

DICKY BARRETT.

Trader, Whaler, Interpreter.

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Master of Arts in History

by

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ABSTRACT

Dicky Barrett arrived at Ngamotu in Taranaki in 1828. This marked the beginning of a 19 year relationship with Te Ati Awa, the local iwi. The relationship was not based on force but on co-operation and accommodation. It forced into being what Richard White has called the middle ground, a place in between cultures. Each party had something that the other wanted. Barrett wanted dressed flax and Te Ati Awa wanted muskets and other European goods. To achieve their goals, both sides were prepared to compromise. Barrett adopted a Pakeha-Maori lifestyle, which combined elements from both cultures. Te Ati Awa adopted certain innovations such as barter and the production of an economic surplus. Yet neither Barrett nor Te Ati Awa capitulated to the culture of the other. Both were selective in the cultural elements that they adopted.

The relationship between Barrett and Te Ati Awa changed constantly. In 1833 Barrett began shore whaling in Queen Charlotte Sound. This marked the end of his Pakeha-Maori lifestyle as he joined a whaling community with a large European population and became economically independent of Maori. Yet the whalers still had strong ties with local Maori, trading with them and living with local women. Towards the end of the 1830s however a new influence made itself felt in the Sound. Local Maori converted to Christianity, and missionaries and native teachers built up their own ties with local Maori which came to rival and surpass those of the whalers.

In 1839 the relationship changed again as the New Zealand Company arrived seeking

to purchase Maori land for colonisation. Barrett acted as intermediary between the Company and Te Ati Awa. However it soon became apparent that both parties involved in the transactions had different perceptions of what they had agreed to. The Europeans believed that they had purchased the land, while Te Ati Awa had only agreed to allow Europeans to live with them. Barrett's inadequate knowledge of the Maori language was at least partly responsible for the confusion over the transaction, although the Company was determined to proceed with colonisation, regardless of Maori opposition.

In this new environment the middle ground soon began to erode as co-operation and accommodation was replaced by conflict. Barrett returned to an ambiguous position in the European world. He did not give up his ties to the whalers and Maori, but also sought a position in respectable society and rewards for his assistance to the Company. He was relatively unsuccessful, and by the time of his death in 1847 was nearly bankrupt. However Barrett obtained the sort of success in death that he was unable to secure in life. The legend of Dicky Barrett, trader, whaler and interpreter was born.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIM	Auckland Institute and Museum
APL	Auckland Public Library
<u>A.S.</u>	<u>Auckland Star</u>
ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library
AU	Auckland University Library
<u>E.P.</u>	<u>Evening Post</u>
<u>GBPP</u>	<u>Irish University Press series of British Parliamentary Papers. Colonies: New Zealand</u> , Dublin, 1968-1971.
<u>JPH</u>	<u>The Journal of Pacific History</u>
<u>JPS</u>	<u>The Journal of the Polynesian Society</u>
NA	National Archives, Wellington
<u>NZG&BS</u>	<u>New Zealand Gazette and Britannia Spectator</u>
<u>NZG&WS</u>	<u>New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator</u>
<u>NZH</u>	<u>New Zealand Herald</u>
<u>NZI</u>	<u>New Zealand Journal</u>
<u>NZJH</u>	<u>The New Zealand Journal of History</u>
NPL	New Plymouth Public Library
NZC	New Zealand Company papers
OLC	Old Land Claims
<u>S.T.</u>	<u>Sunday Times</u>
<u>T.H.</u>	<u>Taranaki Herald</u>
TM	Taranaki Museum

INTRODUCTION

The main focus of this thesis is the interaction that took place between Dicky Barrett and Te Ati Awa over the space of 19 years. When he arrived at Ngamotu in 1828 with his men, Barrett became the first European resident in the Taranaki region. During his time in New Zealand, Barrett was a trader, a whaler, and an interpreter. Each of these roles involved him in a different relationship with Te Ati Awa, and both Te Ati Awa and Barrett were changed by their contact. The second major focus of the thesis is the interaction between Barrett and other Europeans. Starting with his arrival at Ngamotu, Barrett was surrounded by other Europeans and did not have to deal with the new environment on his own. Although he was usually the leader of these informal groupings, Barrett remained part of the group. Much of what happened to him was not unique, but was part of a wider pattern following the establishment of contact between two significantly different cultures.

In the past, historians have drawn on anthropological theories such as acculturation to explain the changes that took place in indigenous societies following contact. Acculturation is a process whereby elements from one culture are passed to another. The nature and extent of this process has been a central issue in studies of nineteenth century New Zealand society. One of the earliest works on the subject was Raymond Firth's Primitive Economics of the New Zealand Maori (published in 1929). In a chapter on the economic impact of contact on Maori, Firth argued that prior to 1840, the economic organisation of Maori was unimpaired. The European demand for products of secondary importance to Maori, such as dressed flax, caused a disproportionate amount of time to be devoted to their production, and tended to

throw the economic machinery out of gear. However they continued to be produced using traditional Maori methods under the same economic organisation. The Maori systems of exchange and distribution of goods, and ownership and acquisition of property remained unchanged also.¹

However the pursuit of muskets had adverse social effects. Maori moved their villages from high ground to low lying areas where flax grew. The incessant labour in unhealthy spots, the neglect of cultivations and consequent starvation had serious effects upon Maori health.² Furthermore, crafts such as weaving and tool making decayed along with their associated rites and mythology as European goods were adopted by Maori. Maori became familiar with European goods and technical processes which helped to arouse new desires and ambitions, and furnished Maori with a new set of economic values. Although Maori had no wish to accept these standards, by 1840 the way was paved for their incorporation into Maori culture.³

E.J. Tapp in Early New Zealand (published in 1958) described Maori in the late eighteenth century as being almost unsullied or undefiled by contact with Europeans.⁴ This was followed however by increasing contact between the two peoples. According to Tapp, the whalers who began to deal with Maori were 'for the most part recruited from the scum of Port Jackson, deserters and escaped convicts

¹ R. Firth, Primitive Economics of the New Zealand Maori, London, 1929, pp. 454-5.

² Ibid, pp. 477-8.

³ Ibid, pp. 455-6.

⁴ E.J. Tapp, Early New Zealand. A Dependency of New South Wales 1788-1841, Melbourne, 1958, pp. 17, 24, 25.

whose standards of conduct was a byword for dissoluteness and depravity.⁵ These contacts with Maori were seldom without friction and they aroused in Maori hatred and distrust of Europeans. Yet Tapp believed that the traders and whalers had a powerful influence on Maori. They interfered with the introduction of 'civilisation' and were jealous of missionary influence, doing 'much to undermine their work, often by their example and sometimes more deliberately by sowing seeds of dissension between Maori and missionary.'⁶ However even the missionaries with their preaching and teaching were as 'disruptive' to native society as the 'more directly demoralizing influence of unscrupulous pakehas.'⁷

Harrison Wright in New Zealand, 1769-1840 has concluded, like Tapp, that contact had a devastating impact on Maori. The Europeans 'by upsetting the Maori culture and introducing a variety of new elements, destroyed the balance of Maori health and warfare and caused the great depopulation.'⁸ Trade was the main cause of this destruction. Maori acquisitiveness was aroused by trade goods and the efforts which they made to acquire them changed the pattern of their lives completely, and left them ill-prepared to face European diseases. Wright has argued, like Firth, that Maori abandoned hill top pa for huts on unhygienic swampy valley floors, starved themselves, and worked to exhaustion in order to produce dressed flax.⁹

⁵ Ibid, p. 60.

⁶ Ibid, pp. 46, 47, 49.

⁷ Ibid, pp. 41, 46.

⁸ H. Wright, New Zealand, 1769-1840. Early Years of Western Contact, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1959, p. 102.

⁹ Ibid, pp. 75-8.

Wright believed that Maori went through three stages in their contact with Europeans. The period from first contact in 1769 until the 1820s was the period of Maori domination. Maori were not Westernised to any degree, and they forced Europeans to act like Maori. Maori maintained their identity and grew assertive in spite of or because of the European pressure.¹⁰ Yet this period was followed in the 1830s by the rapid conversion of Maori to Christianity. According to Wright, 'for the Maoris to turn to Christianity there had to be things happening which they could not explain in terms of their own culture.'¹¹ He believed that Maori society reached a crisis point in the 1830s. It was a time of 'cultural confusion' and 'mental disorganization' for Maori. They had carelessly selected and adopted Western articles which helped to create the forces which destroyed their self-confidence. In addition, the tohunga were powerless against the European diseases which decimated their people, and following a period of increased inter-tribal warfare with the introduction of muskets, Maori, and Ngapuhi in particular, became increasingly war weary. It was in this environment that the missionaries found large numbers of Maori beginning to listen to their message and willing to convert to Christianity. Once Christianity penetrated the hard shell of Maori resistance in the Bay of Islands, it spread rapidly. Outside the Bay of Islands, Maori were much less Westernised. Wright has argued that the Maori conversion in the North Island was hastened by the more rapid disillusionment with war, and the actions of native teachers.¹²

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 115 ff.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 143 ff.

¹² Ibid, pp. 157-9.

The Christian Maori period beginning in the late 1830s resulted in the gradual abandonment of most customs inconsistent with Christianity such as cannibalism, tattooing, and polygamy.¹³ Yet Wright has acknowledged that although much had changed in Maori society, much remained the same. Maori continued to think of themselves as Maori and tried to solve Maori problems such as loss of mana. The social system was secure with the chiefs as its focus, tapu survived and Wright has agreed with Firth that Maori economic organisation remained unchanged.¹⁴

Wright's book provoked fierce debate in the New Zealand Journal of History. J.M.R. Owens believed that culture contact had less catastrophic results than Wright has indicated and he has adopted the more neutral term 'cultural disturbance' in place of Wright's 'cultural confusion' to describe the effect of contact. Rather than helping the missionaries as Wright has indicated, Owens has claimed that cultural disturbances, such as disease, were more often a hindrance. Even when Maori did convert to Christianity, Owens believed that they were not 'made over in mind and spirit.' He has insisted that it is necessary to distinguish between a general diffusion of Christian influence and conversion. It is too easy, according to Owens, to apply the word conversion to evidence of superficial conformity, to assume that a complete transformation was possible and to assume that this implied social breakdown.¹⁵

Wright's position was predominantly based on evidence from the Bay of Islands.

¹³ Ibid, pp. 166, 169.

¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 189, 191.

¹⁵ J.M.R. Owens, 'Christianity and the Maoris to 1840', NZJH, II, 1, 1968, p. 21 ff.

Owens has argued that missionary activity was more successful south of the Bay of Islands where there was little European contact or cultural disturbances. He has rejected war weariness as a factor in the Maori conversion as many of tribes who responded to Christianity were enthusiastic and successful warriors.¹⁶ Owens has accepted that once Christianity penetrated the hard shell of Maori resistance it spread rapidly, and native teachers played a key role in the diffusion. However the most important reason for the spread of Christianity, according to Owens, was the simultaneous diffusion of literacy. Literacy was the 'Trojan horse' which introduced otherwise unacceptable ideas into the Maori 'camp'.¹⁷

Judith Binney has argued however that a native society must undergo social dislocation before it is ready for conversion to Christianity.¹⁸ She has disputed Owens' claim that Maori did not undergo a significant spiritual transformation, arguing that large numbers of Maori saw themselves as Christian, attempted to follow the prescriptions and code of behaviour laid down by missionaries, and attended church regularly.¹⁹ Binney believed that cultural disturbance did take place south of the Bay of Islands as many Maori who had never seen a European engaged in trade for European goods, and those Maori living in areas of indirect contact were less in control and unable to choose which innovations touched them indirectly.²⁰

¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 27-9.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 29 ff.

¹⁸ J. Binney, 'Christianity and the Maoris to 1840. A Comment', NZJH, III, 2, 1969, p. 143.

¹⁹ Ibid, pp. 157, 159.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 162.

For Binney, the Maori conversion was the result of a prevailing mood of despair in the 1830s; recurrent epidemics which made Maori afraid; war weariness which created a distinct role for the missionaries as peacemakers in Maori society; and the undermining of belief in certain aspects of Maori culture, such as tapu.²¹ Trade had a decisive impact. It was not literacy but trade that was the Trojan horse which carried otherwise unacceptable ideas into the Maori camp. In the teaching of apparently neutral skills and techniques, 'missionary Christianity and "civilisation" were never in practice separated.'²²

The stand taken by Wright and Binney has been supported by Alison Begg in her study of the conversion of South Island Maori. Te Rauparaha's attacks caused Ngai Tahu refugees to flee to the whaling stations where they adapted to the whaling sub-culture. The acquisition of new goods, skills and values by Ngai Tahu accelerated the disintegration of their society and culture which became 'thoroughly bastardised'.²³ Their confidence was shattered by disease, apathy and drink, especially in the larger whaling communities, where they lost faith in themselves and abandoned tapu and their respect for Maoritanga. Those Ngai Tahu who lived in the integrated whaling communities fared better. They continued to observe tapu, and kept hope alive in the face of epidemics. It was in this environment that Ngai Tahu turned to Christianity, which seemed to offer a solution to their problems.

²¹ Ibid, p. 147 ff.

²² Ibid, p. 152.

²³ A. Begg, 'The Conversion to Christianity of the South Island Maori in the 1840s and 1850s', Historical and Political Studies, III, 1972, p. 11 ff.

Kerry Howe's study of the conversion of Maori in the Thames-Waikato area supported Owens' stand. Howe found no evidence of any adverse effect from indirect contact. Social dislocation, mental depression and even Owens' cultural disturbance did not take place. There were no epidemics in the area and Waikato Maori did not become war weary. It was the victorious Waikato iwi who exhibited the strongest opposition to war.²⁴ It was the desire for association with the missionaries and their goods and for the emulation of European techniques, the influence of Christian ideas and ceremonies, the influence of literacy and Maori teachers, and the realisation of the irrelevance and futility of war that led to the conversion of Waikato Maori.²⁵ They responded positively to Christian ideas and techniques as they were novel and exciting, yet it did not mean that they were 'made over in mind and spirit'.²⁶ Waikato Maori were selective in what they adopted. They selected and manipulated the most exciting, useful or relevant Christian ideals and rituals.

Harry Morton has argued that the missionaries had less of an impact on Maori than whalers.²⁷ The whaling industry by its 'methods, attitudes, and technology altered the daily lives of a substantial portion of the native society'.²⁸ Trade had a decisive impact. Demand for agricultural produce changed Maori agriculture and brought Maori into the modern world where craftsmanship was secondary to the time /

²⁴ K.R. Howe, 'The Maori Response to Christianity in the Thames-Waikato Area, 1833-1840', NZJH, VII, 1, 1973, pp. 30-32, 37, 41.

²⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 39, 43-6.

²⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 28-30.

²⁷ H. Morton, The Whale's Wake, Dunedin, 1982, pp. 210, 217.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 18.

labour ratio.²⁹ Traditional craftsmanship, such as canoe construction, decayed as a result. Trade led to the spread of the English language which was itself, according to Morton, a major instrument of change.³⁰ The temptations of the European way of life in the shore whaling stations fostered change also. Maori housing, for example, improved as cultural adoption and adaptation took place.³¹

Other Europeans who have been credited with having an impact on indigenous peoples are those individuals referred to as transculturites by anthropologists. These are people who are either temporarily or permanently detached from their own culture and enter the web of social relations that constitute another society where they come under the influence of its customs, ideas and values to a greater or lesser extent.³² This concept has been adopted by many historians.³³ Transculturites were a phenomenon common to all areas of cultural contact, though they differed in the extent of their adaptation. In the United States, the White Indians were mainly young women and children taken captive, and they made in many cases an almost complete

²⁹ Ibid, pp. 176, 178.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 255.

³¹ Ibid, pp. 210, 253.

³² A. I. Hallowell, 'American Indians, White and Black: The Phenomenon of Transculturalization', Current Anthropology, IV, 5, 1963, p. 523.

³³ C. Ralston, Grass Huts and Warehouses, Canberra, 1977, p. 20; H.E. Maude, Of Islands and Men. Studies in Pacific History, Melbourne, 1968, p. 135; T. Bargatzky, 'Beachcombers and Castaways as Innovators', JPH, XV, 2, 1980, p. 93; M. Zelenietz and D. Kravitz, 'Absorption, Trade and Warfare: Beachcombers on Ponape, 1830-1854', Ethnohistory, XXI, 3, 1974, p. 224; I.C. Campbell, 'European Transculturalists in Polynesia, 1789 - ca. 1840', PhD. thesis, Adelaide University, 1976, p. viii; P.J. Gibbons, 'Some thoughts on the pre-1840 Pakeha-Maori', Term Paper, Massey University, 1969, pp. 2, 10; R.P. Wigglesworth, 'The New Zealand Timber and Flax Trade, 1769-1840', PhD. thesis, Massey University, 1981, p. 180; R.P. Wigglesworth, 'The Myth and the Reality. A Study of the Adaptation of John Marmon (1800 ? - 1880), with comments on his three newspaper autobiographies', B.A. (Hons.) Research Essay, Massey University, 1974, p. 82.

cultural and psychological transformation. In the Pacific the beachcombers were mainly shipwrecked sailors whose transformation was less complete.

The impact that transculturites had on indigenous peoples has been debated by historians. Campbell has argued that beachcombers had little acculturative influence due to the shortcomings in their knowledge of the indigenous language, and the lack of a conceptual common ground.³⁴ Other writers have argued that the beachcombers were responsible for the beginning of significant culture change.³⁵ According to Maude, the major contribution the beachcomber made to the welfare of his people was to cushion by explanation the inevitable onset of culture change.³⁶

Acculturation theory has come in for increasing criticism in recent years for implying that culture change is a one way process where a dominant group dictates to a subordinate group which cultural elements it will adopt.³⁷ This has meant that the role of indigenous peoples in determining their future has been minimised. Recent studies by ethnohistorians have emphasised the creative response made by indigenous peoples to culture contact. James Axtell has seen adaptation as 'less often a sign of capitulation than capitalization.'³⁸ James Merrell noted that the Catawba

³⁴ Campbell, pp. ix, 301. See also Zelenietz and Kravitz, p. 245.

³⁵ Bargatzky, pp. 93-102; Maude, pp. 156 ff., 163; Ralston, pp. 29, 42.

³⁶ Maude, p. 163.

³⁷ J.D. Rogers and S.M. Wilson (eds.), Ethnohistory and Archaeology. Approaches to Postcontact Change in the Americas, New York, 1993, p. 17; R. White, The Middle Ground. Indians, Empires, and the Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815, New York, 1991, pp. x, 93.

