A History of the Ellison whanau of Otakou

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By

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Lastly, to my family; Mum, Dad and my sister Tanya, thank you so much for your ongoing support and care, I wouldn’t be the person I am today without your guidance.
Dedication

I want to dedicate this long essay to my father and the Ellison family. I believe our line of descendants have lost sight of the achievements of Raniera and Nani Ellison and their children for one reason or another and it has contributed to a loss of self confidence and direction. I hope that this work can help my family to realise just what a rich past we have and I wish for the achievements of the Ellison whanau of Otakou to motivate and instil a sense of belief within my cousins that we can be just as successful if we set our minds to it. It is up to us to continue the strong legacy that Raniera and Nani and their children have left us and pass it on to our future generations.
Introduction

The Ellisons are a leading Ngai Tahu whanau. In this dissertation I use the Ellisons to interpret and examine the Ngai Tahu experience of cross-cultural encounter from the 1830s until the early twentieth century. Specifically, I examine the extent to which the Ellison whanau and their achievements represent the shifting nature of Ngai Tahu community leadership during this time. The Ellisons represent broader changes in Ngai Tahu and Maori history at a particular historical moment. Through their story we see the impact of interracial contact during the shore-whaling era, the importance and significance of marriage and whanau to leadership, Ngai Tahu involvement and interaction with Christianity, and by the late nineteenth century the addition of education to Christianity as important and valued qualities of community and tribal leaders. As this dissertation shows education and Christianity existed alongside other important tribal modes of determining leadership and achievement. The Ellisons offer an opportunity to explore the changing meaning of leadership within the Otakou community, and help to understand the extent to which a western and Christian education redefined Ngai Tahu leadership and success in the late nineteenth century. By the early decades of the twentieth century the Ellison whanau rose as leaders of their community through their success as professionals, sportsmen, and in cultural activities, which were developed and nurtured through strong kinship ties. It is this relationship between kinship and achievement which links leadership and success closely together within this story.

Despite the economic, social and cultural shifts taking place amongst Ngai Tahu from the mid-nineteenth century, traditional foundations of leadership, such as marriage, kinship and whakapapa, remained central to the rise of the Ellisons as a family of significance amongst Ngai Tahu. Their diverse achievements require investigation, and this dissertation asks why this family was regarded as successful at a time when Maori society was undergoing great change, and, in fact, many South Island families were experiencing poverty and land loss, as Atholl Anderson, Bill Dacker and Harry Evison have demonstrated\(^1\). The Ellisons are proclaimed as a Ngai Tahu success story.

by Jane Thomson, historians Bill Dacker and John Wehiipeihana and in the Otago Settlers Museum Kai Tahu Whanui exhibition.\(^2\)

The Ellisons have been held up by some interpreters of the Ngai Tahu past as an example of what Maori could achieve if they embraced western education, while Ngai Tahu respect their achievements on the sports field and contributions to iwi politics. While the idea of success began to change somewhat in the minds of Ngai Tahu and Maori in general during the late nineteenth century, the Ellisons played important roles in both Ngai Tahu and Pakeha affairs at this time and so their success is qualified in two worlds. The Ellisons came to prominence at a time when a new western educated Maori leadership was emerging within national politics, amongst them Sir Apirana Ngata, Sir Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa) and Maui Pomare. These men were intellectuals and well versed in the Pakeha world in what is termed an era in which Maori and Pakeha lived in ‘separate worlds.’\(^3\) The Ellisons fit into this new era of Maori leadership neatly, because of the contribution they were able to make to their own iwi, by pushing for the settlement of the Ngai Tahu grievances with the government and in the way they achieved within the Pakeha world as well, in gaining university degrees and becoming professionals: skills which they used to the benefit of their community and iwi.

Ngai Tahu families like the Ellisons lived in the shadow of colonisation, as well as government policy, notably assimilation. One cannot interpret the achievements of the Ellisons, and others like them, without noting that their success was judged within the context of assimilation policy. Assimilation, or amalgamation policy, as it was originally termed, was George Grey’s way of accelerating the processes involved in European settlement of New Zealand. Alan Ward’s describes ‘amalgamation’ policies as encompassing:

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The ‘permanent welfare’ of the Maori included the abandonment by them as soon as possible of their own customs in favour of English law, and the adoption by them of such European skills as would command the respect and outweigh the prejudices of the incoming settlers. The saving of the Maori race involved the extinction of Maori culture.⁴

Maori did not accept assimilation policy completely. The Kotahitanga Movement was set up at Orakei in 1879 and lasted for twenty years as an alternative Maori parliament. The Kotahitanga enacted laws for Maori, unrecognised by the New Zealand Government, and fought hard to uphold the Treaty of Waitangi by working through the Crown officials in London. “Acceptance and compromise was seen in the development of the new form of Maori leadership embodied by the Young Maori Party… formed in 1897 by missionary-educated Maori who believed the old ways had passed and who wanted to see the fulfilment of the promised equality or treatment of Maori citizens.”⁵ This was just one form of Maori leadership that emerged during the late nineteenth century, and which the Ellisons engaged with.

Foundation member Apirana Ngata saw the future for Maori based around what he called ‘Maoritanga,’ meaning:

An emphasis on the continuing individuality of the Maori people, the maintenance of such features of Maori culture as present day circumstances will permit, the inculcation of pride in Maori history and traditions, the retention in so far as possible of old time ceremonial [and] the continuous attempt to interpret the Maori point of view to the pakeha in power.⁶

While the Ellisons, and other influential Maori of their time such as Ngata, Pomare and Hiroa, all received a valuable western education, this did not necessarily translate into assimilation. For the Ellisons, education granted them access to information and knowledge which helped them to push their cause for redress of land loss, via

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⁶ Armitage, 144.
movements such as Kotahitanga and also in the Native Land Court. So, in this sense they were not assimilationists because they refused to neglect their own customs in favour of English law and skills. While these educated Maori leaders faced substantial opposition from all corners of society, including their own people, they saw western education as the best way to work within the settler government system and attempt to stimulate policy change that would benefit their people. Success within this idea of assimilation depends on which side of the fence one stood. During the era in which Raniera and Nani Ellison and their children lived, Maori success was seen as succumbing to assimilation, adopting western ideals of health and education and encouraging more Maori to do the same. Importantly for the Ellisons, they were able to achieve on both the rugby field and as professionals, and, were accepted in both worlds.

I want to show that Ngai Tahu history, while one of overwhelming loss at the hands of the Crown and settlers, also was a story of success in the ‘new world.’ Maori made use of western education for the good of their community which draws them into a wider national Maori story centred on key themes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: religion, education and the maintenance of status. Lyndsay Head, James Belich, Ann Parsonson and Bronwyn Elsmore touch on the significance of these three themes amongst Maori society during this time. Each focuses on a specific aspect of Maori reaction to European contact and settlement; Head and Elsmore on religion and the various ways in which Maori adopted and adapted the word of God to suit their own traditional beliefs; Belich gives an overview of the key moments in New Zealand’s comparatively short history, such as, Polynesian settlement and development into Maori tribes, encounter between Maori and Europeans, and the foundation of Pakeha as New Zealanders, while in another book on the New Zealand Wars, he focuses on both inter-racial and inter-iwi conflict and the Maori resistance to European settlement in military terms; and lastly, Parsonson deals with Maori society and its continuous search for mana which is considered the main cause of warfare pre-contact and, she says that post-contact, the desire for mana led to religion taking a much greater hold within Maori society. 7 What all of these historians touch on is the

action of leaders within communities in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, mainly Maori but Pakeha too, and how their leadership impacted on society at a time when assimilation was an active process. The Ellison story fits into the historiography provided by these authors with regards to whakapapa, mana and religion.

Historians, when writing about Maori leadership in the nineteenth century focus predominantly on the substantial amount of interracial conflict in the North Island. Harry Evison and Bill Dacker have produced the most important recent works on Maori in the South Island by delving deeper into the relationships between each hapu and acknowledging the key members of each whanau and illustrating how their achievements benefited their people. However, before this, ethnographers such as Herries Beattie, T.A. Pybus and, more recently, Atholl Anderson have provided an in depth look at Maori society throughout the nineteenth century in particular and into the early twentieth century. These histories of Ngai Tahu show them to be highly mobile and also, quite violent at different points in time. I wish to elevate the Ellison whanau in particular and point out the important role they had in their community and the way in which they strove for achievement and subsequent success and leadership in both worlds. To most, they would be unknown, but the Ellisons are a whanau of significance in the Otago region and amongst Ngai Tahu because of their achievements in both Maori and Pakeha worlds at a time when most of their people were struggling amidst land loss, disease and depopulation and poverty.8

Raniera Ellison is the central figure in this story. The son of a British whaler and a Te Ati Awa mother, Raniera followed in his fathers’ footsteps as a young whaler before venturing south in search of gold in the 1860s. Fortunately, Raniera and two pals stumbled upon a large amount of gold in the Shotover River. Raniera was wise with his subsequent wealth by ensuring that he used it to ultimately benefit his people. From Central Otago, he settled at the kaika/village, on the Otago Peninsula.

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8 Dacker; Thomson; Anderson; Herries Beattie, Our Southernmost Maori (Waimate, 1954); Wehipeihana.
Raniera married Nani Weller, granddaughter of paramount chief Matenga Taiaroa and daughter of British whaler Edward Weller, in 1863. The marriage into such a prestigious local whanau ensured that Raniera, over time, gained mana whenua and eventually the respect of the local Maori, even though he was from the same part of the country as Te Rauparaha, chief destroyer of Ngai Tahu livelihood in the 1820s and 1830s. He used his wealth to build a magnificent homestead at Otakou, and from there, educate his boys at the best schools in the country, and ensure his daughters married into important whanau, even into the lower North Island, so that strong kinship ties were continued. The children of these marriages would continue to lead their people through the next generation. What this did for the greater Maori community was provide western educated Maori elites who could move in both worlds in a professional sense. For Raniera, it meant future generations would be financially stable, as well as giving his people the best chance to fight the system which had taken so much of their mana through land grabs and political manoeuvrings.

Te Maire Tau gives defines whakapapa as “genealogy” but, “in a wider sense whakapapa attempts to impose a relationship between an iwi and the natural world.”

The role of whakapapa within the Ellison whanau is important in uniting significant whanau, such as the Ellisons and the Wellers/Taiaroas. This not only brings two significant whanau together to strengthen social networks but also helps to foster further success and achievement amongst their offspring as the knowledge of their ancestors is passed on. The Ellisons were well aware of the importance of marrying into significant whanau and thus engaged in such marriages which spread further success throughout the country.

When Raniera arrived at Otakou in the 1860s, the Kareti, Taiaroa, and Potiki whanau were already well established as tangata whenua. These whanau, along with the Ellisons, formed a strong social network based on ties of kinship and marriage. These whanau played influential roles in promoting Maori issues and clearing the area for farming. Hori Kerei Taiaroa, the son of Matenga Taiaroa, was the Southern Maori Member of Parliament for nearly twenty years and worked tirelessly promoting Maori

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9 Rawiri Te Maire Tau, Nga pikituroa o Ngai Tahu The Oral Traditions of Ngai Tahu, (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2003), 33.
issues within the house but his passionate speeches were often met by deaf ears. The political standing of many Maori men from the Otakou region was felt nationally throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as they sought to redress the many grievances they had with the settler government.

Ranierea and Nani’s children married into significant whanau from all over the country. Some married into Ngai Tahu families such as the Parata, Brown, Karetai and Taiaroa whanui, while others married into important North Island families such as Te Hapuku of Ngati Kahungunu, Ropata of Ngati Raukawa, Te Karu of Te Atiawa and Boyd of Ngati Porou. The links that these marriages created enabled the Ellison whanau to contribute to other areas of Maori society outside of Otakou, Karitane and Waikanae. Their presence in these areas of society was therefore felt by many members of Maori society, not just those in their immediate communities. Maori marriage and kinship ties were important as status was derived and reinforced through marriage. “It was of particular importance to a person of rank whose place in the society demanded that he entertain lavishly or give generously if he wished to retain the continued support of his followers. The rank and affiliations of the wife would also be important in maintaining the position of the chief.”\footnote{Bruce Biggs, \textit{Maori Marriage: an essay in reconstruction} (Wellington: Reed for the Polynesian Society, 1970), 56.} The status of the Ellison whanau, present amongst their own Otakou people and Ngai Tahu generally, spread into the north island via inter-tribal marriage and each individual played significant roles in their new communities. It is also important that the daughters, not just the boys, made good marriages with men of status and mana in order to uphold their strong kinship ties. Marriage, as I demonstrate in this dissertation, helped maintain the prominence of the Ellison’s in the community as leaders.

