

Oral History Program

OH-463

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Miría Terauhina Rogers Tengaio

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Hawaiian Studies Division
Laie, Hawaii 96762

Miria Terauhina Rogers Tengaio

INTERVIEW NO: OH #463
DATE OF INTERVIEW: May 2, 1997
INTERVIEWER: Niki Wallace
SUBJECT: Life and Experiences in New Zealand

INTRODUCTION

Aunty Millie Rogers Tengaio, known legally in New Zealand as Miria Terauhina Rogers Tengaio, was born on March 16, 1921 in a little village called Torere in Opotiki, Bay of Plenty not too far from Waimana where she played sports. She was quite the sports lady, who loves tennis and basketball.

Most of her relations are from Torere, Opotiki and Wairoa areas. She is mainly of Kahungungu and Tuhoe tribal ancestry and part of other tribes. Her mother who was born in Torere area is from Tuhoe and her father who was born in Wairoa is from Ngati Kahungungu.

She married the handsome Joseph Runga Tengaio and they had two lovely children, Elaine who married Richard Marsh, and Kingi who married Mary Jean Whittington. They have continued to bring love and joy to Aunty Millie with a posterity of the greatest blessing of fourteen grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren and more.

This transcript contains one interview of Miria Terauhina Rogers Tengaio. She was interviewed by Niki on May 12, 1997. Student oral history secretaries carried out the various processes: Candice Nozaki did the transcribing and Noreen Orta completed the auditing, editing, and final assembly. "[OH-396]" and other such notations tell the reader that an interview of that number has been completed with that individual and is on file in the Oral History collection at BYU-Hawai'i.

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Laie, Hawai'i
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SIDE A

MT I'm very happy for your present you gave me. Because we and no matter where we come from we're all one people and our canoes connect up from both sides mother and father. Well, I'm Millie Tengaio, Miria Terauhina Rogers, that was my name and I was born in Torere, Opotiki, Bay of Plenty in the year 1921. And then, I'm born of goodly parents, they were all of Church of England but I feel that I was never ever been in contact with Mormons, you know Bay of Plenty aye! There were no Mormons in that area. There was always Church of England. I used to love going to church and they used to come once a month. The priest! I always looked forward to my card. They had this beautiful star on it. I would say to myself, this is wonderful. But . . . I had . . . there were seven in our family, three brothers, no eight, only two brothers. I'm the youngest in the family and we had a healthy life. The things that I remember growing up as I was going to primary school as we call it at home. Our master, in Torere the Bay of Plenty, I remember the name of my master, Mr. Drake . . . Mr. and Mrs. Drake, our teachers, very strict. And then of course we weren't allowed to speak maori on the play grounds, and at home I was grateful to my grandmother Numareta Rewi Maniapoto. That's the best . . . I have. So rich you know, I can go on and on . . . Yes, Rewi Maniapoto. I have his jade I'll show it to you too . . . Going back to those beautiful young age, I think back how grateful I am for the up bringing. We never had much money, but we had a lot of love. Our recreation was swimming in the ocean and a lot of seafood. We have to camp out on the beach and everything like that. But on our school play grounds, oh, I was one of the rebels but I forget when I get to the play grounds I forget myself. I love my maori. As a young

child I spoke maori because of my . . .

INT Did you get the strap?

MT Well that's it! I was the rebel of Mr. Drake. Every time I forget and call across the play ground for my friends in maori. Next minute, Mr. Drake, "Miria go and stand on the floor" and then he used to have a big bamboo. "Hold your hand out." And strap, strap! But not only me, others too. But one time, it was my turn and my companion to clean a school house after school and I knew I was in trouble and I had to go and stand on the floor the next morning. You know what I did? I pulled one out of my hair and there was a little split at the end of the bamboo, and I put it in the split and when he came to hit my hand the bamboo split, and of course, he wanted to know who did it and no one owned up. But those are just little fun parts we had. Cause we used to play a lot of rounders and all those you know, play marbles and lot of skipping and so forth. But that, and then I remember on our maori marae, my sister Waikohae, she's the oldest, and her husband Timi K., they were the leaders from the middle group maoris up to the elders in maori culture. And I was only a little girl about 11, 12. Every time I heard there was a maori practice on the marae I'd run . . . run to sit there. I used to wish I was old like my sister so I could do the dance. And then I'd watch. One day cause they started up, and Sir Apirana was my mentor because he used to come and visit all that area once a month for meetings and everything in maori culture cause our conferences in the Church of England they called it Simmen and we used to have them once a month and they always used to come. We used to look forward . . . they used to run something like our Hui Taus. See that was before I became a Mormon and then each family, the Williamses, the Rogers, the Ainses, the Richardson; each family had their own table to feed the people. And you know when the maoris feed people. It's all donated you know, the sea food, the kumaras, potatoes, watermelon, everything. They hardly spent money, only for flour for baking bread, and sugar. Those were the only things. We thought that was the life aye! And then of course seafood, lobsters, kuku, paua. so what I use to . . . as I got to the age round about 11, or 12, they use to stand up and do the action song, I use to go in the back . . . So one time they had this big

welcome for Sir Apirana Ngata and some of the member of Parliament. Well my sister was in charge of all the culture teaching maori because that's when they composed that song, dedicated to . . . "KARANGATIA RA."

