

Interview as told by: Kath Coleman
Venue: 113 Bridge St, Opotiki
Date: 2nd May 1991
Interviewers: Julie Williams and Corrina Biddle
Tape: R.T. 91.12 side one

Speaker Kath:

Ko a Kararaina Kathleen Mihaere taku ingoa ... i whanau ahau i Torere ... te wahi kei reira ra te Catholic Church e tu ana ... no taku tipuna na Retia ahau i whakatipu ... taku pakeke tana ... ka hoki ma ahau kia Opotiki nei ki aku parents ... i te ... e ono aku tau ka haere ahau ki te kura i Torere ... ko Mr Drake te kura mahita e ... standard 4 ka mutu taku kura i reira ka haere mai ki te Convent school kura ai ... e toru tau ahau i reira e kura ana ka mutu taku kura ... no reira taku mohiotanga ki te ... ki te mahi ... na Nun na (muffled) hoki i te ako ia matau ... ka pakeke ... haere ahau ... I'll change to English from here so that you will understand better I'm saying ...

While I was at the Convent School I learn't music there and I had 2 brothers a a sister ... and we all learn't music ... after that I was about ... I'm not too sure how old I was and then I had to go to work cause my parents were shifting out to Waiaua on a farm ... and my brother Jimmy was the one that eh worked ... same time ... Billy and Janie were the youngest ones in the family but then went to school at Omarumutu ... so while while we were on the farm we found it abit difficult to use to, to that sort of life because we got used to being in town ... so time went on and we ... there was so much there to do on the farm ... and I was one that didn't ... that couldn't milk cows ... so I'll cut it short after I finished working ...

Speaker Julie:

What sort of..what kind were your food resources..

Speaker Kath:

Our food resources are ... there were all sorts then and I knew what they all were because I use to see um my Grandparents cooking Maori kai ...

Speaker Julie:

Name some of those Maori please Aunt ...

Speaker Kath:

And I can tell you and some of my relations at Torere they were good ... at um, doing these kai I don't know where ... you know what kotoero is and your Auntie Waikohai she was good at that ... cooking it ... pikopiko ... my

R.T. 91.12 side one continued ...

Grandmother taught us how to make kao and from that day to this I still know how to cook kao and there was a delicacy which they call kaangapirau ... preserved corn ... and going back to my Grandparents ... and Aunties there and my cousins we all liked eating this Maori kai and I'm sure the young people of today they don't know ... that what of eh food was like..and even pigeon at Torere ... my Uncles were good at going to the bush and get plenty of um, pigeons and they cook the pigeons and rendered the fat down and that's what they use for butter ... the life up in those days were good ... we were able to eat anything that was given to us in the line of our Maori kai ... and of course when you're living in town here some people don't know what it is ...

Speaker Julie:

Did you go to the Omarumutu school?

Speaker Kath:

No ... no ... I just went to Torere school and then came to the Convent ...

Speaker Julie:

Did you experience the um the depression during the time of the Second World war?

Speaker Kath:

Well ...

Speaker Julie:

Oh you would of been too young for the first world war ...

Speaker Kath:

Yes ... I was too young then but I saw my Uncle getting ready to go to the war ... I was 6 years old ... that's my mother's brother ... I was sitting there looking at him and putting ... they use to have hati or they hold these things ...

Speaker Julie:

Yeah like a bandage type of thing?

Speaker Kath:

Yeah like a bandage yeah and then I've got a photo there too and I'll show it to you and then when he went away that was it..never gave it another

R.T. 91.12 side one continued ...

thought till ... time went on and on and on and got words to say he was killed ... he was killed in Paris ... he was killed in Paris and then they had a big tangi and ... and he um Edwardson ... Star King and them ... their mother was um pregnant then and um gave birth to a baby boy and that was Paris ... Pariha ...

Speaker Julie:

Oh I know I knew him..I knew him oh yes ...

Speaker Kath:

And my Grandmother went and got home and the mother died you see giving birth to him ...

Speaker Julie:

That's where Paris got that name from..

Speaker Kath:

mm, and he's the only Paris here (muffled) by that name ... he was named Paris where my Uncle got killed and his other name was Hemi ... that is my Uncle, name is Hemi and he got the name Paris where he was killed ... so that was my um (muffled) I was too young to know through those things ...

Speaker Julie:

What about did you work after school or when you left school?

Speaker Kath:

Yes..I worked really hard and we use to ... the wages in those days was only 10 shillings and that was alot of money..and of course time went on ... I got married ... I got married to Jimmy Hata ...

Speaker Julie:

How old when you got married Aunty?

Speaker Kath:

I was twenty ... I was twenty when I got married and then I had three children to him and Johnny, Mate, Margaret.

Speaker Julie:

And where were you living then?

R.T. 91.12 side one continued ...

Speaker Kath:

We lived with eh the old lady Karera ...

