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Augustus Hamilton: Appropriation, Ownership and Authority

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
in Museum Studies at Massey University.

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Abstract

Augustus Hamilton (1853 - 1913) was a scientist and ethnologist whose appointment to the position of Director of the Colonial Museum in 1903 was politically motivated. This thesis examines the interrelationship between the appropriation of taonga Maori, the concept of ownership and the assumption of the authority to manage Maori heritage within the colonial context. The life of Augustus Hamilton provides a case study to explore the themes of colonial appropriation and national identity. The study also provides essential background for a number of important contemporary issues.

The purpose of the thesis is to connect four episodes in Hamilton's life to demonstrate a consistent development in his interest in the preservation of Maori heritage within the colonial context. The philosophical and academic movements in the nineteenth century which contributed to Hamilton's intellectual and professional development are discussed before exploring the early years of his career in Hawke's Bay when he established his reputation as a collector, gained his museum skills and built up a network of people interested in science and ethnology. Then the role he played in pressing for legislation to control the export of Maori art and its corollary the establishment of a national Maori museum is examined before demonstrating how his expertise and contacts enabled him assist the Government in the establishment of a politically motivated collection of Maori ethnology and the impact his philosophy has had on New Zealanders' perception of Maori culture until the present time.

Finally I wish to thank my four children Justin, Kate, Alexander and Evelyn and my parents for their support and understanding over the years while I have endeavoured to complete this thesis.

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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to elucidate Augustus Hamilton's motivation and behaviour as a collector of taonga Maori and to demonstrate the way in which these evolved from the early period in Hawke's Bay, when his interest was regional, scientific and museological, through until he became Director of the Colonial Museum when his motivation had become the creation of a "national collection" with all that that implied. At its conclusion this thesis will argue that Hamilton had the vision to ensure the collection and preservation of a significant national collection of taonga Maori which remains a valuable resource for the descendants of the original owners and for scholarly research. Yet he was nonetheless an aggressive agent of the cultural appropriation which was so characteristic of colonialism.

It is intended to link and explain the connections between four aspects of Hamilton's career:

- (a) his collecting and museological activities in Hawke's Bay (1878-1890);
- (b) his contribution to the development and passing of the Antiquities Act (1901);
- (c) his advocacy for the development of a National Maori Museum (1900-1913);
- (d) his contribution to the development of the Maori collections at the Colonial Museum (1903-1913).

Neich¹ Bell² and Wilson³ have documented Hamilton's contribution to the development of a canon of "traditional Maori art" and where appropriate their conclusions are integrated into this analysis.

This case study provides an opportunity to contribute to the understanding of private and public collecting of indigenous material culture in the colonial context. Griffiths⁴ and Thomas⁵ have recently argued that the collecting and appropriation of the material culture of indigenous people are elements of a wider strategy of imperialism and cultural dominance. Cultural appropriation is a political issue.⁶ The symbolism implicit in the appropriation of the material culture of the indigenous people is an important expression of New Zealand's national identity and reveals the underlying political goal of assimilation of the Maori people. Assimilation involves the absorption and eventual demise of the less powerful and subordinate minority culture.

Hamilton was the first person to recognise and act on the need to create a national collection of Maori art. This study examines why Hamilton thought the creation

¹ Roger Neich, *Painted Histories*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1994; "The Veil of Orthodoxy: Rotorua Ngati Tarawhai Woodcarving in a Changing Context," in S. Mead & B. Kernot, eds. *Art and Artists of Oceania*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1983.

² Leonard Bell, *Colonial Constructs: European Images of Maori 1840-1914*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1992.

³ Natalie Wilson, *The Otago Years of Augustus Hamilton 1890-1903*. MA thesis, Otago University, No date.

⁴ Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors: the Antiquarian Imagination in Australia*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

⁵ Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture and Colonialism in the Pacific*. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press, 1991.

⁶ Bruce Ziff and Pratima V. Rao, "Introduction to Cultural Appropriation: A Framework for Analysis," in *Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997, p.8.

of a national collection of Maori art was important and the circumstances that made it possible at that time. A connection is argued between an emerging colonial nationalism and the desire to create and exhibit a national collection of Maori art. Such a collection could only be created in a context where cultural appropriation was accepted practice. Benedict Anderson describes the appropriation and repositioning of aspects of the indigenous culture as “regalia for a secular colonial state.”⁷

Augustus Hamilton (1853 -1913) was born in Poole, Dorset and educated at Dorset County School and Epsom Medical College. He came to New Zealand in 1875 and taught in Wellington and at Okarito on the West Coast, before moving to Hawke's Bay in 1878 where he taught at Petane/Eskdale school until 1887 when he became the Librarian for the Napier Athenaeum and Mechanics' Institute. He began his official museum career in 1883 when he was appointed the Honorary Curator of the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute's Museum. In 1890 he took up the position of Registrar for Otago University where he remained until 1903 when he was appointed Director of the Colonial Museum [changed to Dominion Museum during his Directorship] in Wellington with specific instructions from the Government to make a national collection of Maori cultural material. He died in Russell, Bay of Islands, in 1913 while on an expedition for the Museum collecting papers associated with some of the first European families.

⁷ Ben Dibley, “Telling Times: Narrating Nation at the New Zealand International Exhibition 1906-7,” in *Sites* No. 34 (Autumn 1997) p.11.

Augustus Hamilton had an eclectic range of skills and interests, and boundless energy to pursue them. Very soon after arriving in New Zealand he had joined the Wellington Philosophical Institute and from then on he played an important role in the New Zealand Institute and its various branches. His scientific writing included a number of papers on a wide range of botanical and zoological subjects as well as ethnological papers which culminated in his great work *Maori Art* 1896-1901. He was a founding member of both the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS.) and the Polynesian Society. In 1888 he gave a paper on "Maori Art" to the inaugural meeting of the AAAS. in Sydney. For several years while he was Director of the Dominion Museum he was the editor of the *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*. He was also an artist, a photographer, a librarian, an archaeologist, a collector, an active member of the Anglican church and a prominent member of the intellectual fraternity of late nineteenth and early twentieth century New Zealand. Hamilton had an extensive network of scientific colleagues and a wide range of friends and acquaintances in many fields.

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter explains the intellectual climate which influenced Hamilton's development as an ethnologist and establishes a link between the theories of nineteenth century anthropology which provided a justification for cultural assimilation and the appropriation of indigenous cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible). Chapter Two considers Hamilton's early career in Hawke's Bay where he began collecting taonga Maori and developed his scientific and museological skills. Chapter Three

is concerned with the passing of the Antiquities Act 1901 and Hamilton's drive to create a national museum of Maori art which was temporarily facilitated by the political climate at the beginning of the twentieth century. Chapter Four examines Hamilton's role as Director of the Dominion Museum with particular emphasis on the way he created the early core of the national collection of taonga Maori from a number of private collections throughout the North Island and his influence on the interpretation of Maori material culture.

Chapter One.

Intellectual Influences on Augustus Hamilton.