INT NE!

MT AE! Around that area. Right.

INT Na wai te waiata ra i tito? (Who composed that song?)

MT Well, my father in-law, oh, I mean, my brother in-law had a lot to do with it, with all that area. Yeah, it was dedicated to him. I think I was about thirteen then. My sister used to say to me in maori, "E noho ki raro. Hey, sit down. You're in the road." Then they'd start again. I'd go at the back. When this big day began I'll never forget this; they all stood up with their greeneries, but I couldn't. The ope was sitting. I knew right away that my sister was going to start, te wiriwiri o te karangatia ra (the quiver for the karangatia ra) cause and then she said, "Torongo titaha." One, two, three, on the third one I just ran across the ____ cause she couldn't see me you see . . . and I was enjoying it. When she turned to me, she saw me and she said to me in maori, "Haere ki te noho. Go and sit down." She was annoyed with me. I wouldn't listen.

INT You were stealing the show.

MT I was going but I didn't know I was enjoying it. Well! When they finished their mihi, (greeting) you know te tangata whenua (the hosts) and te ope (visitors), Apirana stood up with is turupou (walking stick). He always came with his turupou. When he used to spend time with us; the posture, te pai o te rere o nga ringa (the movement of the hands) and he taps our fingers with his turupou and says "Katahi, kia penei kua e pera, penei, kua e penei, penei. He tohu kino tenei." (Then like this, not like that, this way, not like this. This is a bad sign). Well I was small then, but now I remember everything he told me. "He tohu kino tena kia tatou te maori. Me penei ke nga ringa, hoki mai hoki mai ara! Ae!" He taught me how to.

He put my fingers there. He said, "Potiki kia penei nga ringa." And then ae, and this is funny. When he stood up, he with is turupou anei 'Kei hea te putiputi' (Where is the flower) cause you know I was with my favorite.

INT Ko koe.

MT Ara te putiputi ara. Te tamaiti na. Kei hea? (There the flower there. That child. Where?)

INT Te putiputi.

MT Te putiputi, and then my sister came around and say to me, (They used to call me Bib, being the baby of the family) 'E Bib! Haere mai.' (Hey Bib! Come here.) Some how I did not know what was going on in fact I just went up and I said . . . Then he came up, and actually yeah, that's right the little girl steal the show. He was mihi-ing, "te rawe . . ." (excellent) and then of course he was complementing my sister which who was telling me to go and sit down before. But my mind goes back to this beautiful upbringing and I'll never forget that.

INT And that's how you grow up with that attitude . . .

MT Right, see and then eight in our family, two brothers . . .

INT You're the youngest?

MT Yes, I was named after my father's mother from Wairoa, Miria Mokai Lewis, she was his mother a quarter maori. Their father was William Rogers. And then, cause, he complemented on this putiputi and after te aki and everything mihi, he called all the tamarikis together, all our age group then he forgot about the pakekes. He stood up and he was a man of few words, but you could listened. He said, 'Tamariki ma, i nga tau e heke mai nei, kia mau ki to koutou maoritanga. Ma to koutou maoritanga koutou ka mohiohia he tangata.' (Children in the future years following, hold fast to your maoritanga. You will be known because of your maoritanga). I go chaa . . . I'm a pakeha! See my father was, had quarter maori, the rest is pakeha,

then my mother was maori. So I have, I say half-cast. Then my grandmother Nimerata, see all my other sisters Wini, Rangi, Diana, only Waikohai gave them all others they were secretaries, lawyer secretaries, but my grandmother could see, she was very happy because she was telling me all these maori stories but all the other children were afraid of her, she was too strict. And then before she died, she died at the age of a hundred and three, Nimerata stately.

INT Hundred and three?

MT Hundred and three, Nimerata Mokai, my mother's mother. Before about two years I think she knew and she took me into her kauta and she brought this box out, she opened it and I thought all rubbish this, was all jade pieces. And she says to me, "Tenei taonga mahau." (This gift is for you). I thought who wants this ugly looking thing? I said oh, and then these were her, I'll never forget her, when she said, 'Kia mau koe ki tenei taonga! Tenei taonga, na to tipuna, i roto i tana taringa, a Rewi Maniapoto.' Well, I didn't know who was Rewi Maniapoto. And then she says to me, funny thing, I remember her words in maori, 'Ka noho koe ka hoko. Kaua koe e hoko. Ka hoko koe ka ngaro i a koe to matauranga o te maori matauranga.' (You refrain from selling. Don't you sell it. If you sell it you will lose your knowledge of all things maori.) And yet I was only young, I didn't have the matauranga of the maori. See I was only about 13, 14. You see she prophesied because I was only starting then. And then she said, she looked at all her mokopunas, not one of them went on the culture, only the little one, me. That's why she . . . Well, anyway, as I was growing up, beautiful, I attended the Opotiki High school. Yeah right, and we used to have gold and black uniforms, basketball.