Speaker Julie:

Karera Walker

Speaker Kath:

Him and I lived there ... till he got sick we went back to Rahui stayed with my parents and of course Tuakana and them were across the road from the farm ... Moana and Hinemoa ... so he died there ...

Speaker Julie:

So you married, how many years were you married to him?

Speaker Kath:

... eh? ... Four

Speaker Julie:

Four years what a shame ...

Speaker Kath:

And of course um after I stayed home with my parents and then I went to work ... 12 months I think after that I went to work um and I was working for Matetewai ... Mrs Stewart ... she was Stewart Rerea Steven's sister ... Lil Stevens ... they were (muffled) Manager of the Devonshire Boarding House there ... that's where I was working ... that's ...

Speaker Kath:

how much? 10 shillings a week ... there was another girl there ... me ... Katie Brown ... she was a good cook ... that's where I learn't some of cooking (laughter) lessons from ... from her ... she was a good boss ... very um what you call it ... strict ... things had to be just right with her...

Speaker Corrina:

Where was that Boarding house situated?

Speaker Kath:

The Boarding was where Dalgety ...

R.T. 91.12 side one continued ...

Speaker Julie:

Still there now at um ...

Speaker Kath:

It's in between Dalgety and Bay Electrical I think it's at a ...

Speaker Julie:

Devonshire ... Devonshire

Speaker Kath:

Devonshire Boarding House ...

Speaker Julie:

I think they changed the name that's where Kath Riri got the shop now ...

Speaker Kath:

Who!

Speaker Julie:

Kath Riri ... Kath Riri got her shop there now ...

Speaker Kath:

Is that um...

Speaker Julie:

little cafe sort of a thing it's got ...

Speaker Kath:

Oh no ... that's another ... it's further down..that one belongs to (muffled)
house ...

Speaker Julie:

Is that a different building altogether?

Speaker Kath:

That's a different building ...

Speaker Julie:

Oh I see ...

R.T. 91.12 side one continued ...

Speaker Kath:

So I worked there for awhile

Speaker Corrina:

For a number of years.

Speaker Kath:

Oh I was there for about eh 3 years and then they sold out ...

Speaker Corrina:

Did you have many people living there?

Speaker Kath:

Lot of people because they were there before I went there to work ... lot of boarders use to stay (muffled) they use to just stay there and then of course they move on, different ones just stayed the night ... I was abit shy to attend to people ... knocking at the door ... to take bookings because we were only young then but she was good she use to teach us what to do ... cook she was ...

Speaker Corrina:

Would there be any records held of that Boarding House ...

Speaker Kath:

Most likely cause someone else took it over you see after Annette ... but I wouldn't know who they went ...

Speaker Julie:

Can you remember some of names of the poeple who use to call in?

Speaker Kath:

Yeah well but I quite clearly remeber one chap that stayed there for few years Charlie Hall ... he was from down the Coast you know he died not so long ago ... Charlie Hall ... There was alot of jobs in those days ... and of course money wasn't um I mean even if you changed your job it didn't matter about the money at all as long as it was a job ... and of course Opotiki Hospital up on the hill ... Opotiki Hospital ...

Speaker Julie:

Oh yes going towards Woodlands..up Woodlands ...

R.T. 91.12 side one continued ...

Speaker Kath:

Up the top...

Speaker Julie:

Oh yes..oh yes

Speaker Kath:

The old one the building that's there now

Speaker Julie:

Yes ... yes

Speaker Kath:

There was um Debbie Koopu you know Mrs Helmbright she was there with me and Polly Pipe and Tootsie that's Polly's sister and um can't remember now and that's when the war broke up, you see and there was alot of um action around in those days ... people getting sick and coming back from the war and Charlotte August was a Nurse in there then ...

Speaker Julie:

That's when they brought all those epidemics back eh all the diseases back

Speaker Kath:

Yeah well ... yes yeah ...

Speaker Julie:

And that's when everyone started getting sick and all the people all our people were dying fast weren't they ...

Speaker Kath:

Yes ... it's a great experience really you know when you're going to work, you change job there's another job over there and it's paying more than this one ... so away we go and then ended up with these, um Masonic Hotel..

**Julie reminisces to Kath about Karera Walker and the
nickname they use to call her ...**

R.T. 91.12 side one continued ...

Speaker Corrina:

Did you ever see the um all the boats at the back where the wharf ... in the old days ...

Speaker Kath:

Yeah they call em the scows yeah ... yeah, because we use to live not far from there in Princess St ... that's where we were living and we use to go there ... boats coming in and um up at Mokomoko ... that's um Mokomoko family ... he had a scow ... everytime um, um what do you call it ... everytime the scow came in he goes out ... to bring them in through the bar ... and a whole lot of kids use to go there and have a look at the boat ... coming in ...

Speaker Julie:

Did the Maori use to trade food then you know like ...

Speaker Kath:

Um I'm not sure about that ...

Speaker Julie:

Maybe before your time I think ...

