

AOTEAROA

Our Whakapapa,
Our Stories



Conflict: NZ Wars
Taranaki

Taranaki Wars

The Taranaki Wars provides a lens to support inquiry into the cultural, economic, political, and social forces that span the colonisation of Aotearoa, and the stories that have shaped our nation. Throughout the 1840s and 1860s, Pākehā lobbied the Crown to buy more Māori land. As the Pākehā population increased so did their pressure, and Māori began to organise to resist further loss of their land.

The following topics are discussed:

- He Whakaputanga Declaration of Independence of the United Tribes of New Zealand
- Tiriti o Waitangi, Treaty of Waitangi
- A Decade of War in Taranaki
- Parihaka – A New Resistance

1835 He Whakaputanga Declaration of Independence of New Zealand



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The Declaration of Independence asserted that sovereign power of New Zealand resided with the Confederation of United Tribes (Māori), and that no foreigners could make laws. The Declaration of Independence was acknowledged by the British Parliament in 1836 as a mechanism to increase British influence and control over New Zealand. The rangatira (chiefs) who signed were continuing a tradition of safeguarding their people in the face of rapid change and challenges posed by British, French, and American contact. The rangatira wished to strengthen their alliance with Great Britain, and assert Māori authority to the wider world.

Supporting Links

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/culture/declaration-of-independence-taming-the-frontier>

Questions

What benefits and safeguards did the rangatira feel an alliance with Britain would bring?

How did the Declaration of Independence serve British interests?

1840 Te Tiriti o Waitangi, The Treaty of Waitangi

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.



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There is an English language

Treaty of Waitangi and a Māori language Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The treaty negotiations were rushed, and so the Māori Te Tiriti o Waitangi does not convey the same meaning of the English 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 for a civil society 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.

Article 2 of the Treaty of Waitangi (English version) 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.

Supporting Links

www.tpk.govt.nz/tpk-treaty-overview-2001

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

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

Questions

How did the signing of The Treaty of Waitangi serve British interests?

What were Māori expectations from Te Tiriti o Waitangi?

North Taranaki 1860 - 1861

Tensions rose in New Plymouth in the late 1850s, with Pākehā settlers demanding that Governor Thomas Gore Browne open up access to Taranaki Māori land. Under pressure, Gore Browne accepted a dubious sale from a minor chief, of six hundred acres of Te Āti Awa land, at the mouth of the Waitara river.

The sale was disputed as a fraudulent transaction by paramount chief Wiremu Kīngi Te Rangitaake and the vast majority of Te Āti Awa. When their attempts at negotiation stalled, the surveying of the disputed Waitara land was interrupted. The British army stationed in New Plymouth, immediately occupied the disputed block, and in 1860 Colonel Charles Gold ordered an attack on Te Āti Awa at Te Kohia pā. Gold then moved to relieve a settler stockade at Ōmata, threatened by the close presence of Ngāti Ruanui building Kaipopo pā, six kilometres south west of New Plymouth. Gold, his British regulars, and local militia came under attack from Ngāti Ruanui, and retreated, while Kaipopo was taken by sixty British naval men. Garrison numbers at Waitara were quickly reinforced, and Te Āti Awa gathered at Puketakauere Pā to assert their mana and ownership, and visibly threaten Devon Road, the main link between New Plymouth and Waitara. In June 1860 Gold launched an attack on Puketakauere and was defeated by an agile Te Āti Awa fighting force.

Following the defeat at Puketakauere Major General Thomas Pratt took command of the British army in Taranaki. The British army abandoned open assaults, of the type responsible for their defeat at Puketakauere, in favour of sapping (tunnelling) to approach a pā. Throughout September 1860, Pratt launched raids on Te Āti Awa strongholds along the Waitara river, and by constructing small redoubts in quick succession, he enabled the advancing British army to apply pressure until Te Āti Awa were eventually pushed back upriver. By March 1861, the North Taranaki war had become too costly for the Crown to pursue, and Māori faced their own challenges of seasonal food demands. This created space on both sides to negotiate a truce for the time being, and the Crown turned its attention to the fertile Māori land of the Waikato.

Supporting Link

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/new-zealand-wars/page-4>

Questions

- What did the settlers want to use the land for and who were the local militia?
- Why were Taranaki Māori resisting pressure to sell their land?

