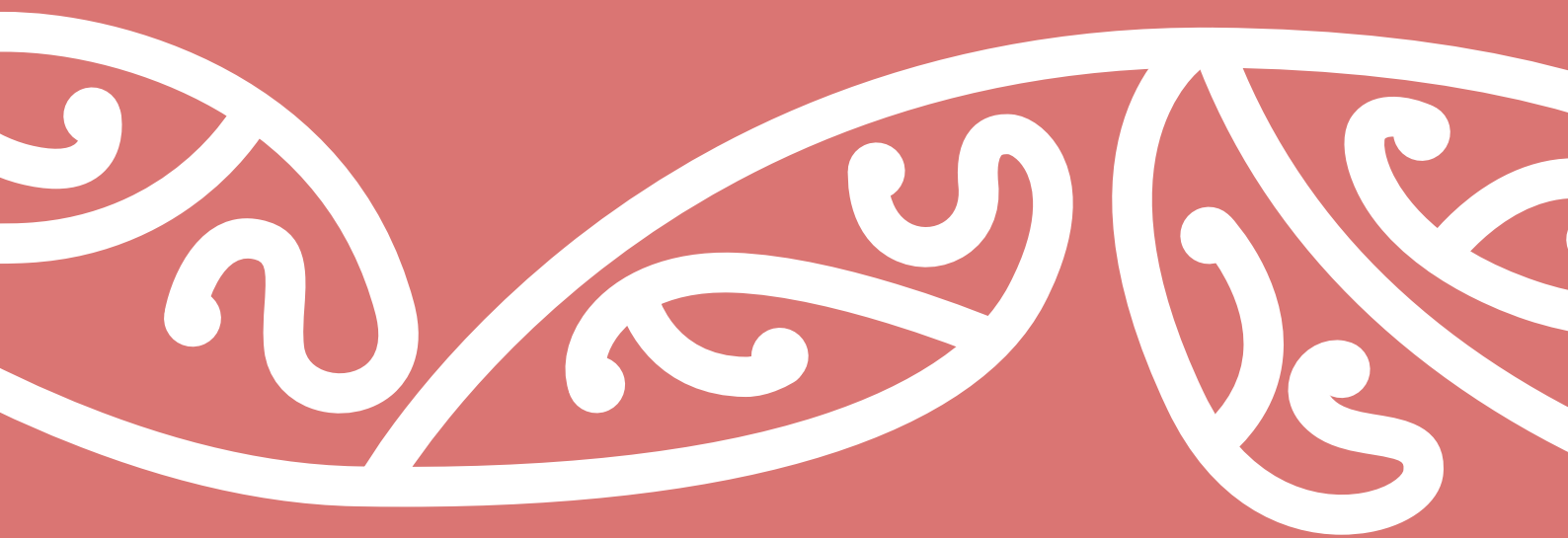


Heneriata Leatherby

**Whakapapa Research
Project series: Matriarch**



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Whakapapa Research Project series

This is part of a series of writings from eight whānau researchers on nine kaupapa. This kaupapa is about matriarchs.

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Research kaupapa

Aspirational letter to future generations

Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) and whakapapa

Kai

Matriarch

Research methodology and methods

Whānau event

Whāngai

Whenua

Taonga



He kupu whakaūpoko: Introduction



Heneriata (Maggie) Leatherby (née White). 19 September 1910 – 14 July 1994.

Photo courtesy of Charles and Heneriata Leatherby Whānau.

When I hear the term ‘matriarch’, I can’t help but think of my great-grandmother, Heneriata Leatherby, or Kui Nan. Born on 19 September 1910, Kui Nan was the third child of Pōtete Hotu White (Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Mutunga, Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi) and Matehuirua Horomona (Ngāti Toa). She was raised by her father’s eldest brother, Ngapaki Hotu White, and his wife, Te Utaiho Wharemate Te Moa. During her upbringing with her whānau taurima at their homestead below Urenui Marae on the banks of the Urenui awa, Kui Nan learned many skills such as weaving and gardening, which she practised throughout her lifetime. As a child, and due to the location of seasonal foods such as gardens, moana, and the ngahere, she connected with many wāhi in the Ngāti Mutunga and Ngāti Tama rohe. One place that was very dear to Kui Nan was Urenui Marae as she spent a lot of her childhood here with her whānau taurima and other Ngāti Mutunga whānau.