This chapter outlines relevant developments in colonial science, anthropology, the museum movement and the rise of colonial nationalism in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century context in an attempt to understand the intellectual environment in which Hamilton worked. Colonial science was institutionalised in the “museum movement” but as it developed and required more complex facilities it progressively moved to universities and other research institutions. Augustus Hamilton was the foremost museum person in New Zealand at the beginning of the twentieth century and a key player during a critical period in both the history of New Zealand science and in the New Zealand response to the international “museum movement” of the late nineteenth century. He is now remembered for his achievements in three fields: his contribution to ethnology and his major work *Maori Art*; as Director of the Dominion Museum; and his contributions to the two pre-eminent professional organisations in New Zealand science, the New Zealand Institute and the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science.⁸

His interests, activities, and career reflect contemporary trends and developments

⁸ Peter Hughes, “The Papers of Augustus Hamilton in the Auckland Museum Library” in *Archifacts*, Oct. 1991, p.12.

in the scientific and social ideas of Europe, America and Australasia but he is an unparalleled figure in New Zealand's intellectual history. To understand the contribution Hamilton made to the cultural life of New Zealand it is necessary to examine the ideas and movements of Victorian science emanating from the northern hemisphere in particular their contribution to the "museum movement," and the new discipline of anthropology.

These ideas should be seen in the context of an emerging "colonial nationalism" and from the perspective of immigrants responding to a unique culture and environment far from Europe. There was a tension, formed by the juxtaposition between the alien land and culture, loyalty to Europe, and the aim to re-create Britain in the "South Seas" by assimilating the Maori people, which resulted in conservatism and the establishment of rigid "orthodoxies" about Maori art and culture which pervaded New Zealand's culture for decades.⁹

Augustus Hamilton was a natural scientist whose skills and training in Victorian biological methods enabled him to turn "his energies entirely to the study of industrial processes and to the collection and description of objects of every kind that threw light upon Maori art."¹⁰ Skinner also said in this obituary that:

⁹ R. Neich, "The Veil of Orthodoxy" in *Art and Artists of Oceania*. eds. S.Mead & B. Kernot, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1983. pp.255-7.

¹⁰ H.D.Skinner, "Obituary: Augustus Hamilton," in *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*. Vol. XLVI, 1914, Wellington, p.v.

Hamilton was the sole worker among New Zealand ethnologists in a department that among the ethnologists of Europe and America is perhaps more strongly manned than any other.¹¹

Hamilton was not the only collector of Maori cultural material in New Zealand but he was the only ethnological collector who was a professional museum person and representative of the classifiers, compilers and collectors who dominated natural history during the nineteenth century and were responsible for the growth of the "museum movement" which became so powerful during the decades leading up to 1900.¹²

Before examining the intellectual environment in New Zealand it will be useful to briefly review some of the concepts which influenced intellectual activities in Great Britain in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The history of anthropology includes the history of physical anthropology and the debate about the relative significance of biological and cultural factors in the understanding of human behaviour.¹³ The very old idea of the *Scala naturae* which perceived all creatures forming a "Great Chain of Being" from highest to lowest, was repudiated by many eighteenth century philosophers and scientists.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Susan Sheets-Pyenson, *Cathedrals of Science: the Development of Colonial Natural History Museums during the Late Nineteenth Century*. Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988, p.3.

¹³ George W. Stocking, *Bones, Bodies Behaviour: Essays on Biological Anthropology*. History of Anthropology, Vol.5. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988, p.3.

But its influence persisted and re-emerged in the mid-nineteenth century in a theory which claimed that the races of mankind formed a natural scale or hierarchy from the European at the top, to the negro at the bottom - near the apes. The idea of the hierarchy of races was not new, but the idea of the superiority of the Anglo Saxon was, and this became a major preoccupation in British scientific and popular thought during the nineteenth century.¹⁴

The natural history tradition at the beginning of the nineteenth century had divided human kind into racial categories. Johannes Freidrich Blumenbach initiated the comparative study of human crania and divided mankind into five major racial groups. By the mid nineteenth century there were two doctrines theorising about the origin of mankind. The earlier, or monogenetic model, was derived from the Bible, and assumed all human beings developed from a single pair. The other doctrine, polygenism, theorised that mankind is descended from several independent pairs of ancestors, or that the human race consists of several independent species.¹⁵ The different species were assessed by the form of their skulls and considered to differ dramatically in their capacity for civilisation. Phrenologists claimed to have "scientifically proved" the differences in the mental capacities of human groups.¹⁶

¹⁴ Ross Galbreath, *Colonisation, Science and Conservation: the Development of Colonial Attitudes towards the Native Life of New Zealand with particular reference to the career of the Colonial Scientist Walter Lawry Buller (1838-1906)*. PhD thesis, Waikato University, 1989, p.54.

¹⁵ C.T.Onions, ed. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, Vol. II. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973. pp.1349 & 1623.

¹⁶ Stocking, 1988, p.8.

There were two interrelated intellectual events in 1858 which fundamentally transformed the framework of anthropological thinking about human physical and cultural differentiation. Pengelly's discovery of flint instruments associated with Pleistocene fauna in a cave at Brixham proved the antiquity of man and that his development was to be measured by geological epochs rather than Ussher's Biblical chronology. The other major event was the publication of A.R. Wallace's memoir in the *Journal of the Linnean Society* which previewed Darwin's hypothesis that species had evolved from one another by a process of natural selection.¹⁷ The following year Darwin published the *Origin of Species*. The evolutionary view of nature implied at once an integration of social and biological studies and was the tie for which many interested in the study of man had been searching. Darwin brought order out of chaos.¹⁸

The Darwinian revolution and the contemporaneous archaeological revolution which opened up the long span of human history meant that the idea of the evolution of man from an ape-like creature became tenable.¹⁹

The theory of evolution, which eliminated purpose from nature, and the idea of progress, which asserted a reassuring and predictable continuity, were two ideas which dominated Victorian thought. The two theories should have been in tension with each other but instead they merged into a kind of eugenic Social Darwinism,

¹⁷ George W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, London: Collier MacMillan Publishers, 1987, p.48.

¹⁸ Stocking, 1987, p.72.

¹⁹ M.C.B. Bowden, *Pitt-Rivers: the life and archaeological work of Lieutenant General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers, DCL,RRS,FSA*. Cambridge (England); New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p.44.

which justified the elimination or domination of indigenous societies as an inevitable natural process and which provided an “ethic of conquest.” The lure and comfort of the idea of progress overwhelmed the radical potential of Darwinism that natural selection was ruled by chance and improbability rather than by a steady and progressive purpose or pre-determined set of stages. The transformation of species and the animal history of humanity could only be accepted if they were seen as purposeful. The full chaotic non-progressive implications of natural selection were not confronted until the twentieth century.²⁰

The Industrial Revolution had brought the struggle for existence among both individuals and societies to the foreground. European societies with superior mechanical equipment were extending their power over the rest of the world. These imperial developments appeared to suggest that the indigenous peoples would become extinct and that such events were but the working of the laws of nature. The facts seemed to find their justification in the natural law of the struggle for life and the survival of the fittest. It was this superficial interpretation of Darwin’s hypothesis which caught the popular imagination and was absorbed into the religious and moral life so “that the successful were justified by their faith and the failures just had to realise that the natural law had placed them where they belonged.”²¹ Many of the ideas which have subsequently been credited to post-Darwinian Social Darwinism were in reality re-interpretations of old ideas such as the Great Chain of Being.

²⁰ Griffiths, 1996, pp.10-11.

²¹ Griffiths, 1996, pp.78-81.

