

Moutoa Monument



Location: Market Place, Taupo Quay, **Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga**
Bates Street, Pakaitore/Moutoa **List Number:** 987
Gardens, Whanganui

Physical Description: the monument comprises a marble statue on a stepped marble and cement rendered plinth. The marble plinth has inscriptions on each face and leaf decorations at corners.

Register Item Number:

21

Building Type:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Recreation
- Institutional
- Agriculture
- Other

Significance:

- Archaeological
- Architectural
- Historic
- Scientific
- Technological
- Cultural

Thematic Context

- Early Settlement
- Residential
- Industry
- Agricultural
- Commerce
- Transport
- Civic/Admin
- Health
- Education
- Religion
- Recreation
- Community
- Memorials
- Military

Built Heritage Inventory



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

Other known names: Moutoa Monument

Current Use: Memorial to the fallen in the Battle of Moutoa

Former Uses: As above

Heritage Status: Heritage NZPT List **District Plan Class:** Class A
(Cat. 2)

Architectural Style: Classical **Date of Construction:** 1865 memorial
with stepped base and
statue.

Materials: White marble on a base of polished Victorian stone

Registered owner:

Legal Description: Pt Res I Town of Wanganui (CT WN21/110), Wellington
Land District

History: The Moutoa Memorial, which is recognised as New Zealand's first war memorial, stands at Pakaitore/Moutoa Gardens, which at the time the memorial was installed was known as the Market Place. The memorial is well documented, including in Gavin Maclean and Jock Phillips' 1990 book, *The Sorrow and the Pride*, on New Zealand's war memorials.

Of the memorial, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage's website, New Zealand History online, records the following:

"New Zealand's first war memorial stands in Moutoa Gardens in Whanganui, a large town on the west coast of the North Island. The weeping woman, a personification of Grief, commemorates 15 kūpapa (Māori fighting on the government side) and one European who were killed at Moutoa Island 80 km upriver, on 14 May 1864.

"At Moutoa, cousin fought cousin. In May 1864, Matene Te Rangitauira led 300 anti-European Pai Mārire supporters (Hauhau) from the upper Whanganui River in an attack on Whanganui town. Their path was blocked at Moutoa, a small island in the river near Rānana (London). There, on 14 May, they faced kūpapa led by two chiefs from Pūtiki, near the rivermouth, Hōri Kīngi Te Ānaua and Hoani Wiremu Hīpango.

"Although it lasted only half an hour, the Moutoa engagement cost the lives of about 50 Hauhau and 15 kūpapa. A European, lay brother Euloge from a nearby Catholic mission, was fatally shot as he stood on the riverbank."⁷¹

The gratitude of the settlers of Whanganui was considerable. Women from

Built Heritage Inventory



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

throughout the region designed and spent many months creating a flag (known as the Moutoa flag) to give to the victors, while the Wellington Provincial Council purchased this memorial to acknowledge the achievement of the battle and to acknowledge the loss of life by the victorious side.

The actual origin of the monument is possibly the result of a distraught intervention by Kawana Paipai, an elderly senior chief from Putiki, who had been one of the leaders at Moutoa. He had just discovered that two of their chiefs, Hemi Napi (who was his near relative) and Riwai *“had been buried like dogs – thrown into the ground without coffins.”* On 18th May 1864, four days after the battle, he had complained of this to Wellington Superintendent, I.E. Featherston, who had assured him that he would have the bodies exhumed and coffins made for them. They could then be buried wherever the chief wanted. Furthermore, a suitable monument would be erected to their memory and also to the memory of all the brave men who had sacrificed their lives for the Pakeha at Moutoa. *“Kawana Paipai went away with his heart, if no longer sad, at any rate highly lightened.”*ⁱⁱ

The burial records for Putiki Mission cemetery reveal that, true to Featherston’s word, the burials of Hemi Napi and Riwai Tawhitorangi occurred at Putiki on 31 May 1864. Their remains had been followed to their graves by Colonel Logan, several officers, a number of soldiers from the 57th Regiment, and several civilians.ⁱⁱⁱ The pair were joined on 5 June 1864 by Wairi (or Wiari) Te Patu (25) of Ranana, who had died in hospital two days earlier from wounds received during the battle.^{iv} Hemi Napi and Haimona Hiroti (who survived) were the two leaders credited with turning a possible defeat at Moutoa, into a victory.

On 29 June 1864, about six weeks after the battle, the Wellington Provincial Council passed by a clear majority the resolution of John Johnston to obtain a “suitable monument” to acknowledge what had happened.