The success of Ranierea and Nani, particularly their status as community leaders, is reflected in, and continued by their sons in the form of educational and professional success in a diverse range of fields. The achievements of their children acted to continue the family’s mana. Clearly all of the children were raised with a strong sense of obligation to their community and to Maori, and they contributed to politics and leadership via their success in law, politics, health and sport. They fit Apirana Ngata’s

\footnote{Dacker, 46.}
philosophy – to integrate and become modern but without sacrificing your culture; to live successfully within two worlds.

Raniera and Nani had twelve children who would contribute much to society in the form of educational and professional success in a diverse range of fields. Tom Ellison became one of the first Maori lawyers and had a distinguished career as a rugby footballer and administrator, captaining the New Zealand team to Australia in 1893. Edward Ellison, the youngest child, graduated as a doctor from Otago University and played a huge role in Polynesia in curing tropical diseases and changing the diet of the Polynesian people to increase life expectancy. He was a medical officer in the Chatham Islands and the Cook Islands, as well as holding the position as Director of the Division of Maori Hygiene in the Department of Health for a period. He was a Maori All Black in 1911 and in 1938, and he was awarded an O.B.E. The other boys in the family who lived beyond their thirties; Teone, Daniel and Teiwi all contributed to their own community through cultural activities; Teone and Daniel in the Maori Land Court, Daniel in the Te Kereme process and Teiwi as a surveyor in the Otago and Southland regions. While, for the girls of the family, marriage into important whanau was a key element of their success. The two girls who lived into adulthood, married into strong North Island whanau such as Ropata of Ngati Raukawa and Te Karu of Te Atiawa.

Tom, Daniel, Teiwi and Edward Ellison were all educated at Te Aute College, an Anglican Maori school for boys in the Hawkes Bay. The role of Te Aute College in educating these men, as well as significant other Maori leaders such as Sir Maui Pomare, Sir Apirana Ngata and Te Rangi Hiroa, no doubt had a significant bearing on their lives that would help to shape them into the men they became and it would also play a vital part in their rise as men of mana amongst, not just Maori, but Pakeha New Zealand wide. Maori themselves wished for their youth to learn the way of the Pakeha so that they could advance economically, militarily and socially.

Organisations such as the Young Maori Party and Maori politicians sought to redress these health problems while also showing the way to their children that a European education could be incorporated successfully into Maori life and be applied in such a way as to benefit their people. These influential Maori leaders such as the Ellisons,
Ngata, Hiroa and Pomare succeeded in their various areas of specialty at a time when the rest of the Maori population were struggling to recover from the wars and loss of lands. These factors elevate their achievements in terms of what and how they were able to benefit their people and their successes must be recognised amidst the nature of Maori life during their time.

The achievements of the Ellison whanau and other key old boys of Te Aute College must be put into the context of life in New Zealand for Maori at the time. The 1860s wars in the Waikato and the subsequent government land policies had an adverse effect on Maori throughout the country, but more significantly in the North Island. The loss of land and life led many Maori to move towards spiritual movements such as Pai Mairire, which featured prominently within the King Movement, the Parihaka community led by Te Whiti-O-Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi, and latterly Rua Kenana and Tahupotiki Wiremu Ratana. These spiritual leaders offered Maori a source of survival throughout an era of loss – as well as being an important site of resistance and a source of cultural strength and stability. It is clear from the number of prophetic movements that arose within Maori society from the 1830s, in conjunction with Maori support for the established churches, that religion was a source of strength for Maori and remains so today. Te Whiti was an uncle of Raniera, and so Raniera, in turn, was a believer in Te Whiti’s teachings. Raniera, in fact, supported Te Whiti and his followers when they were imprisoned in Dunedin during the late 1870s and early 1880s. Raniera negotiated with prison officials to allow Te Whiti to be released one day a month to conduct his payers at the Ellison homestead at Otakou, named Te Wai Pounamu. Not only was Raniera’s support spiritual but he financed the rebuilding of Parihaka after the settler government troops raped and pillaged the village in the 1870s. This bloodline connection brought Raniera into a nationally recognised phenomenon which was the passive resistance movement. He and Nani are proudly remembered by the people of Parihaka even today, as their portraits sit on the walls of the marae in southern Taranaki.

As a member of the Ellison whanau, I am an insider. I have readily available access to oral histories and family records, which allows me to gain a perspective on this

12 Elsmore, xiii.
family. Linda Tuhiwai Smith has written about the problems involved in being an insider in researching indigenous histories. She says that insiders have to deal with the consequences of what they produce, more so than outsiders. She mentions the need to be humble as an insider because, as a member of the community you are researching, you have already formed relationships which should be maintained throughout the research process. Research as an insider can also lead to ‘discoveries which contradict the image that some idealistic younger researchers hold of elders.’ I am aware that family records and oral histories may be shaped by a desire to show family members in a more positive light. Being an Ellison, I have certain ‘qualified’ rights to write the history of my whanau. However, I am also aware that in order to write Maori history, one needs to have a deep and thorough understanding of Maori culture and custom. I was brought up in a very European way by my Maori father and European mother, and had very limited contact with what can be considered Maori culture and tradition. I do not speak te reo, and it is only in the last three years that I have come to know my whakapapa. Therefore, in truth, I am extremely restricted when it comes to knowledge of my peoples’ native tongue and traditions. Woven tightly within Maori histories are their traditional oral histories passed down through generations via waiata and folklore. I am uncertain as to what extent I have missed out on learning these traditions due to my upbringing in which I received very little education in the Maori way of life. I, therefore have reservations about my right to write such a history. Nonetheless, I have continued on with my research and writing because I have a real passion for these family members who have passed before us and just how monumental their achievements were during their time and I want these to be remembered and understood in their context by, not just my own whanau, but other Maori and, hopefully, other New Zealanders. I hope that this will go a small way to help reinterpret colonial history through the lens of the family within this country, but more importantly to me, it helps to reaffirm the position members of my whanau hold within New Zealand history.

The Ellison whanau of Otakou united the two worlds (Maori and Pakeha) neatly, taking the best of both and contributing to both in many ways. In a sense, they ‘assimilated’ towards western ideals of health, education and religion, but at the same

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time they maintained their strong cultural roots through traditional Maori marriages with important whanau from all over New Zealand, and always worked towards finding better relations with Pakeha (via political intentions) and asserting Maori rights in regards to the Treaty and fighting hard to ensure their people received adequate compensation for past land transactions through Te Kereme.
Chapter 1: Whaling and Inter-racial Marriage:

The Beginning - Tom Ellison and Edward Weller

Maori first came into sustained contact with Europeans as a result of the whaling and sealing industries from the late eighteenth century. Whalers wanted access to land to set up their stations and to enable access to the basic necessities needed for survival. For Maori, they needed some kind of utu or reciprocity clause in the relationship because their land was occupied. Maori were eager to invite whalers onto their land so that they could witness the benefits of western technology, and slowly over time the two developed a kind of trading system to finance the right to co-exist. This meant new western technologies for Maori, and for the Europeans, it meant access to land and resources, and in some instances Maori chiefs encouraged sexual and affective relationships between Maori women and whalers in order to encourage them to stay for a longer period. These relationships paved the way for the beginnings of interracial marriage in New Zealand, and the establishment of a mixed descent population, particularly in Ngai Tahu territory. It was in this context of early trade that Thomas Ellison and Edward Weller established themselves amongst Maori communities in order to conduct their business. As whalers, Ellison and Weller needed to have an amicable relationship with local Maori to ensure their safety and access to resources such as land and the sea.

Despite his premature death, Thomas Ellison would leave an indelible mark on New Zealand, courtesy of his relationship with a local Maori woman, Te Ikairaua. According to family tradition, Tom ran away from home as a young man, boarding the Caroline which departed from London on November 20, 1828. The Caroline reached Sydney on 14 March 1829, remaining in port for three months before departing for the South Seas. The Caroline was involved in whaling around New Zealand from about June 1833 to 1839, spending most of this time in the Cook Strait and Marlborough (Queen Charlotte Sounds) areas. Tom took Te Ikairaua to be his wife around September 1835 following the custom of the time. Te Ikairaua was the daughter of Taranaki chief Whati. Tom and Te Ikairaua had their first child, Thomas, on 9 July 1836 at Queen Charlotte Sound.\(^{14}\)

\(^{14}\) Ellison family records: Sean Ellison, notes on Thomas Ellison and Te Ikairaua.
The *Caroline* shifted its interests to the waters around Kapiti Island in 1837 and 'Ika' gave birth to their second child on 9 February, 1838 at Korohiwa, a Maori village opposite Mana Island. Tom became manager of a whaling establishment on Mana Island around the time of the birth of their second child and the family lived at Korohiwa during this time. A third child was born on 15 November 1839 at Korohiwa – named Raniera.\(^\text{15}\) E.J. Wakefield describes Korohiwa in *Adventure in New Zealand*. On arriving at the settlement on 18 June, 1840, he recorded in his journal:

> The leader of a whaling station established at this place had been recently drowned in attempting to land through a heavy surf on the neighbouring coast. The natives had assembled from Mana and other places near to scramble for the property of the defunct, according to a very common native custom and Rangihaeata had, as usual, come in for the Lions share.\(^\text{16}\)

The leader of this whaling station was Thomas Ellison. Ellison is an integral part of this story of Ngai Tahu intermarriage and achievement within both Maori and Pakeha domains because his move to New Zealand in search of employment and an adventure ends in the birth of one of Te Ati Awa’s success stories: Raniera Ellison.

Edward Weller (1814-1893) was the second youngest of six children born to Joseph Weller and Mary Brooks. The family lived in Folkestone, England, before moving to Sydney in 1830. Weller came to Otakou in 1831 with the hope of establishing a profitable whaling venture with his brother Joseph. Sperm whales were the prime targets of whalers in Australia and New Zealand around the turn of the nineteenth century. At the end of the 1820s, the numbers of sperm whales reduced and due to their scarcity in the South Pacific, English tariffs were reduced and the price of whale oil rose, causing the introduction of bay-whaling in New Zealand. There were three types of bay-whaling in New Zealand at this time, each with its advantages and

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\(^{15}\) Ibid.

Figure 1 - Edward Weller

Personal Collection of Sean Ellison
disadvantages. One began with the ship cruising along the coast and acting immediately upon sight of a group of whales. Another type involved the ship remaining in the harbour while other smaller boats would search for whales and bring them back to the harbour where they would be stripped of their blubber and the oil obtained. The final type of bay-whaling involved the establishment of a station on land which was used to abstract the oil from the blubber once smaller boats had returned with captured whales. A shore station had no need for the constant attendance of a large, expensive whaling ship, if the settlement was equipped with a store for provisions and small vessels regularly provided supplies and loaded its cargo of oil. As whale numbers declined, shore station whaleboats would travel longer distances in what was an extremely labour-intensive and dangerous business. The Wellers would take these problems into consideration when setting up their station at Otakou.

With New Zealand waters being home to more Southern Right whales than anywhere else, and with the recently increased value of their oil, Sydney traders began to invest in whaling ventures along New Zealand’s coastline in the late 1820s. Trade in New Zealand at this time was rather fruitful between the various visitors to the country as well as the rich resources that the previously untapped land provided. The Weller’s were well aware of these natural resources and with the help of a working relationship with local Maori, they tried to deal in as many of the resources offered in Otago and New Zealand’s South Island as possible.

During the 1820s, sealers became involved in trading flax, tattooed heads, potatoes, hogs and timber. If these were traded at the right time they could be extremely profitable. Shore whaling created more interest in this trade, as well as reliable employment for sealers. The first shore whaling stations at Preservation Inlet and Tory Channel began in 1829. During the next ten years stations sprung up along the east coast. In Otago and Southland, during this time, fourteen stations conducted whaling.