In the diffusely evolutionary intellectual world of later nineteenth century European colonial expansion, the traditional developmental sequences of savagery, barbarism, and civilisation (colour-coded as black, brown/yellow, and white) took on a systematic biological significance. Contemporary savages were commonly assumed to be closer - in cultural behaviour, in mental capacity and brain size, and in bodily characteristics and skeletal structure - to the ape-like ancestors of *Homo sapiens* and it was widely thought that, like those ancestors, they too would soon become extinct.²²

The European colonisation of New Zealand was based on the displacement of the indigenous people, native plants and things. The colonists believed that displacement was not only necessary but inevitable in the progress of colonisation. They took it for granted that the native people would not and could not stand in the way of the more vigorous immigrants any more than the native plants and animals could rebuff the introduced ones.²³ Additionally there was the political policy of assimilation which assumed that the two races Maori and Pakeha would be "amalgamated" by intermarriage resulting in the absorption of the Maori into a predominantly European population and their ultimate disappearance.²⁴

Consequently one of the major themes throughout the nineteenth century was the

²² Stocking, 1988, p.8.

²³ Galbreath, 1989, p.54.

²⁴ M.P.K. Sorrenson, "Maori and Pakeha" in Oliver, W.H. & B.R. Williams, eds. *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1981, p.169.

urgency given to recording disappearing worlds - both human and natural.²⁵

However there was a sense that human artefacts were more evanescent and thus there was felt an even greater degree of urgency in recording them.

In the 1830s the geologist Charles Lyell had described extinction as “part of a regular and constant order of nature.” To illustrate the process and the struggle between species he compared it to the process of colonisation and displacement.

In 1839 Dr James Prichard read a paper on: “The Extinction of Native Races,” before the British Association for the Advancement of Science. In his inaugural address, the first president of the Ethnological Society (formed in Great Britain in 1843, to be a “centre and depository for the collection and systematisation of all observations made on human races”) declared that the “ethnological harvest was ripe and must be gathered now, if at all.”²⁶

In 1884 Sir Walter Buller read a paper entitled “The Decrease of the Maori Race” to the Wellington Philosophical Institute, in which he argued that it was:

of the first importance... to collect and preserve, while there was still the opportunity, a faithful history of so interesting a people ... That the race was doomed he had no doubt in his own mind. ...He had often reflected on an observation of the late Dr Featherston, on their first meeting, just twenty-eight years ago: “The Maoris (he said) are dying

²⁵ Elizabeth Edwards, ed. *Anthropology and Photography 1860-1920*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press in association with The Royal Anthropological Institute, London, 1992, p.42.

²⁶ T.K. Penniman, *A Hundred Years of Anthropology*. New York: William Morrow & Co. Inc., 1974, p.53.

out, and nothing can save them. Our plain duty as good compassionate colonists, is to *smooth down their dying pillow*. Then history will have nothing to reproach us with.”²⁷

These ideas were still being promulgated in New Zealand at the beginning of the twentieth century. Augustus Hamilton said in his circular (n.d.) promoting the establishment of a national Maori museum that:

There is a necessity for... a well arranged representative collection of the articles illustrating the past history of the Maori people ... a real live memorial to the arts and crafts of the Maori people. The cost could be considerable, but it will be impossible at any price in the future.²⁸

During the middle of the nineteenth century it was thought that it was necessary to collect facts for biological and social studies rather than to try and deduce principles about society from an accepted theory. It is in this context that we should understand the development of an empiricist ethnology. The greatest synthesiser and systematiser of facts about the races of mankind at this time was James Cowle Prichard who wrote two very influential books: *The Natural History of Man* (1843) and *Researches into the Physical History of Man*, which appeared between 1836 and 1847. In these books he collected all that was known about the various races of mankind and this synthesis of anatomical, philological, psychological and ethnological data, formed the foundation of ethnology in

²⁷ Sir Walter Buller, Presidential Address: “The Decrease of the Maori Race.” in *TPNZI*, Vol. XVII, 1884, pp.443-4.

²⁸ Auckland Institute & Museum, (AI&M) MS.131. 9/11/2, p.2.

England.²⁹

The study of the material cultures of mankind or of the arts and industries by which people gain a living and adorn themselves and their surroundings was no less affected by evolutionary ideas than was the study of the social cultures of the world.

The first man to study the material arts and cultures in an evolutionary fashion was General Pitt-Rivers. He began his ethnological museum at Bethnal Green in 1851 and gave it to Oxford University in 1884 where it was housed in a building specially designed for it. Henry Balfour was put in charge of the collections and remained the curator until the 1930s.³⁰

As early as 1858 Pitt-Rivers had already adopted the plan of arranging each artefact type in a separate series with a view to showing its development. He had a method for arranging his collections which was entirely different from any other employed in his time. Pitt-Rivers collected not the unique, but the ordinary and typical objects in common use by the various peoples of the world. He selected and arranged them in sequences with a view to tracing the succession of ideas and development. Instead of using a geographical arrangement he collected, for example, the spears together according to the form of the object. In each group there was a sub-class for localities and in each sub-class, or wherever a

²⁹ Stocking, 1987, p.48.

³⁰ Penniman, 1974, p.153.

connection of ideas could be traced, specimens were arranged according to affinities: the similar to the left and successive improvements in line to the right. The arts of living races helped to explain what was obscure in those of prehistoric times. Just as the zoologist helped the palaeontologist to reconstruct the forms of extinct animals, so ethnological data might be used to illuminate archaeological problems. This method facilitated the tracing of like forms so that connections between places in former times could be determined. Human ideas, as represented by "industry" might be classified into genera, species and varieties and the methods of reasoning applied by biology could be used in studying them.³¹ This principle was quite different from the framework used by other museums which arranged objects by area or culture. Pitt-Rivers sought to elucidate the principles governing the development of material culture.

By 1875 Pitt-Rivers could say "it would be sheer moonshine in the present state of knowledge to study anthropology on any other basis than the basis of development." For the next generation the dominant anthropological view point (in the Anglo-American sphere) was "classical evolutionism."³²

Mid-nineteenth century ethnologists borrowed from natural history, moral philosophy and the humanistic tradition which stretched back into the eighteenth century. They studied non-European mankind in order to understand their own society as part of the old inquiry into the unity or diversity of mankind.³³ Data

³¹ *ibid*, p.154.

³² *ibid*, p.185.

³³ Bowden, 1991, p.42; Stocking, 1987, pp.47-8.

was gleaned from comparative anatomy, but there were other sources of information as well, for example, European folklore, antiquaries and philology.

From 1850 onward a number of scholars had been searching out and recording the fast disappearing beliefs and customs of the "folk," or peasantry. This British folklore movement grew out of an antiquarian tradition. The gentlemen antiquarians, influenced by the Romantic movement and stirred by nostalgia for a way of life which was rapidly disappearing as a result of the Industrial Revolution, had begun to see the culture of the "folk" in a more positive light. They started to collect tales, ballads and legends from the "folk" themselves.³⁴

The professionalisation of disciplines and the ethic of Social Darwinism were two international movements which cast their influence over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Both were products of the nineteenth century formation of mass institutions and nation-states, the prevailing belief in progress and the making of empires.³⁵

Organised anthropology in Britain emerged during a phase between the mercantilist "old colonial system" and the "new imperialism" of the late nineteenth century. As it was institutionalised the study of British anthropology looked less towards social theory than to antiquarianism and natural history, transformed as prehistory, and Darwinian evolution. Although its data was by no means limited to stones and bones, the orientation of anthropology was towards

³⁴ Bowden, 1991, p.55.

³⁵ Griffiths, 1996, p.5.

the distant past and the animal realm. Its living human subjects could only be approached from a distance. Their artefacts, which were often preserved in museums of natural history along with other objects from the vegetable, animal and mineral realms, could be studied or the people might be approached through the mechanism of the "ethnographic questionnaire" in which the complexity of human activities were reduced to the simplicity of recorded rule.

