

# Recording tangata whenua oral histories and traditions

## Techniques and lessons from the Ruapekapeka Pā Oral History Project

Peter Clayworth

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### ABSTRACT

The Department of Conservation (DOC) manages a large number of historic sites that are of great importance to tangata whenua in New Zealand. The recording of oral histories and oral traditions relating to these sites can provide a major asset for site management and interpretation, while helping to establish good working relationships between DOC and tangata whenua. This report sets out advice on processes involved in recording oral histories and traditions, based on the author's experience of an oral history project focused on the Ruapekapeka Pā site in Northland. It highlights lessons learned from the project, and makes suggestions on how problems can be avoided in future oral history projects. Information is provided on both the technical and cultural aspects of working with tangata whenua to record oral histories and traditions.

Keywords: oral history, oral tradition, tangata whenua, Ruapekapeka, archiving, public records, storage, interpretation, method, methodology.

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# 1. Introduction

Oral histories (people's stories about their own lives) and oral traditions (the stories of the past that have been passed down by word of mouth) are important sources of information. They provide a record of events not readily obtainable from other sources, particularly official accounts. This report sets out a series of lessons learned from a particular case study—the Ruapekapeka Pā Oral History Project. The project recorded people's knowledge of traditions concerning the Ruapekapeka Pā, which was the site of one of the most important battles of the Northern War of 1845–46. It is hoped that the lessons learnt from the case study may assist further oral history projects that The Department of Conservation (DOC) may carry out in partnership with tangata whenua<sup>1</sup>. The report also describes some of the basic concepts of oral history and provides a number of sources for further information and training. The Ruapekapeka Pā Oral History Project is described, from initial planning through to issues that arose from storage and use of the information gathered. Throughout the report, the ethical issues arising from the practice of oral history and, in particular, from work with tangata whenua, are examined. This report dwells at some length on the challenges that can arise in an oral history/oral tradition project carried out jointly by DOC and tangata whenua groups. Such difficulties should be weighed against the advantages that DOC and tangata whenua can gain from successful projects. These gains include more comprehensive and balanced interpretations of site histories, increased public understanding of the importance of sites, increased opportunities for tangata whenua involvement in site management, along with enhanced cooperation and understanding between DOC and tangata whenua.

The reader may find it of value to read this report in conjunction with New Zealand history online: a guide to recording oral history [www.nzhistory.net.nz/hands/a-guide-to-recording-oral-history](http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/hands/a-guide-to-recording-oral-history) (viewed 1 March 2010).

## 1.1 THE RUAPEKAPEKA PĀ ORAL HISTORY PROJECT: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SETTING UP THE PROJECT

Ruapekapeka Pā, near Kawakawa in Northland, is a site of great historic importance. It was the location of the last battle of the Northern War of 1845–46, the first major conflict between Māori and British Imperial forces. From March 1845, the Ngāti Hine and Ngā Puhī forces of Kawiti, Hone Heke and their allies fought a series of battles against the British army and their allies from various hapū of Ngā Puhī. In the battles of Kororāreka, Puketutu and Ohaeawai, warriors of Ngā Puhī and Ngāti Hine defeated the British and allied forces. Hone Heke's forces then came off the worse in a battle with the warriors of Tāmāti Wāka Nene and Patuone, allies of the British. Heke was severely wounded in this battle and withdrew from the campaign. Kawiti, of Ngāti Hine, then challenged the British by building an impressive pā at Ruapekapeka. The British and their Māori allies

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<sup>1</sup> Technical terms and Māori words used in this report are explained in more detail in section 9 (p. 33).

besieged Kawiti and his allies at Ruapekapeka from 1 January 1846. (Hone Heke, having recovered from his wound, turned up in the last days of the siege; but throughout the battle Kawiti was the war leader of Ruapekapeka). The taking of the pā by the British allied forces on Sunday 11 January 1846 remains controversial, while the debate on who can be said to have won the Northern War continues to this day. For more detail on Ruapekapeka, the Northern War and the controversy over its outcome, readers should consult Buick (1926), Wards (1968), Maning (1973), Cowan (1983), Belich (1986), and Wright (2006).

The Northern War was notable for the sophistication of the Māori fortifications. Ruapekapeka is a prime example of such pā and the only one from that conflict with earthworks that remain clearly visible to this day. For archaeological guides to the site, readers should consult Prickett (2002) and Jones (2007). The site is currently a historic reserve, jointly managed by DOC's Whangarei Area Office and the RPMT. The Trust is a body made up of representatives of the various hapū who have connections with Ruapekapeka. In 2004, as part of development plans for the Ruapekapeka Pā site, the RPMT put forward the idea that the oral traditions of the Ruapekapeka battle should be recorded. They were concerned that the written historical records largely reflected a Pākehā point of view. From this proposal came the Ruapekapeka Pā Oral History Project in which DOC undertook to interview a series of elders on the subject of Ruapekapeka. With the agreement of all parties involved, the author (then DOC historian, based at DOC's National Office, Wellington) was given the job of both researcher and interviewer for this project. The processes developed in this project form the basis of the current report.

## 1.2 ORAL HISTORY AND ORAL TRADITION

It is important that people contemplating an interview project understand that historians recognise some differences between oral history and oral tradition. There is still much debate within the historical profession over the exact definitions of these two closely inter-related fields.

*Oral history* is generally defined as first-hand accounts of events the informant has participated in. It has also been described as:

*A record of information in oral form ... as a result of a planned interview*  
(Fyfe & Manson c. 1989).

and (as oral histories can also be created from video recordings):

*The sound or video recording of an interview with someone who speaks from personal experience about a subject of historical interest.*

(From New Zealand history online: a guide to recording oral history [www.nzhistory.net.nz/hands/a-guide-to-recording-oral-history](http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/hands/a-guide-to-recording-oral-history)).

*Oral tradition* refers to the information passed down from one generation to another, including accounts of events that occurred well before the time of those people now passing on the information. While oral tradition does not give eyewitness accounts of events (as are provided in oral history), it serves an important role in giving views of past events from people who are usually not included in official historical accounts. It also provides a record of the ongoing meanings of historical events. In practice, oral history and oral tradition are usually intertwined in the same narrative.

Researchers should be aware that tangata whenua do not usually make such distinctions between oral history and oral tradition. Both are regarded as taonga tuku iho: treasured narratives that pass on whakapapa, history and customary knowledge (mātauranga Māori) from the ancestors. It should also be considered that in Māori accounts, the concept of time is generally seen in a different way from that in the Western historical view. In the Māori world-view, events involving ancestors, even very distant ancestors, continue to be seen as real and as directly involving the descendants of those ancestors.

It has often been stated that Māori culture is an 'oral culture', even though a large body of historical documents written in te reo Māori (mostly by Māori writers) exists. Despite these documents, the written record is still dominated by texts written in English, usually expressing Pākehā points of view. Government records of events such as the Northern War of 1845–46 give an official version of events, with little attention to the Māori versions.

Oral accounts, especially oral traditions, are of particular importance in the understanding of historical events involving Māori. They give us access to Māori views on such historical events, while also indicating the range of Māori points of view. Oral traditions, particularly whakapapa, show how events fit into the complexities of Māori inter-relationships. They also show the ways events from pre-contact times have influenced more recent recorded history.

In the interpretation of historic events, oral histories give an important balance to the material presented in written accounts, providing access to views not represented in the official record. Oral histories can provide useful insight to places such as Ruapekapeka, where there is an ongoing debate over the events that occurred there and the interpretation of evidence.

A useful comparative guide describing work carried out with First Nations people in Canada is provided by Hart & Wolfe (1995).

### 1.3 WHAKAPAPA AND LAND

The whakapapa or genealogical relationships between the different whānau and hapū involved in the battle at Ruapekapeka were an important factor in the political relationships of the 1840s. Whakapapa continues to be essential to any explanation of the ongoing relationships between the hapū connected with Ruapekapeka and their links with the site. Most whakapapa information is still only accessible from oral sources. Without this information, much of the Ruapekapeka story does not make sense. It is clear that there is much to be learned from recording tangata whenua oral traditions from this and other heritage sites.

Whakapapa describes connections to the land. Relationships of present-day people to ancestors and to the land are revealed through oral histories and oral traditions. The names of many of the people and places mentioned in oral traditions will not be recorded in books or on maps. The stories of the actions of ancestors at particular places may not have been previously recorded, not recorded accurately, or not recorded in their full complexity. An oral account of a landscape, especially if it is recorded while the interviewee (kaikōrero) is visiting the landscape, may reveal strong historical associations between people and the



land. Oral accounts may enrich knowledge of a site by describing resource use and traditional practices that occurred at that site. Oral accounts can also provide Māori names for plants, animals and natural resources that exist or existed on site, including folklore and descriptions of traditional practices of resource use.