Pai Mārire 1864 – 1866

Born in the early 1820s, Te Ua Haumene founded Pai Mārire and the Hauhau faith in 1862 as a religious, political movement to inspire continued resistance to an aggressive Crown set on acquiring Māori land. He was baptised a Christian by John Whiteley who had established the Wesleyan mission in Kāwhia in 1834. Te Ua Haumene served in the Waimate mission station in Taranaki, where he took services, and continued his study of the Bible. He was an innovative spiritual thinker who believed Māori interests were best served by separation from the theology and ritual of the missionary church and purified of missionary error.

The right of Māori to defend their territorial boundaries against the unjust seizure of their land was central to his liberation theology where he linked the persecution of Māori to the persecution of the Jews. Although Te Ua Haumene's goal was to create a peaceful and harmonious society underpinned by the quality of Pai Mārire (goodness and peace) being the true nature of God, the context of continued Crown aggression meant conflict was inevitable. In 1863, the New Zealand Settlement Act proclaimed all of Taranaki a confiscation area empowering the government to seize Māori land under the pretext of punishing them for their 'rebellion' against the Crown.

Pai Mārire influence spread outward from Taranaki to the upper reaches of Whanganui River with the intention of liberating the Whanganui township. In 1864, a ritualised encounter on Moutoa Island, a traditional battle ground of Whanganui River Māori, was fought between Hauhau supporters, and kūpapa Māori loyal to the Crown who did not support an assault on Whanganui town. The encounter was fought according to Māori tradition to minimise loss of life. The kūpapa were victorious on the day.

Undeterred, Pai Mārire adherents continued to agitate for Māori liberation from England which Te Ua Haumene regarded as a global oppressor. Although instructed by Te Ua Haumene to proceed peaceably, Hauhau messengers to the East Coast incited militant action, and an Anglican missionary to Ōpotiki, C.S. Völkner, was killed for spying in 1865. Völkner's execution provided a 'reason' for Crown violence in the East Coast where fighting continued at intervals until 1872. Te Ua Haumene's political aspirations evolved to regard Māori military resistance as not viable nor sustainable. His call to give up arms was not supported by Taranaki Māori, who, seeing the military escalation by Crown forces to enforce land confiscations unfolding before their eyes, as the very reason to not disarm nor give up the fight to defend their land.

Te Ua Haumene started peace talks with government officials, and in 1866 signed a declaration of allegiance to the Crown. He was then taken into custody, as a prisoner of Governor George Grey, and paraded around Auckland to demonstrate the failure of Hauhau resistance. Te Ua Haumene died later that same year, still urging non-violent resistance. He may be regarded as the originator of Taranaki non-violent resistance, which influenced the strategies of Tiitokowaru, Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi.

Supporting Links

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1t79/te-ua-haumene>

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/new-zealand-wars/page-8>

Questions

Why did Te Ua Haumene want to move away from the Christian missionaries?
What factors may have influenced Te Ua Haumene's decision to sign a declaration of allegiance to the Crown?

Titokowaru 1867 – 1869

When Te Ua Haumene died Tītokowaru assumed his mantle, and Pai Mārire was integrated into his manifesto of Māori nationalism to hold on to Māori land. The original vision of peace and reconciliation remained, and Tītokowaru would embark on his military campaigns only when negotiations with the Crown failed.

Throughout 1866, 'bush scouring' or surprise, violent attacks on unarmed Māori villages were favoured tactics of Imperial General Trevor Chute and Lieutenant Colonel Thomas McDonell to demoralise and weaken the Māori population. The Māori survivors of this cruel strategy were forced to eke out a living in the mountainous inland bush, and when starvation eventually overcame them, return to the arable lowlands where they were reduced to squatting on government land – their land - that had been confiscated! In this volatile and unstable environment, Tītokowaru began an arduous 18month long peace campaign to negotiate a reconciliation with the Crown, avert further suffering, and secure Māori interests. The Crown would not countenance any peace with Taranaki Māori who would not accept the confiscation of their land.

In 1868, accelerating Pākehā settlement on the best, most fertile of the confiscated land, continued to impact on the capacity of Tītokowaru's people to feed themselves. He and his warriors implemented a strategy of 'muru', seeking compensation from Pākehā for their losses, usually relieving Pākehā of their goods and horses. Outrage ensued, and some of Tītokowaru's men were imprisoned for theft. Shortly after, a dispute arose over property and tree cutting rights at Māwhitiwhiti, which led to the killing of three sawyers. Tītokowaru's pursuit of peace was over. In response, the Patea Field Force, the largest colonial force to take the field, was assembled with the addition of 100 Forest Rangers led by Major Gustavus Von Tempsky.