Heneriata Leatherby

Kui Nan, alongside her husband Koro Charles (Charlie) Leatherby (Ngāti Haupoto, Taranaki Iwi), raised their whānau in the small settlement of Rāhotu on the coast of Taranaki. Her only surviving child, Nora Leatherby, recalls how strict her mother was: “As children, we were not allowed to say any swear words”. Kui Nan was a resourceful wahine who made all her childrens’ clothing. A vivid memory that Nora remembers about her mother was waking each morning to three kerosene tins of water placed over a fire to boil for bathing: “As children, we had to bath every morning with sunlight soap—no exceptions”. Each of Kui Nan’s children had daily chores to complete. One chore etched in Nora’s mind is the polishing of their home’s wooden floors: “We would try and jump over the polished floors at the front door of the house to avoid walking on them”. Nora and her siblings had to avoid dirtying the polished floors as the front door entrance was out of bounds to Nora and her siblings.

Leaving Rāhotu for Waitara, Kui Nan, Koro Charlie, and their tamariki moved in with her uncle Eddie Hotu White, who was a half-brother to Ngapaki Hotu White. Although Kui Nan had left her whānau taurima as a teenager to return to Pukearuhe to her own whānau to help raise her siblings, she made sure that the connection between her and her whānau taurima remained strong. Nora remembers visiting Kui Nan’s whānau taurima as a child and staying at the homestead beside the Urenui awa on many occasions. This connection remains today, with the close relationship maintained by a mokopuna of Te Utaiho Wharemate Te Moa, Hurimoana Haami, with our Leatherby whānau. I have been fortunate enough to form a personal relationship with Aunty Hurimoana whilst working together at Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Mutunga in Urenui. Kui Nan and her whānau stayed with her uncle on Centennial Avenue, Waitara, for some years before moving into their own whānau home at 4 Victoria Street, Waitara, commonly referred to today as the Leatherby homestead.



Koko Scotty Leatherby with his parents, Kui Nan and Koro Charlie, at Centennial Avenue, Waitara.
Photo courtesy of Charles and Heneriata Leatherby Whānau.

As the oldest grandchild, my mother Debra Leatherby-Tuuta has fond memories of her grandparents. She recollects going with Kui Nan to Urenui Marae for iwi meetings: “Whenever Nan would get the call to say that there was a tangihanga at the marae, she would always be there in the kitchen with the rest of her Ngāti Mutunga whānau”. Growing up, Debra remembers observing her Nan working on a korowai and how time-consuming it was, especially preparing the feathers with soap to be woven into the cloak. Kui Nan offered to teach my mother to weave, however, this was not of interest to her at the time. With the passing of my father, Gordon Raymond Tuuta (Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāti Tama, Taranaki Iwi, Ngāti Maru, Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangī, Ngāti Raukawa), from cancer in 1987, Kui Nan played a pivotal role in guiding my mother, who was 29-years-old, through the tangihanga process. The era in which Kui Nan was raised was reflected in the strict nature of her instruction to my mother. This included my mother not being allowed to eat for the duration of the tangihanga and to remain by her husband’s coffin unless to shower which was to be completed before sunrise.



Kui Nan and Koro Charlie with their mokopuna Dean (left), Debra (middle), and Antoni (right).

Photo courtesy of Charles and Heneriata Leatherby Whānau.

Personally, I have many fond memories of Kui Nan. Growing up, I would visit her with my mother Debra and her father Koko Scotty at her home on Victoria Street. Nora also lived at home with her mother. Koro Charlie passed away prior to my birth. Although I personally don't have any memories of my great-grandfather, I have always enjoyed hearing whānau speak of him and how much of a gentleman he was.

The Leatherby homestead was a modest three-bedroom home. Accommodating the mass numbers of whānau all at once are some of the best memories and times spent together. The entrance to the property was through a single-lane driveway with the capacity to park up to four vehicles in a row. If there were cars parked on the front lawn and road, you knew that there was a whānau gathering of some sort. The front door to the whare was on the right side, however, the porch and back doors were on the left by the driveway and was the main entrance used by all. The back porch housed two doors. The door to the right would open into the laundry, with another door into the one toilet in the whare. The door to the left would open into the kitchen. The kitchen, dining area, and lounge were open plan. The table and chairs located in front of a window overlooking the backyard and Kui Nan's mara kai was hot property. This is where all the kōrero would take place, especially during whānau meals, hui, and celebrations. Joining the dining area and lounge was an archway. The lounge is where Kui Nan and Nora would knit garments for the whānau. I can still recall Kui Nan knitting while sitting in her chair whilst watching her television programmes. Her ability to knit at a fast speed without looking at her knitting needles was magical. Like her mother, Nora too was a great knitter. Off the kitchen was the hallway that ran straight down the middle of the whare and connected the front door, three bedrooms, bathroom, and wharepaku together.



