

- 1841: The first settlers arrive in New Zealand in March aboard the *William Bryan*.
The first settlers arrive in Nelson in October aboard the *Whitby, Will Watch and Arrow*.
- 1842: Governor Hobson dies in Auckland and is succeeded by Willoughby Shortland as Administrator until a replacement governor arrives.
- 1843: Governor Robert FitzRoy takes up his appointment. The Northern Wars begin with a series of military engagements at sites such as Ruapekapeka.
- 1844: Hone Heke cuts down the flagstaff at Kororareka for the first of four times in a year.
- 1845: Hone Heke sacks Kororareka. The British government agrees to withdraw FitzRoy after long discontent among southern settlers, especially in Wellington, and is succeeded in November by George Grey, at the end of a term as Governor of South Australia.
- 1848: The Otago Association founds a Scottish settlement at Dunedin. A severe earthquake hits Wellington.
- 1850: The Canterbury Association founds its settlement at Christchurch, and the first four ships arrive.
- 1852: The New Zealand Constitution Act passed in Britain provides some self-government with wide powers over domestic affairs. Maori policy remains under the control of the Governor and foreign policy under the control of the British Government. Six provincial governments are established (Auckland, New Plymouth, Wellington, Canterbury, Nelson and Otago) with three more formed later as breakaway provinces (Hawke's Bay, Marlborough and Southland).
- 1853: National and provincial elections held, and Governor Grey leaves at the end of his term. Colonel Robert Wynyard becomes Administrator. Edward Gibbon Wakefield arrives in New Zealand for the first time.
- 1854: First General Assembly sits in Auckland.
- 1855: A massive earthquake hits Cook Strait. It raises land on the western side of Wellington Harbour and the Hutt Valley, and around the southern coast to the east of the town.
- 1856: Henry Sewell becomes the first Premier, but his administration lasts only a fortnight.

- 1860: The first battle of Taranaki.
- 1861: Gabriel Read dies and sparks the George Grey and Cape Colony.
- 1864: A truce is arranged with Maori in Taranaki and Grey begins to move against Waikato Maori.
- 1864: British troops are involved in the Waikato war against Maori, fighting battles at Rangiri, Orakau and Gate Pa.
- 1865: The General Assembly moves to Wellington, which was declared the new capital the previous year.
- 1867: Four Maori seats in Parliament are created. Post Office Savings Bank opens first branches in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Hokitika. Westland has become the centre of a second major gold rush.
- 1868: William Fox becomes Premier and Julius Vogel, his Colonial Treasurer, soon announces a programme of massive borrowing from overseas to finance immigration and the creation of a railways, telegraph and ports infrastructure. Te Kooti escapes from Chatham Island on *Rifleman* and sails to Gisborne where he soon begins guerrilla campaign against Colonial forces harassing him.
- 1869: Government Life Insurance Office set up by Parliament.
- 1872: Two Maori appointed to the Legislative Council.
- 1873: Westland becomes a province separate from Canterbury.
- 1875: Parliament abolishes the provinces from 1876.
- 1876: A one-man-one-vote Bill introduced by Sir George Grey, now an MP, is defeated. Voters still need a property qualification. The provinces are abolished.
- 1877: Grey becomes Premier, leading his Liberal Party, after a 'Continuous Ministry' led by Fox, Vogel and Harry Atkinson is defeated. Education Act provides free secondary schooling.
- 1878: Grey and Sir Robert Stout introduce a Bill to give suffrage for all men over twenty-one. Suffrage for women ratepayers is abandoned after gaining support in both the House and Legislative Council. A campaign to extend the suffrage continues with the support of some conservatives, particularly John Hall.