

AOTEAROA

Our Whakapapa,
Our Stories



Conflict: NZ Wars
Wellington

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Introduction

The Wellington War arose over disputes over Māori opposition to Pākehā settlement in the Hutt Valley. Māori were evicted from their villages to make way for Pākehā who believed they had purchased land from the New Zealand Company. Due to the political turbulence of the times some iwi chose to engage in military resistance in opposition to the Crown, while other iwi supported the imperial soldiers to enforce the eviction of Māori living in the Hutt Valley and prevent an escalation of war in the Wellington region.

This booklet explores the actions of

- The New Zealand Company and its land purchases in Wellington
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi The Treaty of Waitangi
- How the impact of the Musket Wars influenced the decisions made by the different iwi groups to support Pākehā settlement or to oppose it
- The resulting conflicts that arose over contested land ownership

The New Zealand Company

This company was founded in the United Kingdom in the early 1800s. It was formed with the intention to profit from the speculation on land purchased from Indigenous people, and sold to British settlers. The Company board members included members of parliament, aristocrats and a prominent magazine publisher, who, by virtue of their connections, were able to lobby the government to push forward their agenda.



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In the 1830s, Edward Gibbon Wakefield devised a scheme to promote an opportunity to create a model English society in the Southern Hemisphere. Large tracts of prime land would be bought for absurdly cheaply sums from Māori and sold to investors. They would then induce migrant labourers and paupers to work their land with the promise of being able to eventually purchase their own small parcel of land. Land workers would form the basis of a new society. Over time, the population would increase, society would expand, and economic opportunities would grow. Investors in the company were promised 100 acres of farmland and one acre of town land. This promotion saw 1000 orders sold in a month. Free passage to New Zealand for mechanics, agriculturalists, and other land workers, was used to promote interest in the scheme. Other promotion campaigns made promises that could not be met.

The New Zealand Company offered Māori land for sale which they did not own. Their business practices were opposed by the British Colonial Office and the Church Missionary Society who felt a declaration of British sovereignty over New Zealand, and regulated systems of land purchase from Māori would be of greater benefit to the British Empire than a private carve up of land. This would afford better protection of Māori interests.

In 1839, the New Zealand Company was alarmed to learn the British Parliament was intending to enact legislation for the colonisation of New Zealand that mandated land would be able to be bought only from the government. The company moved quickly to purchase Māori land before its activities were curtailed.

With the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 and the pre-emption clause where Māori were prohibited from selling land to anyone but the government, the New Zealand Company found itself in a precarious position where it did not have enough land for the settlers to whom they had already 'sold' land. It created the conditions for conflict between Pākehā arrivals to Wellington who believed their claim to Māori land was valid, and Māori who had a different interpretation of their transactions with the New Zealand Company.

15,500 colonisers arrived via the New Zealand Company, and three of its settlements: Wellington, Whanganui, and Dunedin, became main centres and provided a foundation for on-going colonisation, and the genesis of provincial government, which was enacted in 1853.

The company was unable to generate a profit for their shareholders and surrendered its charter to trade in 1849.

Questions

Why did the New Zealand Company promote New Zealand as an opportunity for British paupers?

Why did the British Government want to be the sole buyer of Māori land?

Te Tiriti o Waitangi The Treaty of Waitangi



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Te Tiriti o Waitangi The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 by William Hobson on behalf of Queen Victoria and Britain, and by over 500 Māori chiefs. Five years earlier the British parliament had acknowledged the sovereignty of the United Tribes of New Zealand, and with growing French and American interest in New Zealand a treaty with the chiefs was considered expedient.

There is an English language Treaty of Waitangi and a Māori language Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The treaty negotiations were rushed, and so Te Tiriti o Waitangi does not convey the same meaning of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The difference in translation and whether Māori ceded sovereignty to the British Crown, or agreed only to comply with the governance Māori viewed as necessary at a time when many Pākehā operated outside of the law, remains the basis for Māori assertion of their tino rangatiratanga – a sovereign people with political power over their own lives.