A particular advantage of oral accounts is that they reveal variations in the interpretation of events that exist even among closely-related whānau and hapū. Contemporary written accounts do not generally include such complexity and depth. Oral accounts can reveal how interpretations of history continue to affect the attitudes of hapū to one another, to other groups (both Māori and Pākehā), and to the Crown.

#### 1.4 TANGATA WHENUA

For tangata whenua, it is of the utmost importance to tell their own stories in their own voice. It is not uncommon for tangata whenua to feel uncomfortable seeing their history told in written form by Pākehā. In the case of Ruapekapeka, the Ruapekapeka Pā Management Trust strongly advocated carrying out an oral history project. They believed the story of the Pā had largely been told by others, mostly Pākehā. The Trust wanted the voices of those most closely connected to the site to be heard.

The Ruapekapeka Oral History Project helped to build the relationship between DOC and tangata whenua and facilitated a level of trust and cooperation that could not have been easily achieved otherwise. Such trust and cooperation is of great value in a future where partnerships between the Crown and Māori will become more common, particularly in managing historic sites.

## 2. Planning and preparing an oral history project

### 2.1 DEFINING THE PARAMETERS OF THE PROJECT

When planning an oral history project, the first question should be ‘What is the nature of the project?’. It is essential from the start that the objectives of the project are clearly defined. A DOC conservancy or area office may come up with a particular project, a DOC Technical Support Officer (TSO) may have a subject he or she wishes to follow up, or (as in the case of the Ruapekapeka Pā Oral History Project), the subject may be brought to DOC’s attention by a Māori group or some other body of the public who are working with DOC. When oral histories and traditions are recorded, a wide range of topics may arise. It is therefore important to be clear on the object of a given oral history project from the start and to define the project’s parameters accordingly. In the case of the Ruapekapeka project, these decisions were made by the RPMT in consultation with DOC’s Whangarei Area Office. It is also crucial that all the appropriate tangata whenua have been approached. Ultimately, a decision needs to be made on whether there is sufficient tangata whenua support to undertake the project.

In order to decide whether there is support for an oral history project, the DOC staff involved will need to meet with tangata whenua representatives. In this process the conservancy’s Pou Kura Taiao should always be consulted for advice on who to talk to. A very important part of these early decisions will be identifying the kaumātua who will be able to provide appropriate guidance for any project working on Māori traditions. Meetings for decisions on the project may be initiated by DOC or by tangata whenua, or both, depending on the specifics of the project in question. Any decision-making meetings for an oral history project should have comprehensive notes recorded, which set out the decisions made and the reasoning behind those decisions. This documentation provides protection for all parties in any future discussions over whether projects are achieving the goals originally set out for them, or if any other difficulties or disagreements occur. In setting up the Ruapekapeka Pā Oral History project, there were no effective notes recording the early decision-making process, leading to some difficulties later in the project.

The following questions need to be addressed at the beginning of an oral history recording project, although they may need to be revisited as the project develops:

- *Purpose*—Why are the interviews being carried out?
- *End product/s and outputs*—What will be done with the material once it has been recorded? Who will have responsibility for it?
- *Access*—Who will have access to the recordings once they are made?

These questions should be addressed by DOC and tangata whenua in consultation, with knowledgeable kaumātua participating as advisors.

Once the purpose of the interviews is clearly established, the person who is to carry out the interviews can work out the style of interview to be conducted. The New Zealand Ministry of Culture and Heritage guide to recording oral history refers to two types of oral history interview:

- The *life history interview* where the interviewee describes aspects of their life story.
- The *topic interview* where the interviewee is asked about a specific subject.

Interviews on oral traditions are topic interviews, although interviewees (kaikōrero) may use aspects of their own life story to illustrate points they are making. Despite its name, the Ruapekapeka Oral History Project concentrated on the recording of oral traditions through a series of topic interviews. However, a considerable amount of valuable oral history concerning the lives of the interviewees was recorded in the process. The oral histories often illustrated the interviewees' ongoing relationship with the Ruapekapeka Pā as well as the historical events surrounding the Pā. While interviewers must keep in mind the purpose of the interview, they should use their judgement and be flexible enough to record other material that may be of considerable historical importance.

## 2.2 PLANNING THE PROJECT TO FIT A REALISTIC TIMEFRAME

Oral history/tradition recording projects are very labour intensive and time consuming. It should be assumed that an oral history project will take more time than initially envisaged. A standard oral history project will require at least 10 hours of additional work for each hour of an interview. This includes preparation beforehand and processing afterwards. For a project based on Māori whānau and hapū, this figure can easily be doubled. If, as was the case in the Ruapekapeka project, the oral material is transcribed (i.e. written out in full), an extra 6–7 hours of work can be added to the initial 10 or 20 hours. Thus, an hour's interview in English, if it is to be transcribed, might involve an additional 16 hours work; while a transcribed interview in te reo Māori might involve an additional 26 hours (see [www.nzhistory.net.nz/hands/a-guide-to-recording-oral-history](http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/hands/a-guide-to-recording-oral-history)). Factors that must be taken into account when estimating time and costs include: travelling to and from the interview; background research; preliminary meetings with interviewees; negotiating and drawing-up interview agreements; cataloguing tapes and interviews; abstracting or transcribing the material on the tapes; arranging storage facilities; and drawing up access agreements.

### 2.2.1 Hui (meetings) with hapū and whānau

In addition to the factors described above, it is also important to realise that when interviews with representatives of whānau, hapū or iwi groupings are being set up, a great deal of time is likely to be spent attending hui (meetings). These are the events where the project will be discussed, and decisions made about whether to participate or not, and who will speak for the group. Above all, the interviewer will need to meet people 'kanohi ki te kanohi' (face to face). Other workers from DOC who are involved in the project may also attend these meetings, but it is essential that the person who is to conduct the interviews be present. It is also of great importance that a kaumātua who can guide the

DOC party through the correct procedures is also present. Without this sort of meeting, it is highly unlikely that the project will gain approval. While hui may be time-consuming, they are essential for building trust and cooperation between an interviewer and interviewees and their people.

The issue of time and resources has to be considered carefully when deciding how many people will be interviewed in the course of a project. In a project involving tangata whenua, consultation is an essential part of deciding who should be interviewed. Questions of protocol, such as who has the authority to speak for particular groups, must be weighed against the question of who has the knowledge of particular subjects.

### 2.3 SELECTING THE RIGHT INTERVIEWER

After the nature and scope of the project is defined, an interviewer (kaipātai) needs to be selected. The parameters of the project should be made clear to the chosen interviewer before they start work on it. It is important for the interviewer to maintain good lines of communication with the DOC area office or conservancy staff and Māori groups involved to ensure the project progresses appropriately.

A variety of factors need to be taken into account in selecting an interviewer. The following questions must be considered:

- Is there someone within the conservancy or area office who has experience in oral history? Will the conservancy TSO Historic be able to do the interviewing? Do they have both the skills and the time required? (Information on training for interviewers is provided in section 2.4 and in Appendix 1)
- Is the equipment required for recording interviews already available in the conservancy or will it have to be bought, hired or borrowed? (Information on equipment is provided later in this report.)
- Is there someone within the conservancy or area office who already has links with the people to be interviewed? If so, will they be in a position to be able to help?
- Will any particular language or cultural skills be necessary for the interviews, (including knowledge of te reo Māori; knowledge of tikanga for pōwhiri, etc.)? Does the interviewer have these skills themselves? Do they have 'cultural backup' from kaumātua and other knowledgeable people? Support from a suitable kaumātua is imperative for the cultural safety of the interviewer and to facilitate relationship-building between DOC and tangata whenua.
- If there is no one already available in the conservancy or area office to carry out the interviews, is it possible to contract someone specifically for the job?

An interviewer must obviously have the approval and support of the area office and conservancy to carry out research in the conservancy. However, for an oral history project centred on Māori subjects, a number of other factors may also need to be considered. It may be best for a Māori-oriented project to be carried out by someone with whakapapa connections to the hapū or iwi involved. On the other hand, it may be more appropriate to employ someone who is a complete outsider, as this person may be seen as neutral in any historical disagreements between different whānau or hapū. In the case of the Ruapekapeka project, it was considered more appropriate to bring in a neutral outsider. The interviewer

should be made aware of any such issues as early as possible in the project. The key contact within DOC for all Māori issues will be the Pou Kura Taiao for the relevant conservancy. Ongoing consultation with the Pou Kura Taiao should provide guidance on who to approach within Māori communities.

## 2.4 PROPERLY TRAINING THE INTERVIEWER

Interviewers need a range of interviewing skills and familiarity with recording equipment. The Alexander Turnbull Library, based in the National Library in Wellington, runs a regular series of training courses for oral history that potential interviewers should attend. While the standard courses do not deal specifically with working with tangata whenua groups, they still give a very good grounding in many of the essentials of oral history interviewing. Details of these courses can be found in Appendix 1.