³⁸ J. Axtell, The European and the Indian. Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America, New York, 1981, pp. 245-6.

took 'ideas, customs, crafts, and objects from beyond their cultural frontier and then made those things their own. This creative response enabled Catawbas to adjust to changing conditions while keeping intact the core of their ancient culture.'³⁹ Wilson and Rogers acknowledged that European contact initiated rapid and sometimes catastrophic cultural changes on indigenous peoples in North America, but argued that the culture change undergone by Native Americans was neither one-sided, nor governed solely by European intentions.⁴⁰

Culture change was therefore a two way process and the strategy used by ethnohistorians in discussing culture contact has been to search for accommodation. Richard White has argued that initially Europeans and Native Americans regarded each other as alien, as other, as virtually nonhuman. However over two centuries they constructed a common, mutually comprehensible world. Culture change did take place, but it did so on the middle ground. This is the place in between cultures and peoples, and it affected both European and Native American. The Europeans could not dictate to Native Americans or ignore them. They needed them as allies, trading partners, sexual partners and friendly neighbours.⁴¹ According to White, there was no sharp distinction between the Native American and European worlds. They were different and distinct peoples, but they shaded into each other. Francis Jennings has seen the frontier as a region of interaction rather than a line of division where diverse ethnic peoples mingled in systems of exchange that required them to behave in ways

³⁹ J.H. Merrell, The Indians' New World. Catawbas and Their Neighbours from European Contact through the Era of Removal, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1989, p. 271.

⁴⁰ Rogers and Wilson, pp. 3, 45-6.

⁴¹ White, pp. ix-xi.

expected by their business associates. As a result of this interaction, both Native American and European societies changed until they merged into a larger society that was neither wholly Indian nor wholly European but distinctly American.⁴²

The relationship between Barrett and Te Ati Awa was based on accommodation also, and it forced into being the middle ground where neither party could ignore or override the wishes of the other. Both parties were changed by the contact and to a greater or lesser extent they both compromised and moved away from acting according to their cultural norms. For example, Te Ati Awa adopted barter as the system of economic exchange with Europeans in place of gift exchange. Barrett and his companions either adopted or were careful to respect Maori customs. As a result of such compromises, Gibbons described the shore whaling communities as places where both Maori and European were abstracted from their own cultural backgrounds.⁴³ These communities were neither Maori nor European, but a combination of the two.

Te Ati Awa were selective in what they adopted from the European world. New crops, new goods and new ideas were introduced, which had significant ramifications for Te Ati Awa society. Yet in many ways their lifestyle remained unchanged. Those cultural elements that were adopted by Te Ati Awa from Barrett were primarily economic in nature, and even here, Te Ati Awa's economic organisation was, as Firth has argued, largely unaltered. There is no evidence of decay in traditional crafts or

⁴² F. Jennings, The Founders of America, New York, 1993, pp. 16, 177.

⁴³ Gibbons, p. 3.

changes to Maori housing that Morton has argued occurred following the establishment of shore whaling stations. Te Ati Awa attitudes, values and beliefs were even less affected following contact with Barrett and his men. Wright and Binney's model of Maori society undergoing conversion to Christianity as a result of social breakdown brought on by culture contact does not fit very well with what happened to Te Ati Awa society. There is no evidence of 'cultural confusion' as a result of contact with Barrett or other Europeans. Furthermore, Te Ati Awa were not war weary and did not suffer from epidemics after 1820. When Te Ati Awa did convert to Christianity at the end of the 1830s, it was for their own reasons. Native teachers were able to convey alien religious concepts in a way that made sense, and literacy was influential also in converting Te Ati Awa because of the close association between reading and writing and Christianity.

New Zealand historians, in focusing on the changes Maori underwent following contact and the reasons that Maori converted to Christianity, have tended to ignore the significant changes that Europeans such as Dicky Barrett underwent. Before 1840 all the European residents of New Zealand had to make some adjustment to Maori culture. Non-missionary Europeans were known initially as Pakeha-Maori.⁴⁴ According to Ormond Wilson, the word 'Maori' was originally an adjective, not a noun, meaning 'normal' and Pakeha-Maori, as contrasted with the missionaries, meant normal European men. The missionaries were different to both Maori and the Pakeha-Maori by setting themselves apart and not living with Maori women. For

⁴⁴ P. Adams, Fatal Necessity. British Intervention in New Zealand 1830-1847, Auckland, 1977, p. 24; O. Wilson, From Hongi Hika to Hone Heke. A quarter century of upheaval, Dunedin, 1985, pp. 89-90.

Maori it was appropriate therefore to regard a European who had adopted Maori customs as a normal man or Pakeha-Maori.

However Pakeha-Maori came to have a different meaning. In 1859 the term entered into widespread use with the publication of A.S. Thomson's The Story of New Zealand. Thomson defined Pakeha-Maori as 'strangers turned into natives'.⁴⁵ The term had other uses as well. In the 1860s Pakeha-Maori began to replace 'old settler' as a pseudonym in letters to the editor from those who thought that their experience amongst Maori qualified them to have opinions on race relations.⁴⁶

A new group of Pakeha-Maori appeared in the 1860s. Several soldiers deserted from the British Army and joined Maori fighting British rule. Their association with the 'enemy' tarnished the image of previous Pakeha-Maori. W.K. Howitt, a Taranaki settler who met Kimble Bent, one of this new group of Pakeha-Maori, described him as 'a rebel and an outcast' who took part in cannibal feasts. Bent was an example 'of how easy it is for a person to slip away from a civilised to an uncivilised life'.⁴⁷ Cowan defined a Pakeha-Maori as being a 'decivilised outlander'.⁴⁸ In his biography of Bent, Cowan took great pains to point out that those individuals who became Pakeha-Maori were not English. Cowan accepted Bent's claim that his mother was a Native American, and concluded that 'perhaps the impulse that led to his

⁴⁵ A.S. Thomson, The Story of New Zealand: Past and Present - Savage and Civilized, Christchurch, 1974, I, p. 297.

⁴⁶ D. Colquhoun, "'Pakeha Maori': The Early Life and Times of Frederick Edward Maning', M.A. thesis, Auckland University, 1984, p. 195.

⁴⁷ W.K. Howitt, A Pioneer Looks Back, Auckland, 1945, pp. 119, 121.

⁴⁸ J. Cowan, The Adventures of Kimble Bent, Wellington, 1911, p. x.

passionate revolt against civilisation and rigid army discipline came from his American Indian blood.⁴⁹ Several other Pakeha-Maori were Irish 'renegades'.⁵⁰ The Pakeha-Maori continued to be referred to as white renegades into the 1950s.⁵¹

More recent literature has returned to Thomson's definition of the Pakeha-Maori, describing them as individuals who crossed cultural barriers and became Maori.⁵² Owens cited Dicky Barrett as an example of the tendency of the Pakeha-Maori to reject much of his European background.⁵³ These definitions fail to take account of the wide range of individuals who became Pakeha-Maori and their different responses to contact with Maori. The major problem in coming to grips with who the Pakeha-Maori were is that while biographies have been written of individual Pakeha-Maori such as Kimble Bent, Frederick Maning, Philip Tapsell, and John Marmon, little work has been done on the Pakeha-Maori as a group, except for an unpublished term paper by P.J. Gibbons.

All Pakeha-Maori were integrated into Maori society and dependent on Maori for food, shelter, protection, and labour. They married Maori women, lived with their wife's hapu, were given Maori names, spoke Maori, and had to respect Maori

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 7. Bent's claim about his mother appears to be a fabrication. See W.H. Oliver, 'Kimble Bent', in W.H. Oliver (ed.), The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Wellington, 1990, I, p. 27.

⁵⁰ Cowan, pp. 75, 91.

⁵¹ Tapp, pp. 48, 49.

⁵² Morton, p. 260; P.J. Gibbons, 'Non-Fiction', in T. Sturm (ed.), The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature, Auckland, 1991, pp. 47, 61; J.M.R. Owens, 'New Zealand Before Annexation' in G.W. Rice (ed.), The Oxford History of New Zealand, Auckland, 1992, p. 47.

⁵³ Owens, 'New Zealand Before Annexation', p. 47.

customs. Gibbons distinguished the Pakeha-Maori from other transculturites by arguing that, in Maude's words, they were 'essentially integrated into, and dependent for their livelihood on, the indigenous community ... to all intents and purposes they had voluntarily or perforce contracted out of the European monetary economy.'⁵⁴

However this does not allow for those Pakeha-Maori who were traders. They did not contract out of the European economy. Their decision to adapt to a Maori lifestyle was a tactical one, aimed at facilitating trade. They retained European dress and European ideas, values and attitudes. Maori were willing to accept this partial transformation due to the benefits that arose from the presence of the trader. Only a few Pakeha-Maori, such as Kimble Bent and James Caddell, underwent a more complete cultural and psychological adjustment. They wore Maori dress, lost their fluency in English and adopted to some extent Maori beliefs and attitudes. Many of this second group of Pakeha-Maori were escaped or ex-convicts, deserters or captives living in isolation from other Europeans. They became Pakeha-Maori before or after the heyday of the Pakeha-Maori traders in the 1820 and 1830s, and did not perform any useful role as the traders did. They were kept by Maori as novelties and therefore had to conform more to Maori cultural norms than the traders did.

Barrett belonged to the first group of Pakeha-Maori who made only a partial cultural adjustment to Maori society. He was a trader, motivated by economic gain. Barrett took the steps necessary to ensure a smooth trading relationship with Ngati Te Whiti, his host hapu, but his trade links and the presence of other traders prevented his

⁵⁴ Gibbons, 'Some thoughts', p. 2; Maude, p. 135.

complete integration. Barrett wanted dressed flax from Te Ati Awa and they wanted muskets and European goods in return. This forced the middle ground into existence. To obtain their desired ends, both had to compromise and co-operate. In the creation of the middle ground, they took from both worlds and in effect created a new culture that was a mixture of both. Barrett lived in a *de facto* relationship with a Maori woman and spoke pidgin Maori, yet he retained many of the attitudes and values of European society. Concern with his own economic advancement was one example.

People who live their lives on the border between different cultural groups gain an understanding of the language, attitudes, values and behaviour of both cultures. In Barrett's case, this understanding was imperfect, but it enabled him to play a number of cross-cultural roles. A mediator is one such role, linking cultures to ensure cross-cultural exchanges of people, ideas and technology.⁵⁵ Mediators contribute to mutual understanding and represent faithfully one culture to another. Their actions are non-partisan and benefit both parties. Another cross-cultural role is a broker, who is partisan in his dealings and manipulates and processes the message between the two groups to serve his own ends.⁵⁶ These concepts have been adopted by many historians dealing with people who moved between cultures.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ S. Bochner (ed.), The Mediating Person: Bridges Between Cultures, Boston, 1981, p. ix.

⁵⁶ R. Paine, Patrons and Brokers in the East Arctic, Newfoundland, 1971, pp. 6, 21.

⁵⁷ Ralston, p. 36; Maude; p. 163; Campbell, p. ix; Gibbons, 'Some thoughts', p. 18; G. Dening, Islands and Beaches. Discourse on a Silent Land. Marquesas 1774-1880, Melbourne, 1980, pp. 129-130, 155; Merrell, pp. 122-3; Wigglesworth, 'The Myth and the Reality', p. 87; Bargatzky, pp. 93-102; Adams, p. 24; J.A. Clifton, 'Alternate Identities and Cultural Frontiers', in J.A. Clifton (ed.), Being and Becoming Indian. Biographical Studies of North American Frontiers, Chicago, 1989, p. 31.

These cross-cultural roles are dynamic. Lois Feister has argued that the form of linguistic contact between peoples reflected the needs of the cultures involved, and any change in this relationship required a change in the form of linguistic contact.⁵⁸ When two peoples come into contact for the first time, signs and gestures are their first form of communication. A pidgin language is later developed where the language is broken down and simplified.⁵⁹ Pidgin languages were adequate for trade purposes, but cultural changes such as the spread of literacy and Christianity necessitated the appearance of interpreters who spoke the indigenous language fluently. Once this happened, the influence of pidgin speakers waned.

Barrett spoke pidgin Maori which proved adequate for his purposes. Between 1828 and 1839 he acted as a mediator, introducing new crops, new goods, and new ideas. However as Christianity and literacy began to make an impact in Queen Charlotte Sound towards the end of the 1830s, Barrett's role as a mediator was taken over by native teachers and missionaries who spoke Maori fluently. A new opportunity was provided by the arrival of the New Zealand Company in 1839 seeking to buy Maori land. In his last cross-cultural role, Barrett acted as a broker to secure the land required. Within a short space of time, it became apparent that the Maori and European participants in the sale had different perceptions of what had taken place. This was partly Barrett's fault as interpreter. He had only a limited understanding of the Maori language and customs. However antipathy between the Company and the

⁵⁸ L.M. Feister, 'Linguistic Communication Between the Dutch and Indians in New Netherland 1609-1664', *Ethnohistory*, XX, 1, 1973, p. 25.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 31; J.E. Reinecke, 'Trade Jargons and Creole Dialects as Marginal Languages', in D. Hymes (ed.), *Language in Culture and Society*, New York, 1964, pp. 534, 537.

missionaries, who were more fluent in Maori, prevented their co-operation.

Much of the historical literature in New Zealand and the Pacific has focused on the performance of cross-cultural roles by European men. However indigenous people have acted in these roles as well, and indigenous women in particular. According to Clara Sue Kidwell

There is an important Indian woman in virtually every major encounter between Europeans and Indians in the New World. As mistresses or wives, they counseled, translated, and guided white men who were encountering new territory. While men made treaties and carried on negotiations and waged war, Indian women lived with white men, translated their words, and bore their children. Theirs was the more sustained and enduring contact with new cultural ways, and gave their men an entree into the cultures and communities of their own people. In this way, Indian women were the first important mediators of meaning between the cultures of two worlds.⁶⁰

Maori women played a similar role. Dicky Barrett's wife Rawinia was the granddaughter of the ariki (paramount chief) of Te Ati Awa, and was related to other important Te Ati Awa chiefs. The use of these kin links assisted Barrett in the acquisition of Te Ati Awa land for the Company. Rawinia Barrett may have played a more active role in the negotiations. The problem is that, as Kidwell has indicated, women were often perceived as powerless by European men and are voiceless in the historical records, even though they were powerful in the roles that they played in their own cultures and the impact that they had on their husbands and children.⁶¹

In his consideration of the relationship between European men on the frontier, Jock

⁶⁰ C.S. Kidwell, 'Indian Women as Cultural Mediators', *Ethnohistory*, XXXIX, 2, 1992, p. 97. Also refer to White, p. 74; S. Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870*, Norman, 1980, chs. 3 and 4.

⁶¹ Kidwell, p. 98.

Phillips has continued this trend of ignoring the role played by Maori women. Phillips believed that conditions on the frontier forced men into a close comradeship. They were cut off from their kin, and had to look to each other for solace, encouragement and aid.⁶² According to Phillips, these friendships were rarely enduring due to the nature of the work and the itinerant character of the men involved. Mates were interchangeable and when one moved on, another would take his place.⁶³ This friendship between individual men extended into a wider relationship within the community of frontier males with its own moral standards and code of behaviour. Fighting and drunkenness were features of this male subculture. The distinctiveness of the male community was reinforced through the use of nicknames and its own language, which was unintelligible to strangers.⁶⁴ Threats to the solidarity of the group, such as women, were treated seriously. Marriage was regarded as almost an act of treason. Any man contemplating marriage was the object of endless teasing and chaffing.⁶⁵

Miles Fairburn has argued however that colonial society was characterised by loneliness, drunkenness and violence. Due to the nature of settlement in New Zealand, the lack of kin ties, and the absence of any other social ties, individuals were socially isolated.⁶⁶ Although Fairburn's work focused on the second half of the

⁶² J. Phillips, A Man's Country? : the Image of the Pakeha Male - A History, Auckland, 1987, pp. 26-7.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 27.

⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 28-31.

⁶⁵ Ibid, pp. 36-7.

⁶⁶ M. Fairburn, The Ideal Society and its Enemies. The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society 1850-1900, Auckland, 1989, pp. 11-12, 191-3.

nineteenth century, it is also relevant to the earlier period because of Fairburn's attack on the concept of mateship as an organising principle for European males. Fairburn has argued that the typical frontier worker was a loner. He travelled on his own and tried his hand at a large number of jobs. He did belong to a regular work gang. Groupings were random and temporary. Therefore Fairburn has argued that frontier workers did not produce a distinctive male sub-culture. They lacked the group pressures, and the power, to induce one another to live up to this code.⁶⁷

Dicky Barrett had other Europeans around him from his arrival in New Zealand until his death in 1847. His experience was closer to the distinctive male culture outlined by Phillips than to Fairburn's position. Te Awaiti was, at least in part, a community of whalers holding to the values that Phillips has described as characteristic of the male culture. There is no evidence of the atomisation that Fairburn saw as characteristic of frontier workers. Yet both Phillips and Fairburn underestimated the ties that existed between some frontier workers. Dicky Barrett made several changes in residence and occupation. On each occasion he was accompanied by a number of his men. Some of them never left Barrett during his 19 years in New Zealand.

Fairburn and Phillips have also ignored the ties that existed between European males and Maori, and Maori women in particular. The male culture at Te Awaiti was not as exclusive as Phillips believed. Marriage was not seen as an act of treason. It was possible to be a member of the male culture and have a relationship with a Maori woman. In fact, nearly all of the whalers had temporary or permanent Maori female

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 143 ff.

companions, and many had children. Furthermore, many of the whalers lived with their wife's kin for six months of the year. The male sub-culture did not arise in isolation, but developed as part of the middle ground. The values that were part of the male culture, such as hospitality and respect for physical prowess, were shared by Maori and whaler alike. They worked out a lifestyle in the whaling communities that suited both Maori and European. According to Phillips, 'Pakeha New Zealanders have never been much inclined to adopt Maori ways.'⁶⁸ At Te Awaiti, the shore whalers often did just that.

However, the middle ground eroded during the 1840s as the full impact of European settlement began to be felt by Maori. The Europeans who came to New Zealand during this period did not act as their predecessors had done. They did not adapt to the new environment but chose to live in much the same way as they had in England. Maori had only one thing that the settlers wanted - land - and they were not prepared to compromise or seek an accommodation to get it. Instead, the settlers were prepared to use force, as events at Wairau, in the Hutt Valley, and in north Taranaki demonstrated. The middle ground could not survive in this atmosphere.

In his biography of John Marmon, Roger Wigglesworth has argued that his subject went through three stages of adaptation.⁶⁹ In the first stage, Marmon became a 'complete' Pakeha-Maori. However by 1829 he became more flexible in his adaptation to Maori society. Marmon acquired his own land and became independent from

⁶⁸ Phillips, p. ix.

⁶⁹ Wigglesworth, 'The Myth and the Reality', p. 82 ff.

Maori. He began to act as a middleman between Maori and European, becoming valuable to both cultures. This role, and renewed contacts with the European world, prevented his complete integration. Marmon did not identify himself as a Pakeha or Maori. The last phase of Marmon's adaptation occurred in the 1840s when settlement undermined his role as a middleman as Maori dealt directly with the settlers. Gibbons found that in this position, most Pakeha-Maori were drawn back into the European world.⁷⁰ However Marmon had a bad reputation amongst Europeans and was not welcomed back into European society. He became 'a man alone', a recluse, critical of both societies.

Barrett went through three stages of adaptation also. The first two steps were similar to Marmon. Barrett was a Pakeha-Maori between 1828 and 1832, although his adaptation was never as complete as Marmon's. Between 1832 and 1839 Barrett carried out shore whaling from Te Awaiti. The shore whalers resembled the Pakeha-Maori in many respects. They had female Maori companions, lived close to Maori, spoke Maori and relied on Maori to some extent for food and labour. In the off-season they went to live with the kin of their Maori 'wives'. However, their relationship with Maori was different during the whaling season. The whalers lived together in large groups and followed a European occupation independently of Maori. As a result, Gibbons called the whalers part-time Pakeha-Maori.⁷¹ In the last stage of his adaptation, dating from 1839, Dicky Barrett vacated the middle ground to participate once again in European society.

