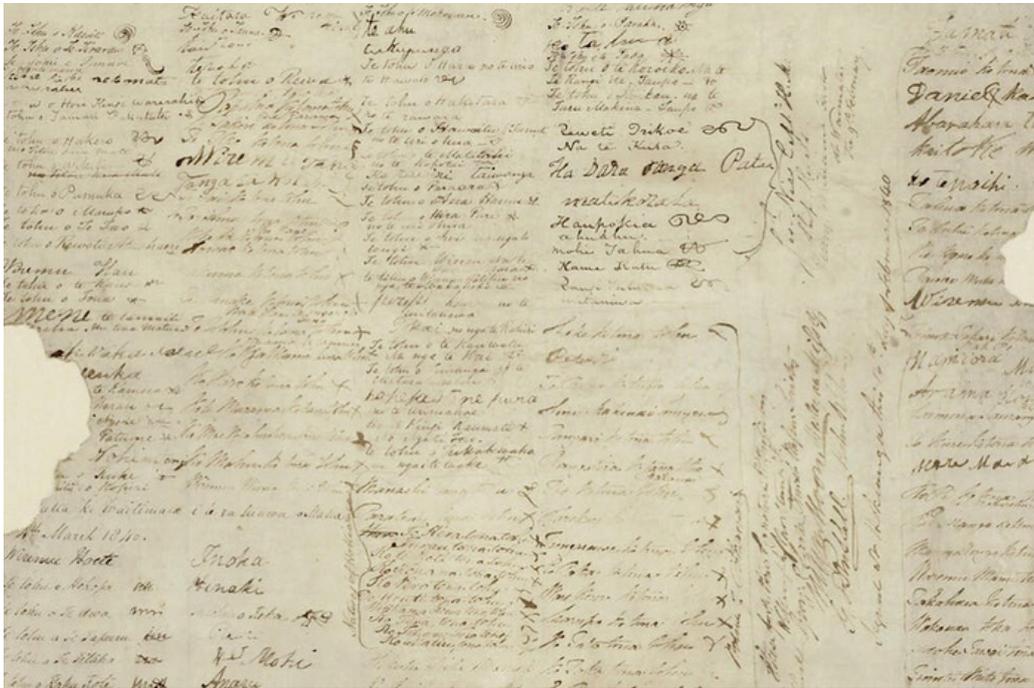


EARLY ENCOUNTERS

Signing of the Treaty in Kaitaia

Curated From The Te Ahu Museum Collections



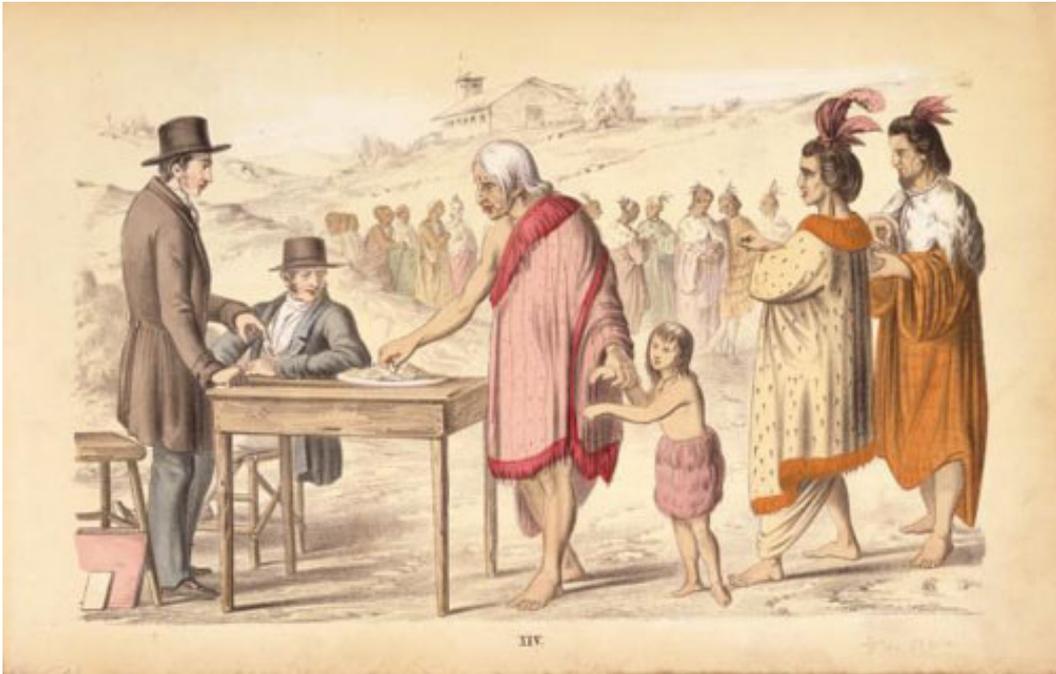
Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Archives New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand.