Thirteen months later, the *NZ Gazette* of 13 July 1865 (p. 111) duly recorded from the speech of Wellington’s Superintendent, Isaac Featherston, that: *“In accordance with the resolution of the Council, I succeeded, during my recent visit to Australia, in purchasing a not inappropriate monument for the brave men who fell at Moutoa, which it is proposed to erect in some conspicuous part of the town of Wanganui, and which, I feel assured, will be deeply gratifying to the*

Built Heritage Inventory



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

Wanganui natives.” The cost of the “Moutoa monument” was also recorded under the heading “Sundry Works” as £500.

A month earlier, the *Wellington Independent* of 11 May 1865 (p. 2) reported having seen a photo of the “very handsome” recently purchased monument. The article reported that the delay had been caused by the difficulty in obtaining one that “would be at all commensurate to the occasion.” The new purchase stood “fourteen or fifteen feet high and partakes of a Grecian character. It consists of a square pedestal placed upon double plinths. The cornice is cavettoed and filleted, and the over-weathering is a blocking upon which is placed a stopped fluted column with an attic base, surmounted by a life-size statue of Grief reclining upon a broken portion of the shaft. The upper portion of the pedestal is enriched, at each corner are corbelled cusps, from which spring an ornamental arch, the spandrills are panelled bas relieve carvings of flowers being executed therein. The whole is surrounded by an ornamental cast iron railing, secured to stone coping. The names of the dead have yet to be cut on the pedestal, but in the course of a couple of months it will doubtless be received ready for erection. The monument is from the works of Messrs Huxley, Parker and Co., of Melbourne.”

The Rev. Richard Taylor described the monument just after its arrival, in his diary entry of 27 November 1865. He said that when it was unpacked, it looked like a corpse, but that it would be a great ornament in the Market Place. However, he noted that one hand was “far too large.” He also wrote that a second marble monument had also arrived, and that this was “to be placed over Hemi’s grave at Putiki.”^v The inscription on this monument reads: “E tapu ana tenei hei whakamaharatanga mo Hemi Nape raua ko Riwai Tawhitorangi”^{vi} While it was not ascertained during this study whether or not the Provincial Government also purchased this second monument, the clear link between the two should be acknowledged.

The *Wanganui Chronicle* of 27 December 1865^{vii} recorded that the monument had been formally uncovered the previous afternoon by Superintendent I.E. Featherston. Its overall cost had been between £700 and £800. The article described it as “somewhat diminutive in size, (but) otherwise a perfectly finished work of art. The base is of polished Victorian stone, closely resembling granite, the pedestal and sculptured figure of Grief surmounting it, are of white marble.

Built Heritage Inventory



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

The work was executed by Huxley and Parker, Melbourne. A low iron railing, formed by arrows neatly crossed, encloses the whole.” The article then went on to detail the text on the monument, ending with the date “4th September, 1865. Isaac Earl Featherston, Superintendent”, the significance of which is unclear, although that might have been the intended unveiling date.

The actual unveiling had occurred at about 3pm on a fine warm day, in front of many holiday seekers and Maori. The Native Contingent performed a haka: *“which was at least sufficiently demonstrative. British soldiers too often find their dress and accoutrements a hindrance to them, the natives take care that they shall not be encumbered after a similar fashion, their covering being reduced to the scantiest proportions – certainly scantier than beseems the modern idea of civilisation.”*

The haka was followed by speeches, following which Superintendent Featherston *“drew aside the covering which had hitherto concealed the sculpture of the monument, and the whole stood revealed to view. Mrs Colonel Logan then gracefully unfurled the (Moutoa) flag. Three cheers were given”* and then the programme concluded, being followed by a banquet for the Native Contingent.^{viii}

The *Wanganui Times* recorded that between 500 and 600 Maori were present for the unveiling, including principal men from all the Whanganui iwi, and the Ngati Apa from Rangitikei. Also represented were the iwi located between Whanganui and Wellington. As the event proceeded, the *Time’s* reporter noted that no-one *“cheered more heartily than the British soldiers belonging to the various regiments here. In fact, one noticeable feature in the day’s proceedings was the interest which the soldiers took in it, and the evident good feelings between them and the Maoris.”*

As well as the 100 principal Maori and the chiefs who dined in the long room at Dunleavy’s Hotel with the official party, another 300 Maori feasted in the Market Place near the monument. The crowd eventually dispersed between 7pm and 8pm.^{ix}

The memorial’s inscriptions read:

Built Heritage Inventory



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

Front face

Kua whakaarahia tenei toma e te parawine o weretana hei whakamaharatanga mo nga toa taua i hinga ki Moutoa i te 14 o nga ra o Mei 1864 i te awhinatanga i te ture i te noho-pai e akina ana e nga ritenga kino o namata e te whakaponoporangi

Reverse Face

To the memory of those brave men who fell at Moutoa 14 May 1864 in defence of law and order against fanaticism and barbarism this monument is erected by the Province of Wellington

Side

Ko nga tangata enei i hinga ki Moutoa

Hemi Nape / Kereti Te Hiwitahi / Wiari Te Patu / Riwai Tawhitorangi / Heremia Te Rangitakuku / Penetito Te Korewa / Rotohiko Waitoki / Manihera Maui / Wiremu Te Waruiti / Hakaraia Te Riaki / Warena Te Pohe / Pehira Te Kahuorauru / Matiu Te Potahi / Hohepa Te Whakaruku / Hare Te Kaho / Lay Brother Euloge

Side

4th September 1865 Isaac Earl Featherston Superintendent^x.