⁷⁰ Gibbons, 'Some thoughts', p. 16.

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 4.

For some individuals, the transformation process worked so well the first time that they were unwilling to make the readjustment back to European society.⁷² Barrett was willing and able to make the transition, but he seemed unsure of what his place in European society was. Maning faced the same dilemma. He had always held himself aloof from those Europeans of lower social status, but he lived a lifestyle in the 1850s in the Hokianga that was out of step with urban respectability. During his visits to Auckland he mingled with the colonial elite and sought recognition of his social status. This led him to conform increasingly to the ways expected of a gentleman and he became isolated from Maori society.⁷³ Barrett did not give up his contacts with either Maori or the whalers, yet he continued to seek recognition and respectability. He was not aided in this quest by the continuation of these ties.

Before the full impact of European settlement was felt in the 1840s, both Te Ati Awa and Barrett had come into contact and adjusted to the presence of the other. These adjustments were not as catastrophic for Te Ati Awa as some writers on culture contact have believed. Neither Te Ati Awa nor Barrett were passive agents in the contact process. Te Ati Awa were selective in what they adopted. Barrett took some steps towards Maori culture to facilitate trade. There was no capitulation to the culture of the other. They met in the middle ground, a place where compromise and accommodation by both sides was the key to success in the trading relationship. Barrett and his men lived a life that was a combination of both worlds. It was distinctive in its own way with a male sub-culture based on attitudes and values that

⁷² Campbell, p. 192; Axtell, pp. 179, 205; Dening, p. 140.

⁷³ Colquhoun, pp. 148, 152.

were often closer to Maori than respectable European society. From the middle ground, Barrett was able to act in a variety of cross-cultural roles to establish a wider relationship between Te Ati Awa and European society. However this relationship was from the start based on misunderstanding due to the inadequate nature of Barrett's comprehension of the Maori language and customs. As violence and dissent replaced compromise and co-operation in the 1840s, the middle ground eroded and with it Barrett returned to the European world to seek recognition and respectability. He failed to achieve this in life, but after his death the legend of Dicky Barrett, trader, whaler and interpreter secured these goals.

CHAPTER ONE

THE NGAMOTU YEARS

Between 1828 and 1832 Richard Latter Barrett, more commonly known as Dicky Barrett, resided at Ngamotu in Taranaki. His presence led to what Owens has called 'cultural disturbances', but it did not have the catastrophic results that Wright has described. Te Ati Awa used various strategies to deal with the presence of Europeans, yet although Barrett adopted a Pakeha-Maori lifestyle, he did not capitulate and become Maori. Barrett and Te Ati Awa met on the middle ground, a place where compromises were necessary and accommodation the order of the day. They worked out a way of dealing with each other, and learned something, one about the other.

The early years of Dicky Barrett's life are largely undocumented. His parents, Matthew Barrett and Sarah Bunce, were married at Bishopsgate in London in 1803. Their first child, Elizabeth, was born later that year. By 1805 the family had moved across the Thames to Bermondsey in south-east London. All six of Sarah and Matthew's subsequent children were born there and christened at St. Mary Magdalen. Dicky Barrett, born in 1807, was their third child.¹ During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there was a westward movement across London of the well to do, and the east became a preserve of the poor. A similar divide separated north and south, with the South Bank becoming a dumping ground for the dirtier trades that had been shut out of the City. Tanners and leather dressers were confined to

¹ These details about Barrett's family are from the International Genealogical Index of the Church of the Latter Day Saints. I have provided further details in the appendix as previous researchers have searched unsuccessfully for details of Barrett's birth in Durham and Rotherhithe.

Bermondsey because of the obnoxious nature of their trade, and by the end of the eighteenth century, Bermondsey was characterised as a place of slums and alleys.²

It is therefore likely that Dicky Barrett's family were relatively poor. Descriptions indicate that Barrett lacked polish. Edward Jerningham Wakefield wrote that Barrett spoke in a broad and unsophisticated manner.³ He had at best a rudimentary education, although he was not the illiterate that he has been portrayed as by FitzRoy and Cowan.⁴ During the 1820s Barrett left England and made his way to Australia. In the period following the end of the Napoleonic Wars, England faced a number of serious economic and social problems - depression, overpopulation, mass unemployment, and poor living and working conditions.⁵ Barrett was one of thousands of Englishmen who left home seeking a better life. He may not have been alone when he travelled to Australia. One of the men who worked for Barrett during his 19 years in New Zealand was John Wright, and there is a christening record for a John Wright in 1806 at the same church that the Barrett family attended. When Barrett left Bermondsey, there are indications that he did not part with his family on the best of terms. In his only surviving letter home, written in 1841, Dicky Barrett asked eagerly for news of home and the family, but also harangued his brother for not replying to his previous letters.⁶ The first letters from the family did not reach

² G. Rude, Hanoverian London 1714-1808, London, 1971, pp. 9, 10, 27, 234; F. Sheppard, London 1808-1870: The Infernal Wen, London, 1971, pp. 8, 161, 363.

³ E.J. Wakefield, Adventure in New Zealand, Auckland, 1971, II, p. 328.

⁴ R. FitzRoy, Remarks on New Zealand in February 1846, London, 1846, p. 6; J. Cowan, The New Zealand Wars, Wellington, 1955, I, p. 88.

⁵ N. Gash, Aristocracy and People. Britain 1815-1865, London, 1979, p. 2 ff.

⁶ R. Barrett, Letter to His Brother, 6 November 1841, MS 1183, ATL.

him until 1842, at least 15 years after he left England.⁷

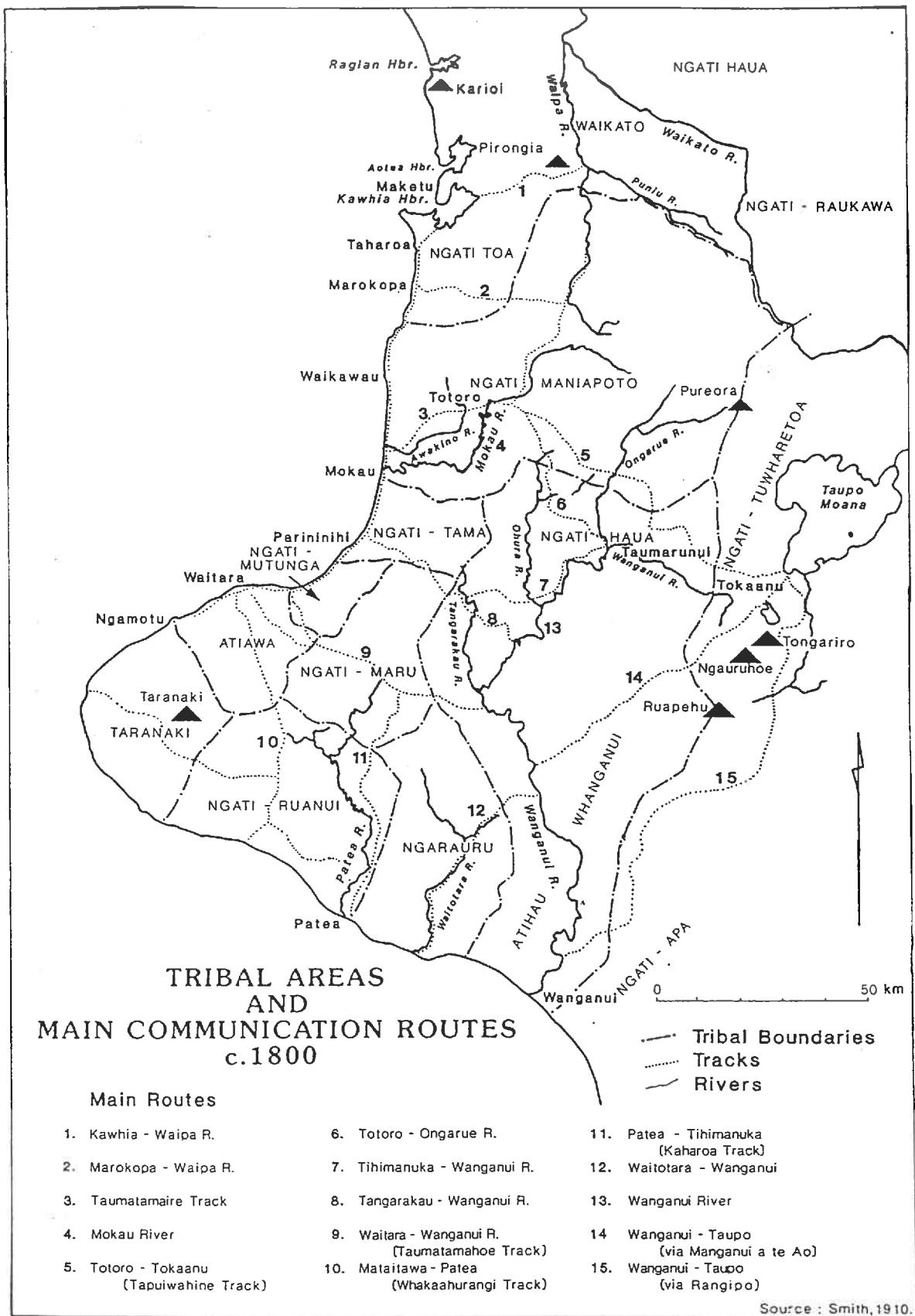
In Sydney Barrett joined the crew of the Adventure, a small 41 foot schooner of 26 tons.⁸ The vessel was owned by Sydney merchants Thomas Street and Thomas Hyndes, and made regular runs along the New South Wales coast. In 1828 the vessel's trading route was changed as a result of an increasing interest in New Zealand flax. In the early to mid-1820s flax had been ignored as a commodity as other activities were more profitable. However when New South Wales entered an economic depression in the late 1820s, Sydney merchants began to look to flax as a way out of their financial troubles. Re-exports of New Zealand flax from Sydney to England leaped from 60 tons in 1828, to 841 tons in 1830, and peaked at 1062 tons in 1831.⁹ There was also an increasing demand for agricultural produce as New South Wales was hit by drought in 1828 and 1829. Consequently, an increasing number of vessels made trips across the Tasman for flax and foodstuffs. The Adventure left Sydney on its first trip to New Zealand between 23 February and 26 February 1828.¹⁰ During the voyage there was a change in command. Barrett became the first mate at the age of 21 and John Love, the man who was to become his good friend and business partner, became the vessel's captain. When the vessel sailed past Ngamotu in Taranaki, it was intercepted by Maori and guided to shore.

⁷ F.A. Carrington, Journal, 29 September 1842, MS 001/1, TM.

⁸ R. Parsons, Ships of Australia and New Zealand Before 1850, Magill, South Australia, 1983, I, p. 3.

⁹ Wright, p. 28.

¹⁰ I.H. Nicholson, Shipping Arrivals and Departures, Sydney, 1826 to 1840, Canberra, 1977, II, 2, p. 27. The exact date is unclear as the different sources used by Nicholson disagree.



Source: E. Stokes, Mokau. Maori Cultural and Historical Perspectives, Hamilton, 1988, p. 14.

The Maori population of the Taranaki region in the late eighteenth century numbered between ten and twelve thousand.¹¹ By the late 1820s this had been diminished somewhat by migrations and European diseases. Ngamotu marked the southern boundary of lands belonging to Te Ati Awa, who were often involved in skirmishes with Taranaki, their southern neighbours.¹² Te Ati Awa enjoyed much more cordial relations with their northern neighbours, Ngati Mutunga and Ngati Tama. They often acted together in war against Taranaki and a far more deadly enemy, the Tainui people to the north and north-east. Ngati Tama lands bordered on those of Ngati Maniapoto, one of the strongest Tainui iwi, with whom they had been involved in warfare for over 200 years. Neither side was able to gain the upper hand in this fighting but Ngati Tama were able to protect their allies from attack. No taua could pass through their lands without their permission.

Muskets were first seen in the region in 1816 when Taukawa of Ngapuhi led a taua with three muskets against Taranaki.¹³ This was the first of several Ngapuhi and Ngati Toa taua (war party) to the area. Due to the close relationship between Ngati Tama and Ngati Toa from Kawhia, the former did not hinder these taua from entering the region. Te Ati Awa contingents joined them in battle against Taranaki, and saw the new weapon in use. In 1818 muskets were used for the first time in Te Ati Awa territory when a Ngati Toa and Ngapuhi taua attacked the Ngati Rahiri

¹¹ N. Prickett, Historic Taranaki. An Archaeological Guide, Wellington, 1990, p. 7.

¹² The name Taranaki has been used for the mountain that Europeans called Mt. Egmont, for the region that became known as the province of Taranaki, and for the iwi that lived in the southern part of the region. To avoid confusion, the name Taranaki will be used to refer to the iwi unless otherwise specified.

¹³ S.P. Smith, History and Traditions of the Maoris of the West Coast, North Island of New Zealand Prior to 1840, New Plymouth, 1910, p. 277.

hapu of Te Ati Awa at Te Taniwha. According to Percy Smith's Te Ati Awa informant, 'the ignorant people of these parts heard for the first time the noise of that weapon [the musket] ... the news of this new weapon spread all over the district'¹⁴ Peace was arranged between Ngati Rahiri and the taua, which then proceeded to inflict two heavy defeats on Taranaki.

At about the same time, Ngati Tama experienced increasing pressure from Ngati Maniapoto. A Ngati Tama defeat at Ngatai Parirua in 1815 was followed by further defeats at Tihi Manuka in 1820 and at Pararewa in 1821. In the latter battle, a Ngati Tama and Ngati Mutunga taua was attacked by a Ngati Maniapoto force using muskets for the first time. Ngati Tama possessed only one musket and were heavily defeated. Shortly before the battle, a Ngati Toa heke (migration) under Te Rauparaha arrived in Ngati Tama territory on its way south to Kapiti to escape from Tainui pressure on their homeland at Kawhia. Ngati Tama were so badly shaken by their defeat that most of them joined the heke. Percy Smith's Te Ati Awa informant believed that 'the new weapon, the musket, was too much for them.'¹⁵ Their departure left the entire region exposed to Tainui raids.

Relations between Waikato, a confederation of Tainui iwi, and Te Ati Awa took a turn for the worse at the same time. In 1820 a Waikato taua returning from Cook's Strait stopped at Rewarewa in Te Ati Awa territory. Many Te Ati Awa were angered by this unwanted imposition, and attacked the taua as it crossed the Waitara River

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 284.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 348.

on its way home. The taua escaped with the aid of the Pukerangiora hapu of Te Ati Awa to their pa at Pukerangiora, but were besieged by the rest of Te Ati Awa. A Waikato relief force under Te Wherowhero came to their aid, but was heavily defeated at Motunui. Te Wherowhero was able to join his kin at Pukerangiora and lead them home, but the loss of a number of leading Waikato chiefs meant that they were bound to seek utu from Te Ati Awa in the future. They were prepared to bide their time however. In 1826 Waikato took part in a joint expedition with Te Ati Awa against Taranaki, who were heavily defeated at Kikiwhenua. The decisive impact of Waikato's muskets in the battle must have served as a warning to Te Ati Awa.

Initially neither Te Ati Awa nor Waikato had direct access to Pakeha traders and they had to rely on Ngapuhi for their supplies. A handful of muskets were obtained by Tukaweriri of Ngati Mutunga on a visit to Ngapuhi in the early 1820s.¹⁶ Others were obtained by chance. The people of Ngamotu obtained a musket from a Waikato man who married a Waitara woman.¹⁷ There is also a reference in a lament sung by Waikato women to muskets that were obtained by the people of Ngamotu from a vessel that visited them before the battle at Motunui.¹⁸ Waikato were more successful in obtaining muskets from Ngapuhi and from traders at Tauranga. In 1828 they obtained the services of six flax traders under John Kent who settled at Kawhia.

Those Pakeha who lived with Maori were little more than a novelty initially, but by

¹⁶ E. Best, 'The Land of Tara and They Who Settled It', *JPS*, XXVII, 1918, p. 99.

¹⁷ Smith, p. 359.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 376-7.

the late 1820s it became a necessity to 'own' a Pakeha, as traders began channelling European goods, and more importantly, weapons, to coastal tribes. At the same time Sydney merchants were eager to establish coastal trading stations to ensure that vessels were loaded immediately with flax prepared to their specifications. However ships avoided the Taranaki region due to its lack of a natural harbour and rough seas. Even as late as 1820, local Maori had never seen a European. The first recorded European visitor to the area was John Kent on H.M.S. Elizabeth Henrietta in 1823 on an expedition to collect specimens of flax plants. There may have been other brief and sporadic visits by Europeans that went unrecorded.

The European contact with Maori in other parts of New Zealand made an indirect impact on Te Ati Awa before the arrival of Barrett and his companions. New sources of food such as potatoes and pigs were introduced to and integrated into Te Ati Awa society through trade with other iwi. Ngati Toa found extensive cultivations of potatoes in the Taranaki region during their heke in 1821.¹⁹ The cultivation of potatoes required no major changes to Maori agricultural techniques. Kumara and potatoes were grown on the same patch of land; they were protected by a tapu while growing; the land was prepared by felling and burning; and ash was used as a fertiliser.²⁰ Pigs were not fitted so easily into the existing agricultural pattern. Although they were left to wander around the villages, scavenging and eating fern root, the pigs had to be kept away from the crops, which made the construction of fences a necessity. As land was used for only a few years before being abandoned,

¹⁹ J. White, The Ancient History of the Maori, Wellington, 1890, VI, p. 71.

²⁰ R.P. Hargreaves, 'Changing Maori Agriculture in Pre-Waitangi New Zealand', JPS, LXXII, 2, 1963, pp. 105, 110.

fencing was a continual task.

