**TRADERS AND WHALERS**

**Trade**

Hawke’s Bay Maori’s first recorded interaction with Europeans was distinguished by trade. Four waka gathered alongside Captain Cook’s Endeavour on 10 October 1769 when it sailed near Te Mahia peninsula. The European crew received clothes, ornaments, pounamu and whalebone patu, spears, and a couple of waka paddles. In return Maori took away a collection of beads, trinkets, glass, Tahitian tapa cloth, an axe and a tomahawk.Encounters further south in the bay were punctuated by Maori shows of defiance, indicating that they were jealous of their territory, and were not afraid to physically defend it. Maori off the coast at Te Matau-a-Maui, or Cape Kidnappers, learnt that trading could be fatal, when they attempted to test the strength of the visitors, by ‘cheating’ on a trade, and, in the confusion that followed, kidnapped Tayeto, the son of Tupaia, Cook’s Tahitian guide and translator. One of the Maori abductors was shot, allowing Tayeto to escape, and two other Maori were also shot. Colenso was able to find out in 1851 that the dead were Whakaruhe and Whakaika, and that Te Ori was injured.Te Reo Areare, a coalition of Maori education groups, were reported in the Evening Post of 30 December 1995, as saying: ‘Maori believed their ancestors thought the Tahitian was being held by Captain Cook’s crew, and wanted to free him. The accusation of kidnapping was inaccurate’.

Despite this unfortunate incident, Maori, through trade with Cook, encountered new tools such as axes, and were given new vegetables to grow, such as cabbages and potatoes. They had also learnt that the musket was an essential item to have if a balance of power was to be maintained between two trading parties.

It is therefore no surprise that muskets were considered by Maori to be the most valuable item to secure. This was further fatally proved when Maori at Parapara and Te Ihu o te Rei, islands in Te Whanganui-a-Orotu, were slaughtered by invaders from the north and west. As a result one of the hapu was thereafter known as Ngati Matepu, or those who perished by the gun.One of the benefits of the retreat to Nukutaurua was to secure the support of Te Wera Hauraki, who had muskets, and that Te Mahia peninsula was on the irregular Pacific trade route. As Lambert wrote, ‘The possession of guns . . . became almost a mania’.

The traders who fulfilled this need for muskets and gun powder were often agents of Sydney based merchants. Barnet Burns, who later achieved some notoriety in England for his full facial moko, was the first such agent to set up operations in Hawke’s Bay. He was contracted by L B Montefiore and Co, who already had J W Harris working for them at Turanganui. Burns traded muskets, powder, blankets and tobacco for flax at Te Mahia from about 1829. To ingratiate himself as the ‘Pakeha’ of Te Wairoa, he married Amotawa, the daughter of the chief whose patronage he depended on.In his own account Burns wrote that he took full part in Maori society, from receiving moko, to fighting against other Maori, and eventually leading a hapu of a couple of hundred people as their chief.Putting to one side obvious reservations about the authenticity of Burns’ account, we are left with a record of someone who, for the eight years he was there, became immersed in the prevailing Maori culture. To remain at Te Wairoa, Burns had to rescind most aspects of his previous culture, and adopt those of the Maori on whose sufferance he remained.

This theme appears to continue with other traders, and especially whalers. For example Alexander Alexander arrived at Ahuriri in 1846, married Harata, of Ngati Te Upokoiri and who lived with her uncle at Poraiti, and set up trading stores at Onepoto (now Napier), Ngamoerangi (near Tangoio), and Waipureku (now Clive).

On behalf of Sydney merchants Cooper and Holt, W B Rhodes set up trading stations in Hawke’s Bay in 1839, leaving agents to husband pigs on a commission basis.Maori obviously did not accept all these traders. Rhodes’ Ahuriri agent, a Mr Simmons, had his store and goods razed by local Maori. At the end of 1841 Rhodes closed all his trading posts at Ahuriri, Te Mahia and Te Wairoa.

**Whaling**

To separate the impact of the whalers from that of the traders is to impose an artificial distinction. In reality the whalers, to survive, had to trade with Maori, and did. From the series of profiles that Lambert provided, many whalers also appeared to adopt the cultural norms of the Hawke’s Bay Maori with whom they were associated. This is evident in the number of Maori families who are descended from the whalers who married significant wahine, and thus substantiated their position within the various communities in which they lived. For example, John (Happy Jack) Greening’s descendant, K Greening, has a claim with the Tribunal regarding the Whangawehi block, Te Mahia peninsula, which was the original site of Happy Jack’s whaling and trading station.