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18 Murray, 60-63.

19 Olissen, quoted in Murray, The Wellermen, 60.
The Wellers were acutely aware of the value of native Maori resources and made use of their time at Otakou by gaining such tools to use for trading in Australia and England, where they would have a large bargaining price, being such a unique find. The real boom in flax importing began in the late 1820s, with many merchants from Sydney and Hobart venturing to New Zealand for two decades. Mats, baskets, cloaks and skirts made from the wide variety of different flax plants which was also the main source of material for shipping ropes. Flax was also a key ingredient in mattresses which were a sort after trading tool for a time. Potatoes were also a profitable export from Otakou for the Wellers, where on occasion they would send 50 to 60 tons at a time.\textsuperscript{20} Dried and salted fish were also items tried as exporting goods but found limited success. The first cargo sent to Sydney from the Wellers base at Otakou was almost entirely loaded with timber and were sold for a good profit. A trade also existed in the export of smoke-cured tattooed Maori heads. The most valuable were those of prominent Maori chiefs, who had identifiable and elaborate facial moko.\textsuperscript{21} The Weller’s:

acted as land agents, buying from the Maori on their own behalf as well as for absentee speculators in New South Wales. To the many visiting ships they supplied fresh meat – pork, goatmeat, beef, mutton and chicken – as well as potatoes and green vegetables, and a wide range of stores, including clothes… In short, the Weller establishment at Otago was then one of the most important European settlements in the country and, in the 1830s, there can only have been two or three that were any larger.\textsuperscript{22}

The presence of the Wellers at Otakou was significant, not only for their whaling and money-making ventures, but their settlement enforced the need for typical community oriented practices. About 1836 they brought from Sydney their own doctor, Joseph Crocome. And in the 1840s, when Octavius Harwood had superseded the Wellers,

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\textsuperscript{20} Murray, 73.
\textsuperscript{21} Murray, 72-6.
\textsuperscript{22} Peter Entwistle, \textit{ODT Historical Biography Collection: Edward Weller 1814-1893}, Series III, 28.
there was even a tiny school at the settlement for the children of the whalers and Ngai Tahu women.\textsuperscript{23}

Like Thomas Ellison, Weller entered into a relationship with a Maori woman of high rank. Edward Weller had a relationship with Nikuru Taiaroa, daughter of Otakou Chief Matenga Taiaroa. It was an arrangement that strengthened the economic and social relationship between local Maori and the European whalers at Otakou.\textsuperscript{24} It was customary for a Maori chief to gift one of his daughters to a newcomer man of status so as to maintain continued contact between the two races. Typically, the newcomer involved was someone of note and held wealth and status in the Pakeha world, and who could add to a chief’s status and mana. These exchanges were aimed at securing more western technologies and resources for the local Maori who were eager to gain as much information about this unknown Pakeha world as they could, so as to outwit their counterparts in the quest for mana and power. Edward Weller was one of these men.

Whaling stations drew in the local Maori community to their economic imperatives. Not only did they awaken Maori to the possibilities of trade, but:

\begin{quote}
While the stations were economic units engaged in the capture of whales and the production of oil, they were also social spaces where male newcomers came into contact with Ngai Tahu women and entered into interracial relationships and the whaling enterprise and whalers had a gendered impact on the social and spatial dynamics of Maori communities.\textsuperscript{25}
\end{quote}

Whalers built their stations on the land within Maori settlements and because of their necessities for living arrangements, the subsequently built up the infrastructure of the area by constructing landing sites, boats, houses and gardens. Shore-whaling stations brought manpower that were only infrequent occupiers of the land they existed on.

\textsuperscript{23} Entwisle, 28.
\textsuperscript{24} Ellison family records: Sean Ellison, notes on Thomas Ellison and Te Ikairaua.
\textsuperscript{25} Wanhalla, 807.
However, it was these stations that had a marked impact on Ngai Tahu society, as many men employed in the whaling trade ended up taking on a Maori wife.  

Interracial marriage has been an important part of the make up of Ngai Tahu since the 1790s, when European contact began with sealers stationed on islands just off the coast. Shore whaling became the dominant form of contact through 1829 to 1850, providing ‘contact zones’ where Ngai Tahu were able to interact with Pakeha for the first time. Relationships were built around economic and technological needs which helped to foster further trading between Maori and Europeans and subsequently these Maori goods were traded between Pakeha hands. The relationships and marriages that resulted in these sexual exchanges were to change the future of the Ngai Tahu tribe in particular. Ngai Tahu have been termed the ‘white tribe’ by many commentators because of their fair skinned appearance, and are seen to have adopted western ideals and ways of living, which is linked to financial success as a result. Raniera Ellison and Nani Weller were born as a result of interracial relationships and, in time, their marriage would bring together two people well-versed in their traditional oral histories but also well aware of the need to be educated in the European way. The coming together of these two, their traditional beliefs and ideals coupled with their knowledge of the Pakeha dominated world they now existed within, would create a new western and Christian educated Maori offspring, similarly educated within their own traditional Maori belief systems, who would emerge as new leaders of their Maori communities in the early twentieth century.

The Otakou station was set up in a densely populated Maori settlement, which caused some disharmony at times between local Maori and whalers. Shortly after Edward reached Otakou and began to establish himself and set up living quarters, he was captured by a group of local Maori whilst traveling alone. He was taken through thick bush until he reached a native village.

Edward thought he was to be killed, until an older man appeared and took charge of the proceedings. He spoke a form of English, and Edward realised

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26 Wanalla, 807.
with relief that he was one of the premier chiefs of the district. He had sent his men to capture Edward and now he sought a ransom. The Chief, Taiaroa, thought that this was the easiest and quickest way to obtain sheep, cattle and goats, but, in the long term, he wanted trade. 29

It would take years of trade between the Wellers and chief Taiaroa before a sense of trust developed between the two parties. It was this trust that ensured their relative safety during their time at Otakou. However, the contact period was a time of conflict, not only between Maori and Pakeha but also between different Maori iwi as they looked to assert their mana and affirm their access to these new agents of trade.

New Zealand experienced many conflicts throughout intercultural contact. In the far north, where contact between European sealers and whalers and Maori was also prevalent, Maori became entangled in a battle to gain rights to trade with these new inhabitants. Maori liked the power of muskets and once Nga Puhi chief Hongi Hika gained a large amount of guns and ammunition from a local European trader, he tore through many tribes at the top of the north island, killing many hundreds of Maori and destroying many hapu as a result. Subsequently, a kind of arms race developed amongst Maori in the north island to equip themselves against such a threat.

The 1820s and 30s was a turbulent time in New Zealand. Banks Peninsula was home to inter-hapu fighting between the families based from around the area. The battles in the Canterbury region became known as the Kaihaanga or 'Eat Relations' war. Te Rauparaha launched his assault on Te Wai Pounamu in the late 1820s in search of greenstone, Ngai Tahu, at last were written into the pages of north island history. Te Rauparaha saw access to Te Wai Pounamu as his chance to secure as much greenstone as he could, subsequently increasing his mana. In the process, he killed and destroyed many south island Maori in Marlborough, Nelson and the West Coast before setting off on his quest to trade greenstone with the Ngai Tahu people. Te

Rauparaha led several taua into Ngai Tahu territory, which resulted in memorable battles at Kaikoura, Kaiapoi and Akaroa, where many Ngai Tahu were killed.\(^{30}\)

During 1832-1834, when Te Rauparaha was commanding his men on raids throughout the south island, two key southern Maori chiefs Te Whatakapuka and Matenga Taiaora of Otakou united to protect themselves against further troubles. Te Whatakapuka was well aware of Te Rauparaha’s advantage in using muskets as his main battle weapon and so conducted trade with local whaler Peter Williams in order to arm himself and his men. Te Whatakapuka and his war party were able to push Te Rauparaha back past Cook Strait, with the help of Taiaora.\(^{31}\)

Given the conflict between Te Rauparaha, his allies (which included Te Ati Awa) and Ngai Tahu, one can understand the conjecture surrounding Raniera (Te Ati Awa) and his relationship with Nani (Ngai Tahu). It was these links that Raniera had to Ngati Toa which made the Taiaora whanau initially skeptical about his relationship with Nani. However, Nani felt very strongly for Raniera and against the wishes of her whanau, the pair eloped for a time before the marriage was accepted. Raniera’s deeds spoke for him in regards to how the Taiaora whanau viewed him. His deeds as a swimmer, when he saved the pilot boat crew from Otago Harbour, as well as swimming the Shotover River and his gold conquest, all helped to redeem his character in the eyes of the Taiaora whanau. For Raniera, the marriage meant that he could eventually be accepted into his new community and he would therefore be allowed access to land to farm and ideally prosper as a result. Marriage into the Taiaora whanau assured him the protection of the Otakou people and, in time, his deeds and character led the people of the ‘Kaik’ to treat Raniera as one of their own.

His marriage into Ngai Tahu placed certain responsibilities into his care, such as maintaining the land, upholding the status and mana of his wife’s ancestry and, down


\(^{31}\) Murray, 81.
the track, he would play a key role in redressing the land grievances of the Otakou people. As this shows, making a good marriage, for both Raniera and Nani, was essential to survival and economic success.

**Contextualizing Raniera and Nani**

Raniera and Nani married on August 28, 1863, uniting two significant whānau and strengthening their economic and social networks. Raniera Ellison and Nani Weller were part of the first generation of mixed descent children born in New Zealand, and actively sought to take the best of both worlds and incorporate them as one so that their children could move actively between both worlds and provide the best upbringing for their future generations. They would bring up their children with a western and Christian education, and use it to benefit their iwi. Vitally important in their lives was their links to Maori society, and a part of this is the need to maintain status through good marriages and the kinship ties they generated.

Raniera Erihana was born November 15, 1839 at Korohiwa (near present day Porirua), Wellington. He was the third child of Thomas Ellison, whaler, and Te Ikairaua, of Te Atiawa, Ngati Mutunga and Ngati Tama iwi. Te Ikairaua’s whānau moved to Wellington along with Te Rauparaha and Ngati Toa and took mana whenua in the area. Tom died before Raniera was old enough to even crawl and so he was raised by his mother and her whānau. Waikanae was one of the allotments of land the whanau owned and Raniera acquired that land because both his elder brother and father drowned whilst embarking on their profitable whaling venture.\(^{32}\)

As a young man, Raniera pursued his father’s occupation as a whaler in Otakou and Waikouaiti and achieved a certain amount of success. In 1861, Raniera went in search of gold. He gravitated towards Otakou due to the presence of Maori and worked for a time on the Pilot Boat at Otago Heads which was responsible for bringing in ships brimming with settlers. As the coxswain, Raniera twice saved the eight crew members on board when it overturned in rough seas. Renowned as a strong swimmer, he swam the heavy current of the Shotover River in Queenstown, in search of gold.

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Raniera and his friends Hakaraia Haereroa and Henare Patu Kopa were gold seeking in a wild region where the swiftly flowing Shotover River is shut in by precipitous jagged rock walls. The trio came across a party of miners who had found some success working in a secluded ravine. On the opposite side of the river was a small sandy beach flanked by cliffs which looked seemingly inaccessible. Raniera, Hakaraia and Henare managed to swim to safety on the opposite side of the river but Raniera’s dog was swept downstream. Raniera set out after his dog and his humanity was rewarded when he saw gold particles in his dog’s fur. He and his companions went on to mine 300 ounces (11 kgs) of gold by nightfall. This claim became one of the richest in New Zealand and is known as the Maori Point claim.\(^{33}\) Raniera’s wealth was built upon this finding and it played a vital role in his achievements and ensured his sons received a western education. It was this access to wealth and resources, aided by a western education and desire for achievement, which made the Ellisons different to so many other Ngai Tahu and Maori whanau in general.

