiarua	Te Ikamimirua
Rurukaiapu - Tarawaikato	Te Aonui
Te Ngaiea	Rangimatanuku
Waiau	*Te Tirarangimatanuku
Korio - Te Wao	Takaau - Kewene Tamakotore
Te Wehi - Te Tirarangimatanuku *	Raihi Miraka - Kino Davies
	Wiri Davies - Waima Waetford
	Raihi Gertrude Tupuna Davies - William Grant
	Judith Ann Grant - Warren Lewis Donald Klink
	Kelly Moanna Klink

For a time, Rehua and his second wife Waipahihi lived peacefully on an island just off the east coast of Aotea. Mataa, who was both aggrieved after the previous conflicts and frightened that Rehua would strike again, decided to act first. While on the island, Waipahihi saw an omen in the form of a lightning strike at the cliff face on the paramount mountain at Aotea. When she arrived home and found her husband burnt alive inside their whare, the sign became clear. Two significant names commemorate the death of Rehua. Firstly, the mountain on which Waipahihi was shown the omen carries the name Hirakimata (lightning striking the cliff face), while the island where they live was called Rakitu (upright lightning). Because Rehua was a significant figure amongst the Kawerau people, his death was viewed as a kōhuru (murder). The main mountain on Aotea and the island where he lived are now forever connected to his death.[4]

The second phase of raupatu began when Te Rangituangahuru sought help from his iwi and hapū of Kawerau. This assistance became known in local oral history as Te Karo ki Mahurangi [the assistance that came from Mahurangi]. When Kawerau whānau arrived, Te Rangituangahuru then proceeded to attack Ngāti Tai and

[2] Beazley, 29th December 2016.
[3] Although there is much debate about Rehua's whakapapa, in the 1881 Hauturu investigation, Arama for Hauturu gives Rehua's father as Mataahu.
[4] Beazley, 29th December 2016.

Ngāti Te Wharau. This was a two-prong assault from both the east coast and west coasts. The final battle between these opposing forces took place at Te Wharangi [Sandy Bay See Appendix A], down the south west coast of Aotea. These inter-tribal pakanga are known as Te Kahukura o Te Rangituangahuru or 'the red cloak of Te Rangituangahuru', named in reference to the widespread killing and utu exacted to avenge the murder of his father, Rehua. Several hapū names arose from the second phase of the raupatu. Those who fled the island took on the name Te Patutātahi [people who were killed on the foreshore of Te Wharangi] to remember the event and their dead. Rehua and Waipahihi had only one son, Te Ikamimirua, who was both Ngāti Tai and Kawerau descent. However, Te Rangituangahuru wanted utu for the death of his father. He sent an ope taua to kill all of Ngāti Tai, including his half-brother, Te Ikamimirua. When Te Rangituangahuru's men came looking for his half-brother, the women concealed his gender, bending his penis causing him to appear female to protect him from Te Rangituangahuru's wrath. Hence the name Te Ure Whakapiko, which means descendants of the bent penis. Te Ure Whakapiko is a hapū of Ngāti Rehua.[5]

Over a hundred years later, two other groups came to Aotea seeking refuge. One group was Ngāti Nau Nau, a hapū of Ngāti Maru who sought refuge with their Aotea relatives, fleeing from Ngāti Whanaunga from the Coromandel Peninsula. The second group came from Whangaruru, led by Ranginui, son of Hikihiki who son of prominent Ngāti Wai ancestor Rangihokaia. Ngāti Nau Nau trespassed on the whapuku ground of Aonui, the leading rangatira on Aotea. This is recorded in korero tuku iho as Te Riri o Aonui [the anger of Aonui] in remembrance of Aonui's anger after Ngāti Nau Nau was thought to have breached customary rights. Ngāti Nau Nau refuted these accusations, and their anger simmered until Ranginui intervened by challenging a Ngāti Nau Nau warrior in single combat and killing him. The Ngāti Nau Nau ope taua then withdrew from this challenge and left the area, but came across Moehau, a sister of Aonui, and killed her. When Aonui and Ranginui discovered this they were grieved. However, Aonui, endeavouring to avoid further blood-shed petitioned Ngāti Nau Nau to return the body. As a show of remorse Ngāti Nau Nau covered her body in a long dog skin cloak as a mark of respect, hence the name Te Kahuwaeroa o Moehau [the long dog skin cloak of Moehau]. These are the two narratives that record the tuku whenua to Ranginui.[6]

One of the last musket wars which occurred in the Hauraki Gulf was in 1838. An ope taua led by Te Mauparāoa was defeated by an opposing force of Ngāti Rehua, Ngāti Wai and Marutuahu. My ancestor, Kewene, was part of the ope taua led by Te Mauparāoa. After the battle, Kewene was captured while emerging from the bush seeking water. The men considered killing him, but Tara Te Mariri had witnessed enough bloodshed and he married him off to his first cousin Takaau. They became the parents of an important ancestor Raihi Miraka Kewene, who was born at Te Wairahi around 1840.[7] Raihi Miraka played a pivotal role in the conversion of her people of Aotea to the Mormon faith, and was the last chieftainess of

[5] Beazley, 29th December 2016
[6] Beazley, 29th December 2016
[7] Beazley, 29th December 2016.

the island to wear traditional moko kauae, denoting her rank.