INT Na gym dresses ra.

MT Ae! I enjoyed it. Well, my story from that time, the second year I was going to high school, at a Henota a senate meeting, these two gentlemen arrived. I heard that they were looking for a Rogers family. So I went oh well, the only Rogers was my father's . . . Rogers, but he was like a Maori, he had learnt the maori language, he used to speak on the marae. I must have been about sixteen. They

had a meeting with my mother and father, cause my grandmother was passed away then. And now during that meeting, these two men they were looking for the family of a Rogers, the Lewises from Wairoa. I do believe the Lewises had a lot of land but they had an uncle by the name of Sid McGreagor, who used to steal our land. Anyway they wanted to know if there was an issue from this Rogers. And someone told them, 'I think there is a William Rogers who was born in Wairoa but he ventured out and married. So they came and these two men were Mormons they were looking for my dad and one of them was Horera Smith and then Walker. See they were both Mormons. But they had this huihui, and we didn't know what was going on cause all the others were married only Wini and I were single. I was the youngest and Wini must of been about eighteen. She was the one . . . they were trying to match-make one of Bishop Bennett's son because Bishop Bennett's mother was a Rogers.

INT Which Bennett was that one? Manu?

MT You see, they were match-making to Manu.

INT There was Manu and Bill . . .

MT Well, Manu was the one the father used to bring out. The old Bishop of Aotearoa, the big man. They were young but they were like brother and sister. They weren't in love. (Laughter) Well, these two gentleman arrived and their take (reason) was to look for this Rogers. They wanted to bring the issue, a relation or rather back to Wairoa to claim the lands. So in that meeting, because when they finished, I saw my mother crying. Cause I was inquisitive then. She was crying. Then it was my father called us both in, Wini and I. Wini was the older. She was the secretary to a lawyer in Wairoa . . . in Opotiki. And then we listened to their conversation. I got all excited cause I heard them mention cause they didn't mention the real kaupapa (subject) of their big meeting. All they were saying well . . . my father said there's only two more of my kids single. Engari he tamariki rawa te mea pakupaku na. Ana te mea . . . so it was up to them to decide which one they were going to . . . and I thought, I thought, ooh! They're going to take us for a holiday. You

know! And I was excited and I thought, at first I thought both of us. They come to take us for holiday.

INT And you were how old?

MT About sixteen. Well, Wini was about eight, nineteen I think, yeah, she's well, the one that should get married. And then I heard my father say, to Brother Walker, 'Te mea tika, kia hoki atu ki te kainga ko te pakupaku. Tana ingoa ko taku mama. Engari he tamariki rawa.' (The right one to go home is the little one there. Her name is my mother's. But she is just a child) You know, sixteen. 'Ana ko tenei na tekau ma iwa ke nga tau. Do you know I thought oh . . . I'm not going to go on a vacation, you know . . . and then um . . .

INT It was your sister?

MT Well! No! Well, they were discussing while we were there. But after a while my father kept on saying. That's why I renamed our last born after my mother Miria Mokai, Miria Te Rauhira Mokai Lewis is really my proper name. Not Lewis Rogers, that's right, but my grandmother's name Lewis. So they discussed it. All of a sudden they decide me, thinking when I go there, to marry back into our people in Wairoa. Well, I didn't know this. Wini and I didn't know. So they decided, o ko koe te mea e haere ana tahangai. Oh! I was excited. I was packing my bag. Oh, I told my friends. I'm going to go on a school holiday. Oh, where to? Oh, to a place called Wairoa. Thinking I was going to come back you see. So anyway, these two gentlemen thanked them, way we went. Arrived midnight, at this beautiful big house and that was Tahaenui at next to Nuhaka. Well, when we really started talking, my family, my Auntie Harriet and they never had children but they had adopted Hawea Mataira as one of their children, they brought up. A football player. So . . . and then the neighbors were all Mormons. I've never had anything to do with Mormons. Cause we, you know, played, six to eight months socials, milking cows, playing tennis and then all my neighbors. I'll never forget this Sarah Smith, towards my auntie. My auntie wasn't a Mormon. Oh, Auntie Harriet, we want to pick Millie up. We want to take her to church. And then Harriet says yes, you know. So that's

how I started to get into the church at . . . because these neighbors taking me there. And then, and I used to sit at the back in the chapel at Nuhaka, and then (now this is part of our love life, see I was there for about over a year) and I used to go to church and I was bashful and I used to sit at the back, and I could see these young children about eight or nine, standing up. Well I didn't realize it was the sacrament gem. You know, young children used to stand up and say the a, what do you call it again? They don't do that anymore.