## 2.5 USING THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

Before anyone embarks on an oral history project, it is vital that they obtain or have access to the right recording equipment. Recordings should be of the highest possible quality. An interview that is inaudible due to a poor-quality recording is no use to anyone. The National Oral History Association of New Zealand (NOHANZ) site has a link to the Ministry for Culture & Heritage equipment guide which details what to look for in recording equipment: [www.nzhistory.net.nz/hands/equipment-a-guide-to-recording-oral-history](http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/hands/equipment-a-guide-to-recording-oral-history).

The main issues are summarised in the following list:

- Both digital and analogue equipment are used extensively in oral history recordings. The quality of the particular piece of equipment being used is much more important than whether it is digital or analogue.
- Dictaphones (digital or analogue) do not make recordings of a quality suitable for oral history.

### *Digital recording*

- If using a digital recorder, avoid using equipment such as ‘personal recorders’ which create files that can only be used with the manufacturer’s software.
- For all digital media, including computers, minimum settings should be sampling rate 44.1 kHz and bit depth 16 bit.
- Keep digital oral history recordings exactly as they were on recording—do not try to edit or enhance them. Authenticity is of great importance to oral history.
- Mini Disc is not recommended for oral history recordings as the coding system used can cause a loss of data when further copying of the material is made.

### *Analogue recording*

- If using a tape (analogue) recorder, make sure it has a tape counter, a recording level volume control, a recording level meter, and jack sockets for headphones and for an external microphone.
- Use 60-minute cassette tapes, as the tapes on these are less likely to stretch or break than those on 90-minute tapes.

### *Recording conditions*

- Always use an external omni directional microphone for recording. Internal microphones pick up all sounds, including the engine of the tape machine.
- When making a recording, avoid rooms such as kitchens that have a lot of hard surfaces. Recording in such rooms often results in a lot of echo. Better sound quality is achieved by recording in rooms with soft furnishings and carpet, as these tend to absorb sound. (It should also be noted that in Māori situations, a kitchen will be generally be deemed a culturally inappropriate site for recording important traditional information.)
- Avoid recording outside, as it is very difficult to control background noise, particularly wind.
- The source of power is important. Wherever possible, record in a place where you can connect your equipment to mains power. If you know you will need to use batteries, check that they are at full power and take some spares, just in case.

### *Practice*

- It is vital that you know how to operate your equipment and practice recording with it before you start your recording project. Practice will also help you to work out how to set equipment levels to achieve high-quality recordings.

## 2.6 BEHAVING ETHICALLY

There are important ethical issues that need to be considered when recording, storing, and using oral history. There are also specific issues associated with recording Māori oral traditions.

NOHANZ has published a Code of Ethical and Technical Practice: [www.oralhistory.org.nz/code.htm](http://www.oralhistory.org.nz/code.htm) (Viewed 1 March 2010).

The section of the NOHANZ code on the responsibilities of interviewers in oral history projects is reproduced in full below.

Interviewers have the following responsibilities:

- To inform the person interviewed of the purposes and procedures of oral history in general and of the particular project in which they are involved
- To inform the person interviewed of issues such as copyright, ownership, privacy legislation, and how the material and accompanying material may be used
- To develop sufficient skills and knowledge in interviewing and equipment operation, e.g. through reading and training, to ensure a result of the highest possible standard
- To use equipment that will produce recordings of the highest possible standard
- To encourage informative dialogue based on thorough research
- To conduct interviews with integrity
- To conduct interviews with an awareness of cultural or individual sensibilities
- To treat every interview as a confidential conversation, the contents of which are available only as determined by written or recorded agreement with the person interviewed

- To place each recording and all accompanying material in an archive to be available for research, subject to any conditions placed on it by the person interviewed
- To inform the person interviewed of where the material will be held
- To respect all agreements made with the person interviewed

With respect to the last point in the list, the NOHANZ ethical guide provides a valuable starting point for interviewers in Māori oral history projects. It should, however, be emphasised that very strong agreements will be necessary with interviewees and perhaps with their whānau and hapū as well. Tangata whenua groups may not wish to make their material available for general research, but may wish it to only be available to those whose access they have approved. Arrangements will need to be made to guarantee the continuance of these agreements into the future. These issues will be discussed in more detail later in this report.

The NOHANZ Code of Ethical and Technical Practice also sets out the responsibilities of archives, sponsors (such as DOC) and organisers of oral history projects. These responsibilities (as defined by the code) are:

- To inform interviewers and people interviewed of the importance of this Code for the successful creation and use of oral history material
- To select interviewers on the basis of professional competence and interviewing skill, endeavouring to assign appropriate interviewers to people interviewed
- To ensure that records of the creation and processing of each interview are kept
- To ensure that each interview is properly indexed and catalogued
- To ensure that preservation conditions for recordings and accompanying material are of the highest possible standard
- To ensure that placement of and access to recordings and accompanying material comply with a signed or recorded agreement with the person interviewed
- To ensure that people interviewed are informed of issues such as copyright, ownership, privacy legislation, and how the interview and accompanying material may be used
- To make the existence of available interviews known through public information channels
- To guard against possible social injury to, or exploitation of, people interviewed

Note that while the NOHANZ guide advocates a duty to ‘make the existence of available interviews known through public information channels’, in the case of interviews with tangata whenua this should only occur with the agreement of the people interviewed. The conditions placed on the use of the material should be included in an intellectual property agreement, made before the interview proceeds. Details of intellectual property agreements will be dealt with later in this report. Intellectual property issues concerning the control of and access to traditional knowledge are of central importance to tangata whenua and must be carefully worked out in any project.

## 2.7 SELECTING INTERVIEWEES CAREFULLY

An interviewer needs to gain the approval and support of tangata whenua. It is a general rule that gaining such support can only come about through meeting face to face (*kanohi ki te kanohi*). The selection of interviewees depends on the nature of the project and the information being sought from each interview. In tangata whenua-based projects, interviewees are often speaking on behalf of whānau or hapū, rather than just giving an individual account. Who the interviewee represents needs to be made explicit in the documentation and/or on the tapes. In the Ruapekapeka project, the interviewees were selected by a meeting of the Ruapekapeka Pā Management Trust Committee. The processes of hui involved in the selection of interviewees have been discussed above in section 2.2.1.

As previously mentioned, in hui situations researchers should be accompanied by a kaumātua, who can carry out introductions, explain procedures to the researcher and, perhaps, promote the project. It is important to be advised by someone who is familiar with local tikanga and internal politics.

The political interrelationships between tangata whenua groups may be an important factor in a project. The fact that a certain person is being interviewed may mean that other people with opposing views or particular family relationships also have to be interviewed. The interviewer may find that the kaumātua they are working with are not welcome on certain marae. In such cases it is advisable to have some other appropriate person deal with introductions and tikanga. Researchers should seek the assistance of the Pou Kura Taiao and other knowledgeable people in these circumstances.

## 2.8 DRAWING UP AN APPROPRIATE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AGREEMENT

It is necessary to have a verified intellectual property agreement before an interview can be used for research or interpretation. Ideally, such an agreement should be made and signed by the interviewee before the interview commences. The agreement should set out generally how the material can be used, who can use it and who needs to give permission before it can be used. The agreement should also ensure that the wishes of the interviewee are made clear and respected in the future storage and use of the material. An agreement may be made verbally rather than as a signed formal agreement. When this occurs, the agreement should be recorded. Interviewers should be aware that a history of disastrous consequences resulting from signing documents may mean that some Māori interviewees are reluctant to put their name to a written agreement.

### 2.8.1 What an intellectual property agreement should include

For a standard interview, an agreement form would involve the following:

- The interviewee's name
- The interviewer's name
- The date of the interview
- A list of possible uses to which the interview may be put, such as allowing researchers access to the material, and quoting it for publication in print or on the web. The interviewee may agree or disagree to any of these.



- A statement of who owns the copyright for the interview. This is important as it allows the material be used in the future. Copyright is commonly held by the interviewer or the organisation they work for. With Māori interviews, it is likely that the interviewee may wish to retain copyright or may ask that copyright be held by a body such as a rūnanga or a marae committee.

### 2.8.2 Storage

Arrangements for storage are of particular importance, as the recorded material will need to be passed on to a suitable information repository. Department of Conservation offices, including National Office, are not suitable places for the long-term storage of historical records. Analogue tapes need to be stored in archives that have the correct temperature and humidity controls to prevent their deterioration. Recordings, whether digital or analog, need to be kept at a place where those looking after the records can locate them easily, keep track of them and manage access to them for research purposes. This must be an institution that can physically look after the recordings, keep them catalogued and, if possible, make them available for use. The conditions of storage should be set out in a legal agreement between the depositing party and the depository institution, copies of which should be made available to the interviewee. The conditions of storage and access to the recordings should be explained to the interviewee in order to gain their informed consent. Any conditions the interviewee wishes to apply regarding storage and access to the material should be added to the interview agreement before it is signed. The interview agreement will act as an intellectual property agreement.