Leatherby Reunion 1980: *Back row left to right:* Percy (son), Tui (husband of Martha), Ashley (mokopuna), Charles (son), Gordon (husband of Debra), Paul (mokopuna), unknown, Oscar (mokopuna), Brian (son). *Middle row left to right:* Andrea (mokopuna), Michelle (mokopuna), Paula (mokopuna), Kim (mokopuna), unknown, Todd (mokopuna), Darryl (husband of Maryanne), Mark (mokopuna). *Front row left to right:* Debra (mokopuna), Delwyn (wife of Percy), Martha (daughter), Maryanne (daughter), Kui Nan, Nora (daughter), Raymond (mokopuna), Kui Emily, Marie (wife of Brian). *Seated on ground left to right:* Kristen (mokopuna), Nikki (mokopuna), Eamonn (mokopuna), Darryl (mokopuna), Scott (mokopuna), Darren (mokopuna). Photo courtesy of Charles and Heneriata Leatherby Whānau.

Manaakitanga was a strong attribute that Kui Nan was renowned for. Kai was the focal point of all whānau gatherings; whether it was working in the kitchen at the marae or in her own home, kai was always a part of the equation. Debra recalls her Nan always making sure there was a pot of kai on the stove ready to feed whomever may arrive at her whare. Another characteristic Kui Nan had was making sure others were fed before eating herself. The practice of manaakitanga is something that I and her whānau strive to uphold today.

Kui Nan passed away at the age of 84 years, on 14 July 1994. She lies beside her beloved husband, Koro Charlie Leatherby, and their children Thomas (Oscar), Rosemary, Charles (Koro Scotty), Percy, Donald, and Nora at our whānau urupā at Pukearuhe. Their children Martha, Brian, and Maryanne (taurima) are also laid to rest at our Leatherby whānau urupā at Opourapa Road, Rāhotu.

He kupu whakakapi: Conclusion

Kui Nan was the pou and matriarch of our whānau. She was a mother who brought up her children in tough times. Her door was always open to her immediate and extended whānau and, when needed, was a place for them to stay. Her name continues to be spoken by those that had the honour of being in her presence. Her memory will forever be remembered and spoken by her descendants, whānau, hapū, and iwi. Moe mai rā e Kui, moe mai rā.

Kuputaka: Glossary

Use of tuhutō (macrons): the introduction of macrons over some Māori vowels, have (1) clarified definitions and (2) made it easier to pronounce Māori words (i.e., knowing where to place the emphasis as you are saying the words). When we quote sources from earlier periods where macrons have not been used, we have not included the macron to remain true to the original text. In the glossary, we have included both versions of the word (with and without macrons).

awa	river
hapū	cluster of extended families descended from an eponymous ancestor
iwi	tribe; nation
kai	food
Koko	grandfather (informal)
kōrero	conversing
Koro	grandfather (informal), shortened version of koroua
korowai	traditional Māori cloak
Kui	term of endearment for grandmother
manaakitanga	care; hospitality
mara kai	garden
marae	traditional place of gathering
moana	sea, large lake
Moe mai rā e Kui, moe mai rā	Eternal rest be granted to you Kui
mokopuna	grandchild
ngahere	forest, bush
Ngāti Haupoto	hapū of Taranaki
Ngāti Maru	iwi of central Taranaki
Ngāti Mutunga	iwi of north Taranaki and the Chatham Islands
Ngāti Raukawa	tribe from Maungatautari-Tokoroa area, some migrated from there with Te Rauparaha to the Ōtaki area
Ngāti Tama	iwi of north Taranaki, Wellington and parts of the northern South Island

Ngāti Toa	iwi south of Kāwhia, the Kapiti-Ōtaki area and parts of the northern South Island
Parininihi	coastal landmark in north Taranaki
pou	pillar
Pukearuhe	coastal settlement 30km north-east of Waitara, Taranaki
Rāhotu	located on the west coast of Taranaki
tangihanga	funeral
Taranaki Iwi	iwi of Taranaki
taurima	adopted, fostered, foster child
Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi	tribe of Whanganui
Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Mutunga	iwi entity of Ngāti Mutunga
Urenui Marae	small settlement in Taranaki
urupā	cemetery
wāhi	place
wahine	female
Waitara	suburb of Taranaki
whānau	family
whānau taurima	adopted family
whānau urupā	family cemetery
whare	house
wharepaku	toilet