The fence around the Moutoa monument was removed by the Wanganui Borough Council during in 1899-1900 year, as part of the work to develop Moutoa Gardens. At the same time, the ill-fated Ballance statue was also relocated to the Gardens.^{xi}

Other History

The monument, or rather some of the text on it, has incited controversy over the years. This is the reference to “fanaticism and barbarism” in relation to the attacking Hauhau forces.^{xii} However, from the perspective of the Whanganui settler community of the time – living each day in a war zone and not knowing what their and their family’s fate was to be, at the hands of a people being liberally portrayed in a terrifying light – then perhaps the words are more easily understood.

Moutoa Gardens, previously known as the Market Place, stands on the site of an ancient pa named Pakaitore, which had been a traditional place of trade before European settlement. In 1995, initially in response to Government policy,

Built Heritage Inventory



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

the site was occupied by protesters demanding that it be returned to local iwi. The occupation lasted 79 days. Amongst the issues causing deep offence to the protesters was the wording on the Moutoa monument in relation to its “fanaticism and barbarism” comments.^{xiii}

It is noticeable that the photo of the face of the monument showing the offending words that appears in Maclean and Phillips’ 1990 book (p. 23) shows them to be in good condition. However, photos shown on the Ministry for Culture and Heritage’s website from more recent times, show that the words and the marble surrounding them have been damaged.^{xiv}

Also noted during this study was a report that the first European child born in Whanganui, a girl, was born where the monument now stands, to a lay Evangelist named Matthews of the Church Missionary Society, and his wife, who had in 1836 or 1837 established a mission station there.^{xv} Also, the first timber sawn in Whanganui, was sawn by a European using a pit where the monument now stands.^{xvi} In both cases the Europeans involved (perhaps the same couple) were assisted in their labours solely by local Maori.

Messrs Huxley, Parker and Co.

The monument as a work of art also requires consideration. It was manufactured in Melbourne by the stone masons Huxley & Parker. They exhibited work at the Intercolonial Exhibition of Australasia in Melbourne in 1866-67, and amongst their work was an untitled ‘figure in marble’ by the artist ‘Gilbert’. He had also undertaken work exhibited by Huxley & Parker at the Victorian Intercolonial Exhibition of 1875, and “*obviously worked for the company.*” While the Moutoa monument is not amongst those mentioned in a brief biography published on James Gilbert, the “*Forgotten Sculptor*” in 1995, it is likely that this is another example of his work.^{xvii}

Bibliography

Cowan, James, *The New Zealand Wars: A History of the Maori Campaigns and the Pioneering Period*: Vol. II: The Hauhau Wars, pp. 30-35 (Wellington, 1956)

Maclean, Chris, & Phillips, Jock, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand’s War Memorials* (Wellington, 1990)

Built Heritage Inventory



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

Ministry for Culture and Heritage website: www.nzhistory.net.nz

New Zealand Gazette, July 13, 1865, No. 24, pp. 111 & 115. The speech is also recorded in the *Daily Southern Cross*, 22 July 1865, p. 5

New Zealand Genealogical Society: Cemetery Microfiche: Putiki Cemetery and Putiki Mission records.

Ridley, R.T., 'The Mysterious James Gilbert: The Forgotten Sculptor, 1854-85' in *La Trobe Journal*, No. 54, March 1995, pp. 18-32:

<http://nishi.slv.vic.gov.au/latrobejournal/issue/latrobe-54/t1-g-t2.html#fn27-23>

Taylor, Journal of Rev. Richard, June 18th 1865 to Sept. 9th 1868, Whanganui Regional Museum.

Also newspapers and online articles as referred to in the footnotes.

Architect/Designer: Huxley & Parker, Melbourne (possibly by their sculptor James Gilbert)

History of changes: Original fence removed 1899-1900

Date Period: 1860s

Rarity / Special Features: The statue is nationally significant as New Zealand's first war memorial.

Integrity: As discussed above, some of the lettering is now difficult to read, the marble statue and plinth are covered in micro-biological growth, and there are several chips off corners and other details. Pointing is also damaged in areas.

Representativeness: The statue is a weeping woman, representing grief, which was one of a number of well recognised symbols in funereal architecture.

Context/Group Value: The statue is situated within Pakaitore/Moutoa Gardens, a place of deep significance to local Maori which has a number of other highly significant memorials.