**Making a good marriage**

Raniera met Nani Weller during his time working on the pilot boat. Nani was born in 1840, and was the daughter of Nikuru Taiaroa and Edward Weller and the granddaughter of Matenga Taiaroa. Taiaroa was a leading chief in the resistance against Te Rauparaha’s raids on the South Island and also in land settlements, while his whanau were to play a key role in Ngai Tahu affairs the future.\(^{34}\) Nikuru died giving birth to Nani and like Raniera, she was raised by her whanau, in her case by her grandfather Taiaroa.\(^{35}\) Edward Weller had returned to Sydney in 1840 and would never see Otakou again in his life. While Edward was to leave a family at Otakou, he would remarry in New South Wales a few years later and start a new family. One can only presume the impact that Otakou had on him. He never spoke of his New Zealand family to those close to him in New South Wales. It was only once his grandson, Tom Ellison, visited him in 1888 that his family in Maitland knew of their Maori relatives.

\(^{33}\) Edward Ellison, interview by the author, Otakou, Dunedin, New Zealand, 18 May 2007; Ellison whanau Records: Sean Ellison.

\(^{34}\) Dacker, 10-40.

\(^{35}\) Edward Ellison.
Raniera travelled back to Dunedin after he struck gold, wanting to marry Nani. Nani’s whanau did not agree to their relationship because of his tribal links, as Te Ati Awa were allies with Te Rauparaha’s Ngati Toa.\textsuperscript{36} The pair eloped and married in Dunedin at St. Paul’s Church on August 28, 1863.\textsuperscript{37} Nani was clearly a strong-minded and determined woman to follow through with the marriage, even though her whanau were opposed to it. The Otakou community took some time, but they eventually warmed to Raniera as word spread of his likeable character and amazing feats as a swimmer. So, in time, the marriage was accepted and Raniera became a valued member of Otakou and Waikouaiti communities. They lived on Nani’s land at the Kaik on the Otago Peninsula, which she received from her grandfather once they were received into the community. Nani and Raniera lived in a community alongside the Karetaia, Taiaroa, and Potiki whanau who, along with the Ellisons, formed a strong social network based on ties of kinship and marriage. These whanau played influential roles in promoting Maori issues and clearing the area for farming. Hori Kerei Taiaroa, the son of Matenga Taiaroa, was the Southern Maori Member of Parliament for nearly twenty years and worked tirelessly promoting Maori issues within the house but his passionate speeches were often met by deaf ears.\textsuperscript{38}

Nani also owned land at Waikouaiti. As the granddaughter of Matenga Taiaroa and the grand-niece of Hone Karetaia, Nani was of high-born status. Raniera’s gold strike allowed him to look after his whanau financially. Coupled with Nani’s whakapapa and access to land, the pair had considerable mana. Raniera’s mana was strengthened when he brought a tohunga to Otakou when Nani was very sick with a Maori spiritual illness. Once the local chiefs had agreed on it, Piripi Te Kohe lifted the tapu from these places so that current and future generations of Maori would not suffer from its spiritual power. For Raniera, it was about caring for his people, as well as his wife. Te Kohe was also asked to lift the tapu in Murihiku and in South Canterbury. Raniera’s initiative had been a blessing to the entire region and he was remembered for this foresight. Even though he was not a man of Ngai Tahu descent, he held a large amount of respect amongst his people.\textsuperscript{39} This respect was derived in part from his

\textsuperscript{36} Dacker, 10-11.
\textsuperscript{37} St Paul’s Cathedral (Dunedin, NZ.) \textit{Dunedin, New Zealand, St Paul’s Church: Anglican marriage registers}, Vol. 1, 1852-65, 49.
\textsuperscript{38} Dacker, 46.
\textsuperscript{39} Edward Ellison: Interview.
Figure 3 - Nani Erihana (nee Weller)

Personal Collection of Sean Ellison
marriage, his wife’s status, as well as his actions because leadership in Maori society is both ascribed and earned through deeds. With his father dying when he was young, Raniera was brought up by his mothers’ whanau which was steeped in Maoritanga and Maori was his first language. He held such a command of both languages that he spoke on Nani’s behalf during the 1868 Native Land Court hearings, while both featured in land claims in that same year. While he was not educated in a western sense, literacy and tribal knowledge was highly valued.

Raniera and Nani had twelve children who would contribute much to society in the form of educational and professional success in a diverse range of fields. All married into significant whanau across the country. The links that these marriages created enabled the Ellison whanau to provide leadership in Maori society outside of the settlements of Otakou, Karitane and Waikanae. The marriages of the Ellison children prove that Maori marriage and kinship ties were important to the functioning of communities as status was derived and reinforced through marriage. “It was of particular importance to a person of rank whose place in the society demanded that he entertain lavishly or give generously if he wished to retain the continued support of his followers. The rank and affiliations of the wife would also be important in maintaining the position of the chief.” Teone (John) Ellison’s second marriage was to Hera Kore Parata (Ngai Tahu), the second daughter of Tame Parata (politician) and Peti Hurene Brown, the daughter of a Foveaux Strait chief. Tom Ellison married Ethel May Howell, the daughter of John Howell, a British whaler and master mariner and Caroline Brown, who was the sister of Peti Hurene Brown. Teiwi Ellison married Olivia Karetai, the youngest child of Timoti and Hariata Karetai of Otakou (Ngai Tahu). While Edward Ellison’s first wife was Tini Taiaroa, the daughter of Jack Taiaroa (first cousin), a prominent Ngai Tahu leader and member of the 1888-89 Natives rugby team with Edward’s brother Tom.

Raniera and Nani’s children also married into North Island whanau. Teone Ellison’s first marriage was to Ngapera Wi Parata of Ngati Toa. Ngapera was the daughter of

40 Native Land Court South Island Minute Book, 15 May 1868.
41 Herries Beattie, “Maori genealogy papers and papers relating to South Island Maori”, Beattie Papers, Misc-MS-0429, Hocken Collections.
42 Biggs, 56.
43 Eva Wilson, Hakori Ko Te Iwi: the story of Captain Howell and his family, (Invercargill: Orepuki, 1976), 69.
This photo is of the Ellison whanau in about 1868. Raniera is seated at left and Nani is seated at right. Teope is sitting on Raniera’s lap, while Tamati (Tom) is being nursed by Nani. What we can note from this photo is that, particularly for a Maori family in the 1860s, they are well dressed and their appearance is very tidy. It is significant that the whanau had the finances to pose for this photo, which most likely would have been expensive at the time. Also of note is the fact that it is taken outside and not in a studio, which leads one to believe the photographer travelled to meet the Ellison’s to take the photo. This is a truly historical document that allows one to understand their status and position within Maori society at the time. (Personal Collection of Sean Ellison)
Wiremu Parata who held a substantial amount of land in Waikanae and the Kapiti region, which was succeeded to by Ngapera and Teone’s children – an important asset to hand on to one’s offspring. Their marriage was arranged following a long sequence of events. Hemi Matenga, brother of Wiremu Parata and his wife Huria, formally asked the Taiaroa family if young Teone could live with them during holidays at Whakapuaka. This continued throughout Teone’s life and a bond was formed with Hemi and Huria, which led to his arranged marriage with Ngapera, who was the niece of Hemi and Huria Matenga. Wiremu Parata arranged for his daughters to be married within the Taiaroa family to ensure a connection with the Taiaroa whakapapa.44

Daniel Ellison married Mepere Makuaiterangi (Maku), great granddaughter of the chief Te Hapuku, of the Heretaunga Ngati Kahungunu. As a young child Maku was promised to a Waikato chief, but due to some unknown circumstances, Maku was given to Daniel Ellison. Te Hapuku was influential in the founding of Te Aute College. He was part of a Maori initiative in the foundation of the school, as he was keen to have a school within the area so that the young men of his iwi could learn European skills. In the end, the blocks of land on which the school was built were decided in accordance with Governor George Grey, Reverend Samuel Williams and Te Hapuku.45 It is somewhat of a coincidence that Daniel would marry into the whanau of the chief who provided land for the very institution in which Daniel and his brothers received their all important education from.

Mary Hineiwhariua Ellison married Teoti Ropata of Ngati Raukawa and they lived at Waikanae. Hineiwhariua died at the young age of 37 and their six children were brought up by Raniera and Nani at their home Te Waipounamu at Otakou. Family records are unsure of what happened to Teoti Ropata and other than what is provided, little is known about his whanau.

Hana Nikuru Ellison married Pononga Tamihana Te Karu of Ngati Mutunga, Ngati Rahiri and Te Atiawa. Son of Tamihana Te Karu, Pononga was born in the Taranaki. His mother was Ngahiwi Ingoingo Rakapa Te Puke (Parata), of Nga Rahiri and

45 Wehipeihana, 23.
Manukrohi. Meanwhile Edward’s second marriage was to Mary Boyd of Ngati Porou. Boyd was the daughter of a Scotsman, George Gillespie Boyd, and his wife Te Pare Pikake Boyd (Huhihu) of Ngati Porou. George emigrated to New Zealand in 1864 and lived in the Wairoa area.

As one can see, the status of the Ellison whanau, present amongst Ngai Tahu, spread into the North Island and all played significant roles in their new communities. Marriage was the key to maintain the success of the family and helped retain their prominence in the community as leaders.
Chapter 2: Interpreting Success

The Ellison whanau are claimed by many historical commentators as one of Ngai Tahu’s success stories. Bill Dacker refers to the Ellisons numerous times in his book *The Pain and the Love*, and at all times their success is well documented. In a prelude to mentioning the Taiao, Ellison and Parata families, Dacker says, “The history of three Otago families with a greater area of land available to them shows what might have been more widely achieved. In modernization and education, they attempted to lead by example.” Dacker goes on to say, “The buoyancy of these years (in the late nineteenth century) was also due, in part, to the academic and sporting successes of the Taiao, Ellison and Parata families. They had shown that Maori could compete effectively with Europeans, given resources and education.” The family also features in the newly updated Ka Tahu exhibition at the Otago Settlers Museum as a success story within an overwhelming narrative of tribal losses as a result of the process of colonization. So the question is, why have the Ellison’s been judged as “successful”? On what basis do historians and commentators make these claims? This chapter explores these questions, by examining the basis of “success” in the world of mainstream New Zealand, particularly Christianity, education and sport; achievements in these fields highly valued by Maori and Pakeha parents, but often for very different reasons. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century a new basis of leadership was emerging in Maori society, drawing upon Christianity, education and literacy: the Ellison family represents these shifts in leadership.

The success of Maori families throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries cannot be judged without understanding assimilation policy. Maori were encouraged to abandon their native customs and adopt European skills and be governed by their law. Assimilation played some role within the Ellison whanau, with Raniera sending his boys to prestigious schools such as Otago Boys High School (Teone) and Te Aute College (Tom, Daniel and Edward). Raniera saw these schools as vital to providing his boys with the right education and tools to survive and prosper in the Pakeha world. Raniera was well aware that his boys needed a thorough understanding of the

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46 Dacker, 79.
47 Dacker, 90.
European professional system so that they could enact some change for their people. It was with some foresight that Raniera sent his sons to such schools. What made the Ellisons so significant is that they were able to adopt European ideals, in the educational and professional sense, and use them to benefit their people.

Maori leaders during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, such as Apirana Ngata, Maui Pomare, Peter Buck and James Carroll fit the same mould as the Ellisons in that they used western education in order to advance the standards and conditions of their people. While some of these leaders encouraged the rejection of Maori traditions more than others, they were all advocates for the betterment of the Maori race. Maori poverty and hygiene were major areas of concern for Maori leaders such as Apirana Ngata and members of the Young Maori Party whose desire was to ameliorate the Maori race. Many Maori found it extremely difficult to reject the ways of their forbears and saw it as an indictment in their own culture and people. Generally, Pakeha saw Maori as uncivilised and believed their traditions to be holding them back from becoming ‘honourary whites.’ Many Pakeha believed it was necessary for Maori to totally reject their barbaric culture and way of life in order to benefit their health and living conditions.

For Maori, achievements within the Pakeha world were highly important, as this was the predominant culture within New Zealand around the end of the nineteenth century. Traditionally, one’s right to success in the Maori world is measured by knowledge, specifically knowledge of whakapapa, waiata and oral traditions. If you had a vast knowledge of your whakapapa and family history, as well as the history of your people, whanau, hapu or iwi, the mantle of kaumatua was often bestowed upon your head. A kaumatua is also a person of respected age within a hapu or iwi.