These significant events led to the formation of the people who resided at Aotea at the time Mormon missionaries arrived in the late 1880s. They are the founding ancestors and korero of those who exercise mana whenua and mana tangata at Aotea today. The hapū is Ngāti Rehua, named after the first ancestor who conquered and settled the island extinguishing all other hapū who were living there at the time. Ranginui is also important because he settled the island after the arrival of Rehua. All those who whakapapa to Aotea descend from both these men. Raihi Miraka was influential in the conversion of her people at Aotea.

Tāhae of Land

Although Captain Cook sighted the island during his travels, naming it Big Barrier, there is no confirmed report of whether he made any actual landing.[8] After Cook's navigation, other vessels visited the shores of Aotea, most notably *The Mermaid* which made landfall on the 3rd November 1796. The ship's logbook provides a record of their visit to the island and notes that when they anchored, over fifty waka surrounded the ship. This number is suggestive of the population of Māori living on the island at this time.[9] This would have been during the time of my ancestors Ranginui, Korio, and Rangimatanuku.

In 1838, the entire island of Aotea was transacted, described as being 20,000 acres by William Webster. This figure turned out to be markedly incorrect, as the island is over 70,000 acres.[10] This was a revised and renegotiated under Ngāti Rehua tikanga. At that time, locals were unable to speak English and signed their agreement with an "X." Later, the Crown treated as a fee simple sale under their own land tenure system.[11]

In 1841, Webster sold an interest of Aotea to Abercrombie and Nagle, which would become a derivative claim. At this time, the Land Claims Ordinance was the statutory authority, allowing the Crown to establish the Land Claims Commission. This commission was created for the purposes of examining land claims that occurred prior to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. This gave Pākehā claimants the opportunity to have their grievances heard under British law rather than Māori tikanga. The Land Claim Ordinance of 1841 would allow each claimant one claim with a maximum Crown Grant of 2560 acres.[12]

In 1842 Governor Fitzroy attempted to have The Land Claims Ordinance 1841 amended and be able to award Crown Grants above the maximum of 2560 acres. In 1844 Britain declined the amendment to The Land Claims Ordinance and the Land Claims Commissioner Godfrey also declined Webster's claim to Aotea.[13] This,

[8] Cited in Cyril Moor, *Early Settlement of Port Fitzroy Great Barrier Island*, (Orewa, 1987) p. 1.
[9] Moor, p. 10.
[10] Evidence given in the 1993 court case, extract from Minute Book 21 AT 242-247.
[11] Evidence given in the 1993 court case, extract from Minute Book 21 AT 242-247.
[12] Evidence given in the 1993 court case, extract from Minute Book 21 AT 242-247.
[13] Evidence given in the 1993 court case, extract from Minute Book 21 AT 242-247.

however, did not stop Fitzroy and he granted Webster his claim to the island.

By the mid nineteenth century, Aotea was a site known and mapped by Pākehā settlers. Locals engaged with traders, and were often victims of the increasingly unscrupulous land acquisitions driven by European missionaries, land agents, and speculators. By 1853, Māori were given 3,510 acres which the Crown awarded as a Native Reserve.[14] This land is still owned by the hapū today.

In 1863, the 'Land Wars' in the Waikato had begun and left many Pākehā on the island fearful of being attacked by Māori. An agent and manager for the Great Barrier Company, Albert J. Allom, wrote to Alfred Dommett requesting arms and ammunition in case of an uprising. The tāhae of land prior to the Waikato wars was done during the second land claim purchases in the 1850s, upsetting Māori. He records that at this time there were only one hundred twenty Pākehā living on the island with only eighty whom were 'strong and able bodied men accustomed to the bush'. In a further letter, Allom estimated the number of Māori who were currently residing on the island during this time to be around twenty- five to thirty.[15]

As revealed by the figures above, from the arrival of The Mermaid in 1796 to the commencement of the 'Land Wars' in 1863, a dramatic decline in the Māori population occurred on the island. This decimation may be attributable to Pākehā settlers and the ease with which they took land, leading to the rapid displacement of many Māori. The effects of colonisation are clearly visible through these figures.