Built Heritage Inventory



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

Diversity (Form and Features):

Fragility / Vulnerability: As a monument in a public park, there is the potential for vandalism.

Summary of Significance:

Archaeological Qualities

The monument is pre-1900 and should be considered an archaeological site.

Architectural Qualities

The design of the memorial uses common symbolism for funereal monuments where a weeping woman signifies grief. The memorial follows a Classical style as described in the contemporary press.

[the statue] partakes of a Grecian character. It consists of a square pedestal placed upon double plinths. The cornice is cavettoed and filleted, and the over-weathering is a blocking upon which is placed a stopped fluted column with an attic base, surmounted by a life-size statue of Grief reclining upon a broken portion of the shaft. The upper portion of the pedestal is enriched, at each corner are corbelled cusps, from which spring an ornamental arch, the spandrills are panelled bas relieve carvings of flowers being executed therein. The whole is surrounded by an ornamental cast iron railing, secured to stone coping.

The memorial was designed and executed by Huxley & Parker of Melbourne, a significant firm of stone masons who exhibited their work at the Intercolonial Exhibition of Australasia in Melbourne in 1866-67, and the Victorian Intercolonial Exhibition of 1875.

Historic Qualities

The statue is significant in memorialising the deaths of 15 kupapa (Maori fighting on the NZ Government side) and one European against 50 Hauhau at Moutoa Island, 80 km north of Wanganui, and is New Zealand's first war memorial. The memorial came about when Kawana Paipai an elderly senior chief from Putiki complained to the Provincial Government Superintendent about the disrespectful burials of two chiefs who had lost their lives in the battle. The Superintendent had the bodies exhumed and were buried where requested at Putiki and the memorial was provided to reflect the enormous gratitude of the settlers to those who had lost their lives in defence of the settlement.

Built Heritage Inventory



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

Cultural Qualities

The memorial has considerable sentimental qualities as a war memorial while also inciting some controversy in the wording on the plaques describing the “fanaticism and barbarism” of the attacking Hauhau forces.

Reference Source:

Associated Pictures:



A sketch of the Moutoa Monument in its original form that appeared in the NZ Truth of 22 September 1906 (p. 7)

Date of Survey: 2012

Prepared by: Ian Bowman and Val Burr

ⁱ Moutoa Gardens NZ War Memorial: New Zealand History online:

<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/moutoa-gardens-nz-wars-memorial>

ⁱⁱ *Wellington Independent*, 13 August 1884, p.3. This information was from the Report of the Superintendent of Wellington, I.E. Featherston, on the battle, that was published in the *New Zealand Gazette* (undated).

ⁱⁱⁱ *Wanganui Chronicle* of 28 May 1864, reprinted in the *Press* of 7 June 1864, p. 3. The funeral cortege was described as having happened that day – 28th May. The date discrepancy between funeral cortege and burial recorded as having happened on the 31st, is not clear, but perhaps involved the tangi.

^{iv} NZ Genealogical Society: Cemetery microfiche: Burials Putiki Mission Cemetery, burials 185, 186 & 187. The three are buried side by side.

^v Entry for 27th November 1865, Journal of Rev. Richard Taylor, June 18th 1865 to Sept. 9th 1868, Whanganui Regional Museum.

^{vi} NZ Genealogical Society: Cemetery microfiche: Burials Putiki Cemetery headstones

^{vii} *Wanganui Chronicle*, 27 December 1865, reprinted in the *Wellington Independent*, 2 January 1866, p. 6

^{viii} *Wanganui Chronicle*, 27 December 1865, reprinted in the *Wellington Independent*, 2 January 1866, p. 6

^{ix} *Wanganui Times* (undated) reprinted in the *Otago Witness*, 12 January 1866, p. 18

^x Moutoa Gardens NZ Wars Memorial: New Zealand History online: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/moutoa-gardens-nz-wars-memorial>

^{xi} *Wanganui Chronicle*, 9 May 1900, p. 2

^{xii} For example, American author Mark Twain's 1897 comments on the Moutoa Gardens NZ War Memorial, on the website New Zealand History online: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/moutoa-gardens-nz-wars-memorial>

^{xiii} Moutoa Gardens Protest: New Zealand History online: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/moutoa-gardens-protest>

Built Heritage Inventory



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

xiv Moutoa Gardens NZ War Memorial: New Zealand History online:
<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/moutoa-gardens-nz-wars-memorial>

xv *Wanganui Herald*, 26 May 1906, p. 6

xvi *Colonist*, 12 June 1905, p. 4

xvii R.T. Ridley, 'The Mysterious James Gilbert: The Forgotten Sculptor, 1854-85' in *La Trobe Journal*, No. 54, March 1995, pp. 18-32: <http://nishi.slv.vic.gov.au/latrobejournal/issue/latrobe-54/t1-g-t2.html#fn27-23>