

Chatham Islands

(MCH, n.d.[a])

Events In History

6 December 1922

Chatham Islanders vote in first election

Although the first elections for New Zealand's House of Representatives were held in 1853, it would be another 69 years before residents of the isolated Chatham Islands (Rēkohu or Wharekauri) were able to vote for members of Parliament. [Read more...](#)

4 July 1868

Te Kooti escapes from the Chathams

Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Tūruki of Rongowhakaata was arrested near Gisborne in 1865 after allegedly helping a 'rebel' Pai Mārire force. He became one of hundreds exiled to the remote Chatham Islands. [Read more...](#)

5 June 1866

Te Kooti exiled to Chathams

The future prophet and military leader was deported to the Chatham Islands with Pai Mārire prisoners. He had been accused of spying for the enemy while fighting alongside government troops. [Read more...](#)

Biography

Te Kooti

Te Kooti fought on the government side in the New Zealand Wars before being exiled to the Chatham Islands on charges of espionage. He later escaped back to the mainland and fought a long guerilla war against government forces.

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Articles

Te Kooti's war

Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Tūruki was one of the most significant Māori leaders of the 19th century. For nearly four years he waged a guerrilla war unlike any previous conflict in the New Zealand Wars. His influence continues to be felt in eastern Bay of Plenty and East Coast, where his Ringatū faith remains strong. [Read the full article](#)

Page 3 - Exile and deliverance

Chatham Island was home for Te Kooti and his fellow prisoners for two

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The people who became the Moriori arrived on the islands from Eastern Polynesia and New Zealand around 1400 AD. They had no contact with other people for about 400 years, and developed their own distinct culture. They were hunter-gatherers with strong religious beliefs, and outlawed war and killing. In 1790 an English ship, the Chatham, was blown off course and landed on the main island. Later European sealers, settlers and whalers arrived. In 1835 two Māori groups, Ngāti Tama and Ngāti Mutunga, invaded the Chatham Islands. They had left northern Taranaki due to warfare, and were seeking somewhere else to live. Moriori decided to greet them peacefully, but the Māori killed more than 200 Moriori and enslaved the rest. Māori grew vegetables and traded with the Europeans. By 1870 most of the Māori had returned to Taranaki. Some of the whalers stayed on the islands and there was intermarriage between the different ethnic groups.

[Read more on Te Ara...](#)

Meaning of place name

The first European to discover Chatham Island was Lieutenant William Broughton, commander of the armed tender Chatham, on 29 November 1790.

There is doubt whether Broughton named the islands after his vessel or after William Pitt, the earl of Chatham. Both may be true, but the fact that the smaller of the islands was named Pitt supports the latter supposition.