Whānau, hapū or iwi groups will need to be involved in the process of drawing up any agreement with the storage institution. The interviewee or their whānau, hapū or iwi, may wish to have control over who accesses material or how material is used in research. They may also wish, under certain circumstances, to have the material returned to them or their descendants. In the Ruapekapeka project, the RPMT acts as kaitiaki (guardian) over the recorded material.

An example of negotiating and drawing-up an intellectual property agreement between an archive and Māori groups can be seen in Barclay (2005). Barclay describes the process by which the New Zealand Film Archive worked with Māori experts to develop the Taonga Māori Deposit Agreement, under which Māori material is kept at the Film Archive. (Barclay 2005: 110-130). The Agreement itself is set out in Appendix 2.

The essential points of any storage and access agreement include:

- Who owns the material
- The responsibility of the archive to physically maintain the material
- Who has the right to grant access to the material and who needs to be consulted in any access process
- What conditions should be set out for anyone who does use the material in question

It also needs to be remembered that it is highly likely that whānau, hapū or the interviewees themselves may want to retain a degree of control over the material rather than giving control of the material to DOC.

### 2.8.3 Tangata whenua intellectual property issues

Māori interview agreements generally involve many more complex intellectual property issues than standard interview agreements. Barclay (2005) provides a very useful and readable introduction to many of these issues. While this book deals largely with film images, most of the principles discussed apply equally to recorded sound. Barclay (2005) quoted Māori film maker Merata Mita on this:

*The intrusion into the private areas of ourselves and our territories is a trespass or transgression if the correct rituals and ceremonies for cleansing, purification and blessings have not taken place. As you wish us to respect your churches, burial grounds and sacred spaces so we would wish ours not to be defiled. And to us, voice and image falls into this sacred area.*

(Barclay 2005: 105)

Barclay (2005) pointed out that, in the Māori world, materials such as recorded voices and images are regarded as taonga, and increase in value the older they get. In making, storing and using recordings, it is essential that the wishes of interviewees are respected. In particular, it is likely that the interviewee will want themselves and their families to retain a high degree of control over the storage and use of the recordings. In this regard, they are likely to be concerned over who will be the kaitiaki (guardians) of the material. Decisions as to who will have kaitiaki rights over the material must be made with the interviewees as part of the original agreement. In the Ruapekapeka project, interviewees asked to be consulted when researchers request to use their material. In drawing up an intellectual property agreement, interviewees should be asked whether they want a clause to this effect as part of the agreement. It should be carefully explained to the interviewees how and where the recordings will be stored and who will have access to them.

In the case of Ruapekapeka, the following process was carried out to devise an agreement:

- An oral history sub-committee was established, consisting of the DOC historian, the RPMT kaumātua, and two knowledgeable members of the RPMT committee.
- The oral history sub-committee of the RPMT drew up a draft oral history agreement. This was based on the NOHANZ agreement, on agreements used by one of the committee members in interviews they had carried out with Māori and on input from the wider RPMT committee. The sub-committee spent a considerable period of time discussing and drawing up the draft agreement, both in meetings and using emails and phone calls. The draft agreement included the provision that the interviewee, before signing, could add or delete any specific clauses, as agreed with the interviewer.
- Once an agreed draft had been drawn up, the draft was sent to a DOC lawyer for a legal opinion, including advice on any changes needed.
- The final version agreed to by the sub-committee was presented to the full RPMT committee. The RPMT endorsed the agreement and gave the oral history sub-committee authority to make any further changes, if needed.
- The agreement was considered to be valid when signed by the interviewees, two members of the RPMT, and the interviewer (in this case, the DOC historian). Three copies were signed for each interview: one to be held by the interviewee, one by the RPMT, and one by DOC.

- The intellectual property agreement signed with the interviewee allows the material to be returned to the interviewee if the RPMT should cease to exist as a body. The Whangarei Area Office and the RPMT came to an agreement with the Whangarei Museum to store the recordings there under the guardianship of the RPMT.
- In the case of the Ruapekapeka Pā Oral History Project, a DOC researcher wanting to use the material has to go through the same processes of consultation and requests for permission as an outside researcher.

Each agreement had a condition specifying that each interviewee would receive a copy of their particular interview. This was an important factor in gaining the trust of the people interviewed and in giving them some benefit from the project.

The Ruapekapeka agreement proved to be an evolving rather than a static entity. For example, one interviewee agreed to go through with the interview, but would not sign the agreement as it was presented. This person set out a number of conditions to be added to the agreement before they would sign it. These additional conditions were recorded on tape at the time of the interview. Following further discussion among the oral history sub-committee, the changes suggested were incorporated into the agreement, which the interviewee then signed. In later interviews, some interviewees signed the agreement as presented to them, whereas others made substantial changes before signing.

In one case, an interviewee felt that the conditions they had agreed to regarding the handling of the recordings after they were made were not all being met by the DOC historian. The interviewee therefore requested the return of all the recordings, and the tapes were all returned. It was felt that it was better to lose some material from the project than to cause any ongoing offence and create a bad reputation for the project. Dealing appropriately with issues like this is important when working in small communities, where word on mistakes made travels rapidly, creating more problems further down the line. The primary consideration in deciding how to respond to this issue was the maintenance of the integrity and reputation of the Ruapekapeka project. This incident also acted as a reminder of the care that needs to be taken in adhering to agreed conditions when carrying out such a project.

A clear definition of who will control (i.e. have copyright over) the recorded material needs to be set out in any storage agreement with libraries or other institutions. In the case of the Ruapekapeka project, control was vested in the RPMT. From the earliest phases of the project, it was made clear by both the RPMT and by interviewees that DOC ownership of copyright and control of material was not acceptable to tangata whenua. Given their past experiences, the groups had a degree of suspicion of government motives and of signing agreements with government agencies. This makes it unlikely that Māori interviewees will agree to a situation where interviews are retained by a government department rather than some other 'neutral' agency.

The process of setting up agreements for the Ruapekapeka interviews highlighted that agreements needed to be tailored to meet the needs of individual interviewees, so long as the broader aims of the project could still be met. For the Ruapekapeka project, this meant that eventually there was a range of agreements that varied slightly between interviewees.

The processes involved in setting up agreements may often be quite formal and may include hui and negotiations with various sections of a whānau or hapū. The greater the understanding the interviewer has of situations and people, the better it will be for the project. In these matters, the guidance and advice of kaumātua will be of central importance. Knowledgeable elders are needed to navigate researchers and interviewers through such formal situations.

## 3. Carrying out the interviews

### 3.1 UNDERTAKING BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Before proceeding with interviews, the interviewer should carry out as much research as possible on the topics to be covered. The interviewer is therefore able to devise the most appropriate questions for the particular project. Knowledge of whakapapa connections can be useful if the interviews are aimed at illustrating the connections of hapū to particular events. It is important to treat the interviewee as the expert on their stories. At the same time, an interviewee who may be very knowledgeable about the history of their own hapū or whānau may know very little about (or have little reliable information on) the stories of hapū they are not closely related to.

Open-ended questions give interviewees the opportunity to expand on the information they are giving, once they are 'on a roll'. It is often useful to let interviewees continue speaking rather than interrupting and trying to get in a particular question. If questions arise while interviewees are speaking, these should be noted and asked later.

It is a sensible and culturally sensitive approach to try and find out before the interview if there are any areas that are best not touched on. Essentially, this is a process of finding out which questions are polite to ask and if there are any questions that may be considered rude. The best option is to get background information by asking knowledgeable people (such as kaumātua and kuia) or, perhaps, other relatives of the interviewees, before the interview is carried out. If, during an interview, it becomes clear that the interviewee does not wish to talk about particular subjects, then these subjects should not be pursued.

### 3.2 GETTING TO KNOW INTERVIEWEES BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Once the background steps have been carried out, a meeting should be arranged with the interviewee. This preliminary meeting is usually informal and is an opportunity for the interviewer and interviewee get to know each other. The aims of the project should be outlined to the interviewee. Copies of the standard intellectual property agreement should be taken to this initial meeting. Generally, a copy should be given to the interviewee to read and consider. It is common to amend and sign the forms at a later meeting or at the actual interview; although, if it is appropriate to do so, the agreement can be discussed, amended and signed at this meeting.

At the preliminary meeting, the interviewee can also decide whether other people will be present at the interview. Some interviewees will want to have other people present for support, advice or just to hear the stories being told. In addition, matters such as whether interviews are to be carried out in Māori or English can be decided at preliminary meetings. In these matters the interviewer should be guided, wherever possible, by the wishes of the interviewee. While the preliminary meeting is an opportunity to make the technical arrangements for an interview, its primary purpose is to connect with the interviewee, set them at ease, and ensure the interview will be set up in such a way that they can communicate at their best.

