

## **Princess Titaua Marama, Chiefess of Haapiti, 1842-1898**



Princess Titaua was the eldest child of the marriage between an English father, Alexander Salmon, and the sister of Queen Pomare IV of Tahiti. Queen Pomare adopted Titaua in accordance with an ancient Tahitian custom and gave her the royal name of Tetuanuireia-ite-raiatea – which means The Great God whose Power extends to the Heavens.

At the age of only 14, Titaua was married to John Brander from Elgin, who was 24 years older than her and owned the biggest trading house in the South Pacific. As the foremost hostess in Tahiti, Princess Titaua played an important part in the life of the island. She left an abiding impression on many international visitors to Tahiti, including Robert Louis Stevenson and Queen Victoria's second son, Prince Alfred, who presented Titaua with a turquoise and diamond pendant and ring as a token of his admiration.

After Brander's death in 1877, she married the firm's manager, George Darsie, who was from a prominent Anstruther family. They went on to have three children, to add to the nine from her previous marriage. She and her five youngest children came with Darsie to live at his family home, Johnston Lodge, when he retired.

In Anstruther she was accepted in her new home as one who had adapted herself "with consummate tact to her new surroundings, and endeared herself to one and all in our community". She died at Johnston Lodge, aged 55, in 1898.

Her son, George Darsie junior served with the British Army in the Boer War and died serving in World War One at Soissons in May 1918. Her youngest son, Lieumonte, emigrated to America, while her daughters, Georgina (who married solicitor Thomas D Murray) and Titaua Brander (known as Paloma) remained at Johnston Lodge. After her death, Paloma's husband, Rev. Andrew MacLachlan, left the capital from the sale of Johnston Lodge to build an out-patients wing for a hospital in Tahiti.