The first station to be set up in Hawke’s Bay was that of the Ward brothers at Waikokopu in 1837. Others quickly followed, and by 1851 there were 140 Europeans manning 26 shore boats, operating from stations at Te Wairoa, Waikokopu, Moeangiangi, Whakaari (near Tangoio), Whakamahia, Kinikini and Cape Kidnappers.According to Lambert, some Maori operated their own boats, and Maori were employed as crew on European owned boats.Because the right (from 1842 predominantly sperm) whales only swam past Hawke’s Bay for part of the year, resident European whalers justifed their existence in the off-season by operating as traders. Wilson writes that Captain Ellis, who arrived from the Bay of Islands in 1837, married into a Waikokopu hapu, and ran a trading store to supplement his three whaling boats. He paid for Maori labour with goods.(It should be remembered that the English pound as a currency was not in sufficient quantity to be an effective medium until the late 1840s.) Apparently the whalers paid a yearly rent for whaling, fishing and occupation rights. Colenso recorded the example of William Morris, of the Rangaika station south of Cape Kidnappers, who was paying £5 per annum.

The Wellington Spectator, on 12 December 1854, described the Hawke’s Bay whalers as all having Maori wives and that they spoke a piebald language called, unreceptively, ‘whaler’s Maori’.Most reports from the time indicated that by the late 1850s the trade was in significant decline. Therefore those whalers who remained were likely to be the ones who stayed on as pastoral farmers and permanent traders, and were likely to have Maori wives and some understanding with a hapu as to use of land.

The ‘lawlessness’ of whaling communities in New Zealand is legendary, and Hawke’s Bay, it appears, was no exception. Joseph Mason wrote to McLean in 1851, complaining that his overseer, Samuel Harrington, following an intense bout of rum drinking, had attacked him with a blubber cutting spade, and the next day, ‘raving like a mad man took up an axx [sic] and threaten[ed] to kill all around’. Apparently he struck one of five Maori working for him on the back with the axe, but ‘did not do him much hurt . . . the Native running at the time’. Mason concluded that it ‘appear[ed] he did not wish to pay us by his behaviour’, and asked McLean to intervene.McLean’s response is unknown. Social activities of whalers most notably the drinking of copious amounts of rum for entertainment purposes was a new spectacle for Maori. Although Lambert believed that Maori did not join their whalers in such indulgence, and generally occupied a sober and moral high ground, William Colenso certainly feared the effect that alcohol would have on local Maori.Hawke’s Bay was described as a ‘favourite resort from justice’ for ship-jumpers, convicts from Australia, and elsewhere.In the 1840s at least, such men were safe from the reach of the fledgling British justice system, although there were a couple of notable examples of fugitives being arrested.It appears likely, however, that if shipwrecked on the Hawke’s Bay coast, as the Falco was on 26 July 1845, that the whalers would plunder any goods worth salvaging. As it happened, the Falco was carrying American muskets, gunpowder and rockets, possibly to be sold to the chiefs at war with the Government in the Bay of Islands.Wilson records other instances of wrecks being plundered.It is unclear how Maori viewed this behaviour by the whalers, yet with the presence of missionary families (the Colensos, the Hamlins, and the Williams), other examples of how Europeans conducted themselves were readily available.

So what was the effect that whalers and traders had on Maori in Hawke’s Bay? The most obvious is the contact it brought with men of many different parts of the world. By 1842 an American, Captain Perry, exercised a large influence in the Te Wairoa area, perhaps giving Maori a different understanding of British imperialism, than that supplied by British whalers and the missionaries. A number of the whalers came from the Australian colonies. Other ideas about the worth of becoming a British Colony are most likely to have been aired, certainly around 1840. The most concentrated area of whaling activity was on the Te Mahia peninsula, which coincided with the largest population of Maori at the time, including a number of the influential Hawke’s Bay and Wairarapa Ngati Kahungunu chiefs. Whalers would surely have passed on their thoughts about Kororareka – the possible effect of a large permanent settlement, and, from 1840, the imposition of customs duties. If they had not, then Maori who visited the Bay of Islands during this period, such as Te Hapuku and Renata Kawepo, may well have.Ideas concerning land ownership and alienation would surely have surfaced at this time as well.

As well as ideas, different work patterns were introduced. Maori were employed on whaling stations, and were also engaged in planting, harvesting and preparing flax for trade. Other foodstuffs were grown to supply the whalers, and husbandry of a variety of introduced animals was carried out. As a result of participation in the commercial market, according to A McKirdy, tension among chiefs and members of hapu resulted from disputes over land and resource use. O’Malley adds that such tensions worsened as Ngati Kahungunu chiefs became aware of the economic value that Europeans placed on their land.

**Focus Questions**

1. Think about and discuss all the ways that your life might be similar to that of a child living in Aotearoa before Pakeha settlers arrived.
2. Discuss the ways that your life is different from that of a Māori child before the Pakeha settlers arrived.
3. How do you think the Maori lives changed after interaction with Traders began? Take into account the trading of tools, food and muskets.
4. How do you think the Maori lives changed after interaction with Whalers began?
5. Did the Maori people benefit from these interactions?
6. Traders brought with them muskets. Do you think that this was of benefit to the Maori people? Why do you think this?