It is a good idea to bring the recording equipment to a preliminary meeting to allow interviewees to become familiar with it. Sometimes an interviewee will decide they want to make a recording then and there, but no pressure should be brought to bear on the interviewee to make the interview until they are ready for it. In some cases, it may be necessary to have several meetings before the interview finally occurs, in others the interview may end up being carried out at the initial meeting. The interviewer needs the ability to 'play it by ear'.

### 3.3 CARRYING OUT EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWS

One of the things to work out at the pre-interview meeting is where to hold the interview itself. In choosing the site or series of sites, a number of factors need to be taken into account. The primary consideration should be the wishes of the interviewee. The interviewee may wish to be interviewed at their own home, at a particular marae, at their workplace, at the home or office of the interviewer, or at the site of the events being described. An interview may involve driving to a number of sites and speaking about events that occurred there. If interviews are to be held at a workplace or outdoors, factors such as noise and possible interference with recording equipment need to be taken into account.

Once a site has been decided on and all those who will be present have arrived, there are generally a few set procedures that should be followed.

In a Māori situation, particularly with older people, a karakia will generally be said at the beginning of proceedings. There may also be a brief mihi acknowledging those who have passed on, those who are present and the matters to be dealt with in the interview. The tikanga of these processes is usually set by the older or most knowledgeable people present. If a kaumātua is providing guidance for the interview, their direction should be followed in these situations.

It is a good idea to have a brief period to relax and chat with the interviewee to set everyone at ease before the start of the interview proper. The actual order of proceedings may vary according to custom, how formal or informal the situation is, and who is present at the interview.

Before starting the interview proper, the recording equipment should be tested to make sure it is working properly and to adjust the recording levels.

Ideally, before the interview starts, the name of the interviewee, along with the date and place of the interview should be recorded, as well as whether this is the first/second or third tape etc. This means that each tape can be easily identifiable

in its sequence. It may prove more convenient to record this information at the end of the interview. If cassette tapes are being used, the following details should be written onto each tape:

- Tape number
- Interviewee's name
- Date of the interview

and the following onto the tape box:

- Tape number
- Interviewee's name
- Date of the interview
- Place the interview was carried out
- Interviewer's name
- Name of the project

In the interview itself, prompts such as books, photographs or maps may be used to stimulate memory and discussion on particular subjects. Maps are particularly useful if the interview involves driving to a number of sites and speaking about them. It may be appropriate to mark the sites on a map and deposit that map in an archive, along with the material recorded.

The interviewer should keep a notebook handy to write down any questions that occur to them while the interviewee is talking. Before taking any notes, the interviewer should make sure the interviewee is comfortable with note taking. It may also be useful to ask for the spelling of unfamiliar words or names and write this down. The interviewer needs to use their discretion in asking such questions, as it is important not to break the flow of the interview.

The interviewer should try and make the interview an interesting and enjoyable experience for all involved. If interviewees are relaxed and having a pleasant time, they are more likely to give good interviews.

## 4. Processes to follow up the interviews

### 4.1 ACKNOWLEDGING INTERVIEWEES

Interviewees should always be acknowledged, initially by sending them a letter of thanks and recognition after their interview. In the case of the Ruapekapeka Pā Oral History Project, each interviewee was promised that a copy of the tape and transcript would be given to them after the interview. This was an important factor in getting the people to agree to be interviewed. In the Ruapekapeka project, it was made clear by kaumātua that this material would be returned by the interviewer in person to the interviewees, unless otherwise agreed. The return of material via an intermediary or in the post was considered to be unacceptable. In one case, a return was made by an intermediary after the interviewee had specifically informed the interviewer that this was acceptable. In some cases, the return was made in a formal situation overseen by a kaumātua. In others, the interviewer made the handover in a less formal setting. The various interviewees all expressed great satisfaction in receiving a copy of the interview and transcript.

### 4.2 UNDERSTANDING AND COMPLYING WITH THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 2005

When we set out on the Ruapekapeka Pā Oral History Project, we were not sure whether material collected through the project would be subject to the Public Records Act. If the material did qualify as 'public records', we would be required to archive the interviews and eventually deposit them with Archives New Zealand. This would have gone against the agreements we signed with the interviewees, which made no mention of interviews being held in government archives. We clearly gained the impression from conversations with members of the RPMT committee and from the interviewees that it would have been unacceptable to them to have their interviews held by the Government, including Archives New Zealand.

Northland Conservancy sought legal advice and followed that in setting up our intellectual property agreements and the storage arrangements for the material recorded. It is advisable for each project to seek such advice. For DOC projects, this means consulting the DOC legal team to ensure that legal obligations regarding the Public Records Act and any other relevant legislation are met.

### 4.3 PRODUCING A WRITTEN GUIDE TO THE INTERVIEW: ABSTRACTS AND TRANSCRIPTS

Oral history should be listened to rather than read. The written documentation that goes with it should serve as a guide to the recording, not a substitute for listening to it. An abstract is a brief summary of the contents of an interview that includes an indication of where to find particular sections of the interview on the tape or digital recording. By contrast, a transcript is a word-for-word written version of the entire contents of the interview. From the point of view of a researcher using the material recorded, abstracts and transcripts are extremely valuable tools. Nevertheless, any decisions on making abstracts and/or transcripts should only be made after discussion with, and with the agreement of, the interviewees.

A transcript takes a lot more time to prepare than an abstract. A transcript will also often be inaccurate, as many words may be hard to decipher from a recording. This problem is increased when the transcriber has te reo Māori as a second language and the interview contains sections in Māori. Further problems can arise if the interviewer speaks either English or Māori in a dialect with which the transcriber is unfamiliar. A transcript has other limitations. It does not indicate changes of tone, irony, emotion, silences, mood, etc. The transcript should be made in the original languages in which the interview was carried out. For interviews on Māori subjects, even where the interview is largely in English, it is necessary for the transcriber to have some grasp of te reo Māori, as Māori terminology will inevitably be used on a regular basis.

With transcripts of interviews involving large sections of te reo Māori, it is advisable to re-check the transcript with the interviewee. Given the errors that are inevitably made with each transcript, it is also a good idea to head each up with a disclaimer. This disclaimer should advise the reader that the transcript is only a 'best effort' to reproduce the material on the aural recording and that listening to the recording should be the primary way the researcher accesses the information. The transcript should not be regarded as a replacement for the recording, or as the authoritative version of it.

These problems are not so pronounced in an abstract. The abstracter has simply to provide a 'shorthand' guide to the interview, providing the reader with a guide to the important information on the original recording. In an abstract, it is particularly useful to include names, places and events that may be mentioned. If the interviewees wish to, they should also be involved in the process of making an abstract of their interview.

For the Ruapekapeka project, the DOC historian originally planned to make abstracts as well as transcripts of the interviews. Some members of the RPMT objected to the use of abstracts. They maintained that writing abstracts involved interpretation of the importance of different aspects of the material, an activity that had not been agreed to by the interviewees at the start of the project. The RPMT asked that the abstracts be withdrawn and they were. For future projects, it might be useful to discuss the making of abstracts with interviewees at the initial meetings with them. If they agree to the use of abstracts, this condition would be written into the interview agreement.



#### 4.4 KEEPING TRACK OF WHAT HAS BEEN DONE

It is practical to keep a journal of work in progress which lists the people who have been interviewed and those still to be interviewed. A table can provide an accessible overview of the following information:

- Who has been interviewed, with the date and location of the interviews
- Whether consent forms have been signed and, if so, when
- Whether letters of thanks have been sent and, if so, when
- Whether copies of the tapes have been made and when
- Whether abstracts and/or transcripts have been made of the tapes
- Whether returns of tapes and abstracts/transcripts have been made and, if so, when

#### 4.5 ENSURING THE RECORDINGS ARE PROPERLY STORED

Issues regarding storage have been covered in detail in section 2.8.2. Those workers managing an oral history project should ensure that all material is transferred to the agreed storage institution. It is likely that tangata whenua groups will want to carry this process out with the appropriate ceremonies and with attendance of people who have been of importance to the project. It is also important to ensure that no loose copies of the material are left lying around in hard copy or in digital storage. All copies of the material should be held only by the agreed people and institutions.

## 5. Using recorded Māori oral histories and traditions for interpreting sites

Site interpretation is a process that, ideally, facilitates the understanding and appreciation of sites, communicating the meaning of these sites through careful, documented recognition of their significance in a manner that is inclusive 'of all stakeholders and associated communities' (Charleston Declaration on Heritage Interpretation, 2005—see [www.enamecharter.org/downloads/charleston\\_declaration.doc](http://www.enamecharter.org/downloads/charleston_declaration.doc); viewed 1 March 2010). Māori oral histories and traditions are rich sources for site interpretation.

