

History

The past, present and future

The generally accepted theory nowadays, states that around 4,000 years ago, Polynesians first settled in the Pacific. Using wooden double-hulled sailing canoes lashed together with natural fibers and applying their knowledge of the wind, currents and stars, the first intrepid navigators sailed eastward, settling the central island groups of the Cook Islands and French Polynesia between 500 BC and 500 AD.

Other great expeditions, undertaken around 1000 AD, established the Polynesian triangle consisting of Hawaii (to the north), Easter Island (to the east), Tahiti and her Islands (to the west) and New Zealand (to the south-west). The various languages derived from ma'ohi that are spoken in these islands testify to the common origin of their peoples.

In the 16th century, Magellan, and later Mendana, reached the Tuamotu Islands and the Marquesas. However, the name of the Englishman Samuel Wallis is the one most often associated with the European discovery of Tahiti in 1767. The following year, the French navigator Antoine de Bougainville named it "New Cythera". A year later, it was the English Captain James Cook's turn to land and take possession of the Society Islands.

At that time, Tahiti and her Islands were divided into several chiefdoms and kingdoms. Around 1797, one of the chiefs succeeded in affirming his supremacy and established the "Pomare dynasty" with the help of Europeans. During the First and Second World Wars, many islanders left to fight alongside French troops. In 1958, the EFO (French Establishments of Oceania) became French Polynesia. The 1960's marked a turning point for Tahiti and her Islands when the establishment of the CEP (Center for Experimentation in the Pacific) in 1963 rapidly propelled them into the modern age. This was characterized by the influx of people from outlying islands to the main island of Tahiti, the growth of local businesses, the development of a tertiary sector, and an increase in the standard of living. People were faced with the growth of a consumer society, previously quite unfamiliar to the region.

Timeline

3000 BC

The presence of plants, pigs and dogs lends weight to the theory that the initial settling of the South Pacific originated from Southeast Asia.

2000 BC

Archeological, ethno-linguistic and other research establishes the start of Polynesian settlement around this time.

1300 BC

Lapita pottery reveals settlement in Western Polynesia in Tonga and Samoa.

300-700

The Marquesas, Society Islands, Hawaii (500) and Rapa Nui (600).

700 -1100

The Cook Islands, the Austral Group and New Zealand.

1000

All the main islands have been settled: Tonga, Samoa, Line Islands, the Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Easter Island, Hawaii & New Zealand.

1760 -1800

European navigators are sent to carry out scientific observations Dutch, English (Cook, Wallis & Bligh), French (Bougainville, La Pérouse & de Surville).

1800

Missionaries - End of Lapita pottery.

1815

Polynesian chiefs lose the battle of Fe'i Pi under Pomare II and are converted to Christianity.

1819

Pomare II creates a Legal Code based on Christian principles The Pomare Code.

1836

English Protestants obtain the expulsion of French Catholic missionaries from Tahiti.

1842

Dupetit Thouars submits the Treaty of French Protectorate signed by the Chiefs of Tahiti to Louis-Philippe, King of France.

1844 -1847

Franco-Tahitian war.

1847

Queen Pomare IV, hitherto a rebel, submits to be governed under the Protectorate.

1880

King Pomare V approves the annexation of Tahiti and Dependencies to France.

1958

The French "Establishments of Oceania" become French Polynesia.

1960

Tahiti International Airport opens.

1984

Statute of Internal Autonomy.

2004

French Polynesia becomes a French "Overseas Country".

