

# Franklin Plays Vital Role in NZ History 1840 Treaty!

**EXCLUSIVE**



CAPTAIN WILLIAM HOBSON, R.N

## Lieut. Governor Hobson

(referring to Tiriti o Waitangi) Feb 6, 1840 (Letter to Major Bunbury 80th Regiment Kilts April 1840):

*"This instrument I consider to be de facto the treaty, and all the signatures that are subsequently obtained are merely testimonials of adherence to the terms of the original document."*

## Events at Port Waikato changed our nation's direction

These days most New Zealanders think that the "official English version" is an exact translation of the Maori text. Nothing could be further from the truth. Those who do not speak Maori would not realise they are reading obsolete wording, compiled and spliced together by an imaginative, 19th century 3rd class clerk, using discarded draft notes, that had been superseded by the time the final draft was written on February 4th 1840. How was it possible that this text in 1975 was chosen as our 'official English version' of the Treaty of Waitangi?

Picture - Hobson arrived as "Captain" Hobson. The moment the treaty was signed and a part of New Zealand was ceded in sovereignty Hobson became "Lieutenant-Governor" (under Governor Gipps of NSW, Australia). In 1841 Hobson was given the full title of "Governor". He died in September 1842.

It is little known that two of the most important and far-reaching events in our nation's history took place in Franklin. The first involved a radical departure from the normal procedure when the Treaty of Waitangi assembly was held at Port Waikato on April 11th 1840. The second event was the discovery in Pukekohe in 1989 of the original final English draft for the Treaty, which had been lost for 149 years.

When 1500 Maori gathered at the mission at Port Waikato on April 11, 1840 to hear the words of the Treaty and to consider whether to sign, the Rev Robert Maunsell was faced with a major dilemma. Maori had finished their hui (meeting) and the government issued Treaty document had not yet arrived. William Cornwallis Symonds, who was to carry the official document to Manukau, Waikato Heads and Kawhia, stayed too long at Manukau, seeking signatures, and missed the Port Waikato meeting by three days. Thankfully, the Rev Maunsell at least had in his possession a printed Maori language copy of the Treaty, containing the only authorised or official text. Two hundred of these had been commissioned by Lieut-Governor Hobson as a paid government consignment and printed on the Church Missionary society's printing press at Paihia on February 17th 1840.

But, unlike the document on its way with Symonds, the missionary paper had limited space and the first five chiefs who came forward to sign used up all the available space on the sheet. As others

stepped forward to sign, Maunsell was obliged to provide a second piece of paper for the overflowing signatures. He allowed the next 32 signatures to go onto scrap paper with English writing on it, which he had received in early March from James Stuart Freeman, Hobson's secretary. Both papers were attached together as a 'make-do' treaty document to give to Symonds when he eventually arrived. Symonds took the papers back to Manukau to show Maori that others had signed at Port Waikato and seven signatures were added to the 32 on the spare paper.

The only words read to the chiefs that day were the official ones on Te Tiriti o Waitangi – the Treaty of Waitangi, first signed on February 6, 1840. Rev Maunsell, who was fluent in Maori was one of only four senior missionaries around the country chosen and commissioned to present the Treaty in Maori, as directed by Hobso, and to oversee the gathering of signatures. Maunsell explained the words to them in Maori clause by clause to ensure that everything in the document was understood. He would have been astounded if he had known that the piece of scrap paper pressed into service to carry the overflow signatures would change the direction of our nation – not immediately, but 135 years on, even though the number of signatures on official Treaty papers around the country totalled 540, compared to the 32 signatures on the overflow paper containing an unauthorised English version – Freeman's version.