Introduction of Christianity

The remoteness of the island enabled shelter from the onslaught of missionaries and their endeavour to civilize Māori, which they believed could only be achieved by introducing local hapū to Christianity. They sought to baptise non-believers, and steadfastly destabilised belief systems not akin to their own. The people of Aotea remained relatively undisturbed from missionary influence, and it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that missionaries were active on the island. This was long after many Māori had been converted to Christianity, the Anglican, Catholic, Wesleyan and Presbyterian, churches back on the mainland. This meant that local iwi at Aotea went relatively untouched by Pākehā Christian influences and were able to maintain their own traditional customs and beliefs more freely than other less isolated communities.

In 1881, Reverend A. Baker, an Anglican missionary, wrote of his visit to Aotea, noting his intent to convert the locals. On arrival, he was surprised to find that they already had Bibles. When asked if they would like a church service, he recounts that they were suspicious of his motives and thought he wanted money. But, when he waived his fee, they were much more amenable to the idea.[16] Baker's discovery revealed that local

[14] Evidence given by Tara Te Mariri in the 1871 Rakitu Investigation, evidence in 1993 court hearing.
[15] Moor, p.46.
[16] Cited in, Colin C. Banfield, *Sowers of Seed: A Story of the Anglican Church on Waiheke Island References to Great Barrier Island,* (Auckland: St Albans Print, 1979) p. 70.

iwi at Aotea, despite their isolation, had access to English travellers and missionaries well before his arrival in the 1880s.

Indeed, interactions with European travellers had likely commenced with the arrival of *The Mermaid,* in 1796. There was no formal education at that time, and previous tāhae of land had left them unable to access earlier resources or engage in mahinga [a place where work is done, activity, garden, fishery] activities. After the wars, Māori distrusted Pākehā and had become even more suspicious of church missionaries. Robert Joseph notes in *Intercultural Exchange, Matakite Māori and the Mormon Church* that:

> When Māori were cheated in land deals by laws and institutions of the state, they naturally responded by defending their lands, lives liberties and tino rangatiratanga. This tended to alienate them from other Christian sects, due to missionary involvement with the colonial Government during the New Zealand Wars period (1860s-1880s).[17]

The mistrust displayed when Anglican Baker visited in 1881 was a common response from iwi in and beyond Aotea. These were a people who remained sceptical, who had already been deceived by previous Pākehā land agents, and the land confiscations in other parts of the country after the wars had left many disillusioned.

Mormon missionaries arrived in New Zealand as early as 1854, where they began proselytising amongst the Pākehā community with little success. By 1881, a new Mission president was called, under the direction of the President of the Church, Joseph F. Smith, who thought it was the right time to share the gospel with Māori.[18] Many Latter-Day Saints (LDS) authorities at the time suggested Māori were the scattered descendants of the *Book of Mormon* Israelites.[19] In 1881, an LDS missionary John Sorenson had a dream 'that the Maories down near the Coromandel out toward Manaia had preserved the Language best since the Confusion of Tongues at Babylon'.[20] Sorenson's dream further supported church philosophy regarding Māori conversion, and their place within the church lore and discourse.

The first missionaries to visit the island, kept meticulous records. In an excerpt from the Auckland Mission records, observers recall 'hearing of the people living on the Great Barrier, the first land sighted by vessels on coming into Auckland, the elders had often desired to visit them, but did not until November 1889'.[21] LDS missionaries had been coming to Aotearoa since 1854, but it would be another thirty-five years before they would set foot at Aotea - on the 28th November, 1889. President Angus Wright and Elder Davis were

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[17] Robert Joseph, 'Intercultural Exchange, Matakite Māori and the Mormon Church', in *Mana Māori and Christianity*, ed. by Murray Rae (Auckland: Huia Publishers, 2012), p. 45.

[18] R. Lanier Britsch,"Māori Traditions and the Mormon Church" The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, June 1981, https://www.lds.org/new-era/1981/06/Māori-traditions-and-the-mormon-church?lang=eng [accessed 10th February 2017].

[19] Ian G. Barber and David Gilgen, "Between treaty and Covenant: The LDS Future in New Zealand", *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (1996), p.210.

[20] John P. Sorenson, *Journal (*June 1881-June 1882), Sited in Barber and Gilgen, p 143.

[21] New Zealand Mission history: Volume 3, 1894-1900, Part 1, 1894-1897. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

the first Mormon missionaries to arrive. During their trip to Aotea they met a half-caste Māori man, Hone Paama, who invited them both to his home. There they stayed for a week preaching the gospel among local Māori. On December 4th, 1889, thirty-four adults were baptised, along with eleven children who were blessed. Elder Davis remained on the island for a further week 'adding ten more souls, making fifty in all, including eleven children'.[22]

In the interviews conducted as part of this short study, participants merged in a general consensus regarding the history and narrative that led many to be baptized into the Mormon faith. According to these narrators, the baptisms of 1889 and broad conversion were enabled by "the Power of the Priesthood." In an LDS conference in 2013 Elder Neil Andersen, offered a short description of what he considered "The Power of the Priesthood" to be. He argued that 'the priesthood is the power and authority of God given for the salvation and blessing of all — men, women and children'.[23] Those who were interviewed here, maintain this discourse which is firmly embedded within an LDS framework and narrative composition.