There are a number of potential pitfalls to be aware of when using recorded Māori oral material. In the case of the Ruapekapeka Oral Pā History Project, the interviews gave traditions from six different hapū as well as from the Kawiti whānau. The same historical events were described but the accounts were often conflicting, with the actions and motives of people sometimes being described in quite different terms. In order to use this material for interpretation at the Ruapekapeka Pā, a way will need to be devised to indicate the range of points of view and to give the public some idea of the variety of opinions. The following points need to be indicated to the public in any interpretation based on the interviews:

- The views of the Ruapekapeka hapū are often different from the history as presented in the written record
- The views of the different hapū regarding people and the events they took part in are often varied and sometimes contradictory
- Ideally, some indication of the depth and detail of the oral accounts needs to be given in the interpretation material that is provided to the public

These are standard issues with any oral account that relies on a variety of different whānau or hapū for source material. Even people within the same family may give very different accounts from one another, based on their experiences, opinions and depth of knowledge. For example, some family members may have had particularly close relationships with kaumātua who have passed on a lot of family tradition. Others may not have the same depth of knowledge but may have information that sets the relationships between family members in context.

When oral traditions and oral histories are used in the interpretation of a site, the media they are presented through must be taken in to account. In moving from an oral account, passed verbally from one person to another, to a form of interpretation embedded in text or a recording, the traditional story has completely changed its context. In effect, it has literally crossed cultures. This is particularly the case where those people reading or listening to an account have little or no knowledge of the original context within which it was told. The various layers of meaning that came across in the original verbal account may not translate well into a different medium of interpretation.

Oral accounts will generally express the views of the people giving them or of the group they belong to. The speakers are therefore seldom inclined to be impartial. When information is passed orally from one generation to another, distortions, mistakes, losses of information, personal interpretations and the addition of spurious detail or of detail acquired from written accounts can all alter the information in the account. Written records, even if they are primary accounts written at the time of the events, are also subject to biases, distortions, mistakes and outside influences. The majority of documents regarding racial conflict in New Zealand, including the events surrounding Ruapekapeka, are English language documents giving a variety of Pākehā points of view. Official documents, in particular, give the views of the various arms of the Government. While Māori documents about these events exist, they are fewer in number. For the modern scholar, Māori language documents also present the problem of interpreting the layers of meaning present in written Māori from the nineteenth century.

Oral accounts, for all their flaws, can help redress the balance of understanding, given that the history of sites is currently dominated by Pākehā written accounts. Māori oral accounts help explain the relationships between individuals, whānau and hapū involved in places and events; information that is not readily available in any written form. Oral information can also show how events within Māori communities, often unrecorded in writing, influenced their relationship with Pākehā in general and the Crown in particular. Oral traditions record valuable information on how events such as the fighting at Ruapekapeka are now regarded by the descendants of the participants, including the impact of these events on their current relationships. Presenting a range of views helps give the visitor an impression of the range of impacts the events described have had on the people involved and their descendants.

The recording of an interviewee may include personal narrative, oral history and oral tradition. Some of what is recorded may be strictly the views and experiences of the interviewee. Some information may be faithful reporting of traditions that have been passed down by ancestors, through a process of discussion and argument with other tribal experts. An outsider using these materials for interpretation is unlikely to understand all the nuances of the information being used. No matter how good an authority an interviewee may be, the interviewer must always be aware that the recorded account may suffer from some problems. Anyone can have difficulties with their memory of events and names, and such problems often increase with the age of interviewees. Interviewees have often read widely on the events they describe (which is to be expected, given their close association with the events). In the case of the Ruapekapeka project, many of our interviewees had read a number of accounts of the battle. Such reading can consciously or unconsciously distort traditional knowledge of an event that has been handed down orally. These issues need to be borne in mind when oral material is used in interpretation.

Before using any recorded material for site interpretation, the tangata whenua who have provided that information must be consulted again. The ideal situation would be to produce a representation of an interviewee's account in collaboration with them, so that their point of view is accurately represented. As this is often not possible, other courses may need to be followed to ensure interviewees provide feedback on the material produced. In such cases, once a

draft version of the information from the interview has been produced, it should be taken back to the interviewee for their correction, amendment and approval. If the original interviewee is no longer available, it would be advisable to consult knowledgeable people from their whānau to ensure as closely as possible the accuracy of the draft.

If an outside agency is being brought in to develop interpretive material from oral recordings, they should send representatives to meet personally with the whānau/hapū/iwi representatives and with the interviewees. The tangata whenua will want to meet 'kanohi ki te kanohi' with those who will be working on the material. Once again, receiving permissions from interviewees and any kaitiaki body (for example, the PPMT in the Ruapekapeka project) will prevent a lot of problems further down the line.

Wherever possible, the interviewees (and, perhaps, other knowledgeable people from their group) should be parties to developing the interpretation material. Ideally, this should be carried out in consultation with historians, archaeologists and other specialists. It is a very good idea to make sure any statements used, either in written or aural form, are correctly attributed to the relevant interviewees, along with information on their tribal affiliations. This will mean that people will be able to trace where the accounts given have come from and will avoid the account as being inaccurately portrayed as 'the Māori', or 'the Ngā Puhi', point of view. The challenge in presenting this material in site interpretation is how to give an idea of the variety and richness of the viewpoints available, without overwhelming the visitor with information.

## 6. Summary and conclusions

Māori oral histories and traditions are taonga, treasures of great value containing a large amount of information that cannot be found elsewhere. Recorded oral histories and traditions can be major assets for site management and interpretation, allowing light to be shone on the history of sites, the use of resources and the ongoing relationships that tangata whenua have with the places in question. In the interpretation of historical events, Māori oral sources provide a balance to the views put forward in written records. Written history tends to be dominated by Pākehā perceptions of events and often gives the 'official' point of view. Oral history projects are a way of enabling tangata whenua to tell their own stories in their own voice, to enhance the historical perspective of all those who are prepared to listen. Such projects can also, if carried out in the appropriate manner, help build relationships between DOC and tangata whenua, with a wide range of resulting benefits to all parties concerned.

While Māori oral history projects can produce extremely valuable results, the challenges involved in carrying them out should not be underestimated. Such projects invariably require a heavy investment of time and labour. Projects should only be entered into if those carrying them out are prepared to make realistic commitments of time and resources to complete the job. Careful planning and record keeping from an early stage will help reduce the potential difficulties of oral history projects. Clearly defined project goals will help in planning how much time and labour to put into any project. A clearly recorded plan will also provide a basis to return to and a focus for discussion, should difficulties arise in the implementation of a project. For all aspects of an oral history project, good record keeping will help create a smoother operation. Department of Conservation staff considering an oral history project must also address any legal or technical requirements that the organisation may have. Foremost amongst these will be consideration of how oral history projects may fit into DOC's responsibilities under public record keeping legislation.

It is also important that at a very early stage the right people are selected to carry out the project. The people to be involved with the project should be selected in consultation with the tangata whenua concerned. Good communications between those working on the project—both DOC and tangata whenua—will be crucial throughout the process. People carrying out oral history projects should be properly trained in both the technical and ethical aspects of oral history recording. While careful planning and clear goals are important, it must also be remembered that flexibility in a variety of situations will often be the key to getting the job done.

For DOC staff working on a Māori oral history project, the first step should be consultation with the appropriate conservancy's Pou Kura Taiao, to get advice on the local background. Projects based around Māori traditions and history will, of necessity, involve a great deal of consultation with whānau, hapū and iwi representatives. The advice and guidance of knowledgeable kaumātua will prove invaluable in all engagement with tangata whenua. One of the most important results of the consultation process will be the selection of the people to be interviewed.

Workers on Māori oral history projects should be aware that there is no substitute for 'kanohi ki te kanohi' (face to face) meetings. Though time consuming, these meetings are the basis of both decision making and the formation of the relationships that are essential for successful projects. Taking the time to get to know tangata whenua will save time in the long run.

In order to understand the processes going on and the historical relationships between people, a basic grasp of the concept of whakapapa is essential for people considering an oral history project. Whakapapa underlies all relationships between Māori individuals, groups and the land. Involvement with tangata whenua will also help DOC staff appreciate that, in recording Māori oral histories and traditions, they may be engaging with a quite different world view from their own.

In addition to considerations specific to Māori oral history projects, staff should familiarise themselves with the general ethical considerations that apply to all oral history work. The ethical guidelines provided by NOHANZ are a good basis for any project. An essential feature of any oral history project is an intellectual property agreement. It is necessary that the interviewee clearly understands any agreement before giving their assent. In particular, the interviewee should be able to set out who should have access to the recorded material and who should be responsible for storing it. If possible, it is best to have storage issues sorted out early in the project. Part of this process should be a clear decision on what sort of written records to make of the interviews themselves, including whether to make abstracts or transcripts. In Māori oral history projects, decisions on access and storage will need to be made through a hui process with tangata whenua representatives. The central consideration will always be that oral accounts are taonga and need to be treated as such. They must be maintained and protected for future generations.

