(Keane, 2009)

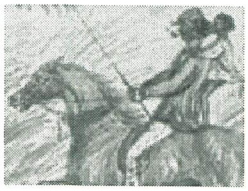
What's the story?
Encyclopedia of New Zealand

1814

Hōiho – horses and iwi

Introduction of horses

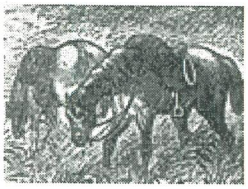
Europeans introduced horses to New Zealand from the early 19th century. At first horses were uncommon and expensive, so only chiefs owned them. Government officials often gifted horses to chiefs as a sign of goodwill.



Going to market (1st of 4)

Hapū (sub-tribes) banded together to buy horses, paying for them with large numbers of pigs or quantities of flax. Horses made overland travel faster, and probably helped bring neighbouring hapū and iwi (tribes) closer together.

From the 1840s, some tribes had significant numbers of horses and were able to gift them to other iwi. In some areas, Māori owned more horses than local Pākehā communities. By the 1850s, horses were the main form of land transport for Māori.

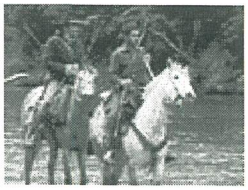


Wiremu Tāmihana

Horses were used by all iwi involved in the New Zealand wars of the 1860s.

Ngāpuhi

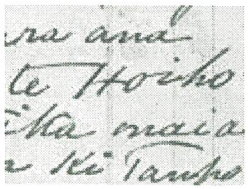
Ngāpuhi were the first tribe to own horses. The first horses in New Zealand were a stallion and two mares, which arrived at Rangihoua in the Bay of Islands on 22 December 1814. One of the mares was a gift from the governor of New South Wales to the Ngāpuhi chief Ruatara.



Horse riders in Te Urewera

Eruera Maihi Patuone, another Ngāpuhi chief, was gifted a horse named New Zealander by Governor George Grey. It won at the Auckland races.

Gift horses



Lament for horses

Iwi often acquired horses as gifts from other tribes. Te Arawa requested and received a horse named Taika from Eruera Patuone, who also gave a mare to Te Kohika of Tūhourangi.

Ngāti Tūwharetoa were given their first horse by Patuone's brother, Tāmati Wāka Nene. Tūwharetoa paramount chief Mananui Te Heuheu named his son Te Waaka after Nene, and sent him to live with Nene in the Hokianga. In 1842 Te Waaka returned to Taupō with a horse Nene had given him, escorted by a large Ngāpuhi party.

3rd

In 1875, a large group of Ngāti Raukawa visited the Taupō region on horseback. However, Parāone Taupiri and his wife came on foot, as their horses had recently died. Taupiri asked in a waiata (song) for horses from the Taupō chiefs. By then, they had so many that they gave him seven.

Taringa Kurī and the taniwha

Māui Pōmare told a story – possibly apocryphal – about one of the first horses in Wellington, which was brought ashore by a trader. The local Ngāti Tama people ran away when they saw the horse swimming to shore, thinking that 'a great taniwha [water monster] was making straight for us'.[1] One sailor tied a rope to the neck of the 'taniwha' and went to ride it. The sailors called to the local people, but the chief Taringa Kurī (also known as Te Kāeaea) was the only one who would approach the horse and ride it. The tribe then bought the horse by filling the ship's hold with muka (flax fibre) and covering the deck with pigs.

OBSERVATION - THE IMMENSE VALUE MAORI SAW IN HORSES

Tūhoe and horses

Te Maitaranui, an important Ngāi Tūhoe chief, first saw horses in the Bay of Islands. The tribe bought their first horse at Tūranga (Gisborne) around the 1840s. It was named Tūhoe, demonstrating its importance to the iwi. Later, Tūhoe members went to Auckland to purchase horses, paying for them with pigs and potatoes. The price of a horse was around 40 pigs.

Footnotes

1. Māui Pōmare, *Legends of the Māori*. Wellington: Harry H. Tombs, 1930, p. 119, http://www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-Pom02Lege-t1-body-d3-d7.html (last accessed 28 February 2008). › Back

Biographies

Tāmati Wāka Nene, ?–1871

Ruatara, ?–1815

Mananui Te Heuheu Tūkino II, ?–1846

Te Kāeaea, ?–1871

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