The Courts and the Waitangi Tribunal have located the core meaning of the Treaty in the exchange of law-making power for the protection of chiefly authority. At the time of the Treaty signing, Māori outnumbered Pākehā settlers by 40 to one, and the tribes represented a powerful military force. It seems unlikely Māori would have agreed to the unqualified transfer of their authority to the new arrivals. It is more probable they understood the Treaty guaranteed the continuation of tribal force and tribal affairs. www.tpk.govt.nz/tpk-treaty-overview-2001

Article 2 of the Treaty of Waitangi promised Māori exclusive and undisturbed possession of their lands, rivers, and taonga, yet within 50 years of its signing Māori had lost more than 50% of their lands.

Questions

*How did the signing of The Treaty of Waitangi serve British interests?
What were Māori expectations from Te Tiriti o Waitangi?*

Supporting Links

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDM-Ct21N4I>

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/treaty/the-treaty-in-brief>

The Musket Wars

The end of the Napoleonic War, and the War of 1812 between Britain and America saw a glut of good quality muskets for sale at relatively cheap prices. Māori were able to arm themselves by trading with American whalers, and Sydney merchants.

The acquisition of muskets enabled various tribes to pursue utu with former foes. Other tribes were displaced as they migrated south to avoid war. The Musket Wars changed tribal boundaries and upended the balance of power which had been tempered by seasonal logistics, the availability of food supplies, and centuries old traditional relationships.

Iwi that migrated to the Kāpiti Coast, Wellington, and Hutt Valley and had not been customary owners prior to the 1820s were Ngāti Toa and Ngāti Raukawa from Waikato, Te Ati Awa and Ngāti Tama from North Taranaki, and Ngāti Rangatahi from the Whanganui River. These recent arrivals negotiated and maintained (at times fractious) relationships with each other as they sought to establish rights over resources such as forests and land for cropping. The original people Muaupoko, confined within the Horowhenua region, were outnumbered and diminished in power. The Treaty of Waitangi recognised tribal boundaries as they existed in 1840.

Questions

*What did Māori trade for muskets?
How do contemporary nations negotiate agreements with each other?*

Conflict in Wellington

Tensions in Wellington grew from a Te Ati Awa decision in 1839 to sell land to the New Zealand Company. Te Ati Awa needed to purchase muskets to strengthen their position against Ngāti Toa and Ngāti Raukawa dominance. The land the settlers

believed they had bought in the Hutt Valley was occupied and under cultivation by Ngāti Rangatahi and Ngāti Tama.

An 1842 inquiry by a commissioner appointed by the Colonial Secretary Lord John Russell found the New Zealand Company purchases to be contested by the various iwi living in the area, and the company had not done due diligence to ascertain who the owners were. Despite the findings of the inquiry, pressure mounted to evict Ngāti Rangatahi and Ngāti Tama from the Hutt Valley. Rangatira from Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Raukawa, and Te Ati Awa wrote to Governor George Grey supporting his actions to facilitate Pākehā settlement in the Hutt Valley and to establish the Queen's law.



George Grey

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Subsequently, troops from the 58th, 96th, and 99th Regiments marched up the valley in February 1846 and destroyed Ngāti Rangatahi and Ngāti Tama homes, and hundreds of acres of cultivations.

Extra troops were garrisoned at Boulcott's Farm, and Grey declared martial law in the Wellington region. The following month W.H. Gillespie and his son were killed as utu. Grey was concerned that the Hutt Valley would become a haven for disaffected Māori and sought to organise support from those rangatira with whom he had formed political alliances, notably Te Ati Awa and Ngāti Toa.

A major rift ensued between Te Rangihaeata, a famous Ngāti Raukawa fighting chief, and Ngāti Toa. Te Rangihaeata objected to Grey's resolve to evict Māori from the Hutt Valley and threw his support behind Ngāti Rangatahi.