In approaching the interviews, the interviewer must have carried out enough background research to enable them to ask intelligent questions. In carrying out interviews, the interviewer should meet with the interviewee beforehand to establish a rapport and set the interviewee at ease and to ensure all the implications of the project are understood. Interviews should be carried out in settings where the interviewee is comfortable and under conditions where all their wishes have been respected. In the interview process itself, the interviewer must have a flexible-enough approach to enable the best possible interview to be obtained under the prevailing circumstances.

Interview follow-up is as important as good preparation. Copies of the interviews and any transcripts or abstracts should be given to interviewees through appropriate channels. Clarification of details of the interviews should be made by going back to the interviewees for the necessary information. The deposit of records in the selected storage institution should be made in conjunction with tangata whenua and carried out with the appropriate ceremonies of recognition.

Workers on Māori oral history projects need to be aware that the accounts recorded will vary in the way they present historical events, including the actions and motives of those involved. These accounts will also often conflict with the descriptions of the same incidents in the written record. Such differences are

indications of the variety of ways historical events were experienced by those participating in them, and the range of perceptions that have been passed on to their descendants. As such, they should be seen as an enrichment of the historical record.

In using recorded Māori oral histories for interpretation purposes, DOC staff must consult those from whom the information was obtained. It is important that the material is used in ways that reflect the views of the whānau, hapū and iwi concerned. When using recorded material in interpretation, it is important that an attempt is made to reflect the range of opinions expressed. Care should be taken to ensure that the material used is correctly attributed to those who provided it, including information on hapū and iwi affiliations. While these processes will be time consuming, the final result should be interpretive records that give deeper and richer accounts of site histories. The processes involved can help build relationships between DOC and tangata whenua, facilitate tangata whenua involvement in site management and, ultimately, increase the levels of understanding of all the people visiting historical sites.

## 7. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the people of Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Manu, Ngāti Kahukuri, Ngāti Hau, Te Kapotai and Ngāpuhi Nui Tonu; the members of the Ruapekapeka Pā Management Trust; the staff of DOC's Whangarei Area Office; and Broniek Kazmierow, my manager during this project. I wish particularly to thank Raumoana Kawiti, Kate Martin, Paeta Clark, and the late Peter Hereora. Ngā mihi ki i a koutou, ki oku rangatira.

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## 9. Glossary

**Abstract:** A summary of the contents of an interview, which includes an indication of where to find each particular section on the tape or digital recording.

(The) **Crown** (lit.): The power and authority residing in the monarch. In the constitutional monarchy of New Zealand, the power and authority of the state; also the agencies of the state such as the Department of Conservation (DOC).

**Folklore:** The traditional beliefs and stories of a people.

**Hapū:** A tribal grouping made up of a number of related whānau, sometimes referred to as a sub-tribe. Related hapū form the constituent groups of larger iwi or 'tribes'.

**Hui:** A meeting, often run along traditional lines.

**Interpretation:** The presentation of information in a variety of forms to give the visitor to a particular place/site a greater understanding and appreciation of the significance and meaning of the site or object.

**Iwi:** A larger tribal grouping made up of a number of a related hapū, sometimes referred to as a tribe.

**Kahui Kura Taiao:** The unit within DOC specifically tasked with providing leadership and advice on matters relating to conservation of relevance and interest to tangata whenua and to Māori in general.

**Kaikōrero:** A speaker or speakers. In the case of an interview, the interviewee/s.

**Kaipātai:** A person who asks questions. The interviewer.

**Kaitiaki:** A guardian, usually of some treasure or taonga.

**Kanohi ki te kanohi:** Face to face.

**Karakia:** Prayer or incantation.

**Kaumātua:** Elder, male or female.

**Kuia:** Older woman, grandmother.

**Mātauranga:** A depth of knowledge and understanding that incorporates aspects of status, experience and standing in the community.

**Māori:** The tangata whenua or indigenous people of New Zealand. Normal (lit.).

**Mihi:** A greeting, often involving an announcement of the whakapapa of the speaker and their connections with the group being addressed.

**NOHANZ:** National Oral History Association of New Zealand. An organisation to foster professional standards in oral history and bring together those interested in oral history.

**Northern War of 1845–46:** The first major conflict between Māori and British Imperial forces. The Ngāti Hine and Ngā Puhi forces of Kawiti, Hone Heke and their allies fought a series of battles against the British army and their Ngā Puhi allies.

**Oral history:** First-hand accounts of events the informant has participated in.

**Oral tradition:** Information passed down from one generation to another, including accounts of events that occurred well before the time of those now passing on the information.

**Pā:** Fortified village or military position.

**Pākehā:** Non-Māori population of New Zealand. By some definitions New Zealanders of European descent.

**Pou Kura Taiao:** Indigenous conservation ethics managers. Officers in each DOC Conservancy whose role is to represent, advise, manage, and support the Conservator and Conservancies in their relationships with iwi.

**Pōwhiri:** A traditional welcome.

**Ruapekapeka:** A pā on the ridge to the south of Kawakawa, to the west of the Bay of Islands. Built by Te Ruka Kawiti, it was the site of the last battle of the Northern War of 1845–1846.

**Ruapekapeka Pā Management Trust:** A Trust established in 2000, consisting of the hapu connected with Ruapekapeka Pā: Ngāti Manu, Ngāti Kahukuri, Ngāti Hau, Ngāti Hine, Te Kapotai and Ngāpuhi Nui Tonu. A committee of representatives of these hapu works in partnership with DOC to administer, protect, and develop the Ruapekapeka Pā site.

**Rūnanga:** An assembly or council.

**Standard intellectual property agreement:** Agreement on the ownership and copyright of intellectual property, in this case recorded oral material. The ‘standard agreement’ is based on that devised by NOHANZ.

**Tangata whenua:** The indigenous people of a particular area. In modern terms, the Māori people with the traditional rights to an area.

**Taonga:** A treasure. This includes material objects, cultural features including language, and natural features.

**Te reo or te reo Māori:** The Māori language.

**Tikanga:** Protocol, the correct way of doing things.

**Transcript:** A word for word written version of the entire contents of the interview.

**Wāhi Tapu:** Sacred area.

**Waiata:** A song

**Whakapapa:** Ancestry, genealogical record.

**Whānau:** Extended family

# Appendix 1

## ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOPS

From [www.natlib.govt.nz/services/courses-workshops/oral-history](http://www.natlib.govt.nz/services/courses-workshops/oral-history)  
(viewed 8 April 2010)

The Oral History Centre of the Alexander Turnbull Library runs regular weekend workshops in Wellington. The tutor is lawyer and oral historian Judith Fyfe. Similar weekend or weekday workshops can also be organised around the country on request.

The Oral Historian, Māori, also runs workshops for iwi, hapū and community groups around the country on request. These workshops include video as well as audio recording and may be bilingual.

The Jack Ilott Oral History Education Operating Fund exists to promote standards in oral history. Grants of up to \$500 may be made to assist with training.

Dates, costs and registration details for the scheduled workshops are listed in the Events Calendar. Contact the Oral History Centre to find out more about upcoming workshops, register your interest, or ask about organising a workshop in your area.

The courses provided are as follows:

### **The essentials of oral history research (Day One)**

Day One: Introduction to Oral History

An introduction to oral history methodology. How to plan an oral history project, choose the best equipment, achieve clear audio recordings, select informants, follow ethical procedures, develop questioning techniques, process oral history and make the material available for use. Exercises to be completed before Day Two will be discussed.

Fee: \$150 (\$110 unwaged). Limit: 14

### **The essentials of oral history research (day two)**

Day Two: Recording Seriously

Recording Seriously builds on Day One: Introduction to Oral History, reviewing work completed and covering in more detail interview techniques, equipment standards, project planning and ethical and legal issues. Some experience in recording or processing oral history is necessary. Completion of an earlier Essentials course or a recent equivalent introductory course is required.

Fee: \$150 (\$110 unwaged). Limit: 14

### **Abstracting oral history**

The abstract is a comprehensive time-coded summary, which serves as a guide to the oral history researcher. Here is an opportunity to practice the comprehension and editing skills needed to compile a reliable and usable abstract. Completion of an Essentials of Oral History Research or a recent equivalent introductory course is recommended but not required.

Fee: \$180 (\$140 unwaged). Limit: 8

**Māori-English bilingual course: Introduction to oral history with audio and video recording (Day One)**

Includes Māori research methodologies, best equipment, achieving clear recordings, pre-interview procedures, the agreement form, ownership and copyright issues, ethical considerations for organisations and interviewers, developing questions, abstracting and preservation of tapes. Recording and interviewing exercises on specific topics and group reviews are a focus.