Tītokowaru's next move was to attack a redoubt at Turuturumōkai, close to the township of Hāwera, with the object of inflicting an embarrassing defeat on the colonial forces, and a tactical advantage in determining the next stage of the war. Although Māori were unable to breach the redoubt walls, 10 members of the armed constabulary, along with the officer in command, Captain Frederick Ross, were killed. Tītokowaru had succeeded in provoking the colonial forces under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas McDonell, to attack him at Te Ngutu o te Manu, the central village of his Ngā Ruahine people, and the headquarters from where he had directed his peace campaign.

On 21 August 1868, Te Ngutu o te Manu was attacked but victory for either side was inconclusive. Another assault was made the following month, and as the colonial forces approached, Ngā Ruahine opened fire from concealed positions within the forest killing 24 of McDonnell's men including the celebrated bush ranger leader Von Tempsky. McDonnell retreated and was relieved of his command following this defeat.

Colonel George Whitmore replaced McDonnell, and attacked Tītokowaru at Moturoa, inland from Waverley, in November 1868. Whitmore's assault proved ineffective against Tītokowaru's defences of ramparts, and concealed riflemen. With colonial casualties mounting, and the engagement clearly won by Tītokowaru, Whitmore and his troops retreated to Waverley.

The final engagement between Crown and Tītokowaru ended early in 1869, when the assault on Taurangaika (near Waitōtara) discovered the pā had been abandoned, and Tītokowaru and his army had withdrawn into the bush. Whitmore, believing Tītokowaru's warriors to be scattered, decided formal confrontation between two armies unnecessary, and a return to 'bush scouring' would be more effective in putting an end to Tītokowaru and his resistance. The final, and dreadful phase to hunt down Tītokowaru and his supporters as they retreated inland saw Whitmore offer a cash incentive of five pounds a warrior, ten pounds a chief, and 1,000 pounds for Tītokowaru, dead or alive. Captured Māori women were also given to colonial and kūpapa troops as involuntary sexual partners.

Due to reports of large numbers of Ngāti Maniapoto gathering north of New Plymouth, and the decision by kūpapa to discontinue their support in pursuit of Tītokowaru for fear of triggering hostilities with Waikato Māori, Whitmore's field force shrank to 400 men, and much to his disappointment, Whitmore lacked the capacity to continue his pursuit. Tītokowaru remained free and independent, although diminished, and Whitmore was humiliated by his dependence on kūpapa warriors, and his lack of a decisive victory against Tītokowaru.

Over the following year, colonial troops patrolled South Taranaki, ruthlessly taking vengeance on Māori fugitives from the war. The Pakakohe tribe who surrendered on the promise they would not be harmed, were imprisoned, and the men sentenced to hard labour in Dunedin.

In the early 1870s, Tītokowaru returned to his tribal lands in central Taranaki, and was able to maintain his border against Crown intrusion due to their lack of capacity to enforce the land confiscations, and open up the area for Pākehā settlement.

Tītokowaru subsequently aligned himself with Te Whiti o Rongomai and reconverted to what had been his original view, and that of Te Ua Haumene that reconciliation and justice could be achieved through peaceful means if the government was willing to abandon its illegal land confiscation policy.

Tītokowaru was arrested when Parihaka was invaded and he spent eight months in jail. He died in 1888 and was buried secretly. His last known public act was to retrieve Von Tempsky's sword from its hiding place, break it, and bury it with the words, "*Let war be returned to the great nations of the earth.*"

Supporting Links

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=51248187>

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/new-zealand-wars/page-9>

Questions

What motivated Tītokowaru to search for a peaceful reconciliation at the beginning and end of the war?

What factors impacted on the Crown's capacity to wage war in Taranaki?

Parihaka – A New Resistance

By 1867 the rangatira leaders of Parihaka, Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi were looking for a way to end the slaughter of their people without surrendering the land. The cost of war was too high a price for Māori, and another way to resist land confiscations had to be found. The rangatira of Parihaka asserted ownership of their lands arguing the confiscations were unjust, illegal, and void. There would be no surrender of the land, and peace would be achieved through negotiations as equals with the government. Instead of a bush fortress, an open clearing by the banks of the Waitotoroa river, and in view of the mountain and sea, was chosen for the site of Parihaka. King Tawhiao (Waikato, Kīngitanga) sent 12 of his rangatira to live at Parihaka. Pākehā visitors were welcomed with courtesy and hospitality.