After being informed that Ngāti Rangatahi and Ngāti Tama had departed, Grey's hopes for an acceleration of Pākehā settlement were dashed when an attack was launched on the Hutt Valley military encampment by the leading rangatira of the upper Whanganui River, Topine Te Mamaku, to support his Ngāti Rangatahi relations.

In response the garrison of troops was increased, augmented by Te Ati Awa warriors.

Skirmishing continued in the area, and Grey determined a show of force was necessary to deter Māori from undervaluing British power, and challenging British authority.

Te Rauparaha, the paramount Ngāti Toa chief, was imprisoned as Grey now believed him to be aiding and abetting 'rebel' Māori moving along the Kāpiti Coast to support the Māori resistance in the Hutt Valley. The imprisonment of Te Rauparaha did not deter some Ngāti Toa from a continued alliance with Grey, notably the rangatira Rawiri Puaha.

In early August 1846, Grey directed 63 militia and 240 allied Māori led by Rawiri Puaha and Wi Tako to attack Te Rangihaeata's pa at Pauatahanui. Te Ati Awa rangatira Wiremu Kīngi advised Grey he would block any movement by Te Rangihaeata's supporters along the Kāpiti Coast. In less than two decades Wiremu Kīngi would be defending land in Waitara from imperial troops attempting to enforce the contested sale and purchase of Te Ati Awa land.

Te Rangihaeata's men withdrew from their pā, and were pursued by the Māori allies. Bush fighting continued until the middle of August when Topine Te Mamaku and Te Rangihaeata were forced to retreat having run out of provisions. For the time being, with Te Mamaku forced to return to Whanganui, and Te Rangihaeata to the south of Manawatu, they no longer posed any significant threat to the Pākehā settlements of Wellington and the Hutt Valley.

Questions

*How would you react if your family was evicted from their home?
Why was Grey supported by the Māori allies?*

Summary

Iwi who migrated to Wellington during the Musket Wars had to negotiate competing interests for resources. Some iwi felt alliances with the Crown provided benefits such as opportunities to trade, acquire muskets, and protection from utu arising from the musket war conflicts.

The New Zealand Company did not carry out due diligence when purchasing Māori land, and sold land to Pākehā it did not own. It could not meet the settler demand for land it had presold.

Governor Grey determined to evict Ngāti Rangatahi and Ngāti Tama who were living in the Hutt Valley. Their villages and cultivations were destroyed to make way for Pākehā settlement. Grey was supported in his actions by Te Ati Awa and factions within Ngāti Toa. All four iwi had migrated to Wellington during the musket wars.

Te Rangihaeata and Topine Te Mamaku supported Ngāti Rangatahi against their forced eviction. Te Rangihaeata refused to submit to Grey's authority and his pā at Pauatahanui, Wellington was attacked by imperial troops and large numbers of Māori supporters of Grey. Te Rangihaeata and Topine Te Mamaku retreated to Manawatu and Whanganui.

The success in bringing these two powerful fighting chiefs into line was due to the support given by Grey's Māori allies. Without their support Grey would've been unable to enforce the eviction of Ngāti Rangatahi and Ngāti Tama from the Hutt Valley nor force the retreat of the fighting chiefs Te Rangihaeata and Topine Te Mamaku from Wellington.

The Māori allies chose to exercise their rangatiratanga and form alliances with Grey as equals. Their motivations for such an alliance must be considered within the context of the musket wars, the internal iwi migration that occurred, and a rapidly changing world.

Questions

*In the 18th and 19th century the British Empire was an international economic and military superpower. Which countries are superpowers today?
Do you think the enemies of New Zealand's friends should be our enemies too?*

Supporting Links

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/war/wellington-war>

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/people/sir-george-grey>

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/te-rangihaeata>

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/keyword/new-zealand-company>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand_Company

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Crosby, R.D. (2015) Kūpapa. Penguin Random House New Zealand Ltd

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