INT The sacrament gem. Quote a scripture.

MT Yeah! That's right! I just looked and, wow! Those young children standing up in front of these people, and of course the choir. Then, wow! What a nice clean looking young man. And I'm singing and so forth. Well, I didn't realize. When the stake president asked the young people of the Church College of New Zealand. Brother and Sister TeNgaio, you are to speak at the Stake Conference. All the young people want to know your love life. How you two met, and that is . . . in the meantime they said when he turned around and he used to see this girl, sitting right in the back. I supposed our eyes connected. I don't know, but anyway it went on and that's how I came in contact with the church. And I feel at this time actually I was born a member of the church, because when I was born I never . . . cause people used to ask me it must have been hard for you to convert. Like drinking tea and things like that. I says funny thing I never ever drank tea, but I used to drink warm milk cause we have seventy cows, aye, milking cows and I used to love the cream when you boil it. But I never ever drank tea, never! And then of course, only two in our family smoked. See, and then only one brother drank a little. But not umm, but I was brought up in a clean family like that. So I told them that's why it wasn't hard for me to become a church member. And I see it, a member. Because and then Nuhaka there. Well, in the meantime the reason why they took me there, (it came to me about a year after) I was staying with my aunty and uncle. This gentleman arrived in this beautiful red car. His name was Kingi Winiata. Big chap from Wairoa, distant cousin, handsome man and then of course you know I liked him, he was so fatherly you know. And then, cause Aunty Harriet says, 'Ah! Koia nei te tamaiti.'

Then in the meantime I heard he had one son, an heir to all his land in Wairoa. He was attending Te Aute College. When I heard all this, when Kingi Winiata went back, Aunty Harriet, 'Ah, kia pai to noho. Christmas time, Kingi Winiata junior will be back from school. We want you two to meet. You know, she started . . . then I got a bit umm, you know, my haole blood, my pakeha blood. Got a bit you know, I was shocked and angry. Now is this what they call match-make? You know to make a story short, before that boy ever came back for a vacation I hated him. I hated him.

INT You ran away?

MT No! Oh no! Not with Aunty Harriet. No! No! They had a big get together, all the families came to the house where they had this big garden.

INT Kept you there.

MT Kept me there, but I was feeling ah . . . that I was being used, I guess. As a young girl, you know, I was shocked, and yet I was enjoying everything else, especially the Mormon church and the MIA, the singing, dancing, and I just, right, till this young gentleman. You see, this young gentleman, he knew all the time. Cause his father sent a photo of me to him. You see! I didn't know they were, it was their ideas of bringing the blood together. So when he arrived, when I saw him, fine looking gentleman, but I didn't like him. He was too you know, well, being an only son aye, well.

INT Whakahihi pea? (Perhaps conceited)

MT Well! Well! That's what I thought . . . being young and coming from a little village from Torere. I saw this man. I think I got scared as a young girl cause we had confidence. He was all for it. And then I thought, see, I already had my thoughts on this Joe TeNgaio. You know the MIA. Well, we weren't going together or anything but we used to dance at the Golden Green balls. Yeah, well he was the same too. But when this kid, Phew! I was confused! Anyway, these pakeke, was oh, well, this time was, they had been trying to pick a

date for the wedding before he goes back, something . . . well you know that was really why I was wanting to go home. And see, that was the first time I ever felt homesick. I was never home sick before that. Cause I love this church activity. And then the one time, cause Harriet always used to lecture me, "Kia pai to noho, be a good girl, no other boys." And this, but made things worse. And then one time she said to me, "O, kei te haere mai, ne, kei te haere mai _____ ne ___ Te kaupapa maori, to ask for my hand. I, you know what? I rebelled. I didn't care whether she was going to hit me. I told her straight. I said, "Aunty Harriet, I don't want to marry him." She couldn't believe it. She had this white hair you know. I said, "I don't love him. I don't like him." And then she said, "Oh! Is there somebody else?" You see, you know. I said, "No." Cause I was telling the truth, you know right? It's just in my mind. But ooh, she slapped me. She did! I was never been slapped by my parents. She just went phoom! I nearly fell on the floor. Cause I ran behind her. So anyway, and then they thought unless the weekend after, but, I wouldn't give in. All I wanted to do was pack up and go home. But they didn't want that. It would disappoint my parents. But Kingi Winiata was my savior. When he talked to me all by ourselves, the father of the son.

INT The father?!