Edward Burnett Tylor was the leading British anthropologist of the later nineteenth century. He believed that the "surviving relics of the past" could help reconstruct the course of man's development. He made this doctrine his own and gave folklore a new intellectual synthesis which gave unity to that study until the end of the century. For Tylor the doctrine of survivals opened up all of European folklore as data to support an evolutionary argument. The European peasantry now served as a crucial link between modern civilised and primitive savage man.³⁶

Tylor was instrumental in the foundation of many organisations for collecting first-hand evidence. For example, he was appointed to the committee set up at the Montreal meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science "to investigate the physical characters, languages and industrial and social conditions of the Northwest tribes of the Dominion of Canada."³⁷ He became the Professor of Anthropology at Oxford University in 1883 and from then on he lectured at the

³⁶ Stocking, 1987, p.163.

³⁷ Stocking, 1987, p.141.

Pitt Rivers Museum.³⁸ His most influential work was *Primitive Culture* (1871). Although his last book *Anthropology* was written as early as 1881 he wrote an enormous number of reviews and papers subsequently which indicate that a great deal of his time was spent keeping up with the developments in anthropology throughout the world as well as in organising the subject and devising methods for its development. He edited eighteen sections of *Notes and Queries* for the 1874 and 1892 editions.

In 1888 Tylor read a paper to the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland entitled "On the method of investigating the development of institutions applied to laws of marriage and descent." This paper contains all the major methodological and conceptual assumptions of evolutionary anthropology.

Tylor's goal was classically positivistic:

... to overcome a certain not unkindly hesitancy on the part of the men engaged in the precise operations of mathematics, physics, chemistry (and) biology to admit that the problems of anthropology are amenable to scientific treatment.³⁹

He wanted to establish the central methodological principle of social evolutionism - the comparative method - on a sounder basis of "tabulation and classification."⁴⁰

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ George W. Stocking, *After Tylor: British Social Anthropology 1888-1951*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995, p.3.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

During the 1890s the most characteristic research in British anthropology was that concerned with physical anthropology and folklore. Within an evolutionary context these two inquiries were concerned with the origin of the different features of contemporary European populations viewed in the confused racial/cultural terms of the period. Physical anthropology presumed to offer methods by which the underlying racial types could be specified. Folklore collected the surviving evidence of their cultural characteristics. At this time the Anthropological Institute was considering amalgamating with the Folk-Lore Society.⁴¹

Throughout the colonial period there was a tendency to interpret New Zealand's history using models developed in Western Europe. The formation of the Polynesian Society had its roots in the development of anthropology. It was established on 8 January 1892, following the circulation the previous June of a proposal by S. Percy Smith that a society be formed to enable:

communication, co-operation and mutual criticism between those interested in studying Polynesian anthropology, ethnology, philology, history, manners and customs of the oceanic races and the preservation of all that relates to such subjects in a permanent form.⁴²

Smith believed it was the "plain and manifest duty" of his generation to record the information from the "old people" and those Europeans who were also familiar

⁴¹ Stocking, 1995, p.103.

⁴² M.P.K.Sorrenson, *Manifest Duty: the Polynesian Society over 100 Years*. Auckland: The Polynesian Society, 1992, p.24.

with the traditional knowledge before there was nothing left but regrets over lost opportunities. Sorrenson continues:

Time was pressing.... civilisation was fast extinguishing what little remained of ancient lore - the people themselves were dying out before the incoming white man.⁴³

The establishment of the Polynesian Society at this time both reflects overseas trends and development in anthropology and expresses ideas, developments and policies within New Zealand. A major political aim from the beginning of European colonisation of New Zealand was that in the interests of progress and civilisation the Maori should be assimilated into European culture and society. This would inevitably involve the extinction of traditional Maori culture. As early as 1851 Governor Grey had expressed the opinion that assimilation should extend to the Maori past but this past should be salvaged in the interests of the present and future culture of New Zealand before it vanished.⁴⁴

By the late nineteenth century the romantic portrayal of a "Golden Age" of Maoridom before the arrival of the Europeans was a basic tenet of thought among the European intelligentsia. (The orthodox view developed in the nineteenth century was that the pure ancient Maori culture had only become decadent as a result of European contact.⁴⁵) Romanticism is relevant in this

⁴³ Sorrenson, 1992, frontispiece & p.24.

⁴⁴ Leonard Bell, *Colonial Constructs: European Images of Maori 1840-1914*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1992, p.147.

⁴⁵ R. Neich, in S.Mead & B. Kernot, 1983, p.256

context of assimilation and national identity. For example, Janson explains that as the Romantic artist is in revolt against the old order he cannot use the established style of his own time but must get it from some phase of the past to which he feels linked by “elective affinity.”⁴⁶ European New Zealanders were beginning to assert their own identity separate from Britain. Although “revolt” is too strong a word for these feelings of independence, particularly when one considers the ambivalent feelings which New Zealanders held towards Britain, yet there was a casting off of allegiance towards the motherland and the Romantic attitude towards the “ancient” Maori culture is an indication of this.

As Rachel Barrowman states of the Polynesian Society:

While its scope, both in membership and interests was Pacific wide, the impetus and focus was the Maori. In essence its programme was to construct a Pakeha cultural identity by discovering, textualising and thus appropriating the country’s Maori history.⁴⁷

Ben Dibley explains that there are two movements which affect the appropriation and repositioning of the indigenous culture.

The first concerns the appropriation of elements of Maoriness as a national signature in an effort to both indigenise the settlers, anchoring them in New

⁴⁶ H.W. Janson, *The History of Art*. 3rd ed. revised and enlarged, London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 1986, p.574.

⁴⁷ Rachel Barrowman, *The Turnbull: a Library and its World*. Wellington: Auckland University Press, in association with the Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington. 1996, p.11.

Zealand, and marking a difference from both Britain and other white societies. ...The second concerns the repositioning of Maori culture in a proto-nationalist discourse which invents, for New Zealand, a tradition of great seafarers, warriors, and colonisers. Such a tradition constructed for the colony a historical continuity between recent European settlement and Maori settlement.⁴⁸

Augustus Hamilton was a founding member of the Polynesian Society. However his interests were different from the majority of the Polynesianists, because he was a scientist. Hamilton was a very active member of the New Zealand Institute, writing many papers on a wide variety of scientific topics and holding positions of responsibility on the councils of the regional branches to which he belonged.

The New Zealand Institute Act (1867) had established an Institute for the advancement of science and art in New Zealand. This was a corporate body consisting of a board of governors and the members of the local societies. The Institute comprised a public museum, laboratory, and public library in Wellington and the Governor was authorised to appoint people to superintend and carry out a geological survey. The Colonial Museum was granted to the Institute and Sir James Hector became the Manager of the Institute and the adviser to the government on scientific matters of all kinds. The Institute received a statutory grant of £500 per annum and each year published the *Transactions and*

⁴⁸ Dibley, 1997, p.12.

Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute which contained some of the papers read before the incorporated societies.⁴⁹

Hamilton had joined the Wellington Philosophical Society on 29 January 1876 as a young man of 22.⁵⁰ For the rest of his life he was deeply involved in the affairs of the Institute and, or, one of its branches. The people and activities of the various regional societies affiliated to the New Zealand Institute were probably the most important influences on Augustus Hamilton. These people included William Colenso, Henry Hill, and William Spencer from Napier, James Hector, Walter Buller and Thomas Kirk from Wellington, and George Thomson, Thomas Hocken and Frederick Chapman from Dunedin.