For the Ellison whanau, being the children of mixed descent parents, these worlds of Maori and Pakeha were continually crossed. Raniera ensured his children gained a western education so that they could contribute to their people within the Maori world. Edward Pohau Ellison earned a medical degree from the University of Otago, and was able to improve the health of his people and create a greater awareness amongst Maori about hygiene and causes of disease. Not only were the Ellison children successful within the Pakeha world in rugby, law, medicine, politics and
social circles, but they were able to contribute greatly to their own people in much the same areas but also Ngai Tahu political causes such as Te Kerene. Tom and Edward were role models for young Maori throughout New Zealand, as they showed that it was possible to be of mixed decent and to achieve lofty heights on the sporting fields, in the professions and within cultural pursuits. A lot of their success must be attributed to the fine education they received at Te Aute College in southern Hawke’s Bay.

At the same time as the Ellisons were making a name for themselves as a prominent Ngai Tahu whanau, other Ngai Tahu were achieving within the same fields. Their close relatives, the Taiaroa whanau, also had some success at crossing between worlds and achieving within both. Hori Kerei Taiaroa and his son, Jack, are the best examples of this. Hori Kerei Taiaroa, the son of paramount Otakou chief Matenga Taiaroa, was heavily involved in Maori politics from around 1862 after his fathers’ speech shortly before his death laid out a process which he hoped would continue after he passed. Matenga Taiaroa wanted Ngai Tahu to continue to fight to ensure the promises about land purchases in the 1840s made by government officials would carried out. He was elected into the House of Representatives in 1871, and served in numerous areas of politics relating to the welfare of the Maori people. “He was a well educated, fully literate, bi-lingual man able to stride the divide, effortlessly, between Maori and Pakeha society.” While H.K. was not taught at one of the traditional Maori boys schools, he received an education from a European Mission teacher from the Wesleyan church at Otakou. This strong grounding in the Pakeha world had an immense affect on H.K. and was significant in helping him to achieve within both the Pakeha and Maori worlds.

Jack (or John) Taiaroa was a pioneering Maori rugby player and his skill and athletic prowess paved the way for the attacking style of rugby we come to expect from Maori rugby players and teams today. He was a cousin to Raniera and Nani’s children and introduced Tom Ellison to the game of rugby at the Kaik. Jack was a prominent member of the 1884 New Zealand representative team and a halfback, known for his dashing bursts. He was unable to join his cousins Riki Taiaroa and Tom Ellison on the

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48 As mentioned in the next chapter on ‘Success in the Maori world’
49 Potiki, 6.
1888–89 New Zealand Natives Tour of the UK due to his University commitments. He was an outstanding athlete, setting a national long jump record and representing Hawke’s Bay at cricket for eight seasons.\(^{50}\) He was a solicitor after beginning his professional career working at a law office. He therefore fits into the mould of double achiever, both as an athlete and rugby player and as a professional, much like the other significant members of the Ellison and Tairaroa families. Jack was educated at one of New Zealand’s oldest boys’ schools, Otago Boys’ High School. It was here he learned to play rugby and where he was able to excel initially as an athlete.

The Tairaroa family, much like the Ellisons, achieved within both Maori and Pakeha worlds. Hori Kerei Tairaroa spent the majority of his life working within the Pakeha system in order to have the rights of his Ngai Tahu people upheld by the government. “In Parliament Tairaroa spoke on a wide range of issues, particularly those affecting Maori, but he made the Ngai Tahu claims his main business.”\(^{51}\) H.K. Tairaroa put the issues of Maori sovereignty and rights on the map via his passion for finding a final solution for his peoples’ land claims. The Ellisons and the Tairaroas were a part of the revolutionary movement in Ngai Tahu leadership in the nineteenth century. These new leaders became notable within both the Pakeha and Maori worlds of their time and their ultimate aim was to secure the respect and recognition their people deserved as equal treaty partners.

Tom Ellison vies with Jack Tairaroa for the title of first Maori lawyer.\(^{52}\) It is difficult to ascertain who exactly received the mantle first, but their status as Ngai Tahu cousins points to the fact that their iwi led the way for Maori in the European professions in New Zealand. Nonetheless, Tom began work as a solicitor in 1891 and was admitted to the bar in 1902. During this time he worked for the firm Brandon Hislop and Johnston.\(^{53}\) Tom’s success within the Pakeha world is evident with him owning one of the first motor cars in Wellington and he would frequently be seen driving to and from his home in Eastbourne in to work each day. As a lawyer, he


\(^{52}\) Dacker, 80.

worked towards finding a solution to Ngai Tahu land grievances and stood three times unsuccessfully for the Southern Maori electorate. His education at Te Aute, coupled with his strongly traditional Maori upbringing formed his understanding of the world in which he lived and knew that he had to work within the Pakeha system in order to create political change for his people and help them out of their poverty as a result of their substantial land loss.

Ellison came from a small settlement, would progress through Te Aute College, become a lawyer and actively stimulate change within a British dominated sport of rugby football. In 1893, Ellison’s finest moment came at the inaugural New Zealand Rugby Football Union meeting where he proposed that the New Zealand playing uniform comprise of a black jersey with a silver fern monogram, black cap, white knickerbockers and black stockings. This was similar to the old Native team uniform, and with a switch to black shorts in 1901 it became the familiar All Black uniform.54 Fittingly, it was Ellison who captained the first fully representative New Zealand team to wear the silver fern to Australia later that year. He played seven matches on tour and finished with the rare distinction of commanding his country every time he represented it.55 However, this was not the only area of the New Zealand Rugby Football Union administration in which Ellison played a vital role in. The aftermath of the Native Tour to Britain in 1888-89 began speculation that a New Zealand Union should be formed, to establish a uniform set of rules for the sport and its administration, throughout the country. Ellison, greatly disappointed when the unions of Canterbury, Otago and Southland wished to remain part of the British Rugby Union, believed that the affiliated provinces should not take part in competition with any non-affiliated club or union. This was a bold statement from Ellison who believed in a united body and nothing else.56 Tom’s standing as an administrator, celebrated player and match official was widely publicised. He was clearly a respected gentleman that could be accepted by Pakeha, as well as play an important role within

54 Anderson, Atholl. ‘Ellison, Thomas Rangiwhiaia 1866-18682 – 1904.’
55 Joseph Romanes, New Zealand’s Top 100 Sports History Makers, (Wellington: Trio Books Ltd., 2006), 186.
56 Ron Palenski, Our National Game (Auckland: Moa, 1992), 22-4; Ryan, 23-4.
Figure 5 - Tom Ellison

DNZB (Online): Tom Ellison file
the Maori world. His versatility is what made him such a successful achiever in the way he was able to move between two worlds with such comfort.

Ellison’s book, *The Art of Rugby Football*, published in 1902 serves as one of the very first instruction manuals on the game of rugby. Not only does it offer intricate details on the techniques of the game but it offers advice on captaincy, the possible future laws of the game, and, most interestingly, his memories from his playing days such as the 1888-89 Natives’ Tour and the 1893 tour to Australia by the first official New Zealand rugby team. This book gives, perhaps, the best insight into his thoughts and feelings, yet not enough mention is given to this throughout the vast array of publications in which Ellison features in. The only time that Ellison’s book is quoted is when referring to his introduction to the game and also his memories of the Native Tour. The lasting memory of Ellison that one gains from his book is his passionate attention to detail, notable in his many depictions of defensive and attacking techniques, which perhaps made him such a successful lawyer.57

The role of rugby as the national sport in New Zealand and Ellison’s great contribution to its growth during the early years has meant that his achievements surrounding the national game are evident throughout many national rugby publications. A.H. Carman, in his book *Maori Rugby 1884-1979*, gives Tom a significant amount of praise within a small biographical piece reserved for each player on the 1888-89 Natives’ Tour. “Ellison’s prowess in the football arena are well known in Wellington. When on tour he played as a forward and was second to none other in the Native team. His knowledge on the finer points of the game, his weight, strength and activity rendered his services invaluable.”58 While in the same piece, A.F. Wiren and W. McKenzie add “Tom Ellison was one of the greatest figures in the history of New Zealand football”59 and “there has never been a line-out player like Ellison nor in fact his equal in general forward play.”60 Carman’s words, along with Wiren and McKenzie, provide memories of the man who offered so much to society in such a short space of time.

59 Ibid, 134.
60 Ibid, 134.
Ron Palenski, in *Our National Game* sees Ellison's role in the early days of New Zealand rugby as vitally significant. "Ellison especially left a mark on the game that can never be erased and when names like Wallace and Gallagher and Cooke and Nepia and all their successors are talked about as being legends or immortals of rugby, Ellison's place lies with them." With reference to his role in formally entrenching New Zealand's traditional black uniform with silver fern monogram, Palenski writes, "Ellison's legacy rides still with every All Black and, by extension, with just about every other New Zealand sports team." Tom's role in the entire spectrum of New Zealand rugby is exemplified in the following quote from Palenski, "Rugby has benefited enormously from the Maori, through the on and off-field examples of such as Ellison and Taiahoa last century and many more since, through the instinctive habits they bring to the game that rub off on to their team-mates and through the flair that has characterised their game."61 In the popular television series 'The Game of Our Lives,' it is said of Tom that, "There have been few visionaries in rugby to match him."62 What is substantial about his name throughout this volume is the respect he is given when speaking about leading Maori players around the end of the nineteenth century and also his numerous roles in developing new ideas for the game as well as the responsibility he assumes in the stance of his people against government with the upholding of the Treaty of Waitangi. Ellison is also credited as being the first New Zealander to promote the idea of player payments whilst away on tour as a way of compensating the income they were losing from being away from work. Ron Palenski claims if, "Tom Ellison had been living in the 1990s and not the 1890s he would be Sir Tom and be revered as one of the great New Zealanders."63

Rugby was a sport in which Maori could play alongside Pakeha. Rugby provided a vital outlet for Maori and Pakeha to work together and help break down the barriers imposed by prevailing ideas of race and difference. For Pakeha, traditional Maori warfare, such as hand to hand fighting, provided perfect preparation for the heavy contact and fleet of foot involved in rugby which made Maori such natural talents with ball in hand. Brendan Hokowhitu has challenged this perception of Maori, saying that, for a long time the only field in which Maori could prove themselves and excel

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61 Palenski, 139.
63 Ibid, 20.
in was on the rugby field. Hokowhitu argues New Zealanders have long thought “Maori relate better to the physical rather than the intellectual world.”\(^{64}\) But Maori such as Tom and Edward Ellison and Jack Taiaroa were not just physical experts in rugby but intellectual experts as well, who were trained professionals in the Pakeha world. The stereotype of the physically powerful but intellectually impaired Maori that Hokowhitu mentions seems to have developed after Tom, Edward and Jack Taiaroa passed.

Having accrued a substantial amount of financial capital throughout his professional career, Tom and his wife decided to build a homestead in Eastbourne, something they could be proud of and it is still standing today, a true testament to the craftsmanship with which it was built. Building one’s own home appears to be a familiar trait of the time in order to show one’s wealth and status. Raniera built his family homestead ‘Te Wai Pounamu’ at Otakou after his gold strike, which would house many different members of the Ellison whanau over time. Their care for their whanau cannot be questioned. Hori Kerei Taiaroa also built a homestead at Taumutu, just outside Christchurch. These homes were thought of as whanau spaces more so than the typical family abode that we are used to today. They were seen as spaces to share with whanau to ensure each child received an educated upbringing in the basics of Maori traditions.

However, in yet another great tragedy in Tom’s short life, he would never get to live on the property. Tom was committed to the Porirua Sanatorium in 1904. He would spend the rest of his life in this dull and dreary institution before passing away in October 1904. Details are very hazy regarding the actual cause of death. Officially, his death certificate reads: ‘Death from General Paralysis of the Insane.’\(^{65}\) However, family belief and some historical sources report his death to be the result of an accident. Other sources say his death can be put down to the immense stress his body was put through as a result of his tough playing schedule on the 1888-89 Natives tour to the UK. His body was taken to be buried at Karori cemetery but was intercepted by

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\(^{65}\) New Zealand Death Certificate: Tom Ellison, Reg no.: 1904008181, Issued by the Registrar 1 July 2008, Registrar of Births, Deaths & Marriages, New Zealand.
a group of men sent on behalf of his father, Raniera, and taken back down to Otakou where his body was sent to rest on the urupa at his whanau marae.