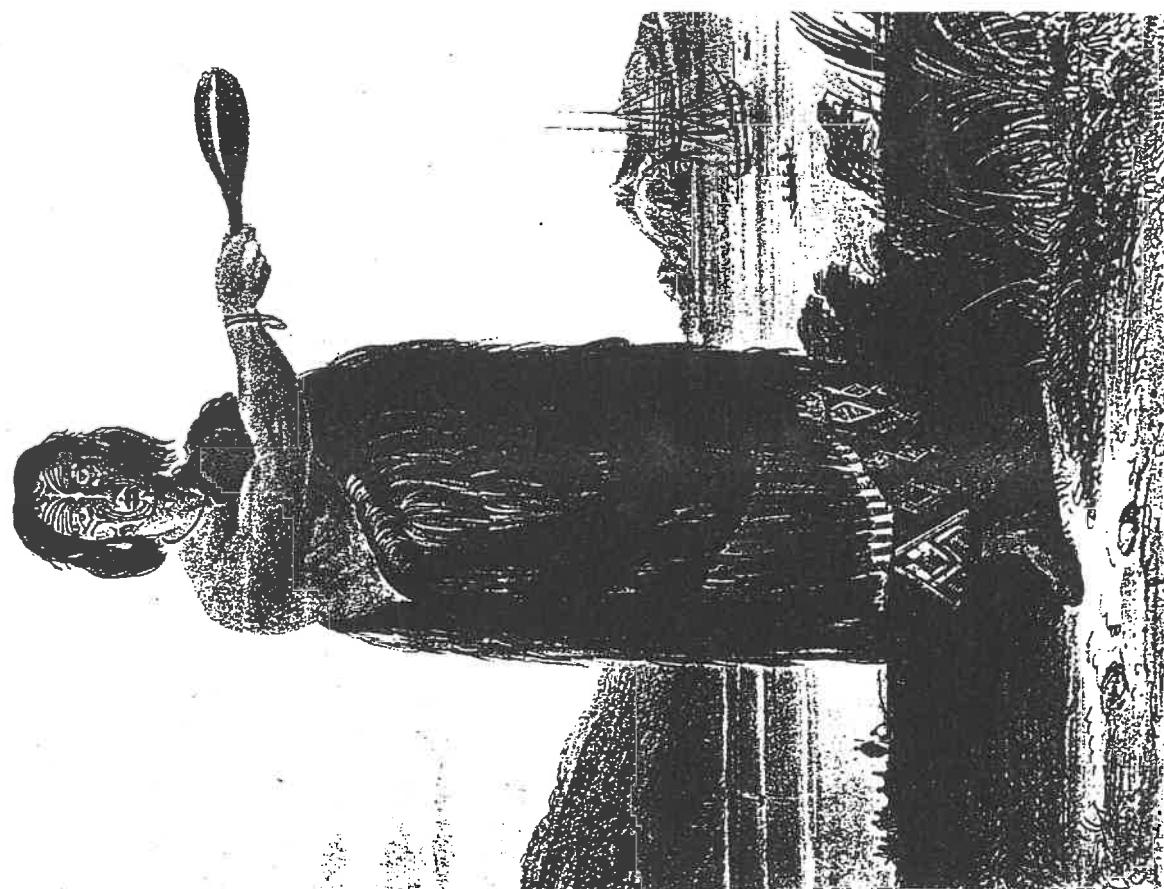
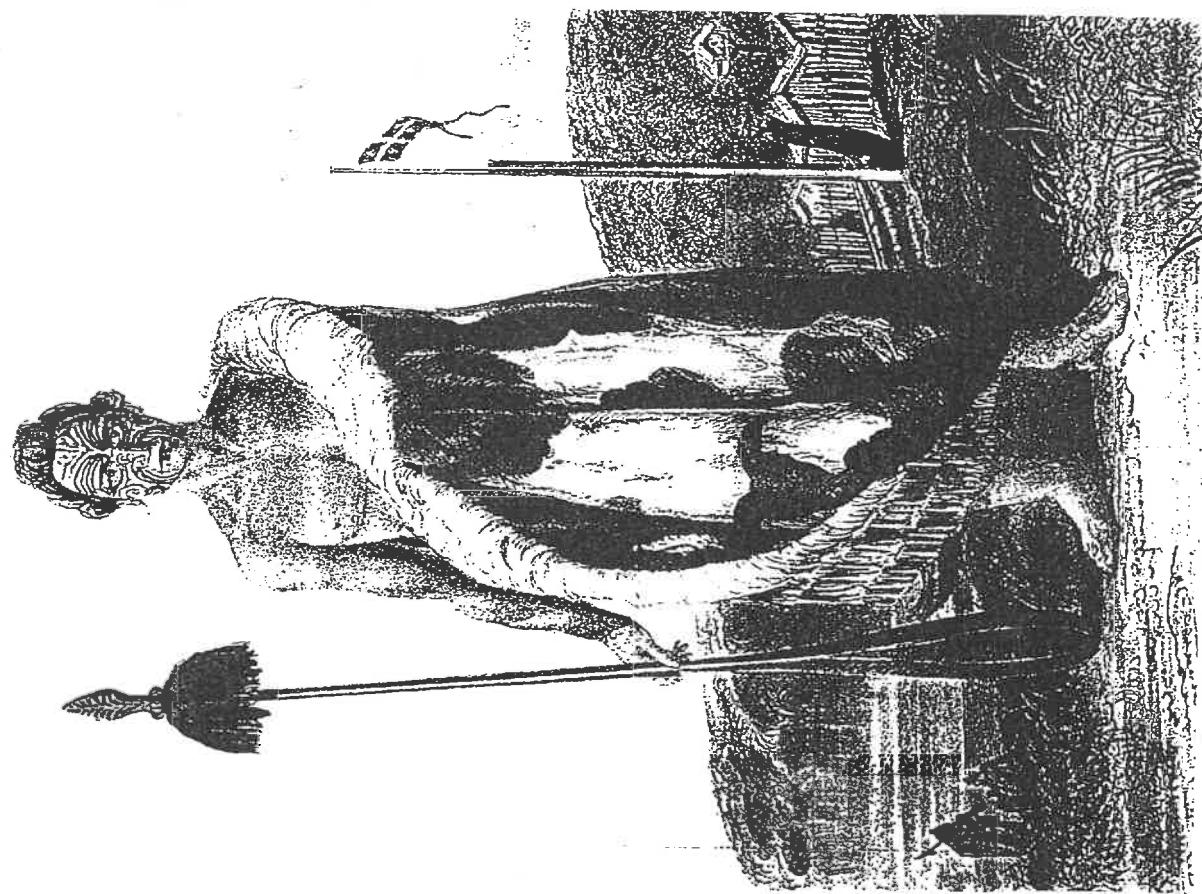
The main source of information about Barrett's arrival comes from Watene Taungatara, a Te Ati Awa kaumatua, who was persuaded in 1897 by Percy Smith and W.H. Skinner to write an account about Te Ati Awa in the nineteenth century.²¹ The main problem with the account is that events have been compressed and reordered. While the Bay of Islands was well documented during the same period by European visitors, the lack of visitors to north Taranaki and the disinclination of Barrett and his colleagues to keep a written record meant that there is little information available to supplement Watene Taungatara's account. However shipping records and scattered references by later European visitors enable a tentative reconstruction of events.

Ngamotu was the home of Te Wharepouri and his Ngati Te Whiti hapu. Te Wharepouri's cousin Te Puni of Ngati Tawhirikura hapu lived nearby at Pukeariki (which is now in the centre of New Plymouth). When Barrett's ship passed Ngamotu, the two chiefs gave chase in war canoes. Te Wharepouri boarded the ship and told the Europeans 'you must take your ship to Nga-motu, where there is plenty of muka (prepared flax) and numerous pigs'.²² Barrett and Love agreed and the ship anchored off Ngamotu. Watene Taungatara claimed that when the Adventure was unloaded, the cargo included 3 cannon, 6,000 small arms, 6,000 casks of powder, bullets, flints, blankets and other 'goods of the white people'.²³ These figures are

²¹ Smith, pp. 281, 444-5.

²² Ibid, p. 445.

²³ Ibid, p. 445.



Te Wharepouri and Te Puni. Source: E.J. Wakefield, Illustrations to Adventure in New Zealand, Wellington, 1968, plate I.

clearly inflated, as Te Ati Awa could muster only 100 muskets at the siege of Otakapa in 1832.²⁴ A more reasonable estimate is that perhaps fifty muskets were landed on this occasion. Wigglesworth found in a random selection of voyages by trading vessels to New Zealand between 1829 and 1831 that on average 5 cases of muskets (with 10 muskets per case) were carried as cargo.²⁵ Barrett claimed that he bought the cannon later from a passing ship.²⁶

The Adventure left Ngamotu on 10 April and arrived back in Sydney between 4 May and 6 May with a cargo of potatoes, pork, and pigs.²⁷ There was no flax on board, so Watene Taungatara's account of Te Wharepouri's offer of flax at the time of their first contact seems to be inaccurate. Barrett and Love were accompanied to Sydney by a number of Te Ati Awa chiefs, including Te Puni and Te Wharepouri, who wanted to continue their relationship with the traders, and were eager 'to see the wonders of the white man's country'.²⁸ The vessel returned to Ngamotu between 26 May and 29 May via the Bay of Islands on what was to be its last voyage. In rough weather the anchor cable parted and the ship was driven on to the beach. Local Maori helped to drag the vessel off the beach, but during the unloading of the cargo a cask of pork fell through the hull of the ship, leaving it a complete wreck. Barrett and his companions were stranded.

²⁴ D. U. Urlich, 'The Introduction and Diffusion of Firearms in New Zealand 1800-1840', *JPS*, LXXIX, 4, 1970, p. 407.

²⁵ Wigglesworth, 'The New Zealand Timber and Flax Trade', p. 386.

²⁶ H.E. Aubrey to D. McLean, 19 December 1846, McLean Papers, Micro MS 12535-032, ATL.

²⁷ Nicholson, II, 1, p. 32.

²⁸ Smith, pp. 444, 445.

However the traders were picked up by the Elizabeth on 19 August and arrived back in Sydney on 9 September.²⁹ The discovery of flax at Ngamotu was kept a secret at this stage. It was reported in a local newspaper that the crew of the Adventure had been on a sealing voyage. This was a common ploy when a new source of flax was found. John Kent was able to keep his source of flax at Kawhia secret for two years.³⁰ Barrett and his companions returned to Ngamotu shortly after, possibly on board the Admiral Gifford, a replacement vessel bought by their employer, Thomas Hyndes, which commenced trading between Ngamotu and Sydney in November.

At some time during these voyages between Ngamotu and Sydney, Barrett and Love established a flax trading station at Ngamotu on behalf of Hyndes. The Taranaki region enjoyed a reputation amongst Maori for the quality and quantity of its flax, and Barrett and Love found Te Ati Awa willing to cut, prepare and trade the flax. The acquisition of a permanent and regular supplier of muskets and other European goods was a significant event for Te Ati Awa. According to Watene Taungatara, all of Te Ati Awa gathered at Ngamotu to construct a house called Patarutu to house the trade goods.³¹ The station was unusual in that it was staffed by up to ten traders. When John Kent arrived at Kawhia with six traders, Te Wherowhero divided them up amongst the various hapu and iwi living in the area.

The impact that Barrett's presence had on Te Ati Awa in general and Ngati Te Whiti

²⁹ Australian, 10 September 1828; Nicholson, II, 1, p. 35.

³⁰ J.O. Ross, 'Captain Kent - his last years', Journal of the Auckland-Waikato Historical Societies, 35, 1979, p. 28.

³¹ Smith, p. 445.

in particular is difficult to gauge due to the lack of sources for the period in question. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw some tentative conclusions. It is apparent that Barrett's influence extended to include a wider group than just his host hapu. Te Puni's Ngati Tawhirikura hapu lived only a few miles away. According to Watene Taungatara, two other hapu, Ngati Rahiri and Ngati Tuparikino, were living at Ngamotu at this time.³² Links between these hapu and other Te Ati Awa hapu outside the Ngamotu area meant that the European influence was probably felt even further afield. There is also evidence that Barrett traded muskets for dressed flax with Te Ati Awa's Taranaki enemy.³³

It was the establishment of the trading station, and with it the beginning of a relationship between Maori and European based on trade, that forced the middle ground into being. According to White, when this sort of interaction took place, each side sought different goals in a different manner. The attempt of each side to apply its own cultural rules and expectations to the new context was often the cause of culture change as both sets of customs were challenged, explained and modified.³⁴ Although the relationship between Barrett and Te Ati Awa was centred on trade, it went beyond that. It was not possible to divorce trade from involvement in Te Ati Awa society. Both parties possessed the ability to deliver something that the other found highly desirable - muskets for Te Ati Awa and dressed flax for Barrett. To achieve that end, both Maori and Pakeha had to compromise and accommodate the

³² Ibid, p. 444.

³³ Ibid, pp. 418, 445.

³⁴ R. White, pp. 52, 81.

other to obtain what they wanted. However neither abandoned their own culture in the process. Barrett did not become a Maori. Instead he became a Pakeha-Maori, combining elements of both worlds. Te Ati Awa remained Maori, but adapted to a number of cultural changes. It is necessary however to distinguish changes that affected the way that Te Ati Awa dealt with Europeans from changes that affected the way they dealt with other Maori.

The whole area of material exchange was one of the first to change. Traditionally, Maori frowned on barter as not being *tika* (correct).³⁵ Economic transactions took the form of gift exchange. It established an on-going relationship between the two parties involved, quite different to the European concept of a sale as a one-off transaction effecting a permanent change of ownership. A gift obligated the receiver to return the favour at some future date. Maori society also valued the distribution of wealth rather than its accumulation. The mana of a chief was tied up with the use of his wealth, which he was expected to distribute amongst his followers. This paid for their services and allegiance, and ensured a continuation of the relationship as gift giving between chief and commoner meant that the reciprocity would continue.³⁶

These values clashed with European society's emphasis on the accumulation of wealth and the sale of commodities. Barrett's occupation reflected the values set by European society, and was predicated on the production of as large a quantity as possible of dressed flax and agricultural produce. Te Ati Awa modified the rules of

³⁵ R. Firth, *Economics of the New Zealand Maori*, Wellington, 1959, pp. 409-10.

³⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 133-4.

their own culture to create a new and special position for Dicky Barrett and his men in their world. The traders were given their own house to store the trade goods and allowed to accumulate dressed flax and agricultural produce for shipping to Sydney.

A change took place in the method of material exchange also. Te Ati Awa were introduced to the idea and practice of trading and purchasing one item with another of equal value. Barter replaced gift exchange, at least in trading between Te Ati Awa and Barrett, as the means of exchange.³⁷ However, barter remained outside Te Ati Awa society, confined to the middle ground, a way of dealing with the Pakeha. Exchange between Maori continued to take the form of gift exchange with its associated future obligations. Te Ati Awa continued to expect the chiefs to distribute rather than accumulate wealth. Therefore the goods brought by the European enriched not only the chief but the whole hapu. When Te Wharepouri received trade goods from the New Zealand Company in 1839, he distributed them amongst the various groups living in Port Nicholson, keeping little for himself.

The traders' demand for agricultural produce and dressed flax did however lead to the partial transformation of the economic pattern of Te Ati Awa society, which moved away from a purely subsistence economy to a partially commercial one. Traditionally, the whanau was the basic economic unit of Maori society. Although agricultural labour was performed by the whole community, the fields were divided into plots owned by the whanau, and members of the whanau tended their own plots

³⁷ This was a common reaction by Maori following the establishment of trading relationships with Europeans. See Firth, *Economics*, pp. 431-2, 441, 443, 453; A. Ballara, 'The Role of Warfare in Maori Society in the Early Contact Period', *IPS*, LXXXV, 4, 1976, p. 503; Hargreaves, p. 103.

and took advantage of the resources owned by the whanau such as rat runs and small eel weirs.³⁸ Resources that required larger numbers of workers for their utilisation were owned and worked by the hapu, and the food produced was divided amongst the various whanau. The need to produce a surplus must have required an increased co-operative effort at the hapu level. No one whanau could dress enough flax or provide enough food to purchase muskets. The goods received from the produce obtained by the joint effort of the hapu were then presumably divided up by the chief.³⁹

At Ngamotu there was an increase in the amount of land and labour devoted to agricultural production and the production of dressed flax. In the area surrounding Barrett's residence at Ngamotu, potatoes, and other crops introduced by Barrett such as melons, maize, cabbages, pumpkins and wheat were cultivated especially for the export market.⁴⁰ Pigs were raised in large numbers, requiring fencing to protect growing crops. When the crops were harvested, they were held in stores pending the arrival of trading vessels. Some of the wheat crop even reached England. The Admiral Gifford returned to Sydney in January 1829 with 12 tons of pork and a ton of potatoes.⁴¹ Large and increasing quantities of dressed flax were prepared as well. The Adventure returned to Sydney without any flax on its first trip. However, the Admiral Gifford carried 4 tons of flax to Sydney in January 1829 and by 1831 this had

³⁸ Firth, Economics, pp. 111, 139, 285, 353; M. Winiata, 'Leadership in Pre-European Maori Society', JPS, LXV, 3, 1956, p. 219.

³⁹ Firth, Economics, p. 286.

⁴⁰ H.M. Jervis, 'Notes on New Zealand Pioneering', NZH, 23 April 1892, supplement, p. 1, col. 4; W. Wakefield, Journal, 1 October 1839, GBPP, NZ 2 : 1844, p. 600.

⁴¹ W.H. Skinner, Taranaki Eighty Years Ago, New Plymouth, 1921, pp. 8-9.

increased to 27 tons carried by the Currency Lass.⁴²

Dressed flax and crops were produced in the traditional manner, but it was inevitable that there would be some disruption to Te Ati Awa society. The preparation of flax was a time consuming and labour intensive business. It involved the scraping of the flax with mussel shells. A skilled flax dresser could produce about 10 pounds of dressed flax daily, and it took about one month's work to scrape enough flax to buy one gun.⁴³ However, there is no evidence of the migrations from hill top pa to swampy, unhealthy low lying areas that Firth and Wright have argued took place with the arrival of the traders. Nor did Te Ati Awa health suffer as a result. They did not starve themselves or work to exhaustion. The Taranaki region was very fertile and was later known by settlers as the Garden of New Zealand. Te Ati Awa also had access to fish, shellfish, eels and birds.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Wigglesworth noted that Maori generally halted production of dressed flax from October to December and in February and March when planting and harvesting of their crops took precedence.⁴⁵

Te Ati Awa kept crops grown for the export trade separate from the rest of their every day lives. They continued to cultivate scattered pieces of land further inland

⁴² Ibid, pp. 8-9; Sydney Gazette, 21 February 1832, cited in Wigglesworth, 'The New Zealand Timber and Flax Trade', p. 386.

⁴³ Wigglesworth, 'The New Zealand Timber and Flax Trade', p. 217; W.C. Schaniel, 'The Maori and the Economic Frontier: An Economic History of the Maori of New Zealand, 1769-1840', PhD. thesis, University of Tennessee, 1985, p. 260.

⁴⁴ Jervis, NZH, 23 April 1892, supplement, p. 1, col. 4.

⁴⁵ Wigglesworth, 'The New Zealand Timber and Flax Trade', p. 213.

as a safeguard against enemy attack,⁴⁶ and traditional foods continued to provide the bulk of their diet. According to one of Percy Smith's informants, in 1832 kumara and taro were grown on a large area of land in what is now the centre of New Plymouth.⁴⁷ Te Ati Awa did not cultivate many of the introduced crops for their own use, although some later came to supplement Te Ati Awa's diet. By 1841 cabbages were growing wild at Waitara, and local Maori were cultivating Indian corn.⁴⁸ A group of Te Ati Awa returned from Sydney in 1829 with peach trees.⁴⁹

The changes that did take place following contact with Barrett were the results of Te Ati Awa's attempts to adapt to the needs of a commercial economy. The effects of these changes were felt mainly in the economic sphere. There is no evidence of any other changes to the everyday life of Te Ati Awa. Cannibalism continued to be practised, much to the disgust of the traders. The old gods continued to be worshipped and Te Ati Awa society remained pre-literate. Trade was Barrett's main concern. Christianity and literacy were left to the missionaries, who did not make their first visit to the region until 1839.

Barrett found that it was not possible to reduce production and the exchange of goods to purely business transactions. Trade carried with it a number of social obligations and benefits that were divorced from business in the European world.

⁴⁶ Smith, pp. 482, 485.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 482.