MT The father, see that' the one I like too. And then you know, he talked to me like the father. Not like Aunty Harriet pushing me, you know the blood connections, the whenuas and oh, he's the only son. He was wealthy, I opened my heart. We needed to be by ourselves, and I cried and he understood me. He was the only one. And he told them, "Leave them alone. You can't push them." So I'll never forget this uncle. He's a second uncle. And that part. Just as well I didn't marry him. He married a beautiful pakeha girl, they had a son. He used to beat her up. And then of course, cause later on in our lives, yeah, he whakahihi, all to himself. You see the Lord was protecting me right from that word go. You know, I, I've looked back, you know, my life have been full of the gospel, because umm, cause after that, and then my Aunty Harriet took a long time to forgive me, but she wouldn't let me go home. She said, "E noho taua ki konei." And then

they started the Gold and Green ball Queens. You know, during the war period, and then these Huitaus and everything, and then I started getting with the dancing. One year they picked me for a Gold and Green Ball Queen. There were seven representatives for different districts. I didn't know what it was all about but I said, "Yeah!" They had a committee in, and they had a big Gold and Green Ball to umm, for the finals. I'll never forget this time. There were seven of us, and then they have the balloting on the ball. So and so Queen districts, high, and then in the end . . .

INT They had a picture of you too?

MT Yeah! Each one you know. And then, who was leading and so forth. Well, it was exciting! I didn't think about queen, I was enjoying the dancing, the music. And then they had before the announcing of the winner, they had twenty minute silent voting. Silent voting.

INT Twenty minutes.

MT Twenty minutes. Silent voting. And then of course, whoever got the highest money it all went to patriotic funds. There was nothing left out. Fund raising. But I nearly dropped to the floor. When they announced Millie Rogers, and you know I was still a shy person you know and they said, my other friends said, "You know Millie, when we looked at you then you were twisting your fingers." Nervous you know. And then, yeah. We raised a lot of money for the patriotic funds, but all for the war and during the war periods. Well, prior to that, cause my husband, this young man, Joe TeNgaio, I knew he was good and then he was my partner for the Gold Green ball waltz, Gold and Green ball fox trot and we used to win competitions. During that time we used to have competitions at the Huitaus. You know basketball, singing, choirs and maori culture and everything. My husband, well, the second year he was my husband, but the first year at the Huitau I was still single. But after that we had a very beautiful courtship. And he came, oh, I admire him. He knew all about the trials and tribulations a year or so before that with Aunty Harriet. And then of course when he proposed and when his mother talked to me and then he says to me, "I know your Aunty Harriet is a

battleax, but I _____, I'm going to come and ask for your hand." I felt sorry for him. So when he came, it was a Sunday. Cause I told my Aunty Harriet, "O, kei te haere mai ki konei." But she had settled then, and then, when he came and proposed she was in good spirits. She had changed everything. We had a beautiful wedding, my parents came up from Torere. You know our maori people aye? Five hundred people is nothing to feed, with all the locals and the kai and everything, so and then, ah, _____. Well, twelve months after that we had the privilege of coming to the states to be sealed.

INT AAHH! That wasn't very long.

MT Yeah! Yeah!

INT Cause our temple wasn't built then.

MT Oh no, see that's another part of my life. See, this is just the beginning of my life in the church. Oh, there's a lot of other things. Umm, yeah, about twelve, fourteen months afterwards, my mother, my mother-in-law had already been here three times prior to this. She brought, she _____, cling to your man, and she brought her eldest son and his wife, one, two, three. It was the third time. Oh no! Fourth time! Yeah, we were the last one that came. And then umm, yeah we were sealed here and course when we went back everything just fitted into place. But the church, that's when we come in contact with President Cowley. I first met him when we got married. And then, of course, he'd been all over. I think that it was his second or third time. Many times we used to go around. He used to come to my mother-in-law's and father-in-law's house to relax, and then, this one time I'll never forget. It was raining, after the football game, we all went back and my in-laws always love feeding people, you know, the houses. I used to think, gee, you know as a young married person to this family, ai, what have I married into. You know, see all these people and they all feeding them, taking care of them, and of course we do the washing of the dishes.

INT Ae! Ae!

MT But this, I think we had a year and a half, and then of course, she had this beautiful living room, a big open fire and a radio, a big radio and we were still washing dishes in the kitchen. We could hear Matiu Kauri talking to my mother-in-law Herengarangi and he came out with these words. "Rangi, I've been all over the mission throughout the triangle." That was the first time I heard of that word 'triangle,' I didn't know what it meant. I didn't know where that triangle was. But you know my years and of course my own sister-in-law said to me, "Yeah, you know, I see a problem." Of course my mother-in-law says, "He aha tumuaki?" That's how you say president. And tumuaki says, "Oh! These last few trips, I've noticed all the young people rushing to the highlights of the cities, city lights and forgetting who they are, forgetting their language, forgetting their culture and forgetting the unity of the maori. What is it? Family unity." And we all agreed, "Ah! Yeah!" And he said, "Well, I just feel that I can." This is what he said, that was years before. He said, "I can see a maori village built in America." We all laughed in the kitchen. We all said, "Huh! Really! America? The Americans don't want a maori carved meeting house there." And then he says, "Because, and this is the word he used, because that's the only way I can see them perpetuate their culture, the language and who they are." See, Hawai'i wasn't a state yet.