As well as being an active member of New Zealand's official scientific organisation Hamilton was a founding member of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science(AAAS).⁵¹ and thus influenced by the new ideas about anthropology which were being formulated by such people as A.W. Howitt, Lorimer Fison, W. Baldwin Spencer, A.C. Haddon, E.C. Stirling, and W.E. Roth.⁵²

⁴⁹ C.A. Fleming. *Science Settlers and Scholars: the Centennial History of the Royal Society of New Zealand*. Wellington: The Royal Society of New Zealand, Bulletin No.25, 1987, p. 17.

⁵⁰ The New Zealand Institute,(NZI).*Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* (TPNZI) Vol.VIII,1875, p.413.

⁵¹ A.Morton, ed. "List of Members" in *Report of Fourth Meeting of AAAS* Hobart: pub. by the Association, 1892. p.1002.

⁵² A.P.Elkin, ed. *A Goodly Heritage : A.N.Z.A.A.S. Jubilee*, Sydney: pub. by the Association, 1962, p.6.

Baldwin Spencer (1860-1929) is an important link between the methods and ideology of Pitt-Rivers and those of Augustus Hamilton. Baldwin Spencer's life and work exerted a powerful influence over a generation of collectors in Victoria, Australia. He was educated in Manchester and at Oxford University. While at Oxford he and Henry Balfour assisted the anthropologist E.B. Tylor to transfer Pitt-Rivers' ethnographic collection from London to a new museum at Oxford and in doing so they absorbed the principles of typological classification of artefacts.

In 1887 Baldwin Spencer took up the foundation Chair of Biology at the University of Melbourne. There he established biological teaching and research on evolutionary principles. He initiated a similar intellectual revolution at the National Museum of Victoria when he succeeded Frederick McCoy as the Director in 1899. Baldwin Spencer inspired many of the "amateurs" who made massive collections of stone artefacts in Victoria. They were amateurs in the sense that they were not formally trained in anthropology or archaeology and found their chief employment in other fields. Even Spencer was an amateur in this sense because his training was in biology and not the anthropology for which he became famous.⁵³

In 1894 Spencer's anthropological interests were revived when as the biologist on the Horn Scientific Expedition to Central Australia he met Frank Gillen, the Alice Springs postmaster and an amateur collector of Aboriginal lore. The two collaborated on pioneering studies of central Australian aborigines. They

⁵³ Griffiths, 1996, p.68.

published *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* in 1899 and *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* in 1904. Spencer's biological training and evolutionary principles shaped his perception of aborigines as "... creatures, often crude and quaint, that have elsewhere passed away and given place to higher forms."⁵⁴ The aborigines were to be compared with the marsupials, for both were the products of biological polygenesis and had developed in entirely isolated ways, never beyond a primitive stage.⁵⁵

Spencer was an energetic cultural and scientific leader in Victorian (Australian) society and a popular writer and lecturer. He was at different times the President of the Royal Society of Victoria, of the Field Naturalist's Club of Victoria and of the Victorian Football League, as well as a connoisseur and collector of Australian impressionist art.

The AAAS first met in Sydney in 1888. It had come into existence as a result of the vision and enthusiasm of Professor Archibald Liversidge of the University of Sydney who had proposed the idea in 1879 but received no encouragement at that time. However the idea was revived after the Montreal meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1884.⁵⁶

At the meeting in Sydney Augustus Hamilton read his paper on "Maori Art" [which is discussed in the following chapter] in the Anthropology section. E.C.

⁵⁴ *ibid*

⁵⁵ *ibid*

⁵⁶ Elkin, 1962, p. 13.

Stirling, W. Baldwin Spencer and W.E. Roth were also present at this meeting but they were in the Biology and Sanitary Science sections.⁵⁷ In 1891 when the Annual Meeting of the AAAS was held in Christchurch, Hamilton was the Secretary of Section G. Anthropology. The anthropologist A.W. Howitt of Melbourne was the President.

Many of Augustus Hamilton's friends attended this conference and were on the committees of the different sections. They included Henry Hill, who gave a paper on "Tongariro, Ngaruhoe and Ruapehu as volcanic cones." to the Geology and Palaeontology section. A.P. Thomas, the Professor of Natural Science at Auckland University, was the vice-president of the Geology section. T.J. Parker, the Professor of Biology at Otago University was the vice-president of the Biology section while Sir Walter Buller, Thomas Kirk, T.F. Cheeseman, Curator of the Auckland Museum were committee members and G.M. Thomson of Dunedin was the Secretary. S. Percy Smith, the Surveyor-General from Wellington and the initiator of the Polynesian Society, was the vice-president of the Geography section and F.R. Chapman from Dunedin was also a member of the Geography section. Walter B.D. Mantell of Wellington was the vice-president of the Anthropology section with T.M. Hocken and E. Tregear both being on the committee. Hamilton himself was the Secretary of this section.⁵⁸

A committee which had earlier been appointed to consider the improvement of

⁵⁷ *ibid*, p.6.

⁵⁸ Sir James Hector, KCMG, M.D., F.R.S. ed. *Report of the 3rd Meeting of AAAS held at Christchurch NZ in January 1891*. pub. by the Association, Wellington: George Didsbury Govt. Printer, 1891, pp. 538-9.

museums as a means of popular education reported back to this Christchurch meeting. The committee confined themselves to affirming the following as important principles in the management of popular museums:

- 1) The collections should be arranged with a view to the requirements of the general public in whom no special knowledge of the subjects should be assumed.
- 2) Index-collections are of great importance and should be widely used: special as well as general index-collections should be arranged wherever practicable.
- 3) Collections illustrating the general phenomena of nature are of great value, e.g. models, diagrams, and specimens illustrating denudation, ice-action, the formation of gravels, variation, mimicry, protective colouring etc.
- 4) In the zoological collections special cases illustrating zoo-geography are highly recommended.
- 5) Descriptive labels in non-technical language should be freely employed.
- 6) As far as possible specimens should be shown only with a definite object and the over-crowding of cases should on no account be permitted.⁵⁹

This outline reveals the prevailing philosophy of colonial scientists towards natural history museums at the end of the nineteenth century which was the “new museum idea.” Earlier museums had celebrated the bizarre and abnormal, and were dominated by aesthetic considerations. But during the nineteenth century

⁵⁹ *ibid*

instructing the observer became more important than merely amusing visitors. As museums became educational institutions questions of purpose, organisation and arrangement emerged as central concerns. A new middle class wanted activities which combined both education and amusement. Curators were expected to reconcile the conflicting needs of public expectation and the newly professional scientific elite. This conflict resulted in seemingly petty debates over how to display specimens and how many objects to exhibit but these debates highlighted fundamental differences over the role of museums.

Attitudes to these differences varied with local conditions, institutional loyalties and national allegiances but some museums served as models for museums everywhere. When the Natural History Museum in South Kensington opened in 1881 it was the example to which every other museum aspired. Institutions all over the world sought advice about museum practice from the Natural History Museum and it became the most influential museum of its kind.

The "new museum idea" had originated with John Gray, the Keeper of Zoology at the British Museum who had tried to persuade his colleagues to carefully prune and arrange collections because these gave the visitor the "greatest amount of instruction in the shortest and most direct manner." However this view was a threat to Richard Owen who insisted that the purpose of a national repository was to display every varietal and specific form. Owen's views seemed to materialise as he oversaw the move of the Natural History Museum in the early 1880s. But when Flower took over the directorship in 1884 Gray's ideas re-emerged and the

“new museum idea” triumphed at the Natural History Museum and influenced museums all over the world.