The following is what transpired during the week the missionaries were proselyting amongst Māori at Aotea, and may assist with understanding the narrative that many believe today. President Angus Wright records that the possession of a woman at Aotea who had been vexed by an evil spirit necessitated church intervention. When Wright asked what the spirit wanted, the response was 'kai kai.' Wright then asked what sort of food, to which the spirit responded 'tangata tangata'. Those present then came to the conclusion that this spirit was a cannibal. According to the kōrero retained within the community the missionaries then used their Priesthood Powers to remove the spirit that had plagued the woman on multiple occasions. The following is also recorded a few days later:

> At another time the woman was caused to rush into the sea and was only saved from drowning by her husband, a man of great bodily strength, who stood near and followed her. After baptism, she was not further troubled'.[24]

It is worth mentioning that at this time there was a lot of makutu practices occurring at Aotea, and many would have interpreted this as a type of 'tohunga-ism' rather than 'Priesthood Powers.'

Another factor in this conversion, and potential reason behind this conversion in 1889 is the fact that LDS missionary were American, not the typical European evangelist that had garnered so much mistrust in the

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[22] New Zealand Mission history: Volume 3, 1894-1900, Part 1, 1894-1897. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

[23] Elder Neil L. Andersen, "Power in the Priesthood", Deseret News, 6th October 2013, http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865587830/Elder-Neil-L-Andersen-Power-in-the-priesthood.html [accessed 20th January 2016].

[24] New Zealand Mission history: Volume 3, 1894-1900, Part 1, 1894-1897. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

preceding decades. The suffering endured by local iwi after the Land Wars and the tāhae of land at Aotea left many sceptical of Pākehā missionaries. Māori more broadly suspected their involvement as interlocutors and spies who worked with and for the Government, thus responsible for the alienation and confiscation of land. It may be that the American missionaries who arrived at Aotea were viewed with less scepticism than their European, British and French, counterparts. To an extent, this is demonstrated viathe Māori reaction during the earlier arrival of Reverend A. Baker. This viewpoint is also shared by Ian Barber, who writes:

> Latter-day Saints success among late nineteenth-century Maori having been variously ascribed to a coincidence of world views, the proselytizing techniques and connections of Maori-speaking missionary elders who lived among the people, the alienation of the Māori from British based Christianity, non-prophetic religion, and the settler government.[25]

Conversion was a long and inter-denominational process, advanced by literacy and other technologies. Judith Binney has highlighted how 'the elaborate imagery of the Bible, much quoted by the missionaries, would [have] appeal[ed] to the Maoris, adept in the use of metaphor'.[26]

Although they had been baptised, the conversion of Māori to the gospel was a gradual process happening over time. Missionaries did not remain with the people throughout those formative years, and many were living in te ao Māori [Māori world] and navigating their way around the Mormon faith. Thus, there became a syncretism of both belief systems. One family member in particular was, Mahou (Toby) Reweti Davies, son of Raihi Miraka and Kino Davies, who had lived his entire life at Kawa, Aotea. He farmed the island, had sheep and cattle on Rakitu, Rangiahua, Motutaiko, an Mahuki. He struggled with many of the church practices as many were against many of his given beliefs.[27] Where once they revered carvings that told the stories of their ancestors, they were told to stop worship carvings. This lead to a lot of carvings were burnt, and traditional practices, developed and maintained over generations, became frowned upon as devil worshipping through the process of diablosation.[28]

When Toby Davies became too frail, he moved into William and Gertrude Grant's home in Auckland to be cared for, before being placed in a rest home. In 1973, when he passed away, his body was brought back to the Grant family home and the kaumātua and kuia of Aotea gathered to tangi for him. It was at this time there was consternation over where he should be buried. Some wanted him buried in Auckland, while some believed he should be interred at Manono on Aotea amongst his ancestors. The night before the funeral service, whilst still in the home of the Grant family, the decision was made to take him back to Manono, Aotea, unbeknownst to his daughter and other family members. During the early hours of the morning the

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[25] Ian Barber, Between Biculturalism and Assimilation: The Changing Place of Māori Culture in the Twentieth-Century New Zealand Mormon Church < http://www.nzjh.auckland.ac.nz/docs/1995/NZJH_29_2_02.pdf> [accessed 12th January 2017].
[26] Judith Binney, 'Parahurihia: some thoughts on interpretation', Journal of the Polynesian Society, (September 1966), p. 326.
[27] Life narrative interview with Tania Vincent, 8th January 2017. Interviewed by Kelly Klink.
[28] Fraser Macdonald, 'Lucifer Is Behind Me': The Diabolisation of Oksapmin Witchcraft as Negative Cosmological Integration. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, (2015) pp. 464-480.