⁴⁸ R.H. Aubrey, Journal, cited in B. Wells, The History of Taranaki, Christchurch, 1976, p. 55.

⁴⁹ F.A. Carrington to the Secretary of the New Zealand Company, 22 September 1841, Carrington Papers; Nicholson, II, 1, p. 39.

Ngati Te Whiti dealt with the Europeans as Maori had always dealt with strangers. The newcomers were incorporated into tribal life yet they remained outsiders. According to Bruce Biggs, a stranger might marry into a group, but he did not become part of it, although his children did.⁵⁰ Incorporating outsiders into tribal life meant that they accepted tribal law and were given a defined place in that society as protection against violence.

According to Margaret Mutu, one way of incorporating the Pakeha into the tribal structure was by giving them Maori names.⁵¹ For example, Dicky Barrett became Tiki Parete and John Love became Hakirau. The acceptance of new names was seen as a tohu (sign) of their acceptance of their new place within that structure, although it is doubtful if Barrett and his companions understood the significance of the act. Another way of incorporating the Pakeha was through marriage. Marriage meant different things to Maori and Pakeha, but in the middle ground that did not matter as marriage met the expectations of both parties. For the Pakeha, a wife was not only a companion, sexual partner and housewife. She acquainted him also with the language and customs of her people. For Maori, marriage was not a union between individuals, but a union between groups.⁵² It provided a link to the European world and secured access to the trade goods of the Europeans.

⁵⁰ B. Biggs, Maori Marriage, Wellington, 1960, p. 27.

⁵¹ M. Mutu, 'Cultural Misunderstanding or Deliberate Mistranslation? Deeds in Maori of Pre-Treaty Land Transactions in Muriwhenua and their English Translations', Te Reo, 35, 1992, p. 87.

⁵² Winiata, p. 220; Biggs, p. 25.

Barrett's wife, known as Wakaiwa or Rawinia, was a high ranking woman. She was the daughter of Eruera Te Puke ki Mahurangi, a leading Ngati Te Whiti chief. Her mother, Kura Mai Te Ra, was the daughter of Tautara, the ariki (paramount chief) of Te Ati Awa. Rawinia was related to many of the most important Te Ati Awa chiefs such as Te Wharepouri and Te Puni. Marriage for such high ranking women was generally political, and while designed primarily to create links between groups, great importance was placed on matching individuals of equivalent rank to retain the mana of the individuals and their offspring.⁵³

Barrett's marriage to Rawinia was therefore a reflection of his status in the eyes of the local people. For the traders, this respect and status was lacking in their own world. Some traders, such as Joel Polack and Thomas Ralph, came from respectable families. However traders were perceived by many Europeans as unsavoury characters. Some were escaped convicts or ex-convicts. Others, like Barrett, came from poor families. 'Respectable' Europeans looked upon the Pakeha-Maori as being quasi-Maori. Yet Maori did not want recruits to their way of life. The Pakeha-Maori trader was more useful because of his European-ness and contacts with the European world. According to Maning, Maori considered a runaway Pakeha to be 'a tutua - a nobody, a fellow not worth a spike nail. No one knew him. He had no relations, no goods, no expectations, no anything ... Of what use on earth was he except to eat ?'⁵⁴ On the other hand, well to do Pakeha, such as traders 'were to be honoured, cherished,

⁵³ B.N. Heuer, 'Maori Women in Traditional Family and Tribal Life', *JPS*, LXXVIII, 4, 1969, p. 473; Biggs, p. 29.

⁵⁴ F.E. Maning, *Old New Zealand*, Auckland, 1956, pp. 20-1.

caressed, protected and plucked.⁵⁵

The ties between the European traders and Ngati Te Whiti were further strengthened by the children that resulted from these arranged marriages. Dicky Barrett and Rawinia had three children - Caroline, born in 1830, Mary Anne born two years later, and Sarah, born at Te Awaiti in 1835. They truly belonged in the middle ground. They wore European clothes, but were bilingual and bicultural. They had Maori names as well as European. Sarah was known as Hera and Caroline as Kararaina.

Land was another way to bind the Pakeha to the hapu. Land was owned by the hapu, but it was worked by individuals and whanau who had rights to use certain resources that the land provided, such as small cultivations, rat runs, shell banks, and patches of fern-root. These use rights were passed on to descendants. Other areas of land were held in common by the hapu and the resources of that land could be utilised by any member of the hapu.⁵⁶ When a Pakeha married a Maori woman and went to live with her people, he could acquire the right to use land in two ways. The wife could bring some land as a dowry or land could be made over to a stranger by the chief through a custom known as *tuku whenua*. However the marginal position of the traders was reinforced by Maori attitudes to outsiders. Land brought as a dowry could be used by the Pakeha, but he had no right of ownership, although his children did. In the case of *tuku whenua*, only the use rights to the land were temporarily transferred, with the mana whenua (power and authority over the land)

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 21.

⁵⁶ Firth, Economics, pp. 283, 378, 380, 386.

remaining with the tribe.⁵⁷ Barrett was allocated some land at Ngamotu around the trading station, and later came to believe that he 'owned' it in the European sense. These different perceptions did not matter in the middle ground and did not affect the relationship between Barrett and Ngati Te Whiti in the 1820s and 1830s. In the 1840s however these differences were to have major implications and played an important part in the erosion of the middle ground.

According to Mutu, the giving and acceptance of land included a tacit assumption by Maori that the donee would abide by tribal law. It was in the trader's best interest to do so. When Maning touched a skeleton he was abandoned by his Maori retainers for transgressing tapu.⁵⁸ This made the trading relationship difficult and it was therefore wise to avoid infringing tapu. This was a custom that Barrett and his colleagues learnt from experience.⁵⁹ In addition, the relationship with Maori carried with it certain obligations, such as support for kin and the provision of hospitality when they visited. Barrett's homes in Te Awaiti and Port Nicholson were visited frequently by Maori.⁶⁰

Following the first contact between Barrett and Te Ati Awa in 1828, both sides took advantage of what the other had to offer without capitulating to an alien way of life. The European traders and Te Ati Awa sought and found the middle ground, a place

⁵⁷ Ibid, pp. 125, 386; A. Ballara, 'The Pursuit of Mana? A Re-evaluation of the Process of Land Alienation by Maoris, 1840-1890', JPS XCI, 4, 1982, pp. 535-6; Mutu, p. 60 ff. The custom of tuku whenua will be discussed in more detail in ch. 4.

⁵⁸ Maning, p. 121 ff.

⁵⁹ NZJ, 9 November 1844, p. 621; Smith, p. 472; T.H., 22 November 1899, p. 1.

⁶⁰ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 44; NZJ, 1850, p. 293.

based on compromise and accommodation. Neither side could afford to ignore the wishes of the other. Barrett became a Pakeha-Maori, but only adopted those cultural elements that suited him or were necessary for a successful trading relationship. Te Ati Awa established links with the traders through marriage, but the traders remained marginal to Te Ati Awa society. Te Ati Awa selectively adopted some European cultural elements and in particular those with an economic emphasis. Yet that was all that changed. Perhaps if there had been more time, Te Ati Awa may have been more deeply affected, for in 1831 an event took place that dramatically changed the lives of Barrett and Te Ati Awa - the Tainui invasion of north Taranaki.

CHAPTER TWOWAR AND MIGRATION

In December 1831 a Tainui taua launched an attack on Te Ati Awa which was designed to seek utu for their defeat at Motunui. The northern hapu of Te Ati Awa fled to Pukerangiora, where they were besieged and starved out. The victorious taua then moved on to besiege Otaka pa at Ngamotu where other Te Ati Awa hapu and the European traders had gathered. After a siege lasting several weeks, the taua was driven off. Their defeat has been attributed by European writers to the presence of the few Europeans in the pa at the time. Some writers have attributed the success to Dicky Barrett in particular. In reality the European presence was not so decisive. What is most significant about the siege is that it revealed the limited adjustment that the Pakeha-Maori traders had made to the Maori lifestyle and customs. They saw Te Ati Awa actions as puzzling and bizarre. However the attempts by the traders to alter Te Ati Awa's behaviour were unsuccessful. The middle ground did not apply to all aspects of Te Ati Awa culture and society. There was no need to find a common ground or to compromise in regard to warfare. Te Ati Awa bore the brunt of the fighting and saw no need to change. In battle, they acted as they had always done.

The earliest account of the siege at Otaka was included in Joel Polack's New Zealand (published in 1838) from information provided by one of the traders. Other information was gathered by W.H. Skinner from Te Ati Awa informants in the late nineteenth century and incorporated into Percy Smith's History and Traditions, (published in 1910). Another major source was letters written by one of Barrett's

traders, Daniel Henry Sheridan, to a Sydney newspaper in 1833, which were later included in Robert McNab's The Old Whaling Days (published in 1913).

These accounts established the dominant interpretation of the siege, namely that the European contribution was the key to the victory. According to Skinner, Ngamotu 'would have met the same fate of Puke-rangiora had it not been for the determined stand made by the eight British traders and whalers living with the tribe under the leadership of John Love and Richard Barrett'.¹ Skinner provided few details about Barrett's role in the siege, and Polack and Sheridan did not even mention him, but subsequent writers have often emphasised Barrett's role. William Pember Reeves called Barrett 'the life and soul of the defence' and the Taranaki Herald claimed Barrett organised the defences and saved Te Ati Awa from extermination.²

A different interpretation was provided in a series of articles by Henry Mahon Jervis published in the New Zealand Herald in 1892. According to Jervis, the battle was not won by the Europeans. In fact, he believed that they provoked the first assault on the pa, and prolonged the siege by interfering with attempts at peacemaking. Jervis described his articles as the result of a culling from diary jottings, but his diary is no longer extant.³ Jervis was a storekeeper at New Plymouth in 1841, and it was here that he learned about the siege from Barrett and his men. When Jervis moved to Auckland in 1845 he met Te Wherowhero, the leader of the Tainui taua at Otaka,

¹ Smith, p. 471.

² W.P. Reeves, The Long White Cloud, London, 1950, p. 118; T.H., 3 June 1978, p. 5, cols. 2-3; 29 March 1941, p. 8.

³ Jervis, NZH, 5 March 1892, supplement, p. 1.

who had taken up residence at Mangere.⁴ Jervis obtained a Tainui view of the siege from Te Wherowhero. His account has been ignored by writers however, including L.G. Kelly who wrote a tribal history of the Tainui people. According to Kelly, Tainui traditions preserved little of the attack on Ngamotu and he relied on Skinner's account for details of the siege.⁵ Jervis' account is therefore significant as the only source that included a Tainui version of events at the siege.

In the dominant interpretation, the European contribution which led to the victory was the result of a combination of three factors - their firm resolve despite inadequate defences; their correct assessment of the treacherous nature of Tainui peace offers; and the use of cannon to inflict large casualties on the attackers. Skinner belittled the effectiveness of the defences at Ngamotu. The villages of Otaka and Matipu were 'hurriedly' enclosed in a single line of palisades and 'the defences, consequent on their being rushed up in such haste were very indifferent and scarce worthy of the name'⁶ It was the determined stand taken by the traders which supposedly overcame these obstacles. Yet it was common for Maori to construct pa hastily in time of need, and despite the hurried nature with which fortifications were erected, they generally served their purpose.⁷ Wells believed Otaka pa to be Te Ati Awa's second strongest fortress.⁸

⁴ Ibid, 23 April 1892, supplement, p.1.

⁵ L.G. Kelly, Tainui. The Story of Hoturoa and his Descendants, Christchurch, 1980, p. 392.

⁶ Smith, p. 471.

⁷ A. Ballara, 'Settlement Patterns in the Early European Maori Phase of Maori Society', JPS, LXXXVIII, 2, 1979, p. 208.

⁸ Wells, p. 8.

The people of Ngamotu had plenty of time to prepare their defences. The crew of the trading vessel the Darling which visited Ngamotu in mid-1831 was told by the locals that they 'expected to have a war, or at least be disturbed by other tribes, who it appears had made up their minds to plunder them.'⁹ Furthermore, the initial target of the taua was Te Ati Awa's strongest pa at Pukerangiora. The raiders were first sighted approaching Pukerangiora on 24 December 1831 and did not begin to besiege Otaka until 30 January 1832.¹⁰ During that period palisades were erected, trenches were dug inside the fence, whare were constructed for shelter, banks of clay were built around the huts as protection from musket fire, provisions were taken into the pa and four cannon were mounted and taken into the pa.¹¹ These preparations proved to be more than adequate in holding back the enemy, despite their superior numbers. Approximately 1600 Tainui warriors, almost all armed with muskets, faced 250 defenders who possessed only 100 guns and four cannon.¹²

After their arrival at Otaka, the taua made several attempts to negotiate a peace. Although they had no previous contact with the Tainui people before the siege, Barrett and his companions were suspicious of Tainui's motives from the start. Sheridan believed them to be 'barbarous', 'treacherous', and 'hounds of hell'.¹³ The traders expected treachery, and acted to prevent this succeeding. Whether their

⁹ B. Burns, A Brief Narrative of a New Zealand Chief, Dunedin, 1970, p. 5.

¹⁰ R. McNab, The Old Whaling Days, Wellington, 1913, pp. 42, 46.

¹¹ Ibid, pp. 46, 49; Jervis, NZH, 23 April 1892, supplement, p. 1, col. 5.

¹² McNab, pp. 39, 46; Urlich, pp. 406, 407

¹³ McNab, pp. 45, 50.

assumption was correct is open to debate, but most writers have uncritically adopted the view that Tainui were treacherous. To question this assumption is to challenge the whole notion of a victory won by Barrett and his companions.

The first attempt to make peace took place on 31 January between Te Wharepouri and a Tainui chief (Sheridan says it was Te Kanawa, while Jervis says it was Te Wherowhero). According to Sheridan, no conclusion was reached, but the Tainui chief agreed to return the following day.¹⁴ Jervis claimed however that Te Wherowhero agreed to leave in peace, but first he wanted to enter the pa with some of his men to declare their friendship.¹⁵ Te Wharepouri was evasive, but agreed to a truce. What happened next is disputed. According to Sheridan, the Tainui chief 'proved to be deceitful, for shortly after his return to his settlement, a general firing commenced from all quarters for about 20 minutes'.¹⁶ Jervis and Polack stated that the shooting took place after a group of Tainui warriors performed a haka in front of the pa. According to Jervis, 'the natives hailed it as tidings of peace, in accordance with Maori etiquette; but the pakeha considered it as a prelude to battle'.¹⁷ Polack claimed that 'some of them [Te Ati Awa] hailed it as glad tidings of peace; others more prudent, regarded it as the signal prelude to battle'.¹⁸

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 47.

¹⁵ Jervis, NZH, 23 April 1892, supplement, p. 1, col. 5.

¹⁶ McNab, p. 47.

¹⁷ Jervis, NZH, 23 April 1892, supplement, p. 1, col. 5.

¹⁸ J.S. Polack, New Zealand: Being a Narrative of Travels and Adventures During a Residence in that Country Between the Years 1831 and 1837, Christchurch, 1974, II, p. 304.

When the haka was over, the warriors fired their guns, as a salute according to Jervis, threw the weapons back to their slaves and women, and rushed towards the pa armed only with traditional weapons. According to Jervis 'all might have gone well, and perhaps peace been established, ... but the European holders of the fort of Moturoa took an opposite view - from their insufficient acquaintance, perhaps, with Maori usages - to that of a majority of the native force, consequent upon which a volley of musketry was sent down upon the climbing war-dancers....'¹⁹ Polack interpreted Tainui's action as proof of their treachery.²⁰ Sheridan recorded a similar incident, with a different conclusion, on 2 February, following a second meeting between a Tainui chief and Te Wharepouri. Apparently the Tainui chief agreed to return to his own land, but

no sooner was his back turned, the venom clung to his heart again, and to complete his deception, he caused the whole tribe to dance that evening upon a plain, laying themselves open to our guns. They were not in the least interrupted in their amusements, as it was a signal with the natives of either friendship or war. Ours were in great glee, expecting it to be the former ... but to their great surprise, they renewed their animosity on the following morning²¹

It is difficult to determine whether the Tainui intended to attack the pa. According to Elsdon Best, once Maori acquired muskets, it took time to become proficient in their use, and 'for some time he [the Maori] continued to carry it [the musket] merely as an additional weapon, he would fire a volley, then discard the musket and go in

¹⁹ Jervis, NZH, 23 April 1892, supplement, p. 1, col. 5.

²⁰ Polack, II, p. 304.

²¹ McNab, p. 48.

with the old rakau maori, or native weapons'.²² It is apparent from the accounts that many, if not most, Te Ati Awa saw Tainui's intentions as peaceful. However, the Europeans expected Tainui treachery, interpreted the haka as an aggressive move and acted accordingly. This incident coloured subsequent attempts to negotiate a peace. It confirmed the traders' belief that their opponents were not to be trusted. The Tainui took the view that the besieged had broken the truce.

A subsequent attempt to negotiate a peace was made on the fourth day of the siege. At a meeting between Tautara and Te Wherowhero, the latter agreed to withdraw his forces. As part of the peace arrangements, Te Wherowhero wanted to be allowed to enter the pa with his people to hold a tangi for the dead.²³ According to Polack, some of the inhabitants of the pa were 'determined to invite the Waikato tribes to join in a friendly dance with them, but the greater number were apprehensive of treachery'.²⁴ Quarrelling broke out between the two factions. One woman who favoured the peace terms left the pa and ran towards the Tainui camp as a show of faith, but was caught and killed. Her body was cut up and washed in the stream that the pa's inhabitants drew their water from to make it tapu. To the Europeans in the pa, this confirmed their belief that the Tainui were treacherous. Jervis believed the incident was in retaliation for the previous breach of the truce by Te Ati Awa.²⁵

²² E. Best, The Maori, Wellington, 1924, II, p. 284.

²³ Smith, p. 474.

²⁴ Polack, II, p. 307.

²⁵ Jervis, NZH, 30 April 1892, supplement, p. 1, col. 5.

It is possible to examine another case for evidence of Tainui's intentions in seeking to enter the pa. In 1833 Waikato besieged a Taranaki pa at Te Namu. They were unsuccessful, but according to Gudgeon, before raising the siege, 'and in order that they might retreat with honour, they sent a messenger into the pa to intimate their desire for peace, and also to enter the pa and hongi'²⁶ The Taranaki people agreed and the visit passed uneventfully. Therefore it could be argued that the Tainui had honourable intentions at Otaka. Yet Percy Smith made no mention of this event in his account of the siege of Te Namu. His informant claimed that after Waikato's final assault, they were driven off and pursued by Taranaki warriors.²⁷

A final attempt to arrange a peace at Otaka took place when the Currency Lass arrived at Ngamotu to collect dressed flax and drop off provisions. Discussions were held on the ship between John Love and Te Wherowhero. According to Sheridan, Love stated that 'he had not come there to fight New Zealanders; he had only come there to trade with them', and he asked Te Wherowhero 'what injury any of their tribes had sustained from the white men.'²⁸ Apparently Te Wherowhero wanted to take the Europeans as slaves to Kawhia. Polack claimed it was clear that 'the chief was determined to take the pa, kill the white men, preserve their heads and sell them'.²⁹ Jervis stated that this threat was only made after Love refused to allow the Tainui to trade the flax, which was in their possession at the time, for the provisions

²⁶ W.E. Gudgeon, 'Maori Wars', JPS, XVI, 1907, p. 31.