William Henry Flower, the Natural History Museum’s Director, was the foremost exponent of the “new museum idea” and the greatest museologist in Britain during the Victorian period.⁶⁰ The essence of the concept involved organising museums around a dual purpose: research and popular education. Numerous specimens representing specific and varietal forms were of little interest to the average visitor and belonged in a segregated study area. The public exhibits were designed to give the layman a general understanding of the kingdoms of nature and only the best specimens were displayed in order to illustrate a particular principle or taxonomic category. No duplication of materials was permitted. Specimens were to be shown in uncrowded cases accompanied by informative labels. The exhibits might be fashioned around themes such as evolution or geographic distribution. Guidebooks and catalogues increased the educational value of public materials.⁶¹

Museums flourished during the nineteenth century because they were extensions of the enthusiasm for collecting, classification and encyclopaedic knowledge. “They became institutional scrapbooks of nature and culture, presenting the newly conquered globe in microcosm.” They were also part of the ethic of progress and the “proving grounds” of nationhood. “The urge to classify and order the world

⁶⁰ K Hudson, *Museums of Influence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. pp.68-9.

⁶¹ Sheets-Pyenson, 1988, p.3.

of nature went hand in hand with the organisation and domination of far-flung human societies.”⁶²

But also as Tom Griffiths asserts:

Collecting is a “crucial process of Western identity formation,” “an exercise in how to make the world one’s own, to gather things around oneself tastefully, appropriately.” Collecting also assumes a certain notion of time; collectors are driven by urgency, by the need to collect “before it is too late” - and we need to ask “too late for what?” Their work is suffused with a sense of salvage, objects are rescued from out of time itself. “Collecting presupposes a story.” And the stories not only give meaning to the objects; they also ensnare the collectors.⁶³

Augustus Hamilton studied material culture from a biological, evolutionary perspective using the methods and techniques current at the time. He was “a man of his time,” and the most significant representative of the biological ethnologists in New Zealand. By the beginning of the twentieth century Augustus Hamilton was known among the international anthropological community for his ethnological studies collated in his great work entitled *Maori Art* and published in five parts by the New Zealand Institute between 1896 and 1901.⁶⁴ He had developed from a Victorian natural historian to an internationally recognised early

⁶² Griffiths, 1996, pp.18-19.

⁶³ *ibid.*

⁶⁴ discussed in Chapter 2.

twentieth century ethnologist.

Leonard Bell asserts that the ethnological investigations and the collecting of Maori historical and cultural material were elements in the drive for a national and indigenous European culture. As such they amounted to an absorption and transformation of aspects of the subordinate culture into the dominant culture.

Maori people may have been peripheral to European society in the late nineteenth century but things Maori were a prime imaginative concern among European New Zealand artists and writers.⁶⁵

Johannes Carl Andersen's life's work was the "inventing" of New Zealand. The study of the Maori and local flora and fauna and the appropriation of these indigenous phenomena were used to create a Pakeha cultural identity. "Leave the Greek and turn to the Maori" was a theme he elaborated at length in *Maori Life in Aotearoa*, 1907. Other writers and artists were by the 1890s looking for the foundations of a national culture in that of the Maori.⁶⁶

The development of Maori "historical," painting at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries is another sign of emerging nationalism. It is linked with the need for a culture "to have a past." Cultural representations, such as historical painting, express the sense of national identity in many countries. In Europe at the turn of the century there were often close links between nationalist

⁶⁵ Leonard Bell, *Colonial Constructs: European Images of Maori 1840-1914*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1992, p.152.

⁶⁶ *ibid*, p.149.

movements and the assertion of national identity, and the promotion of folklore and legend native to particular countries.⁶⁷ This occurred in New Zealand but with a different twist: the New Zealand Europeans took over the culture and history of the people they were supplanting in order to give a greater length to their country's past which may be a result of the deliberate policy of assimilation which was established early in New Zealand's European history. The need to feel native to a place is called "indigenisation."⁶⁸ The origin of the Maori was a topic of intense debate, some scholars thought they had Semitic origins while others such as Edward considered they were Aryan. Either way they had European origins: a useful myth which made the development of a nationalism based on another culture more valid.⁶⁹

Donald Denoon explains:

Only in New Zealand were indigenous people transmogrified into precocious European navigators and colonials, co-opted into settler history rather than expunged from its records. Only in New Zealand was it conceded that history had occurred before Europeans trod the stage. ... By insisting that Maoris were long-lost cousins, the settlers were still able to believe that history began with European colonisation.⁷⁰

The standard European view of traditional society as either something of the past or fast disappearing is captured by Lindauer in his portraits of "old-

⁶⁷ *ibid*, p.150.

⁶⁸ *ibid*, p.152.

⁶⁹ Dibley, 1997, p.14.

⁷⁰ *ibid*, p.15.

time" Maori. There is an absence of drama and static, frozen qualities in his tableaux. The figures are archaic and their half-smiles and abstracted looks convey a sense of remoteness, distance and dream. Lindauer's contemporaries viewed these paintings as accurate records of history.⁷¹

A number of Lindauer's paintings were based on photographs taken by Augustus Hamilton for the anthropological and historical record. These paintings were claimed to be meticulously faithful to life and ethnologically accurate. But they were generally staged tableaux of Maori activities and contributed to the invention of the Maori past.⁷² Hamilton used photography as a useful adjunct to his museum work. Photography was to Augustus Hamilton another means of scientifically documenting the world and the artefacts and customs of mankind which were of considerable interest to him. However what appear to be straight forward direct portraits of Maori, recording ethnological fact or reproductions of scenes from their daily life, in which the artist was capturing a sense of likeness or resemblance, were invariably loaded with social and cultural significance.⁷³

The use of photographs as anthropological data and as simple truth was a feature of nineteenth-century ethnology throughout the world. Committees were established to co-ordinate material of anthropological interest and photographs were collected, swapped and archived for the common scientific good as part of

⁷¹ Bell, 1992, p.205.

⁷² *ibid*, pp.200-202.

⁷³ *ibid*, p.157.

the collection of “raw data” from all over the world which was sent for analysis to the Anthropological Institute in London.⁷⁴

The German photographer Dammann produced photographs which were used to encode a typology of race. His *Ethnological Photographic Gallery of the Various Races of Man* is made up of a mixture of genres from the anthropometric to the romantic, but the layout and the arrangement imply a hierarchy of race beginning at the top with the Germanic and Teutonic type and ending at the bottom with the Australian Aborigines.⁷⁵

As Tom Griffiths says:

The invention of the camera represented the culmination of [the]western quest for visibility and life-like representation. Anthropology and photography were both invented in the mid-nineteenth century and formed a powerful partnership. Like taxidermy, both violated their subject, were scientific and historic, and constituted acts of collection that presupposed and transcended death. That is the nature (and culture) of collection. It appropriates and propitiates.⁷⁶

In the late nineteenth century students of “primitive” design were beginning to realise that the early phases of representative art were not art for art’s sake, but had their origins in symbolism and religious or magical practices. Hjalman Stolpe

⁷⁴ Elizabeth Edwards, ed. *Anthropology and Photography: 1860-1920*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press & The Royal Anthropological Institute London, 1992, p.4.

⁷⁵ Roslyn Poignant, in Edwards, ed. 1992, p.55.