kuia watching over him turned their backs and allowed the tūpāpaku to be taken by the men of our people. Though they were LDS members, they observed the tikanga of Ngāti Rehua Ngātiwai ki Aotea, which was to bury Mahou amongst his ancestors, in particular his mother and father. There was quite a commotion the following day when family gathered at the LDS chapel to wait for the tūpāpaku, some relatives became upset and called the police. A service was held at the gravesite with those who had travelled with him to Aotea. He was buried in Manono and this is where he lays today.[29]

Nūpere Ngawāka was an early church leader and great tohunga amongst his people. He was baptized in 1889 and is the half-brother to Toby Davies. He too struggled living within two worlds, the remoteness of the island visiting missionaries were very sporadic. When Matthew Cowley (Matiu Kauri) arrived many years later in the early part of the twentieth century, he counselled Nūpere 'that the Melchizedek Priesthood was stronger than his tohunga customs'.[30] This discourse was influential in the removal of Māori customs, and the dismantling of prior beliefs systems and assimilation into a Mormon world.

In the 1930s, Nūpere, who had now accepted the Gospel and moved away from te ao Māori, thought it would be best for his family to move off the island due to contention over land, and a desire for better education and better opportunities to meet potential marriage partners that were not cousins.[31] This, in particular, confirms his full conversion to this Pākehā belief system. Marrying cousins was prevalent on the island and this practice was not uncommon in a Māori world. Thus, for Nūpere to hold the prospect of finding non-related partners as reasoning behind leaving his homeland, he must have inserted Christian beliefs over and above his traditional Māori values and practices.

Many locals ended up moving to Whananaki, Auckland, and Hikurangi after Nūpere had already passed away. The leaving of their home island presented a range of difficulties as they attempted to shift from the hapū, communal-based framework of te ao Māori into the Pākehā framework of the nuclear family. This family structure left many isolated from extended family, having to adapt to a new way of living without extended family connections and support.

Frederick Beazley and his wife, Te Ruahuihui Ngāwaka, eldest daughter of Nūpere, left Aotea in 1940 along with about sixty others. They dismantled their house at Kawa and brought it with them to Whananaki with their children and stock. His children were speakers of te reo Māori in their younger years living on the island, but when they moved to the mainland, Frederick needed to work and no longer had the time to instruct his children in te reo. This need to leave his family to work lead to the decline of the language amongst his family.[32] Meanwhile, this was also occurring in other families that had left the island. The assimilation of the

[29] Interview with Tania Vincent, Judith Klink, Michael Beazley.
[30] Rosanna Whaanga, Chieftainess of Ngāti Rehua: Raihi Miraka Kewene-Ngāwaka C.1830-1933, in *Turning the Hearts of the Children: Early Māori Leaders in the Mormon Church,* ed. by Selwyn Katene. (Wellington: Steele Roberts Publishers, 2014), p.52.
[31] Beazley, 29th December 2016.
[32] Beazley, 29th December 2016.

Aotea migrants into the Pākehā world through Christianity lead to both the deconstruction of hapū and decline in te reo Māori. It is, however, necessary to note that many LDS family saw this conversion as a form of progress rather than colonisation.[33]

This perception of progression rather than colonisation in many who were interviewed was remarkably revealing of how memories are stored, processed, and transmitted through generations. The question must be asked whether those tupuna in the early years fully understood the implications of converting to the gospel. Perhaps they perceived it as a means of assimilation to that which had been forced upon them by the colonisers? There would have been a sense of urgency to read and write in English, with the goal of not only a smooth assimilation, but to help fight the land confiscation during the nineteenth century. They may have believed the only way to achieve this was through the adoption of, and conversion to, Christianity.

In the 1980s when the people gathered to build the Kawa marae, the puriri grove adjoining the marae block was considered tapu. It was, in fact, considered to be a very tapu area, due to Māori burying whenua [placenta] there many years before. During the musket wars of 1821 at Te Totara Pā, Hongi Hika had gathered an arsenal of weapons which altered the balance in power and now wanted utu over past grievances. A leading Ngāpuhi and Ngātiwai rangatira, Taukokopu who was with Hika, warned the people of Marutuahu not to trust Hika. They did not, however, heed his warning, and many were taken prisoner or eaten in a cannibalistic ritual. In recompense for alerting those of the impending danger, Taukokopu was gifted Mere Tiaho and settled at Aotea.[34] Mere Tiaho was a tōhunga mākutu and gifted woman from Ngāti Nau Nau hapū and the people of Marutuahu. She also occupied the puriri grove near the marae, adding to the tapu placed upon it.