Edward Pohau Ellison, Raniera and Nani's eleventh child, Tom's youngest brother, was born on 26 November, 1884, near Waikanae, Wellington. As an infant Edward was adopted by Raniera's first cousin, Harirota and her husband Bill Eyes who were childless. He was raised at a small farm at Punehu, near Pihama, in Taranaki and visited Parihaka on occasions where he met Te Whiti-O-Rongomai and Tohu Kakaahi. Growing up in this environment, he was strongly influenced by the many tangi that passed by his house. It seemed to Edward that many of the deaths could be attributed to tohungaism and this later influenced his decision to study medicine.

In 1896, when Edward was just eleven years old, his step-mother Harirota was tragically killed. Edward was brought back to his birth parents and met his real family, initially meeting the famous rugby footballer Tom Ellison when visiting Wellington city, only later to discover that he was in fact his very own brother. He eventually met the rest of his family, living at Waikanae once again, where he was born. He was educated at Pihama, Waikanae and Otakou schools as his whanau moved frequently between properties in the north and south islands. When the Ellison family returned to Otakou, their native home, Edward was delighted.

I liked this place immensely... Otakou commanded a beautiful view of both the Otago Harbour entrance and the channel to Port Chalmers with a background of bush-clad high hills. It was a delight to see both trading and passenger steamers passing to and fro along the channel, while fishermen plied their trade along the banks or in the blind channel as the tide receded. What a wonderful place this was!\(^{66}\)

Once Edward completed the sixth standard at school he moved to Wellington to help Tom with the clerical duties involved in his legal work. During his time in Wellington, Edward's keen interest in sports fuelled his desire to attend live matches at Athletic Park where he was able to watch the football greats of his era such as Billy

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Figure 6 - Edward Ellison

Personal Collection of Sean Ellison
Wallace (whom Tom mentored). It was these rugby matches that convinced Edward that Te Aute College was the secondary school for him, being the nursery for so many famous footballers. He kept at Tom to allow him to attend and in 1902 Edward finally gained acceptance to Te Aute. At Te Aute he was a contemporary and close friend of Sir Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa) and the pair would maintain this friendship throughout their lives as Medical practitioners. It was here, at Te Aute, that Edward learned to play rugby, and he toured Australia with the First XV in 1904. Te Aute was a fine educational school, teaching and converting Edward to Christianity before finally matriculating in 1904.

Three years after my entry into Te Aute, I matriculated. The teachers were always very helpful to us and in particular our beloved headmaster, Mr. John Thornton, together with the first assistant, Mr. Long. The occasions on which they addressed us, be they in church, in chapel or school, were always very impressive and had a marked uplifting influence on the School, in manner, behaviour and character... The staff accompanied our rugby football team in 1904 to Australia...never was there such an enjoyable trip and our teachers helped to make it so.

During Edward’s time at Te Aute College and in his close relationship with his brother Tom, he was beginning to meet and mix with influential figures, both Maori and Pakeha. It was the relationships that Edward formed during his years as a Te Aute College schoolboy that would have the most impact on his life. Edward’s time with Tom, albeit brief, convinced him that the more respect he had from Pakeha, the more opportunities would be presented to him. Therefore, he needed to have the support of his whanau and iwi, as well as a degree of respect from the professionals he desired to work alongside. Through his work as a member of the Young Maori Party, Te Aute College fostered friendship with key Maori figures Peter Buck and Apirana Ngata. Reverend John Thornton stressed the importance of gaining an education and opened their eyes to the Pakeha world. It was Thornton’s tuition and guidance that allowed these influential figures to realise their potential, initially as scholars and finally as

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67 Te Ao Hou, 47
68 Te Ao Hou, 47.
politicians or professionals. Thornton instilled in these young men an awareness Maori could be as successful and prevalent in society as their Pakeha counterparts.

Edward developed a strong sense of religion at Te Aute and looked to further his knowledge by attending Te Raukahikatea College, a theological school in Gisborne, upon finishing secondary school. Raniera had wished for Edwari to take over Tom’s role as a lawyer to look after whanau and Maori affairs in general but it did not interest Edward. Without financial assistance from his father, nor the Government, he was forced to enter the workforce rather than study medicine. In 1909, at the age of 24, Edward finally gained entry to Otago Medical School and while he was there he received a University blue in cricket. He played rugby throughout his time in Dunedin for Varsity Blue, alongside some club rugby greats. In 1911, he was rewarded for his consistent performances by being selected in the New Zealand Maori team. He also played Hockey for Poverty Bay during his time at Te Rau.

In 1919, following a year as an intern at Wellington Hospital, Dr. Edward Ellison was appointed Chief Medical Officer for Niue, a position he held until 1923. While in Niue he developed a strong affection for the Polynesian people and was given a daughter to adopt and raise as a mark of respect. While in Niue he held numerous positions including Deputy and Resident Commissioner, Resident Magistrate, Coroner, Sheriff and Chairman of the Licensing Committee. His career in the medicine profession had well and truly begun. This first appointment would lead to a succession of jobs as a medical officer throughout the Pacific. It would allow him to give something back to his people in the long term, but in the short term his attention was needed in the Islands.

In 1923, he took on a new appointment as the Medical Officer for the Chatham Islands, which he held for two years. He was also resident magistrate for two different periods of time. He was extremely well received by the people of the Chatham’s and upon hearing of his return to New Zealand to conduct further study and research the people got together and organised a large leaving party for Dr. and Mrs. Ellison. Numerous speeches were made by Chatham Island senior officials at the social gathering to farewell Edward and the final address read:
To Dr. E.P. Ellison, Resident Magistrate: We feel that we cannot allow you to leave the Chatham Islands without some expression of the honour and respect in which you and your wife are held by the people of the island. In your capacity as Resident Medical Officer we have learned to trust you implicitly, and your skilled care and attention have always been willingly placed at our disposal. As Resident Magistrate we have learned to rely upon your careful and considered judgments, and you have brought to bear in all cases placed before you a sound common sense and a realization of the needs and difficulties of the island. In the field of sport, also, you have displayed that interest which has been an inspiration to the younger generation. Altogether we feel that your two years' residence amongst us has done more than we can express towards the cementing of those good feeling between the residents – Maori and European – which we hope may continue as a monument in our hearts to your work amongst us.⁶⁹

Not only was he a fine doctor but his well-educated background enabled him to take on a diverse range of jobs within his already busy role as Medical Officer. His versatility as an administrator proved to be extremely valuable as the authorities were able to bestow numerous tasks upon his shoulders and he was to carry these out with the utmost of professionalism and success. The weight of expectation that his father had placed upon him as a young man clearly helped him handle these different roles. Raniera made sure his boys were achievers not only on the sports field, but as scholars, professionals and as political subjects within the scheme of Ngai Tahu's land claims.

Edward furthered his studies in tropical medicine and diseases, including leprosy, and wrote an authoritative paper on the disease. In 1926, he was appointed Chief Medical Officer and Deputy Resident Commissioner to the Cook Islands, but tragedy struck on 18 September, 1926 when his wife Tini died suddenly of acute rheumatic fever. She was buried in Avarua, Rarotonga and left behind two sons Riki and George and one daughter Nancy. Another daughter Joy had died as an infant.

⁶⁹ Ellison family Records, Sean Ellison: Cook Islands Chief Medical Officer, E.P. Ellison – Work for Maori Hygiene newspaper clipping, no other details.
Yesterday, Sunday, was a sad day. Dr. Ellison’s wife who had been ailing for some time, died on Saturday night and the funeral took place yesterday. Makea ariki had her buried in the Makea family cemetery and the local Maoris were sympathy itself. Ellison is much cut up but I have been trying to buck him up so as not to give up his job. Our kinsmen need someone of the Ellison stamp to look after them. He has their full confidence and affection.  

While the loss of his wife was a huge blow, Edward knew his priorities lie with his people. On this occasion it was the people of Rarotonga. His decision to stay on as Chief Medical Officer and ensure the health and safety of the Rarotongan people shows his amazing strength and perseverance as a person. These qualities were taught to him by his parents, who held strong family values and passed down a clear understanding of duty. While Edward did not grow up with his parents, it is clear to see that Raniera and Nani had a positive effect on Edward in ensuring he fulfilled his obligations and never let anybody down, even in such terrible circumstances.

On the appointment of Sir Peter Buck to the Bishop Museum in Honolulu in 1927, Dr. Ellison was called back to New Zealand where he took over the job of Director of Maori hygiene, a position he held until 1931. He became actively involved in the Young Maori Party and was closely associated with Apirana Ngata, whom he regarded as their ‘Leading Light’. Edward was well aware that his people needed a helping hand, and in this case another voice, to spread the word of hygiene and health. His people were in dire need of leaders at a time when they had been dispossessed of their lands, disease and depopulation were rife, and, as a consequence, poverty was further impeding their livelihood. The Young Maori Party sought to address these issues thought to be holding Maori back from achieving within the Pakeha world and Edward knew its importance and believed he could make a difference along with these other influential men. His position as a doctor gave him the best chance to make a difference. His hands-on role allowed him to get to the front-line of Maori poverty and illness and he believed he could instill changes in their living standards.

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71 Ellison family records, Sean Ellison: Kuirau Medical Centre, 22-8-1995,
In 1931, Edward was reappointed Medical Officer to the Cook Islands, a position he held for 14 years. He also served as Commissioner of the High Court from 1932. During his 14 year tenure in the Cook Islands, Edward had to deal with many serious health problems, often with very limited resources. One of his first tasks was to attack tapeworm disease which was extremely common in the Cook Islands. He decided upon a bold plan of treating the population en masse and instituting a ground sanitary improvement scheme, boosted by a Dr. Lambert and aided by the Rockefeller Institute, New York. These two plans greatly improved the health of the native population. In 1938, Edward was awarded the OBE for his long and dedicated services to the Polynesian people. Twenty years later, Edward would refuse a much higher honour, feeling that as a man he was not fit enough to receive such a prestigious honour.72

Edward returned to New Zealand in 1945, where he took up private practice in Manaia, Taranaki where he practiced until 1956. He and his wife Mary were strongly involved in community groups and sports clubs. During his distinguished career he also received the King George V medal and the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation medal. Upon hearing of his impending departure from the Cooks’, the people of Rarotonga got together and wrote a passionate plea to the Minister of the Department of Island Territories in New Zealand in the hope of asking Edward to reconsider his decision. The people of Rarotonga expressed their saddest commiserations in hearing of his departure, adding that Dr. Ellison was not only a ‘family physician’ but ‘an institution.’