²⁷ Smith, pp. 503-4.

²⁸ McNab, p. 51.

²⁹ Polack, II, pp. 310-11.

on board the ship, after which they agreed to end hostilities.³⁰

The traders had no intention of compromising. According to Polack, they agreed to 'enter into no treaty with so perfidious and hostile a horde, as it was well known that honour (said to exist among thieves) did not much oppress the native breast, and nothing less than their departure should restore peace'.³¹ Jervis believed that 'the Europeans treated Maori agreements of their opponents with the utmost disdain and disbelief, insisting upon carrying on the fight till their powder was exhausted', a decision which was due to 'rum-valour'.³² Although Te Wherowhero's terms for peace do not seem unduly harsh, Polack called the terms a 'surrender' which would probably have been 'accepted by the simple besieged, but for the prudence of the English ...'.³³

In the debate over the impact that transculturites had on indigenous people, one of the areas of argument has been over warfare. Campbell has argued that the beachcombers did not bring about a change in tactics, and warfare was carried out in the traditional manner.³⁴ The beachcombers had no role in battle other than as 'extras'. However Bargatzky believed that the beachcombers successfully introduced innovations in to two areas - seafaring and warfare or military organisation.³⁵ Not

³⁰ Jervis, NZH, 30 April 1892, supplement, p. 1, col. 6.

³¹ Polack, II, p. 310.

³² Jervis, NZH, 30 April 1892, supplement, p. 1, cols. 5, 7.

³³ Polack, II, p. 306.

³⁴ Campbell, p. 299.

³⁵ Bargatzky, p. 94.

only were the ships they constructed used for military purposes, but European military tactics were used in many engagements.

The biggest change to warfare as far as Te Ati Awa were concerned was the introduction of large numbers of muskets by Barrett and Love from 1828. The siege at Otaka was the first time the southern hapu of Te Ati Awa used these weapons in battle on a large scale (the northern hapu used them in the defence of Pukerangiora). Some of the innovations used at Otaka may have been introduced by Barrett and his colleagues. Sheridan is believed to have been an ex-military man, and his account of the siege indicates that it was the Europeans who advised Te Ati Awa to dig a trench to counter Tainui attempts to undermine the fence.³⁶ The four cannon used to defend the pa were also an innovation, but were used exclusively by the Europeans and did not affect Te Ati Awa tactics. Other innovations may have been introduced by the Europeans, but are just as likely to have been learned from other Maori. The trenches behind the palisades were probably used as rifle pits, and the defenders used earth to make the huts musket proof. These tactics had been used by other Maori for some time.³⁷ Many of the other tactics used by Te Ati Awa remained unchanged. Elsdon Best argued that 'the statement sometimes made, however, that firearms "struck a fatal blow at the whole system of Maori tactics" is entirely wrong: they simply caused the Maori to make some changes in his fortified places and mode of conducting a fight.'³⁸

³⁶ T.H., 22 November 1899, p. 1; McNab, p. 50.

³⁷ E. Best, The Pa Maori, Wellington, 1975, pp. 366, 383-4.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 365.

While they may have had some impact on the tactics used, Barrett and his men were unsuccessful in their attempts to change the way Te Ati Awa behaved during the siege. Barrett and his men had made only a limited adjustment to Maori culture, and their European values and attitudes remained intact. They were left bewildered and disturbed by the way that Te Ati Awa conducted the siege, and attempted to modify Te Ati Awa's conduct to follow European rules of conventional siege warfare. However a mediator has little power of his own, and has to act through the authority of traditional leaders in the role assigned to him.³⁹ In Barrett's case, this was purely commercial. Belich has seen the position of Europeans in Maori society as being 'less the dominating agents of Empire than something akin to Jewish communities in some European societies, their power more commercial than political'.⁴⁰

According to Sheridan, the Europeans were concerned that

any of the natives that had any friend or relation on the enemy's side were permitted to pass and repass unmolested to see them, and on the opposite side were allowed to come into the par (sic), each party telling different stories, the strength and number of their people, and every transaction that occurred. We Europeans, had several times tried to persuade the different chiefs to prevent such intercourse, as being very injurious to the par (sic), but to no effect; they had not the least control over them, and would still persist it was for their good, believing every story the artful enemy would send in, and which we well knew to be deceit.⁴¹

What Barrett and his colleagues failed to understand was that Maori chiefs did not

³⁹ E.G. Schwimmer, 'The Mediator', JPS, LXVII, 4, 1958, pp. 339-40.

⁴⁰ J. Belich, The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict, Auckland, 1986, p. 304.

⁴¹ McNab, p. 47.

order their followers, but had to persuade them. Barrett and Love tried to act in a command capacity. Skinner commented that 'Love stood on an equal footing with him [Barrett], and was considered by the besieged as the better general of the two'.⁴² Yet their attempts to convince the chiefs to prevent contact between the two sides were unsuccessful. According to Gudgeon, it was commonplace for a besieging party to pay 'occasional visits to the besieged, and it is remarkable that such visits were seldom disgraced by treachery. The men of the pa might be starving and bitterly hostile to those who visited them; but however great their cannibal instincts and desire for revenge, for the time being, all hostile feeling was suppressed'.⁴³

Even more shocking to the Europeans was the invitation extended to Tainui chiefs to enter the pa to discuss the tactics of the siege. They were shown the cannon and defences and pointed out the weak spots to their hosts. The traders 'could scarcely believe the evidence of their eyes, and listened with undisguised astonishment at the madness and indiscreet folly of their friends'.⁴⁴ Other Tainui were welcomed into the pa to trade muskets and goods taken at Pukerangiora for blankets and food. Sheridan considered this 'a curious mode of carrying on war', but the Europeans overcame their scruples to join in the trade.⁴⁵

One of the traders' biggest concerns was the apparent lack of vigilance by Te Ati

⁴² T.H., 22 November 1899, p. 1.

⁴³ Gudgeon, p. 31.

⁴⁴ Polack, II, p. 306.

⁴⁵ McNab, p. 52; Polack, II, p. 314.

Awa. Sheridan claimed that 'the par (sic) would have been taken with ease ... had not the white men kept so strict a watch at night as they did; for the natives would lie in the trenches with their arms, cover themselves up with their blanket or mat, and fall fast asleep.'⁴⁶ Such vigilance by the Europeans was unnecessary. The Tainui sent several advanced warnings of their attacks. Yet the traders continued to fear treachery. The discomfort of the Europeans may have been due to the taunting that they endured during the siege from Tainui warriors. The traders were told that the Tainui would 'bake us all in an oven, curing our heads, and taking them to Wicatto (sic). Others would say they had ropes ready, which they had, to drag us slaves there, and make us carry baskets of dead men on our backs; as for our women they had them allotted for different chiefs'.⁴⁷ Consequently, the Europeans 'were continually on the alert, night and day at our guns, expecting every moment to be attacked, and in fact wishing for it'⁴⁸ They were 'perfectly miserable', and 'fatigued by constant watching'.⁴⁹

The cannon used by the defenders have been seen by many writers as playing the decisive role in the victory over Tainui.⁵⁰ One of the cannon became known as Dicky Barrett and was recovered by settlers who displayed it in Pukekura park in New

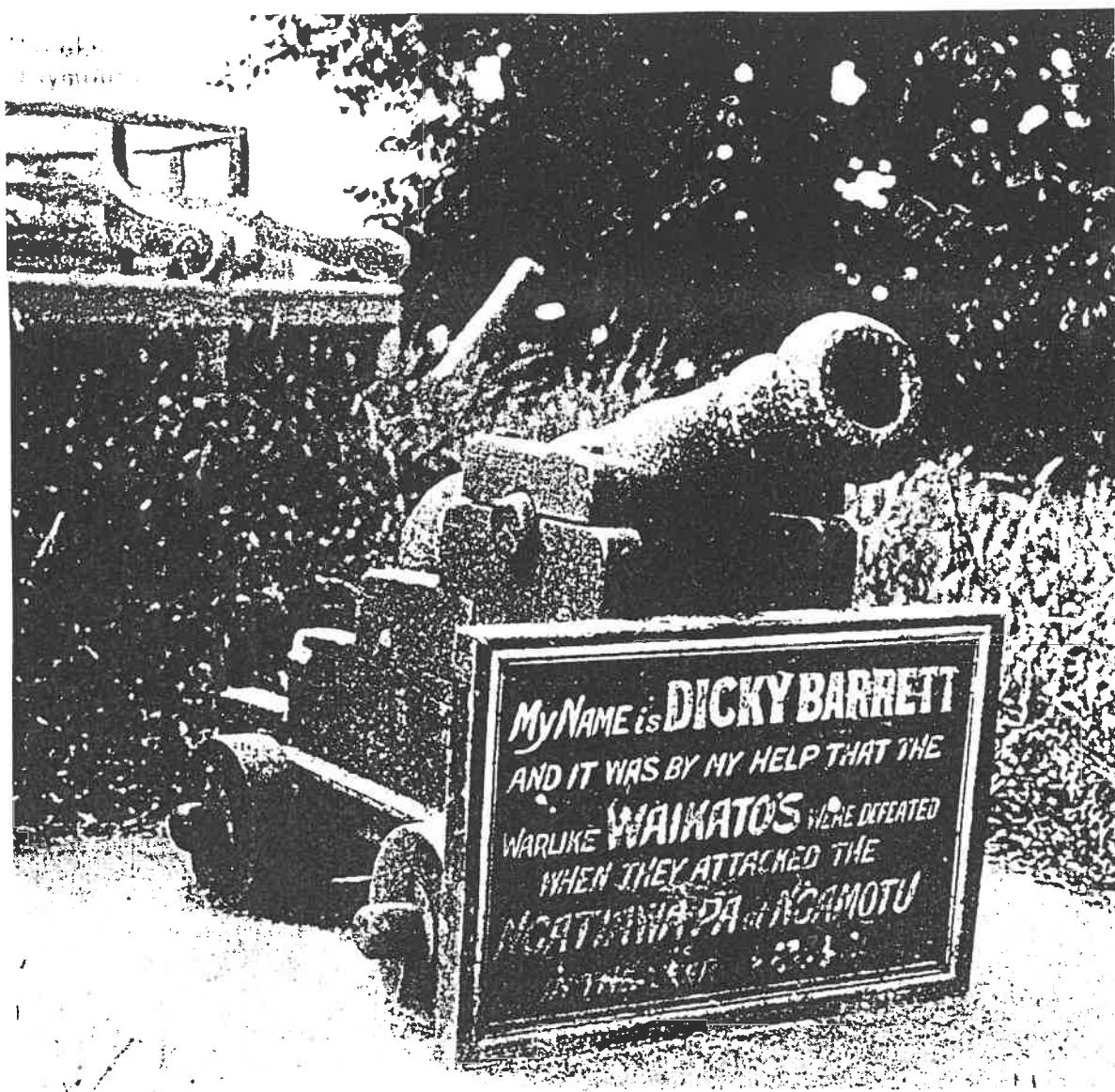
⁴⁶ McNab, p. 52.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 58.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 52.

⁴⁹ Polack, II, p. 312.

⁵⁰ M. Moorhead, Tales of Old New Plymouth New Plymouth, 1991, p. 2; T.H., 29 March 1941, p. 8, 4 December 1976, p. 5 and 31 July 1982, p. 2; E.P., 9 September 1946; The Dominion, 3 November 1962; G. and R. Lambert, An Illustrated History of Taranaki, Palmerston North, 1983, p. 20; D. McGill, Lower Hutt. The First Garden City, Wellington, 1991, p. 20; J.S. Tullett, The Industrious Heart. A History of New Plymouth, New Plymouth, 1981, p. 5.



Barrett's cannon. Source: Tullett,
Photo following p. 10.

Plymouth (it is now in the Taranaki Museum). A plaque mounted on the cannon declared that 'it was by my help that the warlike Waikatos were defeated'⁵¹ However the evidence casts serious doubt on this claim. The cannon were mounted on makeshift carriages and were very old, being manufactured towards the end of the seventeenth century.⁵² Barrett possessed few cannon balls, and relied on nails, glass, iron and stones as projectiles. Cannon in similar condition were used by Maori at Ohaeawai and Ruapekapeka in 1845-6 and at Meremere and Paterangi in 1863-4. In these cases the cannon were old, subject to corrosion and mounted on makeshift carriages which made them difficult to aim and dangerous in recoil. Stones and scrap metal were used as projectiles. According to James Belich, 'these missiles made accurate and powerful fire all but impossible. Such weapons were of little use in open battle or even in the defence of the pa'.⁵³

Furthermore, the Tainui adopted effective counter-measures against the cannon. According to Sheridan, they 'did not give us much occasion to fire at them, always leaving us a wide berth', and the uneven ground and large number of trees in the area made it 'impossible to bear upon them'.⁵⁴ The cannon were ineffective when the Tainui dug trenches towards the pa to undermine the fence.⁵⁵ In addition, the Tainui constructed mounds or fighting stages known as taumaihi, made of clay and

⁵¹ Tullett, photo following p. 10.

⁵² T.H., 29 March 1941, p. 8.

⁵³ Belich, p. 292.

⁵⁴ McNab, p. 46.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

bracken. The cannon were ineffective against them and the Tainui used the taumaihi as platforms from which to fire their muskets and hurl firebrands into the pa. Only when the Tainui abandoned their previous caution in favour of an all out final assault on 20 February were the cannon able to inflict a significant number of casualties.

In this final assault, the attackers did not co-ordinate their assaults, and Te Ati Awa were able to concentrate their forces at one point and defeat each force in turn. The taua then abandoned the siege and returned home. Te Ati Awa feasted on the dead enemy. Although the traders were acculturated to Maori society to some extent, this was one thing about their host society that they could not accept. In his account, Sheridan made his feelings clear. 'Oh, what a scene for a man of Christian feeling, to behold dead bodies strewed about the settlements in every direction ... By great persuasion, we prevailed on the savages not to cook any inside the fence, or to come into our houses during the time they were regaling themselves ...'⁵⁶ Sheridan treated not only the Tainui, but also Te Ati Awa with disdain. He used words such as 'barbary' and 'cruelty' to describe Maori and their actions, and felt Maori to be 'a race of the most depraved wretches that nature ever formed'⁵⁷

Jervis' account of events at the siege at Otaka presents a serious challenge to the dominant view which has hailed the victory as a triumph due to the presence of the Europeans; their correct assessment of Tainui treachery; and the use of cannon. In reality, the European presence was not decisive. Their belief that Tainui were

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 57.

⁵⁷ Ibid, pp. 56-7.

treacherous is debatable, and the actions that the European traders took may have prevented the successful negotiation of a peace. The accounts of the siege show a small group of European men who had made a limited adjustment to Maori society, and were baffled by events going on around them. When the Europeans tried to modify the behaviour of their hosts, their efforts were unsuccessful.

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Although Te Ati Awa defeated Tainui at Otaka pa, the latter still constituted a serious threat. Te Ati Awa suffered serious losses at Pukerangiora and Tainui's superior numbers and firepower meant that they could not be met in open battle. As it was feared that they would return, most Te Ati Awa embarked on a heke to the Cook's Strait area. Subsequent heke in the next few years left the Taranaki region virtually depopulated. However the ties which they felt to the land were so strong that some stayed behind, even at the risk of their lives. A small group moved to Mikotahi, a semi-island fortress at Ngamotu. By doing so they ensured that it could be said the fires never died out, enabling a later reoccupation of the area when Te Ati Awa had recovered its strength. This group included Rawinia's parents.

Most of the European traders abandoned the trading station and accompanied the heke. The removal of Te Ati Awa labour and protection meant that trading was no longer a viable proposition. One of the traders, Oliver, stayed behind and lived on Moturoa Island with his Te Ati Awa wife. Two others went to Lord Howe Island,⁵⁸

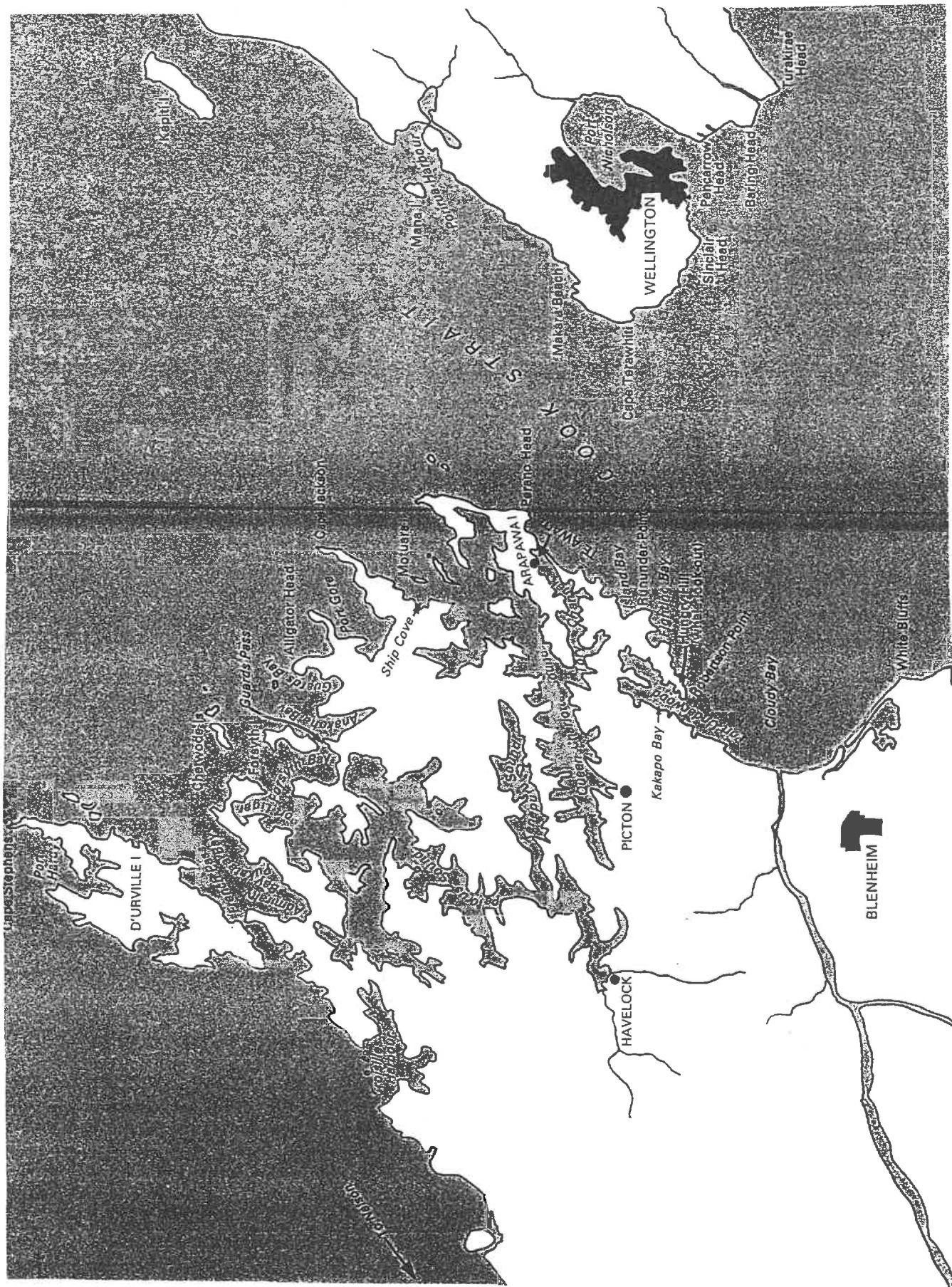
⁵⁸ Dominion, 21 August 1922.

and Sheridan left for Sydney. Te Heke Tama Te Uaua was led by Tautara, Te Puni, and Te Wharepouri and set out in June 1832, moving south by way of the Te Whakaahurangi track.

