

Mitchell sheets measure 670mm by 540mm and 665mm by 555mm, and the Turnbull sheets are larger. In each case, the statement of ‘Indenture’ occupies the first sheet and the top of the second sheet. The second sheet carries the moko, while the receipts for the initial payments and a certificate of ‘delivery of possession’ dated 2 April 1840 are on its reverse side. On both deeds, Tūhawaiki has penned a broad flourish across his name.

The calligraphy of the two documents is different, suggesting that they were prepared by different clerks simultaneously — perhaps under pressure, judging from the deletions, insertions, and spelling errors. Clearly one was not copied from the other, for they are set out differently.

3. *The Moko*

On each document, the Māori signatures consist of the moko — varying from 60mm to 100mm in width — and a seal of red wax alongside each name. The moko are drawn in pencil across a vertical axis of double lines about 3mm apart and are set out in two columns. Tūhawaiki heads the left column, followed by Karetai, Kaikōareare, and Tūkawa, while Taiaroa, Pōkene, Tohowack, and Pātuki occupy the right column. On the Turnbull document, the chiefs’ names and seals appear in a single column to the right of all the drawings. On the Mitchell, however, the name and seal of each chief appears alongside his moko — a fortunate circumstance without which the moko on either deed could not be identified with certainty.

The Mitchell document has rectangular frames ruled up for the moko, about 120mm wide in the left column and 113mm in the right. The rectangles are 78mm (3 inches) high, except for the second one in each column, which is 92mm high. Karetai and Pōkene thus have bigger spaces than the others. Pōkene’s is used to good advantage with a magnificent moko about 100mm across. Tūhawaiki evidently found his space too small and used the top 5mm or 6mm of Karetai’s space.

On the Turnbull document, there are no ruled frames for the drawings, some of which consequently crowd upon one another. Tūhawaiki’s drawing crowds down on Karetai’s, Pōkene’s on Tohowack’s, and Tohowack’s on Pātuki’s. Taiaroa, Kaikōareare, and Tūkawa, on the other hand, have drawings of modest size which leave unused space.

It is not stated how or by whom these moko were drawn, but it is well documented that Māori could draw such moko. According to Cruise, the Church Missionary Society completed a purchase as follows at the Bay of Islands in 1815:

When the missionaries had signed it [the deed of sale], Shungie [Hongi] and some of his principal chiefs drew the amoko [moko], or pattern according to which their faces were tattooed, upon the paper.²²