INT Aahh. It was not America.

MT Yes! See! I mean he prophesied this place long before anyone else. It was his dream.

INT Even before Hawaii was America.

MT This is a truth, because he said his words long before Honolulu (Hawaii) became a 50th state. All he said was, I'd like to see a maori carved meeting house built in America. That's when we laughed, "Heh! The American people." Well, you see how strong his dream was. Well, to bring the story short, we know of course, came back again, bring back the . . . Well I, this time in the year 1953, my husband just came back from the hospital and then, and his elder brother own race horses. He was a trainer and Eru TeNgaio was a

breeding man of show horse for AMP shows and my husband was a jockey, and they used to win all the Hawkes Bay area AMP shows.

INT No wonder Uncle Joe was fit.

MT Yes! He was. But my daughter has all his photos. I only have a few here, on his horses. And then Matiu Kauri oh, everybody loved him you know. That's another branch but, umm, talking about this thing, and then about the year 1953, got this special from Besienger, George Besienger and Evans. George Besienger was the engineer of the program in New Zealand. Make a bit more chapels, that was in 1952 then. Well, they used to come and visit us in our home and during the Huitau period, President and Sister Young was our tumuaki then when we built our house. And then when they used to come to Nuhaka to Huitaus, my husband and I, and two children used to move out of our house and give them our house because it was brand new, vegetables around, cause I was in the Stake district Relief Society.

INT And you moved with family?

MT We moved. We loved it. We moved to the marae. And we loved it. And we left our house, it cause they felt, in Nuhaka it was a brand new house for our President to stay in, for the weekend, for the week. Our Relief Society Stake used to cook food and take it there. And of course we enjoyed it being at the marae even our children you know. And then in the year 1953, we got this memo from Brother Beseinger and Brother Evans, "Millie and Joe, we want to call you on a mission." Oh! What's this for? Umm. And we had just planted about 70,000 kumara plants. That was our livelihood apart from the _____, because we used to sell the first crop of kumaras. We used to get you know, money, that was my hobby. Gardening, sweet melons and sweet corn. So we had just planted, it was growing. My husband had just come out of the hospital and then, oh, Millie and Joe we would like you to go on a mission up at the building program at Tuhikaramea. I was, my husband said, "Well, I can't do anything. Look at me, I've just come out of the hospital, and er, I can't," he was expecting to go out and do labor work, dig ditches and things that are manual. And I started thinking, and I said, "I'm not going to

go. Gee! I'm not going to go. I can't leave my beautiful house, garden, you know, and my life." And then Beseinger says to him, "Joe, you don't have to do manual, you can push a pencil can't you. You've been to uh, see he was one of the last students at the M.A.C. college before the earthquake. He was right in that earthquake. So that's another part of his testimony. Bridge pa! You see that was a big Mormon Church, no Mormon College and each one of them, they all became leaders all over.

INT Uncle Jim was there too.

MT Yes! Yes! Scotlands and Tahitian peoples, and then my husband was one of the last ones there and when you hear his testimony about that, the earthquake. And then umm, my husband did, _____. Beseinger said, "O! You can't push a pencil can't you? We need a person in the joinery office, for taking inventory for all the merchandise we getting from the Mainland, from America. You know. You'll be working with another man there. We already have Watene up there but he needs an assistant." And my husband couldn't say anything else. And then as he says, he says, "Well, we'll talk about it with the family and in me I rebelled. I'm not going to go. I'm not going to go and so forth." Anyway, and then we had a lot of pumpkins and kumaras and we loaded there station-wagon up with foods so they went back. But when they turned around and they says to my husband, "Everything will be taken cared of." And I said, "President Besienger, but my children are still going to high school you know." "Oh, there's high schools in Hamilton." I was trying to find all excuses. And then my husband says right we'll think about it. So before they left they turn around says to us, "Two weeks, the van will be here to pick your whatever you want to bring up here." Well, you know the first week I was crying. Well, see, they told us not to mention to anybody. They'd contact the branch President and the branch President and the District President who was a Smith. So before, the Saturday before we went to church , it was going to be announced because we had accepted. Me and my husband did say, "We'll see you." And then all went through my mind, who we going to leave our house to, who will take care of our crops. You know all those things you know. Materials things, but my husband already