The heke passed through the territory of other iwi unscathed, except for a skirmish with Nga Rauru, until a party of Ngati Tuwharetoa and Whanganui warriors attacked the migrants at Putiki (opposite the present day town of Wanganui). Barrett and the other Europeans joined Te Ati Awa in the battle. On this occasion the traders adopted the Maori style of warfare. According to Percy Smith's Te Ati Awa informant, 'the white men were with us all the time, and, stripped to their skins, had fought with us at Puke-namu'.⁵⁹ After defeating the attackers, the heke moved on to Manawatu, arriving in early summer. In January or February of 1833 they moved on to Waikanae. Here Barrett and his companions parted company with Te Ati Awa, moving to Kapiti.⁶⁰ Shortly after they arrived at Te Awaiti in Queen Charlotte Sound. There they adopted a new occupation - shore whaling.

⁵⁹ Smith, p. 496.

⁶⁰ Evidence, R. Barrett, OLC 906, NA.



Queen Charlotte Sound. Source: D. Grady, Guards of the Sea, Christchurch, 1978, inside cover.

CHAPTER THREESHORE WHALING AT TE AWAITI

Dicky Barrett's arrival at Te Awaiti marked the beginning of a new relationship with Maori. He became economically independent, and can no longer be considered a Pakeha-Maori. Yet elements of Barrett's lifestyle remained unchanged. The whaling community at Te Awaiti was a product of the middle ground - it was neither Maori nor European but a mixture of the two. The whalers were part of a distinctive male culture characterised by violence, drunkenness, hospitality and discipline. Yet Maori influences were important, and in particular those of Maori women. Their relationship was based on co-operation and accommodation, and not domination by either Maori or Pakeha. These influences served to modify the dominant male culture and break down its barriers. Barrett and the whalers had an influence on local Maori as well. This influence was predominantly economic. Other areas of the Maori lifestyle remained unchanged. When Queen Charlotte Sound Maori converted to Christianity at the end of the 1830s, it was not the result of contact with the whalers. It was the arrival of native teachers, along with literacy, that ensured a welcome reception to the new creed.

Te Awaiti is situated on Arapaoa island in Queen Charlotte Sound. The area is mountainous, with many narrow, steep sided valleys, and small stretches of flat land. In 1827 one of the first shore whaling stations in New Zealand was established at Te Awaiti by John Guard. By the time that Barrett arrived there in 1833, Guard had moved to nearby Cloudy Bay. However Guard's former lieutenant, Joseph Thoms,

continued whaling from Te Awaiti. Barrett's men and their families swelled the numbers of the community, and allowed Barrett to establish a second whaling station. Jimmy Jackson established a third station in adjacent Jackson's Bay in 1837. By 1839 there were between 40 and 60 whalers living at Te Awaiti.¹ Though it was predominantly European, the group included a number of non-European whalers such as Black Lee, Dicky Barrett's African-American cook, Saturday from Rotuma Island, and an Aborigine.

Shore whaling was a tough, dirty, back-breaking and hazardous occupation. During the whaling season the boats put out each day from Te Awaiti before dawn, and rowed out to the entrance of Tory Channel where they kept a look out for whales.² The whaleboats were manned by between five and eight men, and when a whale was sighted, each boat raced rival crews in pursuit of the whale in an attempt to get close enough to harpoon it. The successful boat crew then let out the line attached to the harpoon and waited for the whale to weaken and die. The greatest danger to the whalers was that the boat would get too close to the whale and be wrecked by its tale. Once the whale died, the boat crew towed the carcase back to the beach in front of the settlement for processing. Pieces of whale flesh were put into try pots and boiled, releasing the oil which was then siphoned off. The whale bone and the oil, which was stored in casks, were ready then for shipment. The processing of whales was a messy business. The beach at Te Awaiti was saturated with oil and littered

¹ W. Wakefield, *Journal*, 29 August 1839, p. 587; A. Barrett, *The Life of the Rev. John Hewgill Bumby*, London, 1864, p. 144; E.J. Wakefield, I, pp. 30, 44; E. Dieffenbach, *Travels in New Zealand*, Christchurch, 1974, I, p. 38.

² J. Hobbs, *Diary*, 20 June 1839, MS 144, Typescript, AIM, p. 553; Dieffenbach, I, p. 49.

with the remains of whales. The stench from the carcasses and the oil filled the air.³

The shore whalers were divided up into three ranks. The headsman commanded the boat, while the rest of the crew consisted of the boat steerer and the oarsmen.⁴ Dicky Barrett was too fat to go out in the whale boats.⁵ As the chief headsman, he was responsible for the running of the whaling station. This involved him in a close relationship with Sydney merchants. It was too expensive for Barrett to establish his own whaling station, costing between 1500 and 2000 pounds to establish a station, and at least 1200 pounds per annum to run it.⁶ The capital was provided by Sydney merchants, and at the beginning of each season they sent a ship to the chief headsman with new boats, gear, provisions, trade goods, and new hands. Whale oil and whale bone was sent to Sydney more frequently as ships visited the area. Barrett was involved also in trading with Maori for pigs and agricultural produce, which was a major sideline to the whaling business. In addition he was engaged in a profitable trade supplying the men. The shore whalers were not paid a wage but were entitled to a share of the catch. If no whales were caught the whalers earned nothing. They were given food, clothing, spirits and tobacco on credit at a considerable mark up on the prices charged in Sydney. By the end of the season, after these debts were deducted, the balance paid in cash to the men was small.⁷

³ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 45; Dieffenbach, I, p. 37.

⁴ E.J. Wakefield, I, pp. 317-8.

⁵ Ibid, I, p. 68.

⁶ Morton, p. 225.

⁷ E.J. Wakefield, I, pp. 48, 319, 323.

One of the chief headsman's main tasks was to keep some semblance of order amongst his men. Rum was used as a reward for a kill, as a stimulant when towing, as a cure for boredom, and for pleasure.⁸ Not surprisingly, the shore whalers had a reputation for heavy drinking and disorder. The missionaries feared that the whalers' intemperate habits, lawlessness and slack morality would have an adverse influence on Maori and make the task of conversion that much harder. In 1839 Reverend Bumby said that the Te Awaiti whalers dwelt 'in the region of the valley of the shadow of death, they practise every species of iniquity without restraint and without concealment. The very sense of decency and propriety seems to be extinct. The very soil is polluted. The very atmosphere is tainted.'⁹ James Crawford, who spent a week at Te Awaiti in 1839, claimed that 'the population was generally more or less drunk, the smell of arrack [rum] throughout the village was unbearable, and rows and fights were of constant occurrence.'¹⁰ Crawford believed that it was so profitable to sell rum to the men that it was not in the chief headsman's interest to enforce sobriety. When the Tory visited Te Awaiti in August 1839, Edward Jerningham Wakefield wrote that 'fierce quarrels and wild orgies were to be met with both day and night; and never, perhaps, was there a community composed of such dangerous materials and so devoid of regular law.'¹¹

However these communities were not anarchic. As Jock Phillips has indicated, males

⁸ Morton, p. 247.

⁹ A. Barrett, p. 144.

¹⁰ J.C. Crawford, Recollections of Travel in New Zealand and Australia, London, 1880, pp. 39-40.

¹¹ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 49.

in frontier society formed a distinctive male culture, with its own attitudes and code of behaviour. These attitudes and behaviour were shocking to 'respectable' European visitors, but the violence and heavy drinking that the whalers at Te Awaiti indulged in arose from within that culture. When they were working, the whalers acted in a very disciplined manner as their lives depended on quickly and efficiently following orders. There also existed a code of laws which dealt with conflicting claims to a whale. These laws were not written down, but were so well known that few disputes arose, and these were settled by the oldest headsman according to precedent.¹²

In this male culture, it was the man who was versatile, tough, and imposing who won the respect of the men. The chief headsman at Te Awaiti were, according to Wakefield, 'men of iron will and large limb [who] ruled to a considerable degree the lawless assemblage, and maintained a powerful influence by their known courage and prowess, whether in the whale-boat or the fight on shore.'¹³ Thoms had a reputation for being a strict disciplinarian who the men dared not disobey. Those whalers who did were tied up by Thoms and held prisoner.¹⁴ Dicky Barrett was a different kind of chief headsman. He was not a martinet but was respected for his kindheartedness, and had a reputation for hospitality and kindness that was highly valued in this male culture.¹⁵ According to Edward Jerningham Wakefield, a stranger at Te Awaiti 'was always welcome to a share of the meal, a drop of the grog,

¹² Ibid, I, pp. 316-7.

¹³ Ibid, I, pp. 49-50.

¹⁴ Crawford, p. 33.

¹⁵ E.J. Wakefield, I, pp. 46, 49-50.

and a seat on a stool'¹⁶

While Thoms was feared, Barrett was a mate. Fairburn has argued that the typical frontier worker was a loner, and Phillips believed that the friendships that developed between men on the frontier did not endure. However, Barrett was accompanied from Ngamotu to Te Awaiti by several men who continued to have some sort of relationship with him. John Love was Barrett's business partner; Black Lee continued to work for Barrett as a cook; John Wright became one of Barrett's headsmen; and James Bosworth and Bill Bundy worked for Barrett as whalers. Other men might come and go, but the relationship between Barrett and these friends was an enduring one.

The social bonds of the whalers were reinforced through the use of a distinctive language. Edward Jerningham Wakefield described their language as a slang or argot that was almost unintelligible to strangers.¹⁷ Potatoes and pigs for example were referred to as spuds and grunters. One of the advantages of this language was that every article of trade with Maori had a slang equivalent, so that the whalers could talk with each other about a purchase without Maori understanding the discussion. The use of nicknames was also widespread amongst the whalers. Thoms for instance was known as Geordie Bolts. Other bonds were formed by the leisure hours that the men spent together. Books and newspapers were rare, and literacy was not universal. The men provided their own entertainment. This usually took the form of singing

¹⁶ Ibid, I, p. 50.

¹⁷ Ibid, I, pp. 318-9.

and the 'spinning' of yarns, accompanied by drinking. Yarns fulfilled more than one function. Phillips has argued that

Because frontier men often came from widely diverse backgrounds and geographical origins, yarns helped fill in those backgrounds and enrich men's knowledge of their fellows. Significantly, many of the yarns seem to have been based on past experiences - on the speaker's 'personal adventures'. The stories were always exaggerated - 'a modicum of truth mixed with a considerable amount of hyperbole' ... but they still served to flesh out a man's past history and travels.¹⁸

Barrett developed a penchant for this kind of story telling. When he welcomed the Tory to Te Awaiti, Dicky Barrett sat down at a cabin table with a bottle of 'grog' and related to his audience some 'wild adventures' and 'hairbreadth scapes'.¹⁹ He regaled credulous settlers on numerous occasions with tales about the siege at Otakapa, including long and detailed accounts of cannibalism to shocked audiences.²⁰ Other accounts included tales of being tied to a stake while Maori prepared to cook him for dinner.²¹ One of Barrett's men told similar stories to gullible settlers.²² These yarns stretched the truth considerably, as yarns always do, but several colonists were impressed enough to write them down. These yarns placed Barrett at the centre of attention and told new arrivals what he wanted them to know about him. They were designed also to entertain and to shock, playing on the fears and inexperience

¹⁸ Phillips, pp. 32-3.

¹⁹ E.J. Wakefield, I, pp. 35-6; Dieffenbach, I, p. 37.

²⁰ H. Weekes, Journal, 11 April 1841, cited in J. Rutherford and W.H. Skinner (eds.), The Establishment of the New Plymouth Settlement in New Zealand 1841-1843, New Plymouth, 1940, pp. 66-68; Aubrey to McLean, 19 December 1846, McLean Papers; E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 278; Jervis, NZH, 16 April 1892, supplement, p. 1, col. 3.

²¹ Aubrey, p. 53.

²² Smith, p. 472; T.H., 22 November 1899, p. 1.

of newcomers, especially with regards to Maori. This practice, commonly known as 'chaffing', was a common way of dealing with and initiating so called 'new chums' into the male culture.²³

The whalers at Te Awaiti and their male culture did not exist in isolation. By 1839 1200 Maori lived in Queen Charlotte Sound.²⁴ Most of them lived in settlements on Arapaoa Island. The main Te Ati Awa settlements were in East Bay and at Whekenui. There was also a Ngati Tama settlement at Okokuri. Whekenui and Okokuri were only a few miles away from Te Awaiti. Further afield, there was a settlement at Anaho in Cannibal Cove occupied by the Ngati Hinetuhi hapu of Te Ati Awa, and Ngati Toa settlements on the island of Moioio in Tory Channel and at Kaihinu on the opposite shore.

These Maori were recent arrivals to the area. Some Te Ati Awa contingents joined Te Rauparaha and Ngati Toa in a series of raids on the northern part of the South Island in the late 1820s. After they drove out Rangitane, Ngati Kuia and other tangata whenua, Te Rauparaha gave Pelorus and Queen Charlotte Sounds to the Puketapu and Ngati Rahiri hapu of Te Ati Awa. The Ngati Rarua hapu of Ngati Toa was given Wairau and Te Awaiti. Ngati Rarua do not appear to have occupied Te Awaiti. According to Dieffenbach, Te Awaiti was given to the whalers by Te Rauparaha and his brother Nohorua.²⁵ This may have been due to the fact that Thoms was married

²³ Phillips, p. 33.

²⁴ W. Wakefield, Journal, 22 November 1839, p. 633.

²⁵ E. Dieffenbach, Report to the New Zealand Company, GBPP, NZ 2: 1844, p. 617.

to Te Uatorikiriki, Nohorua's daughter and Te Rauparaha's niece. However there was no permanent transfer of the land. According to Te Rangihaeata, Ngati Toa 'allowed' Dicky Barrett and John Guard to occupy the land.²⁶

Te Awaiti was a different type of community to Ngamotu, where Barrett had been dependant on Te Ati Awa to produce dressed flax and agricultural produce using traditional methods of production. Shore whaling was a European occupation, carried out with European techniques, European tools and a large element of European labour, and it allowed Barrett to become economically independent of Maori. Yet the whalers continued to be involved in a close relationship with Maori. Some 60 to 80 Te Ati Awa accompanied Barrett to Te Awaiti in 1833, where they settled under their own chief.²⁷ Most of them worked at the whaling stations. At Te Awaiti, women were not seen as the threat to the male culture that Phillips believed them to be. The whaling season lasted from May to October and most of the whalers who stayed over the summer period had a permanent Maori female companion, and lived in a relationship they saw as a bona fide marriage. In the off season the whalers dispersed all over the Sound to live with their wife's relations and trade pigs and potatoes to passing vessels. As a result of their lifestyle, Gibbons called the shore whalers part-time Pakeha-Maori.²⁸

Barrett and Love were not even part-time Pakeha-Maori as they were economically

²⁶ P. Burns, Te Rauparaha. A New Perspective, Wellington, 1980, p. 237.

²⁷ Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, p. 195; Dieffenbach, Report to the New Zealand Company, p. 617.

²⁸ Gibbons, 'Some thoughts', pp. 3-4.

independent all year round. In the off season Barrett returned to the sea in the Harriet, a 40 tonne cutter.²⁹ The ship made a sealing trip down the west coast in 1836; it was sighted by local Maori at McDonnell's cove, 66 miles north of Wellington, possibly on a trading expedition; and it was used to collect coal from Manganui, near Cape Farewell.³⁰ As a result of these voyages one settler whom Barrett met in 1841 claimed, with some exaggeration, that Barrett had 'a thorough knowledge of the coasts, especially of Cook's Strait, in which there is not a cove, however unimportant, that has not, at some time or the other been visited by him.'³¹ In December 1837 Barrett and Love journeyed further afield, helping to sail the Hannah back to Sydney after its crew deserted.³² Love was involved in the timber trade, and employed men to cut timber and split staves.³³

At the start of each season, new hands followed the lead of more experienced whalers and went to the villages to procure a temporary wife. In return for her services, the whaler was expected to make a payment on completion of the bargain, to receive visits by her kin during the season and to treat them hospitably.³⁴ According to Edward Jerningham Wakefield, the whalers' wives were 'distinguished by a strong affection for their companion; are very quick in acquiring the habits of order and

²⁹ W. Wakefield, Journal, 31 August 1839, p. 587.

³⁰ Ibid, 31 August 1839, p. 588; C. Heaphy, cited in A.N. Field, Nelson Province, 1642-1842, Nelson, 1942, p. 63; NZJ, 18 September 1841, p. 236.

³¹ Aubrey, p. 53.

³² J. Heberley, Reminiscences 1809-1843, Micro MS 74, ATL, p. 74. Heberley is a year out in his dates. I have corrected them using Nicholson, II, 1, p. 181.

³³ Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, pp. 116-7.

³⁴ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 324.

cleanliness; facilitate the intercourse between the whalers and their own countrymen; and often manage to obtain a strong influence over the wild passions of the former.³⁵ The ties between the whaler and his wife were strengthened by the children that often resulted from the union. By 1839 there were over 20 children at the whaling station.³⁶ Barrett's third daughter, Sarah, was born at Te Awaiti in 1835. When missionaries arrived in the area, many couples took the opportunity to formalise their marriage according to European custom.

The whalers married local Maori women not only for sex or to carry out domestic chores. The women provided protection also from other Maori by binding the whalers to their tribe. Some of the marriages were politically important. Joseph Thoms married the niece of Te Rauparaha, the dominant influence in the area, and Barrett's relationship with Rawinia was important in an area with a significant Te Ati Awa population. A good relationship between the chief headsmen and local chiefs was important for a peaceful working environment. Thoms and Barrett's marriages, and the marriages between other whalers and local women, ensured that such a relationship existed.

The presence of large numbers of Maori meant that the whaling community at Te Awaiti was neither wholly European nor Maori, but a combination of the two. Some of the same values, such as hospitality, respect for physical strength, and generosity were shared by both Maori and the whalers. Barrett and the other chief headsmen

³⁵ Ibid, I, p.324.

³⁶ Ibid, I, p. 50; Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, p. 38; W. Wakefield, Journal, 6 September 1839, p. 590.

were seen as leaders or rangatira (chiefs) by both groups and these values were especially important in men in such positions.³⁷ When Edward Jerningham Wakefield visited Barrett's house at Te Awaiti it was reported to be half full of whalers and Maori.³⁸ Barrett was noted for his kindness to both Maori and whaler.