Speaker Kath:

Could be yes ... because um we weren't really allowed to go to the wharf but we use to sneak there sometimes to have a look you see (laughter) yeah we weren't allowed to go there ... our parents use to punish us if they found out we were going there ... there's alot you know one can think about when you're sitting at home ... you know about ...

Speaker Julie:

Yeah when nobody's bothering you (laughter)

Speaker Kath:

And different ones come and then you hear talking about their experiences and that and we all have a good laugh and of course when Rangi and Koro got married we got very close to one another..we got very very close to one another..oh well we were both from Ngaitai you see so (laughter)...

Speaker Julie:

That's right yeah ...

R.T. 91.12 side one continued ...

Kath reminisces about Koro ... Rangi and Jimmy Hata and the antics they got up to ...

Speaker Kath:

Oh well I ... you know I thought well I just um go eh visit um different places ... Eastern Bay Garage and a piece of land there ...

Speaker Julie:

Towards the where the factory that area..

Speaker Kath:

No ... just where Eastern Bay is got there cars ... um parked ... there for sale ... and then you turn in ... it going to the boot factory there ... they were all Maori homes there, Maori people living there but that was one couple I quite remember Te Keri and Porena Hata living ...

Speaker Julie:

So all that could be Maori land there ...

Speaker Kath:

Yeah ... well that's what I'm just saying you see ... could be Maori land everywhere ... yeah, and um right down um Victoria St and Albert St there well the street we were in, Princess St ... those land belong to the County Council but the houses were ours you know so when we shifted from there ... we could sell the house but not the land ... that's how it was but I don't know what the rules are now ... of that sort of thing ... but they put their homes there ... well they buy the house on it's own but the land belongs to Council ... where the Pakowhai hall there's a vacant land there ... that's Ngaitai ... that belongs to us ... so this person went to Torere to ask if they could have it to put a meeting house up for Pakowhai ... some of them agreed and some didn't so the land was given to Pakowhai now they are not allowed to have a Meeting house there so a few of us talking about it and I said well whats going to happen to the land..if it's not you's better give it back ... that's Ngaitai land and Riria was the Trustee then and my Uncle Pareparo, so ...

Speaker Julie:

Cause Whanau Apanui got some land around here too ...

R.T. 91.12 side one continued ...

Speaker Kath:

That's where the basketball are ...

Speaker Julie:

Did they have a Meeting House there ...

Speaker Kath:

Yes ... I'm quite sure there must have been..

Speaker Julie:

Was the name Tutamure ...

Speaker Kath:

Tukaki ...

Speaker Julie:

Tukaki ... I'm sorry

Speaker Kath:

They shifted it to Opape up on the hill there where use to be ... forgotten all these Maori ...

Speaker Julie:

Not Otanemutu ...

Speaker Kath:

Ae, that's it ... mm, it was up on the hill where that house up on the hill where Tony Edwardson use to live ... that's where that Meeting House use to be ...

Speaker Julie:

... Is that part of Otanemutu?

Speaker Kath:

No ...

Speaker Julie:

Oh yes ...

Speaker Kath:

(can't hear explanation) Base farm ... Base farm ...

R.T. 91.12 side one continued ...

Speaker Julie:

And did they shift that one up to Te Kaha or they built a new Tukaki ...

Speaker Kath:

Yeah ... because when they have tangi ... it was strange you know we weren't allowed to go to tangi or anything even at Torere there we never use to go to tangi ...

Speaker Julie: Not the little kids ...

Speaker Kath:

Mmm and um they use to have dances there and there was about ... my, see my Grandmother Retia was um she brought Annie Edwards ... Riria ... myself and Bill Johnson (Noema) and Rere Stevens ... my gran, we were all brought up together and this kuia use to live kauta nad she use to make us live in the house ... we had a house and we all use to sleep in it ... in the house top and tail you know ... there was nothing like today ...

R.T.91.12 side two

Kath then reminisces about when they use to sneak out to dances and the time she joined the band with George Rewita and others.

Then she goes on to tell how to prepare kao (dried kumera).

Speaker: Kath

First you get your hangi, all the stones there and then the wood ... the manuka wood is the best for cooking kao ... you got your kumara say about 3 or 4 kits of kumara ... little ones ... when they get cooked they shrivel up ... you got the kumara ... you scrap them and leave them out to dry in the sun ... to dry and they start shrivelling up abit, they're ready to cook ... so you leave them, then you get the leaves ... you get karamu and puriri leaves ... makes the kumera red inside when you have the wina kumara ... the Tauranga red kumara, in those days they use have the white kumara called marikina ... plain white ... they are not as good as the red ones ... the red ones are sweet ... the puriri leaves gives it a bit of a flavour to loose that strong karamu smell and then you get your leaves put a thick layer of karamu, bottom ... then put your puriri leaves ... then a layer of kumara ... then your leaves again and so on ... and then you cover the sides but use a basket if you use a wire basket and that's all you do, like an ordinary hangi ... and then you cook it at night and you open it up in the morning.

End of tape