⁷⁶ Griffiths, 1996, pp.24-5.

studied the art of primitive peoples and early came under the influence of Pitt-Rivers. As early as 1881 Stolpe had foreshadowed the view that appeared in his paper of 1890 which claimed that conventional patterns had developed from images of gods and that these highly conventionalised patterns symbolised the primitive usage. He recognised that unilinear evolution is a rare phenomenon and that a given design may be traceable to a plurality of origins, hybridisation of ideas being a common occurrence. He also considered it vitally important that designs were studied in terms of their culture-environment, and of the material and techniques used in their execution.⁷⁷

In 1880-81 Stolpe had made a tour of all the main European museums and discovered that many of them were not scientifically arranged. He made a large number of copies of objects and took numerous rubbings with paper and black wax. These are all in the National Museum of Natural History in Stockholm where Stolpe was Director of the Department. In 1883-5 he was the ethnologist on board the *Vanadis* which made a voyage around the world. His paper "On Evolution in the Ornamental Art of Savage Peoples" was the first scientific study of Polynesian Art and was published in *Ymer* as "Utvecklings foreteelser i Naturfolkens ornamentile."⁷⁸ It is included in Hamilton's "Handlist of certain Papers relating more or less directly to the Maori Race."⁷⁹

A.C. Haddon's *Evolution in Art as Illustrated by the Life Histories of Designs*,

⁷⁷ Penniman, 1974, pp.156-8.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ *TPNZI*. Vol.XXXIII p.515.

1895, includes most of the contemporary ideas on symbolism. In this book Haddon aimed to encourage the study of decorative art from the biological rather than the aesthetic point of view:

Only by the study of the life history of designs, of their origin in some far away field of realistic conception, their evolution and conventionalisation under varying geographic and racial influences, their final assumption of apparently the heterogeneous forms, can the student hope to escape the multitudinous pitfalls with which his path is beset.⁸⁰

Haddon gives an account of the decorative art of British New Guinea as an example of the method of study. He discusses the reasons for which things are decorated, including art, information, wealth, magic, and religion and concludes with a statement of his method of study. This book applies biological deductions to designs and discusses the geographical distribution of animals and designs.⁸¹

Alfred Cort Haddon had attended Cambridge University then spent six months studying marine biology in Naples before being appointed to the Chair of Zoology at the Royal College of Science in Dublin. In 1888 he went to the Torres Straits Islands with a £300 grant to study "the fauna, structure and mode of formation of the coral reefs in the Torres Straits."⁸² He realised before he went that there were opportunities for ethnographic work but after consulting Flower, the Director of

⁸⁰ Penniman, 1974, p.158.

⁸¹ *ibid*, p.158.

⁸² Stocking 1995, p.100.

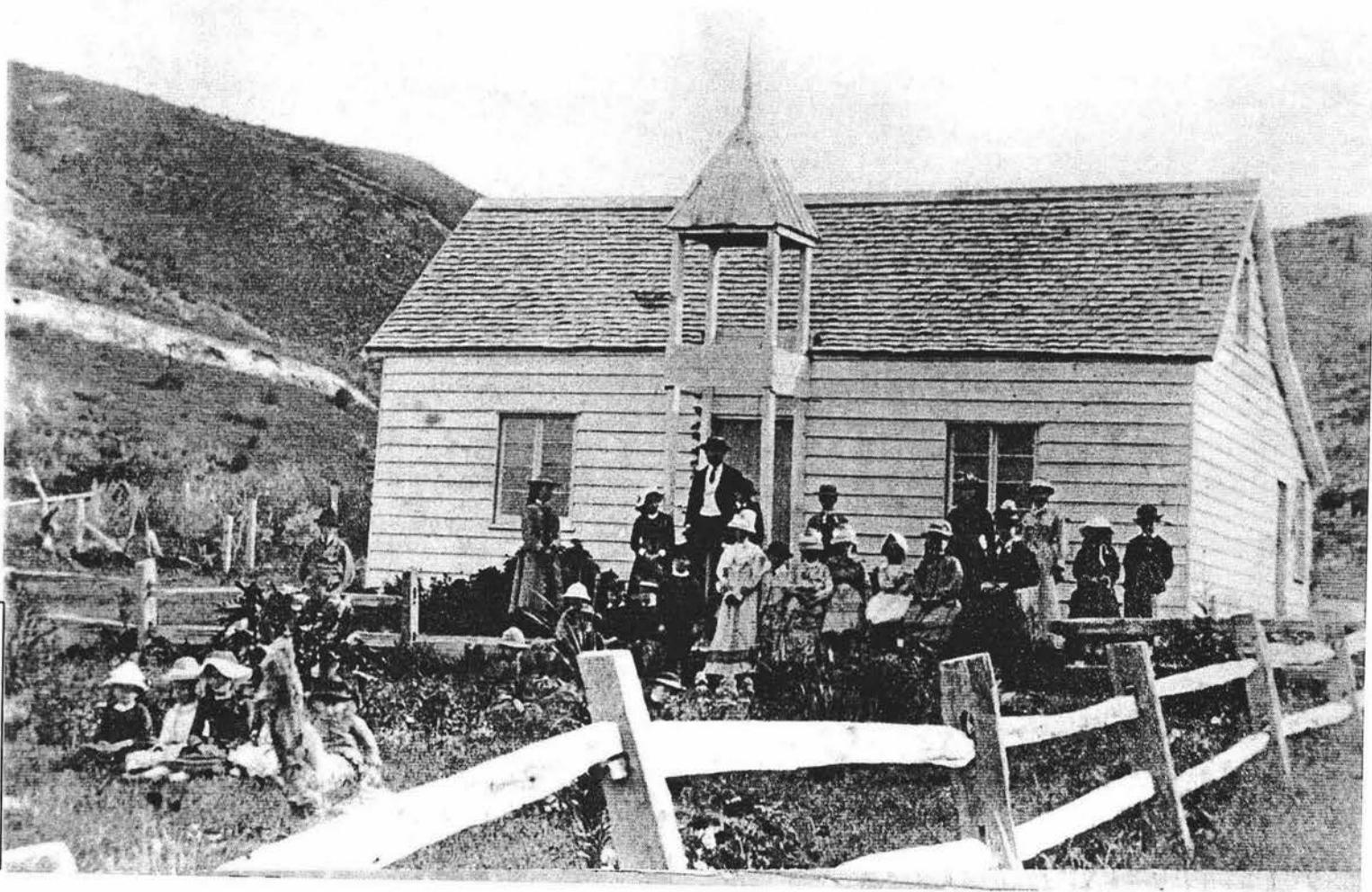
the Natural History Museum in London, he decided against taking measurements of the “natives” because “a good deal was already known about them.” But he did take *Notes and Queries* and during the expedition his interest shifted from marine biology to anthropology. He bartered calico and hatchets for “curios” to sell to recoup his expenses.

He made random ethnological observations which he published in a book *The Ethnography of the Western Tribes of Torres Straits* on his return. This showed an unusual sensitivity to “colonial situations.” Haddon tried to find a standpoint from which he could both study and defend the “natives” whose traditional customs and beliefs were being radically transformed by the encroachment of European civilisation. He believed anthropology should “enlighten the imperial self-interest which would reduce its weight for the English and for the savage who bore the brunt of it.”⁸³

This chapter has reviewed the intellectual movements which shaped the world view of ethnologists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hamilton trained as a Victorian scientist and was able to bring this interest in systematic research to the field of colonial ethnology. His involvement in a number of national organisations led to the development of a network of amateur and professional “colleagues.” Having established the characteristics of the broad intellectual milieu within which he developed it is now appropriate to move to the

⁸³ *ibid*, pp. 101-103.

more detailed account and analysis of certain aspects of his career, pursuing in particular his contribution to the preservation and collecting of Maori art.



Petane School, Hawke's Bay,
[Augustus Hamilton in
doorway]. Collection of
Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust -
Hawke's Bay Museum,
Napier. New Zealand.
Reference No.2366

Chapter Two

Hamilton to 1900.

