

One of the people teaching weaving in the Community House is Ngapuhi Brown. Ani Bosch talked to her about early life in the area.

Ani: Ko tetahi o nga kai mahi o te Community House i Kawakawa, ko Mrs Ngapuhi Brown o Pokapu He kainga kei muri atu i Otiria. Ko tenei wahine i whanau ki Pipiwai i te tau 1931, na no muri ake i te matenga o tana papa, ka haere ratou ki Motatau, a i reira ia e tupu ake ana, He wahine i tupu ake i roto, a, i waenganui hoki i te reo rangatira nei — i te reo Maori.

Ngapuhi: "There were 11 of us in our family, six girls and five boys. I'm the second to last. Anyway, ko te reo Maori tonu to matou reo i te kainga. Ko te korero hoki, 12 years koe e haere ai ki te kura ki te ako i te reo Pakeha. Tae mai koe ki te kainga, korero Maori".

I a maua e korero ana, e rere ana nga ringa o te wahine nei ki te whiri potae korari. Ko nga korari ko te variegated a te Pakeha. Koia hoki tana mahi i konei. He whakako i te tangata, wahine ranei ki te whiriwhiri korari. Tokorua ana tamahine i tana taha. Kua mohio ke ki tenei mahi.

Ani: Ka patai atu au ki a Ngapuhi, "Ka mutu, na wai ke koe i whakako ki tenei mahi?"

Ngapuhi: "Na taku mama ano ra hoki. E nohinohi ana ano au, ko taku mahi he wati (matakitaki) i a ia e mahi ana. No tetahi ra, ka patai penei mai ia. 'Hena, e hiahia ana koe mau tenei mahi e ko?' Ka penei atu au, 'Homai koa kia tarai ake au?' Pai tena. Kua mohio koe, kua mohio katoa o hoa ki te whiri korari i a koe iaiane'.



Mrs Ngapuhi Brown weaving a hat.

Na, koina taku mahi, he whakako. I tetahi ra, ka noho maua ko taku hoa i te taha o te rori i Pokapu ki te mahi paro. Pai mutunga a Lori ki te mahi nei. Kihai i roa, patere ana a maua paro mo ta matou hangi hei mahi moni mo te Community House nei.

Ani: Ka hoki ano ana korero mo nga ra i a ia i te kura o Motatau.

Ngapuhi: "I aua ra, hore kau ke matou i whakaetia kia korero Maori i te kura. Mahara ana ahau ki aua ra. No te taenga mai o te Maori Culture, katahi ano matou ka waiata i nga poi, te haka me te waiata-a-ringa. Ko Miss Paraha, ara, Mrs Witehira ra iaiane, raua ko Bill Hohepa. Pai noiho ta raua korero Maori. Engari matou nga tamariki, kore rawa."

Miss Ngapuhi Hoterene married Pouwhare Tiari Brown in Pokapu in 1952. She says, "I have lived there all my married life. We never left the farm, and they have been my happiest years too. We have 10 children, four girls and six boys. The eldest would be 30 now if he was alive, my youngest is 13."

When I first met Mrs Brown, she was in the Bone carving class. She was actually trying to saw through a piece of whale bone, and had started her piece of carving. I asked her how she came to be the tutor for weaving.

She replied, "Since Lori grabbed me in the street. I've been here since the beginning. I love it too."

So Mrs Ngapuhi Brown has become a vital part of the Community House and it's band of dedicated workers. A woman who is quiet, caring and comfortable to be with and near. To people like her, and her kind, "I thank you for allowing this story to be printed, these photographs to be shown and most of all, mo to aroha kia matou e rapu nei i nga taonga tuku iho a nga matua, a nga tupuna. Tena koutou katoa."

Mrs Ngapuhi Brown bone-carving with saw at left.