In some ways the whalers' lifestyle was little different from Maori. They adopted Maori fishing methods and made a tea-like drink from manuka.³⁹ Barrett's house was European in style. It was built of sawn timber, floored and lined, and sheltered in front by a verandah.⁴⁰ However the other whalers' houses were constructed by Maori and followed the traditional Maori pattern, with some European innovations. The traditional Maori whare had a thatched roof and walls, low doorways, no chimney and an earthen floor.⁴¹ The whalers' houses were constructed in a similar fashion with walls of wattled supplejack filled in with clay, thatched roofs, and clay floors but they also possessed European innovations such as tall doorways, chimneys, and internal partitions.⁴²

Maori at Te Awaiti were affected also by their relationship with the whalers. The

³⁷ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 30.

³⁸ Ibid, I, p. 44.

³⁹ Ibid, I, pp. 270-1; Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, p. 28; Dieffenbach, Report to the New Zealand Company, p. 611; W. Wakefield, Journal, 3 November 1839, p. 629; J.W. Barnicoat, Diary, 21 April 1843, Micro MS 256, Typescript, ATL, p. 66; Heberley, p. 81.

⁴⁰ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 44.

⁴¹ P.J.F. Coutts, 'An approach to the investigation of colonial settlement patterns: whaling in southern New Zealand', World Archaeology, VII, 3, 1975, p. 298.

⁴² Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, pp. 37-8; Barnicoat, Diary, 21 and 22 March 1843, pp. 57, 58; E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 44.

whalers' wives adopted European dress and grooming habits. They wore 'loose gowns of printed calico, and their hair, generally very fine, was always clean and well-combed.'⁴³ The women and children spoke English in addition to Maori. Maori at Te Awaiti did not adopt European innovations in housing however as Morton has argued. According to Dieffenbach, they either had their own houses or stayed with European whalers they were related to. The latter group gathered round the fireplace in the evening and slept there, sharing meals with the whaler and repaying their hospitality with gifts of potatoes and pigs.⁴⁴

Dicky Barrett had an impact by being the largest employer in the area. In 1839 his whaling station operated nine whale boats, compared to only four for Thoms and two for Jackson, making it one of the largest whaling stations anywhere in New Zealand.⁴⁵ Roughly one-third of the crew were Maori,⁴⁶ and given that whaleboats had a crew of between five and eight, around 40 Maori must have been employed at any one time. Most of these men were from the Ngamotu settlement at Te Awaiti and they dressed in European clothing, with which they were paid.⁴⁷ According to Dieffenbach, Maori were paid at the same rate as the Europeans, and were aware of what was due to them.⁴⁸

⁴³ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 50.

⁴⁴ Dieffenbach, Report to the New Zealand Company, p. 617; Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, London, 1841, p. 15.

⁴⁵ Hobbs, Diary, 20 June 1839, p. 553; Morton, p. 228.

⁴⁶ Dieffenbach, Report to the New Zealand Company, p. 614; Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, p. 15.

⁴⁷ Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native population, p. 16; E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 30.

⁴⁸ Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, p. 16.

As a result of the close relationship between European and Maori at Te Awaiti, Dieffenbach believed that 'the intermixture that has taken place between Europeans and natives, is complete. They shared in their sufferings from other tribes, and this has united them more closely together.'⁴⁹ In 1834 for example Ngai Tahu destroyed Guard's Cloudy Bay establishment, before moving against Te Awaiti. A subsequent Ngai Tahu raid in 1836 was met at Cloudy Bay and driven off by a combined force of Maori and whalers. The Te Awaiti whalers were involved in clashes between Te Ati Awa and Ngati Toa as well. In February 1838 a battle broke out at Te Awaiti between these two groups, forcing the whalers to flee with their families to the safety of a ship in the harbour. Edward Jerningham Wakefield observed that the whaler's sympathy in these disputes was influenced by their wife's tribal affiliations.

The jealousy of the native tribes, fostered by the women who cohabited with the white men, often produced the most rancorous feelings between rival parties. Those living in Cloudy Bay with the Kawhia [Ngati Toa], and those living in the Sound with the Ngatiawa, were in the constant habit of disparaging each other and each other's natives; and seemed to have imbibed a good deal of the savage enmity existing between the two tribes.⁵⁰

The whalers also had an impact on Maori outside Te Awaiti, although they were not the sole contact that local Maori had with the European world. The people of Anaho were visited occasionally by European and American ships, and its chief had certificates of good conduct from the masters of several vessels.⁵¹ However, the Te Awaiti stations were the dominant influence in the area as the focus of a trading

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 15.

⁵⁰ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 49.

⁵¹ E.M. Chaffers, *Sailing Directions*, CBPP, NZ 2 : 1844, p. 602; Dieffenbach, *New Zealand and its Native Population*, p. 13.

network extending all over the Sound. The people of Anaho traded pigs and potatoes in exchange for everything from clothing and blankets to tobacco and pipes.⁵² These trade contacts led to the spread of the English language, although it was not the major instrument of change that Morton believed it to be. According to Dieffenbach, Maori had 'made great progress in the English language [but they] do not talk it much, and the Europeans have been obliged to learn the native tongue.'⁵³ Following Morton's argument, it could be argued that the whalers were more subject to cultural change as they had to use pidgin Maori in their dealings with local Maori.

The most significant changes were felt in the economic sphere of Maori society in the Sound. Economic exchange was conducted on a new basis, at least between Maori and European, with barter taking the place of gift exchange. Gift exchange engaged the two parties involved in the transaction in an ongoing relationship based on reciprocity where the debt incurred in accepting a gift might not be paid back for some time. Barter on the other hand was less of a social than an economic relationship where the needs of both parties were satisfied immediately. The whalers also changed Maori agriculture, as Morton has argued, primarily by way of demand. The whaling stations provided a ready market for agricultural produce, and Maori responded positively to this demand in an effort to acquire European goods, raising pigs and growing potatoes, cabbages, turnips, onions and wheat specifically for

⁵² Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, p. 31; Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, p. 13.

⁵³ Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, pp. 15-16.

trade.⁵⁴ In 1839 James Crawford observed that in the Sound the 'love of agriculture and trade is now the ruling passion'⁵⁵ The increase in time, labour and land devoted to these activities must have been disruptive to some extent as Firth and Wright have argued. More land was cultivated, and the gardens at Anaho, Whekenui and Okokuri had to be fenced to protect the crops from pigs.⁵⁶

In some ways there was a blending of the old and the new. Local Maori adopted blankets as part of their dress, yet although blankets came to rival the flax mats worn previously, they did not completely replace them. Blankets and mats were worn together, often accompanied by European clothing such as trousers and coats. In the long run European clothing had less impact on Maori than blankets. Dieffenbach noted that 'the natives who at first have great desire for European dresses, throw them generally aside after a short time as they are too incommodious for them.'⁵⁷ European clothing was de rigueur for Maori oarsmen at Barrett's station, but they tended to revert to native clothing when they returned to their villages.⁵⁸

Despite these changes, local Maori were selective in what they adopted, and European visitors to the area noticed that little change had taken place to the Maori

⁵⁴ Ibid, pp. 13, 14, 16, 17; E.J. Wakefield, I, pp. 23, 24, 25; Dieffenbach, Report to the New Zealand Company, pp. 616, 617; Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, pp. 120-1; W. Wakefield, Journal, 3 November 1839, p. 629.

⁵⁵ J.C. Crawford, MS papers, Micro MS 214, Reel 2, ATL.

⁵⁶ Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, p. 14; Dieffenbach, Report to the New Zealand Company, p. 617.

⁵⁷ Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, p. 29.

⁵⁸ Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, p. 12; W. Wakefield, Journal, 22 August 1839, p. 585; Dieffenbach, Report to the New Zealand Company, p. 617; Barnicoat, Diary, 17 March 1843, p. 55.

lifestyle. Dieffenbach thought that Okokuri 'was more pure ... less spoiled by the introduction of foreign elements into their quiet and harmless existence' and the people of Moioio and Kaihinu were 'a little more in their indigenous state'⁵⁹ Those Maori living in areas peripheral to the Sound, such as D'Urville Island and Admiralty Bay, were less affected by the European presence, although they too engaged in trade with the whalers.⁶⁰

Even Maori agriculture, which had undergone some significant changes, remained unchanged in some respects. The mountainous nature of the land in the Sound continued to be the dominant factor in Maori agriculture. Potatoes were grown on steep ravines and in patches between burned tree stumps, while the flat land in the bays dotting the Sound were reserved for kumara.⁶¹ Even by 1839 the crops were tended with implements made of kahikatea and manuka.⁶²

Nor did the Maori diet change radically. Some of the new crops introduced to local Maori by Europeans pre-dated the arrival of the shore whalers. Carrots, turnips, cabbages and radishes grew wild in the Sound as a legacy of the visits by Captain Cook and other explorers. However they played only a minor role in Maori diet. Even pigs, which were available in large numbers, were not eaten regularly by Maori,

⁵⁹ Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, p. 17; Dieffenbach, Report to the New Zealand Company, p. 617.

⁶⁰ W. Wakefield, Journal, 18 August 1839, p. 584; E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 24.

⁶¹ Hobbs, Diary, 20 June 1839, p. 551; Crawford, MS papers; Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, pp. 25, 55, 58.

⁶² Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, p. 28; Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, p. 20.

but were reserved for trade.⁶³ Potatoes, fish, kumara and taro remained the staple food.⁶⁴ By the 1840s this diet was supplemented by other crops introduced by the whalers such as pumpkins and melons, and a weed, milky thistle, was boiled and eaten as a vegetable.⁶⁵ The whaling stations also provided a regular supply of whalemeat in winter. Dieffenbach observed that 'as soon as the process of cutting [the whale] was over, the natives, who had come with their canoes from the Sound, cut off large pieces of the flesh, which they carried off to feast upon.'⁶⁶

Other areas of Maori life remained unchanged. Although local Maori accepted barter as the means of material exchange with Europeans, trade did not, as Morton has argued, bring about the decay of traditional crafts. In the Sound wood carving, decoration and other traditional crafts flourished.⁶⁷ Canoes were used widely and were constructed, even at Te Awaiti, into the 1840s, although the people of Whekenui fitted out two boats to catch whales.⁶⁸ Even the traditional whare puni was retained with its small, low doorway. There was no cultural adoption and adaptation in Maori

⁶³ Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, pp. 14, 17.

⁶⁴ Ibid, I, p. 120; Dieffenbach, Report to the New Zealand Company, pp. 617, 619; W. Wakefield, Journal, 3 November 1839, p. 629.

⁶⁵ Barnicoat, Diary, 18 and 19 March 1843, p. 56.

⁶⁶ Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, p. 51.

⁶⁷ G.F. Angas, Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand, London, 1847, I, pp. 272, 278-80; G.F. Angas, The New Zealanders Illustrated, London, 1847, plates 23, 50; Barnicoat, Diary, 22 March 1843, p. 58; N.M. Taylor (ed.), The Journal of Ensign Best, Wellington, 1966, p. 256.

⁶⁸ Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, pp. 23, 35, 58; E.J. Wakefield, I, pp. 22, 23, 24, 28, 30, 34, 50; W. Wakefield, Journal, 17 August 1839, p. 583; Crawford, MS papers; Dieffenbach, Report to the New Zealand Company, p. 610; Barnicoat, Diary, 22 March and 21 April 1843, pp. 58, 66.

housing as Morton has claimed.⁶⁹

The whalers' habits had little impact on Te Ati Awa society, with one single exception. The use of tobacco became widespread among Maori of all ages. Tobacco was a common trade item. When the Tory visited the Sound in 1839, tobacco and pipes were used as gifts, to trade for fish and potatoes, and to placate Maori angered over the breaking of a tapu.⁷⁰ Alcohol made no impact whatsoever, even among those Maori employed by Barrett at Te Awaiti. Dieffenbach stated that he had 'not seen one instance of drunkenness amongst them, common as the vice is amongst the Europeans; although mixing with the latter in the boats, they do not join in their revelries, which are contrary to their taste and inclinations'⁷¹

In 1839 Te Ati Awa society in the Sound began to undergo further changes as missionaries and native teachers arrived in the region to convert local Maori to Christianity. They faced immediate opposition from the whalers. Bumby said of the Cloudy Bay whalers that 'I am persuaded, if Missionary operations were commenced here, there would be more opposition from civilised Europeans, than from the untutored barbarians.'⁷² The whalers had an ambivalent attitude towards Christianity. A letter that Barrett wrote to his brother contained references to God and

⁶⁹ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 26; Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, p. 15; Barnicoat, Diary, 21 March 1843, p. 57.

⁷⁰ Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, p. 24; E.J. Wakefield, I, pp. 23, 25, 29; W. Wakefield, Journal, 8 November 1839, p. 630.

⁷¹ Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, p. 41.

⁷² A. Barrett, p. 144.

Heaven, and Jimmy Jackson enjoyed quoting from the Bible.⁷³ However, the whalers had no qualms about working on Sundays and when Bumby and Hobbs arrived at Te Awaiti they were welcomed by only a few of the whalers. One whaler told Maori that if they listened to the missionaries they would be ruined and get no more tobacco and muskets.⁷⁴

Despite their ties to Maori women and their half-Maori children, many of the whalers retained an innate sense of European superiority. The observance of some Maori customs was not done willingly or with understanding. The whalers were victims of a muru raid as the result of the theft of a pig by a whaler, and in 1834 the sinking of the Shamrock with local Maori on board reduced the whalers to living on fern root and the lips of whales, as Maori enforced a strict tapu on the water that prevented fishing.⁷⁵ According to Edward Jerningham Wakefield, after his uncle was forced to pay for the violation of a tapu, two Te Awaiti shore whalers 'confirmed our idea that the demand of utu was a mere extortion, and were much amused at the relation of our alarm and warlike demonstration. They told us that the natives were always ready to take advantage of inexperienced visitors in this way.'⁷⁶

This attitude was apparent when many of the Te Awaiti whalers opposed the introduction of Christianity to local Maori. Some 'spoke of the New Zealanders as

⁷³ R. Barrett, Letter to his brother, 6 November 1841; E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 46.

⁷⁴ A. Barrett, p. 144.

⁷⁵ Heberley, pp. 54-6, 68-70.

⁷⁶ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 31.

being little better than the beasts that perish, and almost ridiculed the idea of their becoming Christians.⁷⁷ The reference to the beasts that perish comes from Psalm 49 of the Old Testament which sets out the fate of those who concern themselves with worldly pleasures. They are like sheep, and when they go to the grave, death feeds on them, while those who are worthy are redeemed and taken by God to himself. 'A man who has riches without understanding is like the beasts that perish.'⁷⁸ At least some of the whalers saw Maori as sub-human and not worthy of redemption.

In spite of this opposition, the new religion won many converts. This was not the result of Maori cultural or social dislocation as Wright and Binney have argued. There was no 'cultural confusion' or 'mental disorganisation' among Maori as a result of prolonged contact with Barrett and the whalers. Furthermore, Western diseases were absent from the Sound.⁷⁹ Nor were local Maori war weary. In 1839 large numbers of Te Ati Awa gathered at Okokuri and Te Awaiti to travel to Waikanae to aid their kin against Ngati Raukawa.⁸⁰ There was no systematic undermining of Maori culture or disruption of tribal society by missionaries either. When the first missionaries made a fleeting visit to the region in 1839, they found local Maori had begun the conversion process already.

This conversion was due, as Owens has argued, to the role played by native teachers

⁷⁷ A. Barrett, p. 144.

⁷⁸ The NIV Study Bible. New International Version, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1985, Psalm 49:20.

⁷⁹ Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, p. 27.

⁸⁰ W. Wakefield, Journal, 31 October 1839, p. 628.

in disseminating the new religion, and its association with literacy. The native teachers were ex-slaves who had been released through the spread of Christianity in the North. Some had spent time with the missionaries in the Bay of Islands, and they carried their knowledge of Christianity with them. By August 1839 native teachers were established at Anaho, Moioio, Kaihinu, Whekenui, Okokuri, and even at Te Awaiti.⁸¹ They taught reading and writing as part of their efforts to win converts and acquired a large following. When Crawford visited Anaho in 1839, the villagers were 'very busy sending messages to each other on slates. The art of writing had just been introduced, and the Maoris seemed to have acquired a furor for it. They wrote everywhere, on all occasions and on all substances, on slates, on paper, on leaves of flax'⁸² There were similar scenes elsewhere in the Sound, including Moioio which had little contact with the whalers at Te Awaiti.⁸³ Dieffenbach believed the most powerful lever in the introduction of Christianity was the printing of the Gospels, Catechisms and tracts in the Maori language.⁸⁴ The beginnings of a literate Maori society saw a significant change in items Maori wished to trade for, which began to include books, paper, pencils and religious writings in Maori.⁸⁵

The religious change for Maori was as significant as the economic change that preceded it. Christian Maori in the Sound marked themselves off as different. When

⁸¹ Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, pp. 13, 14, 17.

⁸² Crawford, Recollections of Travel, p. 31.

⁸³ B. Brailsford, 'Moioio Island: One of the earliest Ngai Tahu bases', Tu Tangata, II, 1981, p. 27.

⁸⁴ Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, II, p. 164.

⁸⁵ Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, p. 13; Dieffenbach, Report to the New Zealand Company, pp. 616, 617.

greeting European visitors they shook hands, and the dead were buried in coffins.⁸⁶ The chief at Anaho and his son were not tattooed as they were Christian, and they wore blankets with blue cotton to distinguish them from the rest.⁸⁷ However even Christian Maori did not abandon totally the traditional lifestyle. When John Love died in 1839, Maori erected a canoe over his grave which was edged with feathers and painted in traditional designs, and similar cases were reported into the 1840s.⁸⁸ Neither the whalers nor the missionaries were able, either intentionally or unintentionally, to undermine tapu. When the wife of the chief at Te Awaiti became ill in 1839 she was taken to a hut and became tapu, and a tapu on graves applied even in Christian communities such as Okokuri.⁸⁹

The introduction of Christianity had an effect on the whalers also as it changed the relationship between Maori and European society. As Feister has argued, any change in the relationship between cultures necessitates a change in the form of linguistic contact. For a relationship based largely on trade, pidgin Maori was an adequate form of communication. However Christianity and literacy required a different form of communication for the passing of ideas and concepts from European to Te Ati Awa society. Fluent speakers of Maori were required for this type of relationship and the new cultural mediators were the missionaries and native teachers.

⁸⁶ E.J. Wakefield, I, pp. 23, 24, 27; Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, pp. 24, 30; W. Wakefield, Journal, 18 and 22 August, 31 October and 6 November 1839, pp. 584, 585, 628, 630.

⁸⁷ Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, p. 13.

⁸⁸ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 135; Angas, Savage Life and Scenes, I, pp. 272, 278-80; Angas, The New Zealanders Illustrated, plate 23.

⁸⁹ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 67; Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, pp. 17-18.

Both Dicky Barrett and his whalers, and Queen Charlotte Sound Maori, adapted to the presence of the other in the 1830s. Local Maori underwent a process of economic change to meet the demands of a market economy. Barrett and his whalers lived in a community at Te Awaiti that was neither Maori nor European but a combination of the two. Yet neither party abandoned its cultural roots. Maori and European attitudes and behaviour were unchanged by the contact, and the Europeans retained a sense of racial superiority. Yet other changes followed that altered the lives of both Maori and the whalers. Christianity made rapid inroads amongst local Maori from 1839 on, changing their relationship with the whalers. Further changes were to result from the arrival at Te Awaiti in August 1839 of the New Zealand Company which sought to purchase Maori land. In that quest Dicky Barrett was to play a leading role, and one that had far reaching consequences for the whalers and Maori alike.