We have had many doctors since the first (Doctor Yeats) in 1908, of varied skills, but none has produced the beneficial results on the whole which have appeared since Dr. Ellison took charge of the general hygiene of the Cook Islands. In all the group health and life have benefited.73

Such was Edward’s success in his role as Medical Officer in the Cook Islands, there were many media notices reporting on the end of his term in Rarotonga. The

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72 Te Ao Hou, 64.
73 E.P. Ellison file – Archives NZ, Wellington, ‘Letter from the people of Rarotonga to the Department of Island Territories, October 26 1945.
impassioned pleas of the Rarotongan people sadly were not answered with joy, owing to Edward contracting filarial. As the Rarotongan people stated in their letter, they saw illness as an excuse to leave the islands as the result of a strained relationship between Edward and the Resident Commissioner for New Zealand, a Mr. Tailby. Edward was to leave Rarotonga but never officially retired until July 1946. Interestingly, Edward wrote to Prime Minister Peter Fraser in May 1949 requesting to be reappointed as Resident Commissioner in Rarotonga. However, the Honourable Peter Fraser denied this request because the position was already competently filled. Fraser, however, did have some kind words to say when Edward left Rarotonga in 1945:

Dr. Ellison's very many friends will hear with regret that he expressed a wish to retire for health reasons, and they all wish, as I do that his return to New Zealand will quickly restore him to full health. During his long years of faithful work among the people of the Cook Islands he has not only been their doctor but by his considerate and patient manner he has been affectionately regarded by the people as one of themselves. Over the past 26 years he has laboured among the islands people who are in the care of New Zealand administration. They, as well as his numerous friends in New Zealand, will join with me in doing honour to the work he has done, and in extending to Mrs. Ellison and himself the best of wishes for their future.74

Edward Pohau Ellison died on 9 November, 1963 at Napier Hospital, aged 78. He was a big man in physical stature, in mental ability and in moral character. He stood six feet tall and had a solid athletic build, an olive complexion and blue eyes. He will be remembered for his great service and devotion to the people throughout Polynesia, a service driven by his deep religious convictions, and for his strong, determined, and often obstinate character which slowly but steadily produced the desired results. Through his studies he became a leading authority on tropical diseases but perhaps his greatest feats were those of a brilliant administrator. Being Maori allowed him to have a greater insight and understanding of Polynesian ways. Admiration of Dr. Ellison lived on for several decades after he left Rarotonga and the hospital on Rarotonga was

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74 E.P. Ellison file – Archives NZ, Wellington, ‘Right Hon. Peter Fraser: Statement for Press.’
named the Ellison Memorial Hospital in his honour. He had a passion for most sports and showed great ability in rugby, cricket and hockey. He stood out as an example of what a Maori could achieve, not by being at the forefront of politics or media attention, but by the quiet persuasive way that he devoted his life to the peoples of Polynesia.75

Edward and Tom are evidence enough of the changing leadership in Ngai Tahu around the turn of the twentieth century. These new leaders, educated at prestigious religious boys schools from throughout the country, were taught in line with western ideas and knowledge. They were part of the first generation of Maori professionals and western-educated intellectuals. What these young men proved was that it was possible to be Maori and to achieve as a Maori in the Pakeha world. Their education opened their minds to success and allowed them to see that it was only their own thoughts and expectations that could limit their success and effect on their people. These young men such as the Ellisons and the Taiaroas, brought their education and drive for achievement back to their Ngai Tahu people and these ideas were spread into both their whanau and iwi. The stereotype of the typical Maori man, unable to break free of the poverty and disease his people faced, was crushed by these new leaders, who offered light and a new experience to young Maori keen to follow in their footsteps. It was these men who acted as role models to their iwi as walking evidence that Maori could be successful within both worlds. The most important thing that the Ellisons and Taiaroas did as men of rank, was use their own abilities in the political world or in the professions to benefit their people, not just their own needs as individuals.

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Chapter 3: The Maori world of the Ellison whanau

Raniera made a name for himself at Otakou in the way he worked tirelessly to secure a final outcome for Te Kereme. Even though Raniera was not directly involved in the land claims, he had married into a whanau and community in which the land claims were a part of restoring justice. His efforts to help Ngai Tahu throughout the land claiming process shows his deep understanding of duty and responsibility to his children’s tribe. Even though he cannot claim to be tangata whenua within Ngai Tahu lands, he knew the importance of contributing to the needs of the tribe that adopted him and included him as one of their own. His own involvement in Ngai Tahu affairs however, never kept him out of contact with Maori politics in the north, as he supported the Parihaka Movement in Taranaki and was a member of the Kotahitanga movement too. Raniera frequently travelled between Nani’s land at Otakou and Waikouaiti and into the North Island to the land his mother handed down to him at Waikanae. Therefore, while he was active within his wife’s iwi, he knew he had an obligation to his family in the north as well. He had houses at Otakou and Waikanae and the family moved between the two for a period of time, and Edward Ellison was born in Waikanae as opposed to Otakou like his brothers.⁷⁶

Raniera knew how important it was to mix in the right circles and know the right people in order to stimulate change. That is, change for the better for his people, at both Otakou and Waikanae, and in order for his children to be given the best chance in life. Tied tightly into this is his work with Te Kereme, on the Ngai Tahu Land Claim. His time involved with Maori political movements made it clear to him that in order to stimulate change, one needed to move through the Pakeha world first. Raniera’s foresight was bold and ultimately successful. In looking at how he prepared his boys for the Pakeha world, knowing the importance of a western education, which, in time, would allow them to work within the Pakeha world to create political change, it shows just much of a deep thinker he was.

⁷⁶ Edward Ellison: Interview.
Nani, undoubtedly, played a vital role in the upbringing up her children as conscientious contributors to the Maori world. "Nani brought up a bevy of children, and later grandchildren, helped other families in the community, and was an active participant in the pressing for resolution of issues facing Kai Tahu in her old age." Her duties as a mother stretched far wider than just in the household, she played a significant role right throughout the Land Claim, acting in the interests of her father, Matenga Taiaroa, for the substantial amount of land that she succeeded to at Otakou and Waikouaiti. Her role in producing these important Ngai Tahu leaders, in Tom and Edward, should not be understated as it is clear their richly traditional Maori upbringing had a considerable effect on them as grown men.

The Ellison family acted within the relatively unstable period after colonial contact which must be understood in order to evaluate their achievements. New Zealand witnessed four decades of turbulence after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. Wars between local Maori and the Settler Government in Taranaki in the 1840s caused much distress amongst Maori who were greatly outnumbered by the imperial troops. The formation of a unified north island Maori movement was seen as a way for Maori to survive against the constant conflict created by the many waves of new European settlers and their land hungry government. The Kingitanga was formed in 1857, the first pan-tribal Maori allegiance of its kind, based in the Waikato, to protect their lands which were under threat from the creeping confiscations set about as a result of the signing of the Treaty. Taranaki, Waikato and central north island Maori united as one to fight against the British forces, in a stand that would ultimately fail, but which would evidently demonstrate Maori could not be defeated on the battlefield and that they were prepared to fight for their land rights.

Separate, but with a connection to the King Movement in the Waikato, Parihaka, a small, self-reliant, Maori community had begun to prosper in southern Taranaki in the 1860s, in direct opposition to the enforced Pakeha rule in place in central and northern Taranaki. However, this Maori opposition was different to those evident at the time, as it was founded on religion and revolved around the ideas of peace and passive

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78 Edward Ellison: Interview.
resistance from 1864 onwards. Its religious leaders were Te Whiti-O-Rongomai and Tohu Kakaahi. In 1879, when the government began surveying the area, the community at Parihaka embarked on a campaign to upset proceedings by ploughing the same areas. The settlement increased in population as more and more Taranaki Maori communities were being marginalized by government schemes to take land for their settlers. In 1881, after government troops invaded the settlement, claiming that their community was obstructing the peace, Te Whiti, Tohu and a number of their followers were imprisoned for a time and sent to Dunedin.79

Raniera was a nephew of Te Whiti-O-Rongomai, on his mother’s side and maintained support of his movement during his time at Otakou and in Waikanae. Once the Parihaka prisoners were sent to Dunedin to work, Raniera’s support turned from spiritual to physical. Raniera provided food to the exiled prisoners in Dunedin, which was a great relief to the Taranaki people as they grew tired very quickly of the prison rations. He gave financial assistance to the people of Parihaka which helped to pay for plumbing and irrigation because he had seen the benefits of such technology in Dunedin, which at that time was the leading city in New Zealand. Raniera was able to negotiate with prison officials in Dunedin to help his relative, Te Whiti, and his followers in anyway he possibly could. Raniera managed to gain access to Te Whiti and Tohu for one day a month (the 18th which was Te Whiti’s ra day). Raniera brought these two from their working grounds and prison cells in Dunedin, all the way around the Dunedin peninsula to his homestead at Otakou. In the front left room of the house (show picture) Te Whiti conducted his prayers in peace and harmony. This show of kindness and friendship was never forgotten by Te Whiti, who presented Raniera with a raukura (white feather), a symbol of peace and goodwill that Te Whiti and his followers adopted. Raniera was subsequently known as ‘the man with the feather in his cap’ – a sign of their prophetic movement, of peace and goodwill.80

According to Jane Reeves, Te Whiti’s Ra Day celebrations continued at Raniera’s Otakou house until the first world war.81

80 Edward Ellison: Interview.
81 Jane Reeves, ‘Exiled For a Cause: Maori Prisoners in Dunedin’ in When the Waves Rolled in Upon Us (Otago University, 1989), 131-2.
The role of religion within the Ellison whanau is difficult to ascertain. Raniera was related to and a devoted supporter of Te Whiti-O-Rongomai and his Parihaka community which was based on the Pai Marire faith. Add to this the fact that four of Raniera’s sons attended Te Aute College, where Rev. Samuel Williams, a member of the Church Missionary Society, ensured that pupils were educated in line with the doctrines of the Church of England. Edward Pohau Ellison attended Theological School in Gisborne shortly after leaving Te Aute and so it is evident that religion did indeed play a part in the Ellison whanau but its role in their achievements is more difficult to measure. Religion was a source of status amongst Maori. Religious knowledge and the ability to communicate religious ideas was significant in Maori society. Religion and the ‘Pursuit of Mana’ were aligned with the pursuit of knowledge. The Ellisons succeeded in uniting these three themes.

Religion and education were facets of the new Pakeha world that Maori adopted as a result of European contact, and the Ellison family were no different. The importance of a solid education, coupled with a strong religious upbringing became key components of the Maori world in the nineteenth century. Tom, Daniel, Teiwi and Edward Ellison were all educated at Te Aute College, an Anglican boarding school for Maori boys in the Hawke’s Bay. The role of Te Aute College in educating these men, as well as significant other Maori leaders such as Sir Maui Pomare, Sir Apirana Ngata and Te Rangi Hiroa, no doubt had a significant bearing on their lives. Te Aute would also play a vital part in their rise as men of mana amongst, not just Maori, but Pakeha New Zealand wide. Te Aute College was founded in 1854 and Rev. Samuel Williams, a member of the Church Missionary Society was posted to the school to ensure that education would be taught in line with the Church of England. Prominent Maori chief, Te Hapuku of Ngati Kahungunu, saw it necessary to have a school in the area where the promising sons of the tribe could attend in order to become literate and learn the skills of the Pakeha. In setting up the school, Governor Grey intended to Christianise Maori as a way of pacifying and assimilating them into European culture. Rev. Williams, however, aimed to Christianise first and then to educate and civilise in the hope that his students would one day become teachers, catechists or ministers. Maori themselves wished for their youth to learn the way of the Pakeha so that they

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82 Parsonson, 142.
could advance economically, militarily and socially. After the school closed for over a
decade, amidst the uncertainty of the Waikato Wars, it began to establish itself as a
school of real promise. The timing of Te Aute College’s rise to fame coincided with
the arrival of Rev. John Thornton in 1878. John Wehipeihana has stated in his history
of Te Aute that:

In the quarter century that they (Williams and Thornton) led Te Aute it
reached a peak of achievement never surpassed before or since... What is
remarkable about their success is that it occurred at a time when the Maori
race was in such decline that its extinction was widely anticipated, and
educational authorities considered primary education was all that could be
expected of them.

One reason for the success that the school enjoyed was the provision of scholarships
which allowed boys from families from outside of the Hawke’s Bay to be educated at
Te Aute. Tom and Edward Ellison were helped by these scholarships. Te Aute very
quickly became renowned nationally as one of the best schools for Maori boys and is
very much central to the story and success of Tom and Edward.

The idea of what would later become the Young Maori Party came from Thornton in
conjunction with Williams and their religious conversations with senior students.
Originally, the collaboration of senior students formed the ‘Association for the
Amelioration of the Maori Race,’ then it became the ‘Te Aute College Students’
Association’ and they did not officially become the Young Maori Party until 1909, a
name they had called themselves right from the start but the press and Pakeha public
cautions on sometime after. Basically they wanted to improve areas of Maori life such
as health, welfare and living standards. With Maori Members of Parliament James
Carroll, Apirana Ngata, Te Rangi Hiroa and Maui Pomare, there was significant
impetus for the ideas of the Young Maori Party to gain a voice within the House of
Representatives.