**Māori-English bilingual course: Introduction to oral history with audio and video recording (Day Two)**

Focuses on using the video camera, including basic functions, one-to-one interview shots, filming photographs and objects, panning, inside and outside locations. Practical work in teams with interchanging roles as a camera operator, interviewee and interviewer.

**Māori-English bilingual course: Abstracting oral history (2 days)**

Hone your listening and comprehension skills and learn how to make an abstract in te reo Māori. The abstract is a comprehensive time-coded summary that serves as a guide to the oral history researcher. The course also includes a review of interviews recorded since the first workshop.

# Appendix 2

## EXAMPLE OF TAONGA MĀORI DEPOSIT AGREEMENT

This example of an intellectual property agreement negotiated and drawn up between an archive and Māori groups is from Barclay (2005). The New Zealand Film Archive worked with Māori experts to develop the Taonga Māori Deposit Agreement, under which Māori material was kept at the Film Archive. Under the terminology of the Agreement 'the Depositor' is the Māori group placing the film in question into the Film Archive. Appendices A, B, C, D and E mentioned are documents accompanying each specific agreement. They set out details of the material, the persons making the deposit, permissions from the copyright holders of the films, names of the kaitiaki for the material and conditions under which the material will be held.

### **Taonga Māori deposit agreement**

#### **Ngā Kaitiaki o Ngā Taonga Whitiāhua/The New Zealand Film Archive**

Clauses:

1. The Film Archive acknowledges the receipt of the moving image materials listed on Appendix A from the Depositor.
2. The Film Archive acknowledges that: a) The moving image materials will remain the property of the Depositor; and b) all copyright in the moving images materials belongs to the Depositor and/or those persons named and identified by the Depositor in Appendix B as copyright owners.
3. The Depositor warrants that no person or persons other than the Depositor and those persons named in Appendix B have any entitlement to, or claim to, the ownership of the moving image materials and/or copyright in the film materials.
4. The Depositor has supplied letters from the copyright holder(s) in Appendix C, which show he/she/they agree the Depositor may place the moving image materials in the Film Archive under the mana tūturu principle embodied in the Agreement.
5. The Film Archive and the Depositor together acknowledge that these moving image materials have significant Māori content and therefore mutually agree that the moving image materials will be held by the Film archive under the principle of mana tūturu.
6. The Film Archive and the Depositor agree that, for the purposes of this Agreement, the mana tūturu principle will mean 'Māori spiritual guardianship'.
7. The Film Archive and the Depositor agree that guardianship under the mana tūturu principle will be exercised by the kaitiaki (guardians) named in Appendix D, and their descendants, in perpetuity.
8. The Film Archive and the Depositor agree that bringing the moving image materials under mana tūturu protection must not in any way prejudice the copyright owner's usual rights under New Zealand law. Nevertheless,

both parties agree that in choosing to place the materials under the mana tūturu regime, they are acknowledging that spiritual rights over the destiny of the deposited materials are being given to the named kaitiaki and their descendants.

9. The Film Archive agrees, in the event of a conflict between the Film Archive, any of the depositors, people depicted in the material, the copyright owners, the kaitiaki, or between the successors or any two or more of them, to actively promote discussion between the parties to the dispute in order to resolve the dispute. In such discussions, the Film Archive will be mindful of its obligation to respect national copyright laws relating to personal property, and of its duty under this Agreement to accord named people and their descendants kaitiaki status over the moving image materials.
10. If for any reason the Film Archive should come to be unable to guarantee the continued protection of the deposited moving image materials under the principle of mana tūturu, then the moving image materials will be returned to the Depositor. Should the Depositor have died or be untraceable, then the moving image materials will be passed over to the kaitiaki named in Appendix D and their descendants, and where the moving image materials will be stored and under what conditions will then be at their discretion.
11. The Film Archive and the Depositor agree that this film material is being deposited into the care of the Film Archive for preservation purposes, and agree that the Film Archive will have the authority to make duplicates of the deposited moving image materials, if it finds it necessary, in order to continue their proper preservation, provided that the uses to which these duplicates will be put will conform to all other provisions in this Agreement and its Appendices.
12. It is acknowledged by the Film Archive and the Depositor that any access to the moving image materials for study, exhibition, reproduction, or re-editing for any purposes other than preservation will be subject to the conditions set out by the Depositor in Appendix E. In assisting the Depositor to draft appropriate conditions, the Film Archive will be mindful of the status of the spiritual guardianship given to kaitiaki under the mana tūturu principle embodied in this Agreement.
13. The Depositor acknowledges that the Film Archive will not be liable for any loss or damage of any nature (whether direct or indirect) incurred or suffered by the Depositor in relation to moving image materials deposited in with the Film Archive howsoever arising.
14. The Deposit Agreement will take effect from the date shown below, indicating the receipt of the Agreement by the Depositor.

The Depositor acknowledges that he/she has read and agreed to the conditions of this Agreement

# Appendix 3

## GIVING EFFECT TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE TREATY OF WAITANGI

The Department of Conservation has a statutory responsibility under Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987 to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. There is considerable discussion on the exact nature of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, as they continue to be developed through commentary from the courts, the Waitangi Tribunal and the Government. A useful guideline is presented by the principles stated by the Government in 1989, as the basis from which they would deal with issues arising from the Treaty of Waitangi (Ward 1997). These principles are:

- The principle of government
- The principle of self management
- The principle of equality
- The principle of reasonable cooperation
- The principle of redress

The Kahui Kura Taio (KKT) team at DOC National Office used these principles as the basis of a document entitled 'Giving Effect to the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi at DOC Guidelines', available to DOC staff on the departmental intranet.

The KKT paper also sets out goals for DOC, which it describes as being developed: *to help managers interpret these principles and apply them successfully to their work*. We will examine below how oral history projects may assist conservation managers to achieve these goals. In each case, the action from the oral history project would only be able to be carried out with the prior agreement of the tangata whenua partners in the project.

The goals for DOC in relation to the principle of self management include:

- *The department recognises the exercise by tangata whenua of traditional authority over their land, resources and other taonga.*

Recording of oral histories and traditions may assist both tangata whenua and DOC to identify historical and contemporary tangata whenua involvement with particular sites, along with ways tangata whenua may wish to be involved with these sites in the future.

- *The department recognises the exercise by tangata whenua of their customary duty as kaitiaki over their natural and cultural taonga according to tikanga.*

Recording of oral histories and traditions may help identify traditional conservation practices, provide knowledge of customary uses of traditional materials and indigenous species and help Māori to have more input into protection and management of wāhi tapu and other conservation sites. Oral history recordings can be a way of preserving and passing on mātauranga Māori and of making this accessible for conservation managers.

- *The department actively protects the interests of tangata whenua in the land, resources and other taonga maintained by the department and does this in co-operation with tangata whenua.*

Recording of oral histories and traditions may assist tangata whenua and DOC to identify tangata whenua interests in areas and resources managed by DOC or affected by DOC's work. They may also help to identify steps to protect these interests and avoid actions which may undermine them. Oral history projects can be particularly useful in identifying traditional placenames and the names of native species. Given that different hapū may have different names for the same places, oral history is often the only way of identifying such diversity.

In all the cases above, the information provided by an oral history project may be well known to all members of a hapū or may be held by only a few people. The information will often not be common knowledge among DOC staff. So when tangata whenua agree to share such information, it will usually be of benefit to DOC. There are also many cases where the information is not known by many within the relevant hapū and an oral history recording can be yet another way of passing on information to them.

The goal for DOC in relation to the principle of equality is set out as:

- *All citizens have access to natural, historical and recreational resources managed by the department and can participate in conservation management.*

In cases where tangata whenua agree to share the information with the general public oral accounts can provide a way to share the Māori history and traditions of a site or natural feature with the wider community.

The goals for DOC in relation to the principle of reasonable cooperation include:

- *The department makes informed decisions which have regard to the interests and needs of tangata whenua in respect to the land, resources and other taonga managed by the department or affected by the department's work.*

Oral history projects may help identify areas where the DOC needs to consult with tangata whenua:

- *The department has successful relationships and partnerships with tangata whenua.*

Oral history projects may help maintain good relationships between DOC and tangata whenua. They may be useful to encourage cooperation between DOC and tangata whenua.





***What are the important technical and cultural aspects of working with tangata whenua to record oral histories and traditions?***

*Oral histories (people's stories about their own lives) and oral traditions (the stories of the past that have been passed down by word of mouth) are important sources of information. They provide a record of events not readily obtainable from other sources, particularly official accounts. This report looks at a particular case study—the Ruapekapeka Pā Oral History Project. It is hoped that the practical experience gained from the case study will assist any further oral history projects that DOC may wish to carry out in partnership with tangata whenua.*

Clayworth, P. 2010: Recording tangata whenua oral histories and traditions: techniques and lessons from the Ruapekapeka Pā Oral History Project. *Department of Conservation Technical Series 36*. 40 p.