Tiaho had placed a makutu on the paramount chief Tara Te Mariri's four sons. They all passed away at young ages, leaving no descent line. It was because of these practices that she was buried upside down at an urupā for outsiders. It was also due to her use of makutu that he was considered amongst locals as an outsider. Mere Tiaho is generally not discussed by those on Aotea now, as many feel that the events of her life are better left in the past. The puriri grove was an area of great tapu for many years and family were warned not to walk through or take wood for cooking, for if they did, they would froth at the mouth.[35] It was decided by our old people to make the area a wāhi tapu [sacred site] to ensure the safety of their descendants.

During a hui in the 1990s, it was discussed by members of the hapū to lift that particular tapu. The tapu was lifted in the 1990s, by a group of about twenty LDS Priesthood holders who formed a prayer circle to lift this particular tapu. Michael Beazley, a priesthood member who was there, remembers 'the wind whistling in

[33] Life narrative interview with Judith Klink, 23rd December 2016. Interviewed by Kelly Klink. Tape held at Waikato University History Department. Beazley, 29th December 2016.

[34] Beazley, 29th December 2016.

[35] Beazley, 29th December 2016, this happened to many family who did not adhere to the warning.

the trees whilst the prayer was being given and when the prayer was over it went very quiet and a warm feeling came over us'.[36] It was then that they knew that the tapu had been lifted, and today many enjoy the puriri grove where Mere once lived.

When Mere was buried, mākutu practices had not completely ceased on the island. Many still practiced makutu, even though it was against LDS doctrine, who were in favour of the Tohunga Suppression Act 1907. The LDS claimed that 'tohunga are of Satan and will go to the place God had prepared for the wicked and the ungodly'.[37] Tohunga were not simply practicing the work of Satan but as Hirini Moko Mead explains in, *Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori Values*, they were skilled spiritual leaders, experts, and or priests.[38]

An important aspect of the negotiation process between Māori beliefs such as tōhunga and makutu and the LDS faith is the use of te reo Māori within the church. There has been much debate over this subject, however, Māori were discouraged from speaking te reo over the pulpit, even though there was no doctrine issued by the Prophet. Rather, this discouragement spawned from the belief of some Mission Presidents that the only language they needed was English, as this was the Lord's language.[39] Apostle George A. Smith, 'speaking at a conference in 1867, [he] ingenuously proposed that as God, in His divine wisdom, revealed the gospel in the English language, it was up to the non-English speaking Latter-day Saints to take the hint and learn English'.[40] This attitude filtered down to other Mission Presidents that served in New Zealand. Mission President (New Zealand) in 1955 -58, Ariel S. Ballif, believed that 'as they take up the righteous way of living, they become more attractive and acceptable to white people and lose their dark skin [by intermarriage]'.[41] These ideas and beliefs, present during the formative years of colonised New Zealand, are indicative of the time and explain Apostle George A. Smith's attitude towards non-English speaking communities.

In the 1990s, English was the predominant language amongst the people of Aotea, and although many of the elders did not speak the language, they could still understand it. For some family members, the church played a significant role in their lives while te reo Māori played a very small role. Many discussed that the old people would korero Māori in the home amongst themselves, but not outside their home.[42] Of those

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[36] Beazley, 29th December 2016.

[37] Cited in J. Henderson, 'The trials of the Saints: Mormons in New Zealand', in *Building God's Own Country: Historical Essays on Religions in New Zealand, 1854-1940,* ed. By John Stenhouse and Jane Thomson, (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2004), p.143.

[38] Hirini Moko Mead, Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori Values, (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2003) p. 368.

[39] Majorie Newton, Māori and Mormon (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2014) p.165.

[40]Cited in Newton, p.166. also in the Te Karere which was written both in English and Māori however they believed this was an 'incentive [for] …our young Māori friends to learn the English language and to learn the Gospel in English. It is hoped they will look diligently to acquire the use of the English language since it will be such an aid to their intellectual and business welfare'. Elders' Messenger 1, no.1 (January 1907) p.1.

[41]Cited in Newton, p.34.

[42] Judith Klink, 23rd December 2016.

interviewed, many explained that it was not intentional of their tupuna to lose the language and how with the assimilation of Māori into a Pākehā world, this just happened.

Samoa (LDS) Saints had remained steadfast in the maintenance of their language. In the early 1980s when ethnic wards would be assimilated into English speaking wards many left and started their own wards and their own matai [Samoan chief who is of an extended family and or village] as leader rather than church appointed bishop. Though the Area Presidency could dissuade these Samoan Saints, after a year a new doctrine was issued, and ethnic wards were once again sanctioned in New Zealand.[43] There was much discourse on whether there needed to be a separate Māori speaking ward, as some felt at this stage that we were all one person in the eyes of God, and thus, there was no need to be separated because of ethnic backgrounds.[44] This viewpoint is indicative of transition that had occurred - moving from te ao Māori to becoming totally immersed in LDS society, simultaneously losing traditional culture and embracing a new form of culture.

