



Te Māori i te ohanga – Māori in the

Early trade with Pākehā

Early trade

In initial exchanges between Māori and Pākehā trade worked on two levels. The first was an extension to Pākehā explorers of the traditional practice of the ritualised gift exchange, where one gift incurred a requirement to reciprocate. Eruera Maihi Patuone said that in an encounter between his father, Tapua, and those on board the *Endeavour* in the Bay of Islands in 1769, his father threw fish to the 'tupua' (foreigner) as an offering. When Tapua went on board he received a red garment and corned meat.

The other type of exchange was bartering. Goods of a relatively similar value (in the eyes of both parties) were exchanged at the same time. For example, once Māori realised the value of nails as chisels they started to request them in return for goods they had – soon they began requesting longer nails as they were better for chiselling. Māori bartering skills developed with increased contact with Pākehā. Early visitors often commented on Māori bargaining skills – whether in terms of praise or resentment.

Acquiring goods for potatoes and pigs.

Potatoes were grown at Thames by 1801 and traded in the Bay of Islands by 1805. By 1810 potatoes were being grown and traded in the Foveaux Strait area by Māori – they may have been brought down by Ngāi Tahu from gardens in Queen Charlotte Sound. Potatoes were cultivated so extensively that by 1803 whaling ships were able to purchase them by the tonne.

Pigs were also important. Norfolk Island governor Philip Gidley King's gifts to Te Pahi of around 60 pigs in the late 1700s were probably the first used for breeding, in the north at least.

Whalers

From the beginning of the 1800s to 1840 whaling was the most significant industry in New Zealand for Europeans. Whalers created a huge market for potatoes grown by Northland Māori, and Māori also supplied the whalers with pigs. Soon Māori began working in the industry. Shore-based whaling was established around 1827–28. Māori continued whaling even after it was no longer profitable.

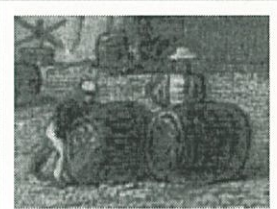
Early in the 19th century the expansion of whaling in the South Pacific created a huge market for potatoes grown by Northland Māori.

Becoming sailors

Many Māori took the opportunity to become sailors, often at the instigation of their chiefs. When



Potato crop



Paremata whaling station



Flax work

they returned to the tribe, often after years of being away, they would usually provide gifts for relatives and chiefs.

Early flax trade

A trade in flax began with Australia in the 1820s and peaked in the early 1830s. Trading stations were set up on the coasts of Northland, Waikato, Taranaki, Coromandel, Bay of Plenty, the East Coast, Southland, both sides of Cook Strait and Banks Peninsula.

Flax worked and traded by Māori was measured by the ton (roughly a tonne) and half-ton.

Musket wars

In the 1820s and 1830s the negative aspects of the new economy became obvious. Māori had entered into an arms race based on the acquisition of muskets. Tribes had begun to focus heavily on creating a surplus of produce to purchase muskets. Often the work involved in accumulating goods to purchase muskets left tribes unable to grow sufficient food for themselves. Additionally, the wars between tribes unsettled tribal boundaries.

Leadership

Despite tribes becoming involved in a new trading economy with Pākehā, they did not fundamentally change the way they organised the work of whānau and hapū.

The most significant change was the mass production of certain goods such as flax, potatoes, and timber for trading.

Biographies



James Cook, 1728–1779



Eruera Maihi Patuone, ?–1872



Te Pahi, ?–1810

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