said, "We'll be there, " and I nearly dinged his head. So, well, before we went to church, I remember, Saturday morning, I got a phone call. "Oh, Millie, this is Rebecca." Now that's, well, I'll call her State President's wife. She used to be my partner playing tennis at Huitaus. She was a little bit older than me. And she's Kepa's grandmother. You know, Kepa Smith. Yeah that, oh, he said, oh yeah, my grandmother is Rebecca Smith. I thought, "Oh, my word. That's why I love that boy." And then, anyway, this is what she said to me on the phone. She said to me, "Oh, Millie, you can't go." And then, I said, "Yeah, I'm not going to go." But my husband said, "Yes, we've only got a week." Now I don't know what, I don't know what to do, our house was a beautiful brick house. And my vegetables, who's going to crop them and sell them while I . . . ? And she says to me, "That's right Millie, because you don't need anything else. Your family have been blessed. You've been to the temple. You've been sealed to one another, we haven't. And your children are born to the covenant. When she started talking like this to me, anyway, and then, when she finished talking to me, and I think, I just felt, to defy her. You know, and yet I was all for her and I was enjoying it.

INT You're typical TUHOE I think.

MT I think so. Right! And you know she was telling me, oh, you don't have to go. You got all the blessings and all . . . And I said to myself gee! It's wrong! I just felt as young as I wasn't 40 then. You see. Cause we came, no, I was over 40. Cause we were here, I was about 45. So, okay then Rebecca I'm going to show you. I'm going to go. So finally . . . To defy her? See, she was meant to call me. See how the Lord moves aye! See, at that time I didn't realize it. By Sunday, next day, I told my husband we're going to go. We got our children together and they rebelled. They said, oh, we got too many friends here you know, we got no friends up there. We hugged and had a prayer circle in our little house, you know. So we went to church, and I was still worried. Who would, who are we going to get to take care of our brand new house and the vegetables. So anyway, we went, and of course, the stake president stood up, special announcement, "I'd like to let you know that Brother and Sister Joe TeNgaio and Millie TeNgaio have been called on a mission, labor

mission at Templeview Hamilton and they've accepted. Course I'm thinking in my heart yeah, I've accepted, but I still have this worry behind my mind, you know the material things in life. So anyway everyone is congratulating, on Monday morning we're going to have a farewell you know. So then, then I started, my attitude had changed. And Tuesday a knock on our door about six o'clock in the evening, it was my cousin, Stone Whaanga, "Oh, Millie, Joe, you know, wonderful, you're going on a mission. Who's going to take care of your house?" Because, they live, he married a school teacher. And staunch, and he was the First Counselor in the Branch Presidency. And they lived in a cottage not far from ours and she was teaching at Nuhaka school. Lovely lady. And I said, "Why Stone?" "Oh, Marie and I want to know, we want to rent your house." You know what, we couldn't wish for a better couple. Wow, I sat there I said, "Oh, it's all yours." I said, "The only thing I'm worried about is our crops. They were all growing ready to harvest in a month or two." We told the District President, and they said, "Don't worry." Then by Thursday, we had started packing. By Thursday, our District President came, "Millie, Joe, don't worry our priesthood, high priest, will take care of your crops." And you know what my husband said, without consulting me. "Oh, Brother Smith, that's wonderful. I'll tell you what you do. Tell our district here our branch, get them all on the train, ship all the vegetables here up to us to feed the missionaries." Then I thought, "Oh, my dear, there goes my two hundred dollars." Then I thought, "My children." Well we went. Anyways, we pack up and the big van arrived and away we went. Didn't know what we were going into but at that time we were one of the lucky ones around that area. We had our own car. And then of course we drove up on the car. We didn't know what to expect. When we got there, I tell you, oh, it was real humbling, humbling circumstances. Arrived there, the reason, one of the reasons why George Besienger and Brother Evans came and asked us to go, as a matter of fact when they mentioned it to us, they said, "You know, we've been calling in a few other couples to come and help the single boys up there. But no response." So they felt, if we can get Millie and Joe here, sure the other couples will follow them. The only other couple there was only two, two married couples. All the others were single boys. Mud everything was, was just, and red.

Right! Right! Aunty, she was a dear old lady, Raiha TeNgaio, she was the first cook up there. She was a widow. My husband's uncle's wife. They called her on a mission up there. She was a cook there for many many years for them. She was a battleax, strong. Prior to that, I did go up. I went there for two months. She wanted me to go there and help her, to make toast and things like that. And I saw the young boys there working hard in the mud, and, well, it was a year or so afterward they came to us. When we got up there all these little matchbox houses, you know, and all the boys slowly just . . .

INT That was down by the Besienger . . .