The opening of the new marae at Kawa in 2014, has been instrumental in providing a place where te reo and tikanga is observed and maintained. Many of the kaumātua and kuia are not able to korero Māori however, the establishment of the taumata this year consists of many who can only speak English, demonstrating the loss of language amongst the older generation. However, this has inspired many to learn Māori and once again embrace their culture, lifting the constraints by the colonisation of Aotea. The marae has also been instrumental in many whānau been able to return back to their whenua and reconnect with their Māoritanga.

The introduction of Christianity, had a definite impact on the lifestyle of those at Aotea, and can be seen somewhat typical strategy of the colonisation process. Although Christianity came late to the people at Aotea, it ushered in new philosophies and extinguished many traditional practices.

The Establishment of Pākehā Schooling

After the mass conversion of the people on Aotea, they petitioned to have a native school erected. By the late nineteenth century Kino Rewiti Davies started to correspond with the Education Board and set aside a piece of land at Pukemaukuuku, Katherine Bay. In a letter to the board by kaumātua and kuia, they stated ‘some of our children can neither write nor read, some of them have grown up to be married men without education of any kind’.[45] Further on, they continue to describe that, ‘we are compelled to ask for a Native School in order that our mental ignorance might be remedied’.[46] The term ‘mental ignorance’ is a revealing statement, as it once again demonstrates the displacement of local knowledge and belief systems in favour

[43] Newton, p. 166-67.
[44] Michael Beazley, 29th December 2016.
[45] Letters held in my possession
[46] Letters held in my possession

of those Pākehā settlers. This is reflected in the following statement by Moana Jackson, who has worked in the education system and a lawyer, explaining that schooling was part of 'the colonising process, the colonisers had to educate us to think that what we already knew, or might know from our own traditions, our own education and our own cultural understanding of the world, was not worthy'.[47] This statement by Jackson provides insight into how many viewed themselves within a Pākehā society.

It took many years for a school to be erected it was established in 1909. A register of admission was taken, which also provides evidence of the mindsets of people at the time, as the names that are recorded are all in Pākehā and not Māori.[48] This could either be explained by assimilation or as a result of the Native School Act.[49] Many suffered harsh brutalities by enforcers of this act, which banned Māori in school. Aotea, even with its remoteness, was not excluded from this, and many of the children were beaten and did not remain at school. William Grant, born in 1913, attended the school at Aotea. Although he is registered in 1919, he never attended school till much later about 1926.[50] This could be best explained by the need for children to be enrolled in order to keep the school open. William Grant only stayed in school till he was fourteen years old, as was typical of many at that time. Many worked to support family, and work on the island was scarce. As the eldest of ten children, he ended up leaving the island for forestry work in the King Country with his uncles.[51]

Today children living on the island are able to speak te reo, assisted by some of the teachers at the local Okiwi school, who are fluent in te reo. This has allowed the children today to be connected to their land and has fulfilled them spiritually. This may be seen as the restoration of balance on an island with such an unbalanced and tumultuous history of assimilation and colonisation.

Conclusion

From the arrival of Rehua and the establishment of the hapū at Aotea, through to the incursion of Pākehā major changes transpired to break traditions and previously common practices, values and language at the Barrier. Land that once held a revered history of conquests and histories were confiscated and broken in for monetary gain. This left many living off 3,510 acres, a sheer contrast to the 70,000 originally used to occupy and source their food. The arrival of Pākehā and tāhae of land signifies the beginning of the colonisation process, whati, and broken connection that led to a decline in hapū numbers and structure. The availability

[47] Moana Jackson, 'Decolonising Education', in *Decolonisation in Aotearoa: Education Research and Practice,* ed. by Jessica Hutchings and Jenny-Lee Morgan (Wellington: NZCER Press, 2016), p. 39.
[48] These documents are in my possession.
[49] Controller and Auditor General, 2001, http://www.oag.govt.nz/2012/education-for-Māori/part3.htm [accessed 28th January 2017].
[50] Judith Klink, 23rd December 2016.
[51] Judith Klink, 23rd December 2016.

to access previous food resources that had earlier sustained the hapū was severely limited to a small piece of land in the north of Aotea. This action meant that local Māori were forced to rely on Pākehā to continue living on the island.

The introduction to Christianity and the baptism of many Māori at Aotea was another significant step in the colonisation process. Many were influenced by the idea of their place within this new religion, giving many a sense of belonging. However, once baptised, there were certain expectations to assimilate fully into this new culture and facets of the old world were casualties of this diablosation practice. This assimilation broke traditions of old and established the foundation of a belief system still active on the island today.