83 Wehipeihana, 25.
84 Ibid, 25-6.
85 Ibid, 27.
86 Raeburn Lange, May the People Live: A History of Maori Health Development 1900-1920
(Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1999), 91-5.
The Young Maori Party was the catalyst for national reform, but it was
Thornton and Williams at Te Aute College who inspired Ngata, Hiroa and
Pomare. Their entry into politics turned Government’s attention to tackling at
least some of the problems of the Maori community.\textsuperscript{87}

Sadly, with the passing of Archdeacon Samuel Williams in 1907 and his close
colleague Rev. John Thomton in 1913, Te Aute lost both of its chiefly leaders in a
short space of time and the school would never recover from their passing.\textsuperscript{88} These
circumstances, coupled with the outbreak of the First World War, meant that many
Maori communities not only lost their own men of knowledge to the battlefields of
Europe, but also the young men in the region would never quite receive the same
exemplary education from the following generation of masters at the college. The
Maori people, on the whole, suffered health problems as a result of their living
conditions and practices in the key areas that organisations such as the Young Maori
Party and individuals like Carroll, Ngata, Hiroa and Pomare had worked so tirelessly
to improve.

The achievements of the Ellison whanau and other key old boys of Te Aute College
must be put into the context of life in New Zealand for Maori at the time. The 1860s
wars in the Waikato and the subsequent holding of power of the New Zealand
government and their land policies had an adverse effect on Maori throughout the
country, but more significantly in the North Island. The loss of land and life led many
Maori to move towards spiritual movements such as Pai Marire, which featured
prominently within the King Movement, the Parihaka community led by Te Whiti-O-
Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi, and latterly Rua Kenana and Tahupotiki Wiremu
Ratana. These spiritual leaders offered Maori a source of survival throughout an era of
loss – as well as being an important site of resistance and a source of cultural strength
and stability. It is clear from the number of prophetic movements that arose within
Maori society from the 1830s, in conjunction with Maori support for the established
churches, that religion was a source of strength for Maori\textsuperscript{89} and remains so today.

\textsuperscript{87} Wehipeihana, 28.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid, 28.
\textsuperscript{89} Elsmore, xiii.
While these followers were satisfied spiritually, many of their homes were unsanitary which, according to the Young Maori Party was caused by a lack of knowledge about health and wellbeing.

The Young Maori Party and Maori politicians sought to redress these health problems while also showing the way to their children that a European education could be incorporated successfully into Maori life and be applied in such a way as to benefit their people. These influential Maori leaders such as the Ellisons, Ngata, Hiroa and Pomare succeeded in their various areas of specialty at a time when the rest of the Maori population were struggling to recover from the wars and loss of lands. Tom Ellison worked as a lawyer to give Maori a greater voice with their land grievances, Edward Ellison and Te Rangi Hiroa tried to increase the awareness of better health and living conditions as members of the Young Maori Party, and as doctors, and Ngata worked within the Pakeha political spectrum to enforce legislative change. These factors elevate their achievements in terms of what and how they were able to benefit their people and their successes must be recognised amidst the nature of Maori life during their time.

Tom Ellison’s achievements as a rugby player are remembered as his greatest feats. He was a member of the 1888-89 ‘Natives’ team that toured Great Britain and Australia. However, what he was able to contribute to the Maori world is perhaps most important when one considers the problems they faced as a result of European settlement. Ellison’s involvement and efforts with his Ngai Tahu people, such as standing for the Southern Maori seat three times in an effort to push for land redress within parliament, and his contribution to society as a lawyer, have received less coverage within the scholarship about him. Following school he became an interpreter for Maori in the Native Land Court. Shortly after leaving Te Aute, he worked as a law clerk in Wellington and unsuccessfully stood for the Southern Maori seat in Parliament three times against his Uncle H.K. Tiaaroa (once) and Tame Parata (twice). As a Barrister with Brandon, Hislop and Johnson, Ellison represented a

significant number of Maori clients who had land claims.\textsuperscript{91} Tom’s life was cut short many years too soon and evidence of his standing within New Zealand society can be seen in what has been written about him since. Bill Dacker wrote, “Tom Ellison’s tragic death at the age of 38 removed a potentially effective leader for Kai Tahu. Rugby dominated his public life, showed his leadership potential and an inclination to innovation but he died before he could turn his attention elsewhere in any significant way.”\textsuperscript{92} Jane Thompson’s book is more measured in its praise but nonetheless his mark on society is evident. “(Tom) is best remembered as one of the great rugby players of his day... In 1902, he wrote \textit{The Art of Rugby Football}, which gave and insight into the development of rugby as the national sport.”\textsuperscript{93}

Writers of Ngai Tahu history and its people mention Tom’s role as a leading tribal figure during the late nineteenth century. Bill Dacker and Jane Thomson position Ellison’s achievements within a traditionally Maori perspective. His whakapapa and tribal links are of vital importance, they claim, and it is here we learn the story of his father Raniera, who made a significant gold discovery in 1863 which played a pivotal role in funding Tom’s schooling and travel. This, no doubt, had a significant effect upon Tom in helping him develop into the remarkable man that he was. Whakapapa was also vitally important and, after all, it was his cousin Jack Taiaroa who taught him how to play rugby on the Kaik at Otagou before he attended Te Aute, where he began to make his mark as a player of promise. Dacker and Thomson only pay Tom a small mention within their writings, but it is what is said about him within this limited coverage which marks him as a man of significance, not only within Ngai Tahu, but within society at large during this period. His achievements are listed and his status is conveyed by both authors gives the audience an insight into the true meaning of his achievements at a time when his people were struggling to make ends meet.

While Edward Ellison was studying Medicine at Otago University he took medical students for instruction in Maori at his home. Once again, a member of the Ellison whanau were attending to their duties as Ngai Tahu Maori. Even though Edward had his obligation to his studies, he still had the time and sense of duty to step in and help

\textsuperscript{91} ERB, 20-2.
\textsuperscript{92} Dacker, 258.
\textsuperscript{93} Thompson, 149.
out when he knew he could be of service. Edward continued his family tradition of actively contributing to the Maori world. Edward is most renowned for his lifelong work as a Medical Officer in the Pacific Islands. However, he was also aware of the family tradition to incorporate the Maori world and the needs of his people into his list of achievements. Importantly, he strengthened tribal affiliations by marrying back into the Taiaroa whanau. On July 30 1913 Edward married Tini Wiwi Taiaroa at Sedgemere, near Christchurch. Tini was the daughter of Teone (Jack) Wiwi Taiaroa, famous halfback for the 1884 New Zealand Native Rugby team and prominent South Island chief. Edward and Tini were second cousins, an important relationship in that the marriage strengthened the ties and kinship of two illustrious Ngai Tahu whanau.

Raniera and Nani led their children towards educational, cultural and sporting pursuits that would have a very positive effect on their people. It was the foundation that Raniera and Nani provided their children in areas such as cultural traditions and education that ultimately had the greatest impact on them and pushed them towards their achievements. The thorough understanding Tom and Edward had of their whakapapa and oral traditions went a long way in keeping them grounded in the Maori world. Their achievements in the Pakeha world may well have received far greater recognition, but it is their contribution to the Maori world which was most important because Maori, at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, were in such a perilous position, especially when you consider health standards and dislocation from their traditional tribal lands. It took leaders such as Tom and Edward Ellison, as well as the Taiaroa and Parata whanau from Ngai Tahu, who worked with and alongside Ngata, Buck, Carroll and Pomare to show Maori of all ages that, if they set their minds to it, they could achieve in a diverse range of fields and be accepted within both worlds.

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94 Dacker, 91-2.
95 ERB, 39; I had hoped to gain access to H.K. Taiaroa’s papers at the Canterbury Museum, but unfortunately, due to a longer than expected process to gain access, I was unable to include them within this thesis. What I had hoped to include were written letters between H.K. Taiaroa and members of the Ellison whanau, including Raniera, Nani and Tom. I had hoped to draw from these conversations more of an insight into each individual’s thinking about their relationship with the Maori world and, specifically, the political processes they were working within in order to achieve their goals.
Conclusion

The Ellison whanau brought the two worlds (Maori and Pakeha) together and showed that is was possible to combine these and be successful in both. The Ellisons combined the Maori worldview (traditional beliefs and customs) with the ideas associated with Pakeha economy in a way that enabled them to achieve their goals. The Ellison story of success is not only to do with their achievement but the diversity of it. They did not just achieve in one aspect of their community, they were able to contribute to politics, health, sport and law. These achievements not only benefited their own whanau but they held great meaning in the community. The Ellisons were an example of what should have happened following the Treaty of Waitangi – that is, a nation of ‘one people’ working constructively together. Like Apirana Ngata, James Carroll, Peter Buck, and Maui Pomare, Tom and Edward Ellison were regarded as an exemplar of what Maori could achieve if they assimilated.

The mixing of Maori and European blood plays a vital role in these achievements too and the presence of shore-based whaling in the 1830s around southern New Zealand led to more frequent intercultural contact. From this continual contact and the subsequent relationships that developed between European whalers and coastal Maori settlements, marriages and sexual relationships were inevitable. These marriages played a significant role in shaping the future of Ngai Tahu by mixing Maori blood with European blood. In Raniera and Nani’s case, both had fathers who were British whalers and Maori mothers. In both circumstances, they lost contact with their father, either through death or migration, and so they were brought up by their mothers’ Maori family. This meant they had access to the resources of the European world, courtesy of the impact of the whaling station upon their community, which, if used carefully and intelligently, gave them a greater opportunity to survive and achieve. Also, their mothers’ families taught them their cultural traditions from their Maori side. Bringing these two worlds together was vitally important to this new breed of Maori. This is where the Ellison whanau succeeded in uniting the best aspects of their European blood and moulding it into their traditional Maori upbringing. Coupled with a strong financial foundation, courtesy of Raniera’s gold strike, the Ellisons were able
to produce leaders in areas such as politics, law, medicine and sport, as well as provide leaders for the Maori world.

Even though both Raniera and Nani lost their fathers influence on their lives while they were so young, it was the efforts of their whanau, who gathered around them in a time of need and provided an all important form of Maori education in whakapapa and oral traditions that would go so far in instilling in them a deep understanding of who they were and what their whanau wanted to achieve. Their strong upbringing taught them to contribute to the future of their iwi and people, and in doing so they were taught to look into the future. It was this foresight from both Raniera and Nani that they passed onto their children and contributed to their achievements and success in both worlds.

Raniera and Nani’s children had to make good marriages too in order to maintain their strong kinship ties and bloodlines with prominent whanau. The Taiaroa and Parata families are well-known Ngai Tahu families and they hold close kinship ties with the Ellisons. Marriages between such important Ngai Tahu whanau, and marriage into significant whanau from around the country for that matter, went a long way to maintaining their status as a prominent Ngai Tahu family and contributed greatly to their successes. Their education and understanding of both worlds enabled them to excel in both worlds and this can be credited largely to their solid family surroundings.

Te Aute College created great leaders for the nation. Not only in the Maori world, but more significantly, these Maori men were able to become leaders in the Pakeha world. However, this stopped around the turn of the century when these great Maori men went to war. If they were not killed they were wounded, if they were not wounded they were shell shocked. Therefore the ‘cream of the crop’ were never able to reach their potential. The 1918 Flu epidemic no doubt had an impact on Maori society as many up and coming leaders were lost. The loss of such a significant group of leaders greatly hindered Maori progress in the years to come, but at the same time it brought to the fore such men as Ngata, Buck, Pomare and the Ellisons who worked in Maori communities providing leadership and role models for youth.
The Ellisons used their western education to achieve within the Pakeha world and they used their traditional Maori upbringing effectively to contribute heavily to the Maori world of their time. While they are remembered in the Pakeha world as successful professionals and sportsmen, their greatest and most significant contribution was to their own people, be it Ngāi Tahu or Maori in general, through their work on land claims, as legal professionals or as doctors. This is why the Ellisons should be considered as equais to the names of Carroll, Ngata and Buck in the scholarship about Maori leadership in and around the turn of the twentieth century.
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Appendix:

Ellison whakapapa – linking the author Raniera and Nani Ellison

Thomas Ellison married Te Ikairaua

Edward Weller married Nikuru Taiaroa

Raniera Ellison/Erihana married Nani Weller

Teone Matapara Ellison married Ngapera Wi Parata

Pirihana (Bill) Ellison married Pahimata Takutai

Te Piwa (Joseph) Ellison married Norma Reeves

Phillip Ellison married Deborah Tong

Marc Ellison