MT Yes! See, now its a city. But in the year 1954, we went there 1954. After the other couples started coming in, oo, it was like a big marae. We had great experiences there. The second year I was there, I assisted the ahh, they had Sister Brown in charge of the campus area, issuing the food out. Because we were fed, although we were there on a mission, our district at home too, and branches, were also on a mission because they contributed our food and things like that. And meat and everything. See how our people are. Wonderful! That's how those places were built. They use to save the meat and I used to go with Sister Brown and another man used to cut it up and it was rationed to the families according to the amount in your family. And I learned a lot from that experience. Humbling circumstances. Some of the women coming there not satisfied what they get you know. Poor ol Sister Brown . . . Lot of activities, beautiful entertained authorities from the Mainland. Mendenhall was like a father to us. It was him, I mean Mendenhall, it was him that told Brother Beseinger, "Go and get Millie and Joe bring them up here." Anyway, our children went to the Kingi, went the Tech, high school in Hamilton. Elaine ended up with her, she was in the middle of her nursing. She's a nurse, and then she graduated in the Hamilton Public Hospital. She became a Registered Nurse.

INT They were all grown up already?

MT Well, you see, we were there three or four years, and then we thought that we were going to go home, because you were only

supposed to be there for three or four years. And then they asked us to stay on because the reason for that, it was mentioned at that time, they might be building a temple in New Zealand. The first rumors. So we need you here. So, anyway I thought we'll good-bye house. And then different people took care of it. So we went back a few times to look at it, but it's not how I expected it to be. But when we get back to Hamilton, a very different feeling again. Being with the labor missionaries, we had wonderful times there. The year, (pause) Just the year before, it was President Young that found that spot on the hill. President Young. He talked it over with the owners, well, that's how the Church bought that land on the hill. It was through President Young. The whole, it was in peat, ugly, peat and smoke coming out. It was horrible. I still remember the smoke even though they had the field. Yeah! Right! Well, you see, they had that place first. But you see the other the nob on the hill that came later. Those rich families they didn't want to sell that piece. But through President Young, and Besienger, you know, finally they got that nob, that beautiful place for the temple. See that came after the Church College and everything. That peat and smoke, oh boy, when I got there, I didn't if I was happy or not. Then I thought ahh. Then I saw other people roughing it. So we stayed there three years and we thought that we would go home, and they asked us to stay. Cause you know my husband. Next to his family, it's the Church. And then of course there was rumors. And then we heard President David O. Mckay is going to visit. Then we were all told cause I love, you know, I love little flowers, although it was, I've been here but I, you know, I put flowers, I was the first to have flowers around my little matchbox, I called it. But I though it was pretty. And then they had duckwalks for when it rains there's mud. But they built these duckwalks behind and all around our village . . . So Besienger visited us, "Millie and Joe, you know President, our Prophet is coming and he requested a tour through the campus. He wanted to see how the campus, how we all were living. And then President Besienger said, "Do you mind opening your house up for President to come and visit." Huh! I said, "Oh! Blessings like this." He said, "You and Jane MacDonald's." I said, "Oh! President!" I got so excited and I thought well, it's always clean. Sunday before the Apostle arrived he told the people, "You know when the apostle comes, don't pressure him,

because he is on doctor's medication and then just leave him alone." And then he told the people, "The houses he ask to open are Millie and Joe's and Jane and Don MacDonald's." MacDonald's house. So you can look from your yards. Wave out to him as he comes up the duckwalk. So, and then President George Besienger says to me, "You do a little maori karanga." I said, "Oh, yeah! Yeah! And a hongi." And of course by ten o'clock, here comes this party. Oh, me and my husband and our two children was there. He sent Evans and President in his wife. When I looked at this man, I think it's was like looking at Christ because he was so handsome. Oh, and his white hair, it was beautiful. And then of course, when I went up to do the hongi, and I looked into these beautiful blue eyes, I felt cleansed. Before I closed my eyes for the hongi I did, I felt that all my thoughts of wanting to go home, was cleansed. I felt a different person at that age. So of course, we took them into our little and course, one of our chairs was a box. It was so humble. And then it was just two little bedrooms, was only three little rooms, but it was clean, I had little flowers around, then he came in and he sat down. He looked around, Bless you my children. He was talking of the Polynesians. Bless you my people, and he ended up with my husband and I. He says to my husband, "You look like a very jovial person." And my husband just smiled. And Besienger said, "Oh! Tumuaki, you want to see him doing the haka you know, doing, and you know our culture, our culture cane out in that little, and he, we'd love to see that. So George said, "We're having a culture night, and you will see them all. So anyway, and then he comes and says to us, "Keep on doing what you are doing. You will be blessed the rest of your lives. Be kind to one another, love one another." In humbling circumstances, and then, "Keep on being as sweet as you are." I didn't know whether to cry or to . . . ? And he stood up, he says, "Bless this house with all their hearts desires in righteousness." And he went over to the Macdonald's house. All the other people came over and said, "Oh, we want to hongi with you." (Laughs.)