Over the next decade Parihaka continued to flourish and Pākehā media reported the village was orderly, had its own mill and bakery, the largest of cultivations anywhere in New Zealand, and its people were thriving. The number of permanent occupants at this time has been estimated at around 2000, swelling to over 4000 people at times.

Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi advocated for an alternative political strategy to military engagement based on the principles of non violent resistance, self sufficiency, and communal prosperity for both Māori and Pākehā.

'The year of the plough' (1879) saw unarmed Parihaka men plough furrows on Pākehā settler farms close to New Plymouth and Hawera. Te Whiti o Rongomai explained the ploughing was not directed against the settlers, rather it was to plough the belly of the government to force a declaration regarding the land confiscations. Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi argued their stand was not against individual Pākehā but what the government did in their name. They appealed to landless Pākehā and advocated for all the poor – Māori and Pākehā – against the oppression and power of the government. As Parihaka ploughmen were arrested and sent to jail, more Parihaka men would return the next day and resume ploughing fields. The Māori Prisoners' Trial Act (1879) declared the ordinary course of law be suspended, and trials be postponed indefinitely. Taranaki jails were soon overflowing with Parihaka men and they were taken to the South Island, imprisoned without trial, forced to do hard labour, and given meagre rations. Many died.

On the night of October 19, 1881, an emergency meeting of the Executive Council of Government was called. A proclamation was issued giving Te Whiti o Rongomai and his people 14 days to accept the breaking up of their land, and the Parihaka settlement, or it would pass away from them forever.

Just after midnight on 5 November 1881, the men, women, and children of Parihaka assembled on the marae to wait. At 7am a forward unit of constabulary advanced on the main entrance to Parihaka to be met by children singing and skipping. The cavalry was brought up to clear a path through but the horses shied away when the children took off their shoulder mats and shook them. The bugle sounded the alarm and the surrounding troops swept down onto the marae. Defence Minister Bryce ordered Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi to be arrested.

In less than three weeks Parihaka, the largest and most prosperous Māori village in history, was reduced to ruins. Night raids, looting of taonga (treasures), destruction of food crops, slaughter of livestock, indiscriminate arrests of menfolk, and sexual assaults on women were tactics employed to demoralise and drive out the people of Parihaka. Over 2000 Māori men, women, and children were displaced, and government agent Hursthouse was able to survey his road through the centre of the Parihaka block.

After six months in a New Plymouth jail and a mockery of a trial, Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi were sent to the South Island to be detained indefinitely under special legislation (West Coast Peace Preservation Bill 1882) to thwart an appeal to the Supreme Court. Such an appeal might have found in favour of Parihaka and the government could not risk that.

In March 1883 an order for their release arrived with conditions they must hold no more meetings and resist from raising strife in the land. Upon their release from prison Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi returned to Parihaka determined to rebuild and repair the damage inflicted by the soldiers. Protest action continued and Te Whiti o Rongomai was arrested again in 1886 and spent six months in prison, and a further three months imprisonment in 1889, at 60 years of age.

Tohu Kākahi and Te Whiti o Rongomai both died in 1907, and their tangihanga drew many people to pay their respects.

In 1928 a Royal Commission (judicial enquiry) travelled throughout Taranaki to gather historical documentary evidence into the *'confiscations of native lands and other grievances alleged by natives.'*

Many Taranaki Māori who had been present at Parihaka as young people were able to appear before the Royal Commission (known informally as the Sim's Commission) to give testimony of the events under enquiry. The Commission's conclusions found the Government had pursued war in Taranaki in order to assert its' believed sovereignty over Māori, the Taranaki Māori were not rebels, and the land confiscations were unwarranted.

Supporting Links

<https://theconversation.com/how-nzs-colonial-government-misused-laws-to-crush-non-violent-dissent-at-parihaka-126495>

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/war/taranaki-wars>

<https://teatiawa.iwi.nz/history/government-inquiries-and-the-sim-commission/>

Questions

How was legislation used to disempower Parihaka resistance?

How did Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi assert ownership of their confiscated lands?

References

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Keenan, Danny. (2015) *Te Whiti o Rongomai and the Resistance of Parihaka*. Huia Publishers.

Parihaka Pā Trustees and Wellington City Gallery. (2000) *Parihaka The Art of Passive Resistance*. Victoria University Press.

Scott, Dick. (1975) *Ask That Mountain*. Heinemann/Southern Cross Ltd.

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/new-zealand-wars>