The Treaty was initially signed at Waitangi on February 6, 1840, with a number of chiefs from the Bay of Islands area signing the document.

Although this date came to be recognised as the formal authorisation date of the Treaty, Lieutenant Governor Hobson recognised that he required signatures from tribes and chiefs beyond the number present at the initial signing to achieve broader ratification and confirmation.

To this end Hobson and his colleagues set out on a journey across the north to seek further signatures from leading Māori to add to the Treaty. This included stops at Waimate and at Mangungu on the Hokianga Harbour. Then Hobson went further south but while on a journey to engage Māori in Port Nicholson and Waitematā he suffered a stroke.

Although Hobson would slowly recover, Colonial Secretary Willoughby Shortland took the lead in securing more signatures for the Treaty. In April 1840, Shortland sailed with a British delegation to Awanui and then into Kaitaia on the schooner New Zealander, to be greeted by a haka and musket fire by the people of Te Rarawa.



After the signing of the Treaty in Kaitaia, Panakareao standing behind the child.
 Ref: PUBL-0151-2-014. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand

On April 28, 1840, sixty Te Rawara chiefs met the delegation on the lawn and veranda of missionary William Gilbert Puckey in Kaitaia.

Kaitaia Māori had concerns about unregulated land sales and trade, and about the behaviour of British traders and settlers. They were also wanting surety that chiefly status would be intact or enhanced; and that Māori would be able to benefit from trade with the British. It wasn't guaranteed that all would sign the Treaty.

Nopera Panakareao had met with the British delegation the night before the signing. He had received assurances, perhaps disingenuous, about these concerns and also about the ongoing sovereignty of the Māori people. So when he spoke on April 28, asserting his right as paramount chief, he felt confident enough to address his people:

*"Kō te atakau o te whenua I riro I a te Kuīni, kō te tīnana o te whenua I waiho ki ngā Māori."
 'What have we to say against the Queen, the shadow of the land will go to her but the
 substance will remain with us'.*

He urged the other chiefs to sign, and unanimously they did. There was an exchange of gifts, potato, kumara, pigs and dried shark from the Māori; blankets and tobacco from the British.

The Kaitaia Treaty signing was important. It added ratification and the strength of the Te Rawara people to the earlier signatures. It was an important part of the north to add to the list of signatories.

The Treaty was signed in good faith by Te Rarawa and Ngāti Kahu rangatira like Panakareo and Tauhara and was only signed after there had been time to interpret the intent of the Treaty and to receive British assurances about that intent.



Hei Tiki, thought to have belonged to Panakareao who gifted it to Rev Matthews circa 1850.
Taonga Māori collection, Te Ahu Museum.

Despite this, within a year Panakareao had changed his perspective. Unrest was occurring across the north, and the concerns Māori had before signing the Treaty were now evident. He reversed his prophecy, believing now that the substance had gone in fact to the Crown.

The initial optimism that the Treaty would bring order; lead to equal trade and maintain rangatiratanga was soon in doubt.

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