

Hōne Heke cuts down the British flagstaff - again

19 January 1845

MCH, 2020e

1844, 1861



The first Māori to sign the Treaty of Waitangi, Ngāpuhi chief Hōne Heke Pōkai soon became disenchanted with the consequences of colonisation. He expressed his outrage by repeatedly attacking the flagstaff on the hill above Kororāreka (Russell).

Hōne Heke chopping down the British flag is an enduring image in New Zealand history. Traditional Pākehā interpretations portrayed him as a 'rebel' who was finally subdued by 'good Governor' George Grey. In reality, questions of authority in the north remained unresolved well after 1840, years in which the Bay of Islands also lost its political and economic importance.

Te Haratua, Heke's right-hand man, first attacked the flagstaff in July 1844. The British re-erected it, but it was levelled twice in January 1845. A fourth attack on the flagstaff on 11 March signalled the outbreak of war in the north.

NB: King Sep 10 March but we use March, 11 March

4th The 'Flagstaff War' was no simple matter of Māori versus British – two Ngāpuhi factions squared off against each other. Heke and Kawiti fought both the Crown and

Ngāpuhi led by Tāmāti Wāka Nene. The fighting ended in a stalemate in January 1846 (see 11 January).

Read more on NZHistory

Kororāreka – A frontier of chaos?

Treaty events 1800-49 – Treaty timeline

Hōne Heke

Origins of the Northern War – The Northern War

Russell - roadside stories – A frontier of chaos?

Hōne Wiremu Heke Pōkai

External links

Heke's war in the north (Te Ao Hou)

Hōne Heke (DNZB)

Ngāpuhi - Early European contact (Te Ara)

∨ How to cite this page

'Hōne Heke cuts down the British flagstaff - again', URL: <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/hone-heke-cuts-down-british-flagstaff-for-a-third-time>, (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 24-Sep-2020

∨ How to cite this page

'Hōne Heke cuts down the British flagstaff - again', URL: <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/hone-heke-cuts-down-british-flagstaff-for-a-third-time>, (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 24-Sep-2020