

Reflections on the Past — Early friendships between Māori and Pākehā: envisioning the future by re-envisioning the past

Susan Healy

Susan Healy is a Pākehā New Zealander of Irish, English and Cornish heritage. She is a Treaty educator. In her recent research she investigated the written evidence for tuku whenua as the traditional means of land allocation by Māori communities, part of an action research project along these (or other) lines.

In 2004, the Ecumenical Coalition for Justice asked me to prepare some Treaty resources for church groups—especially because of the Foreshore and Seabed Bill.

The first theme of this resource is called: 'Early Friendships between Māori and Pākehā'.

It can be found at www.socialjustice.org.nz

The reason for this theme is that stories are emerging from around the country of how Māori communities cared for a significant number of European individuals and families when the first came to this country. There are also more recent tauwi immigrants who also have stories of these warm, often mutually advantageous, relationships. I have found that people who have found out this sort of family history can move to a new appreciation and respect for tangata whenua.

On 'Campbell Live', TV3, Tuesday 7 July 2009 there was a moving story relating the Otago Chinese community to tangata whenua of the Hokianga.

Do you know of other similar stories? What value do you see in them?

This theme also relates to the Māori practice of 'tuku whenua' – the granting of outsiders a place on the land, for the use of the land, but not an alienation of land as in the European practice of land sales. Hapū experts have shared information about the 'tuku' of land at various Tribunal hearings. Some academics have brought evidence in support, but some notable historians have shown that they think there is insufficient written evidence to uphold the claimants' position. It has been a contentious issue for the academics.

The Waitangi Tribunal reports, the *Muriwhenua Land Report* and the *Te Tau Ihu* report, are good sources of information on 'tuku whenua' and the intentions of hapū in giving a place to tauwi on their lands.

See also:

Sir Hugh Kawharu's 2001 Hillary Lecture, on Auckland Museum website. <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com/91/events-&-lectures>

Susan Healy: 'Let's acknowledge the gift of land that became Auckland', on NZ Herald website or entering the title in Google.

Susan Healy, 'Tuku Whenua as Customary Land Allocation: Contemporary Fabrication or Historical Fact', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, June, 2009

I incorporate some of these ideas very simply into the powerpoint presentation I use in Treaty workshops. If you would like a copy of these slides just email me:

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