First-hand accounts of early explorers, missionaries and traders

Tirohanga Māori

Banks, Joseph. The Endeavour journal of Joseph Banks. 1962

Cook, James. The journals of Captain James Cook on his voyages of discovery. 1955-1974

Craik, George L. The New Zealanders. 1830
Includes notes about early Māori visitors to England and Australia and their impressions of English civilisation.


Earle was a young gentleman artist on an extended holiday. Generally antipathetic to missionary endeavours, and sympathetic to Māori.

Maning, F. E. Old New Zealand. 1863
Various subsequent editions. Maning's reminiscences of life as a trader in Hokianga in the 1830s. Includes anecdotes of muru, tapu, tohunga, matakite

Nicholas, John Liddiard. Narrative of a voyage to New Zealand. 1817.
Notes on family life, women, polygamy and adultery, cannibalism, tapu and Māori "character".

Polack, Joel Samuel. Manners and customs of the New Zealanders: With notes corroborative of their habits usages etc. 1976.
Polack was in New Zealand from 1831-1837 working as a trader. The books are mainly about the Bay of Islands and Tolaga Bay.

Polack, Joel Samuel. New Zealand: Being a narrative of travels and adventures during a residence in that country between the years 1831 and 1837. 1839.
Tolaga, Northland.


Taylor was a missionary stationed at Wanganui. His book includes notes on cosmology, mythology, atua, matakite, patupaiarehe, tapu, karakia, tangahanga and whakataukī.

Yate, William. An account of New Zealand. 1835.
Yate was a C.M.S. missionary at the Bay of Islands. Pages 80-164 of his book note his impressions of Māori customs and beliefs.