Another pivotal moment which brought about the deconstruction of hapū and decline in te reo was the scattering of the people of Aotea. The assimilation into a Mormon belief system ushered in new ideologies that were conflicting within te ao Māori. Many embraced these new beliefs and adhered to the conditions that were required to fully assimilate into a Christianised structure. This caused a reorganisation of family/hapū structure into a Pākeha construct.

The establishment of a school at Aotea institutionalised a sense of moving forward, however, this was significant in the decimation of te reo on the island. Despite the revival of te reo there are still lost generations who are navigating their way through te ao Māori.

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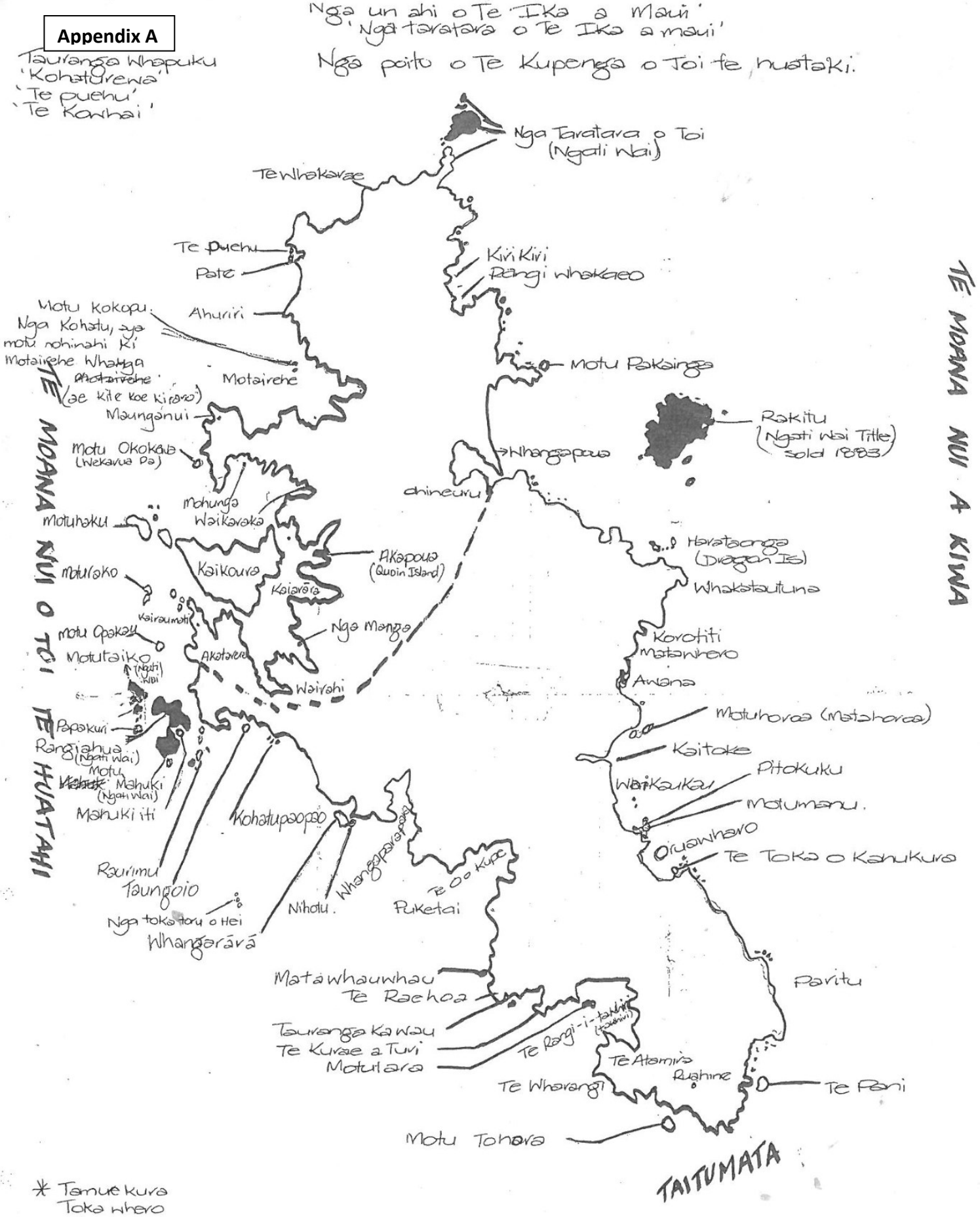
Appendix A



* Tamue kura
Toka whero
Koruru whango
Matatiutiuo Tainui
Te Punga o Tainui
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* see Whetu m'Gregor's evidence for brief outline of relationship with each island. islet + rock.