

KAIKOURA - HERITAGE

The First Settlers

The Kaikoura area has been home to people for more than 900 years. Archaeologists have found evidence of early Maori, sometimes called the moa hunters, because they hunted the large, flightless bird which is now extinct.

From the mid- 15th to the mid 16th century, the Waitaha people are believed to have settled here. They were followed by the Ngati Mamoe and then by the Ngai Tahu tribe. The Ngai Tahu, who came from the North Island in the 17th century, became the dominant South Island tribe by conquest and intermarriage with Ngati Mamoe. The Ngati Kuri hapu, or sub tribe of Ngai Tahu, settled in Kaikoura.

Te Rauparaha and Kaikoura

Tribal warfare was more common in the North Island where there were more tribes. In the early 19th century, Te Rauparaha, chief of the Ngati Toa, moved south from Kawhia conquering tribes on the west coast of the North Island. He established a pa on Kapiti Island, an ideal site for trading with European ships passing through Cook Strait.

Armed with a good supply of muskets from this trading, Te Rauparaha decided his next conquest would be Te Wai Pounamu (the South Island). Then he could acquire the precious pounamu (greenstone) for himself.

When the Kaikoura chief, Rerewaka, boasted he would rip Te Rauparaha's stomach open with a barracuda tooth if he attacked, revenge was inevitable.

In the fighting season of 1827 - 1828, Te Rauparaha crossed Cook Strait. After overwhelming tribes in the north of the South Island who had only traditional weapons, he sailed to attack Ngai Tahu at Kaikoura.

Although there were several pa on the Kaikoura Peninsula (14 pa sites have been identified) the people had only two muskets. When Te Rauparaha's canoes arrived, the Ngai Tahu people, not realising it was the enemy, went to the beach to greet them and were shot. At least 1000 Ngai Tahu were killed.

For some eight years warfare raged in the South Island with Te Rauparaha attacking Ngai Tahu strongholds, burning pa, slaying inhabitants and capturing slaves. Despite his many victories, he and the Ngati Toa did not establish occupation rights to the land. In 1836 the defeat by Tuhawaiki of Te Puoho, an ally of Te Rauparaha, ended the hostilities.

The Arrival of the Europeans

Captain James Cook

In 1770, after his discovery of the Strait between the north and the south islands which bears his name, Cook sailed south. When the *Endeavour* anchored off Kaikoura, Maori paddled four canoes out towards the ship, but could not be persuaded to come alongside it. As a result, Cook called the peninsula - which he thought was an island - Lookers On.

Whaling

Cook's voyages to the Pacific created great interest in this part of the world. England, deprived of penal colonies because of the rebellion of its American colonies, sent its convicts to Australia instead. From there sealers came to the South Island in search of valuable sealskins.

Whalers followed. Initially in the Pacific they hunted sperm whales from boats launched from a mother ship where the oil was processed. After sperm whale numbers declined, whalers established shore stations to hunt the slower moving 'right' whales when they came inshore to breed in New Zealand waters.

These huge mammals provided black oil extracted from the

blubber which was melted down in trypots on the beach. The oil was used for lubricant and for lamp fuel.

Baleen, the bone-like substance inside the whale's mouth - usually referred to as whalebone - was used in women's corsets.

Whaling at Kaikoura

As there were no controls on whaling, right whales, like the seals, declined in numbers until by 1850 they were quite rare. Whalers either left New Zealand to hunt in other waters or settled here, working in villages as carpenters or coopers, or farming the land. Whaling stations brought together Europeans and Ngai Tahu, since whalers often married Maori women.

In 1842, Robert Fyffe established the Waiopuka whaling station on the Kaikoura Peninsula. The site offered good lookouts from the cliffs, broad and flat rock shelves for cutting up the whales, and a stream for fresh water.

By the next year, Robert had four whaleboats and employed 40 men during the winter season. Immediately the spout of a whale was sighted, the men launched the longboats. As they closed in on their quarry, the harpooner stood ready to launch his harpoon which was attached to a coiled line. When the harpooned whale tired, the men killed it with a lance. As soon as possible they cut the tendons to its tail because the large flukes had the power to smash their small boats.

The whale was then towed ashore to Waiopuka bay where the incoming tide would help wash it up onto the rock platform. Here they cut the animal up and the waves cleared away the unwanted remains. After they melted the blubber in trypots, they transferred the oil to wooden barrels for shipment - the cooper who made and mended the barrels

was an important member of the whaling community.

Diversification

By 1847, whale numbers were declining and oil quantities dwindling. Many whalers like Fyffe turned to sheep farming. He also owned a schooner and had been shipping supplies to whalers and settlers. By 1854, when he drowned in the shipwreck of a schooner taking oil to Wellington, he had amassed considerable property.

Kaikoura Purchase 1859

Governor Grey authorised the disposal of the million hectare Kaikoura Block of land to European settlers. In the 1850s almost all the land was bought or leased, with the government benefiting from many thousands of pounds in revenue. Ngati Kuri, who had never sold the land, asked for recognition of their rights. Threatened with being deprived of any rights to their territory, the Ngati Kuri were forced in 1859 to agree to a small cash payment and ownership of a few coastal reserves totalling about 2,250 ha.

- References:
- Te Wai Pounamu by Harry Evison
 - Tohora by Jan Harris
 - Historic Places Trust Publications

KAIKOURA - SIGHTSEEING/ ARCHITECTURE/ HERITAGE

Fyffe House

Fyffe House, Kaikoura's oldest surviving building, has links with moa hunting, whaling, fishing, farming and port activities.

It was built as part of Robert Fyffe's Waiopuka whaling station, founded in 1842. The cooper who made the barrels for the whale oil lived there originally in the single storeyed wing, which has foundations made of whale bone vertebrae. George Fyffe, Robert's cousin extended the cottage for his wife Catherine in the late 1850s. While digging foundations, he uncovered a skeleton buried with the largest egg ever found of the extinct moa. The egg is now on display at the Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa.

The house is built of pit-sawn native timbers - kahikatea, rimu, totara and matai - with lath and plaster interior and mud and straw insulation. The kitchen has a special bread oven which may have been used to supply the whaling station.

The Goodall family lived in the house from 1868. Formerly the local police constable, Joseph later managed the nearby wharf, built in 1881. The Customs Store across the road has long since disappeared, although you can still see its chimney, and the Pier Hotel, which Joseph Goodall had built in 1885, has been moved to the 'new wharf'.

The Low family followed the Goodalls, living in the house for more than 60 years. They farmed, fished and worked on the wharf. George Low left the cottage and some furniture to the Historic Places Trust in 1980. Since then, the Trust has undertaken major conservation work, including returning some of the rooms to the Fyffe period finishes. A small charge is made to view the house.