Augustus Hamilton was born in Poole, Dorset, on 1 March 1853. His father Augustus Priestley Hamilton, was a doctor. His mother had been Mary Eleanor Tebbott. Hamilton was educated at Dorset County School and Epsom Medical College.⁸⁴ He held a Certificate from the Royal College of Surgeons which was the qualification he used for his teaching career.⁸⁵ The Hamilton family emigrated to New Zealand on board the *Collingwood*, a New Zealand Shipping Company emigrant ship, arriving in Wellington in July 1875. Hamilton's father was the Surgeon Superintendent and Hamilton himself was the schoolmaster. During the voyage there was an epidemic of scarlet fever and typhoid which killed 20 of the passengers, including 15 children under ten years old.⁸⁶

Hamilton taught in Wellington and at Okarito on the West Coast before moving to Hawke's Bay in 1878 where he taught at Petane/Eskdale school until 1887.⁸⁷ Subsequently he is described as a "Librarian" living in Napier.⁸⁸ He was

⁸⁴Department of Internal Affairs, *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography 1870-1900*, Vol. II, Wellington: Bridget Williams Books & Department of Internal Affairs, 1993, p.189.

⁸⁵Hamilton Diary, 1882, (Hamilton says "Had a letter from the Minister of Education asking for Certificate from R.C of S. I find that I have not got it as Robinson of Hokitika never returned it." (p.116), "...By chance I found the College of Surgeon's Certificate and the English testimonials which I thought were mislaid by the Secretary of the Westland Board so that now I can send them to Wellington on Saturday." (p. 121)

⁸⁶Peter Hughes, "The Papers of Augustus Hamilton in the Auckland Museum Library" in *Archifacts*, Oct. 1991, p.14.

⁸⁷*Petane/Eskdale School Centenary Souvenir Booklet*, p.15, p.27.

⁸⁸R.C.Harding, *Hardings Almanac: 1889*, p.264, R.C. Harding, *Hardings Almanac: 1890*, p.254.

employed as Librarian for the Napier Athenaeum and Mechanics' Institute from 1887 to 1890, replacing Mrs Caulton who had been the Resident Librarian for this Institute for a number of years.⁸⁹ In 1865 the Librarian of the Athenaeum had been paid £43 and had been given a rent-free house. The Athenaeum was given some financial assistance by the Provincial Government in the form of grants-in-aid which included a contribution towards winter firing.⁹⁰ Presumably there was a similar arrangement when Hamilton took over the position in 1887 after he stopped teaching at Petane/Eskdale school. On 22 September 1882 he married Hope Ellen McKain, a member of one of the earliest European families to settle in Napier. They had two children, a daughter, Pearl, and a son, Harold.⁹¹

The Mechanics' Institute had been established in 1859, but it was not until 25 July 1865 that the first Athenaeum building was opened on a site in Browning Street, Napier, granted by the Provincial Government.⁹² In 1874 there was a drive to raise funds for the purchase of more books and the foundation of a museum and an exhibition was held in November where Maori carvings and artefacts, manufactured goods and settlers' possessions were all displayed.⁹³ In 1876 the Mechanics' Institute became incorporated with the Athenaeum by an Act "by which all the real and personal property belonging to the Institute was duly vested in the members of the Athenaeum."⁹⁴

⁸⁹ *Hardings Almanac* 1887: p.269 (Mrs Caulton) *Hardings Almanac*: 1888, p.205, *Hardings Almanac*: 1890, p.236.

⁹⁰ P. Bear, *Catalogue Rules of the Napier Athenaeum*, 1884, & M.D.M. Campbell, *Footprints along the Shore: the History of Napier 1874-1974*. Napier, p.35.

⁹¹ *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Vol. II, 1993, p.190.

⁹² P. Bear, 1884.

⁹³ Campbell, 1975, p.35.

⁹⁴ The Napier Athenaeum and Mechanics' Institute Incorporation Act, 1876.

The Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute was founded in Napier on 14 September 1874 (under the New Zealand Institutes' Act, 1867) for the advancement of science, literature and art, as well as for the development of the resources of the colony.⁹⁵ Those present at the first meeting were J.D. Ormond, M. Miller, Thomas Tanner, Charles Weber, T.K. Newton, William Williams, F.W.C. Sturm, William Colenso, J. Chambers, W. Spencer, John Alexander Smith, J.S. Kinross, J. Murray Gibbes, John Hall jr., M. Hutchinson, G. Peacock, J.S. Smalley, H.R. Holder, Andrew Luff and Samuel Locke. These founding members were important men in the community: members of the Provincial Council, businessmen, landowners, medical men and the Anglican Bishop. Williams, Spencer and Gibbes had medical training, Sturm was a nursery man, and Colenso was a clergyman, printer and botanist. John Alexander Smith had been the first curator of the Auckland Museum when it was established in 1852.⁹⁶ At the first meeting J.D. Ormond was appointed President, Bishop Williams Vice-President and the councillors were Messrs Locke, Sturm, Smith, Spencer, Gibbes and Holder. William Colenso became Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, a position which he held for the next ten years until he resigned and Augustus Hamilton was appointed Secretary.

In 1877 Dr Spencer, a founding member, councillor and president of the Philosophical Institute (and between 1882-85 the third Mayor of Napier) arranged

⁹⁵Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute Constitution 1875.

⁹⁶T.F. Cheeseman, *The First Fifty Years of the Auckland Institute and Museum and its Future Aims*, Auckland, 1917, p. 8a.

with the Athenaeum Committee for the Philosophical Institute to have a bookcase containing their books in the Athenaeum library. They paid Mrs Caulton, the Athenaeum librarian, an honorarium of three guineas a year for attending to their books.⁹⁷ This was the beginning of the long association between the Philosophical Institute and the Athenaeum.

The Philosophical Institute rented a room in the Athenaeum from 1879.⁹⁸ Then in 1881 they decided to lease the room for their exclusive use and at the same time to receive into it “the present museum belonging to the Athenaeum and now in their newsroom.”⁹⁹ This was arranged by January 1883 when the deeds of lease for the room were signed by four members of the Council of the Philosophical Institute in the presence of Captain W. Russell. At this meeting sundry furniture and fittings were agreed to, such as an additional book case “like the present one, but with sliding doors,” four strong plain tables and two dozen cane-seated chairs.¹⁰⁰

Once the Philosophical Institute had their own room the members were able to organise their museum in earnest. William Colenso said in his report in 1884:

The Library is in the Society’s Room in the Athenaeum Building, now leased to the Philosophical Institute for a term of years, and is open for reading and for reference at all times during hours to Members

⁹⁷ Hawke’s Bay Philosophical Institute Minute Book (HBPIMB) 14/11/1881.

⁹⁸ HBPIMB, April 1879

⁹⁹ *ibid*, 4 Oct 1881.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*, 17 Jan 1883.

and their friends, on application to Mrs Caulton, the resident Librarian of the Athenaeum. ...

Further: In addition to the valuable first-class Standard Works in the Library, the Museum of the Society has been during the year put in order; several glass cases and other necessaries for that purpose having been purchased by the Council; and the able and hearty assistance of Mr Hamilton has also been obtained.¹⁰¹

Hamilton did not join the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute until 1883, although William Colenso mentions in his reports for both the preceding years that he had exhibited various botanical specimens at the ordinary meetings.¹⁰²

In June 1881:

Mr Hamilton of Petane (a member of the Wellington branch) was present and showed several fine specimens of an *Asplenium*... he had lately detected near Petane; the fern being a scarce one in this District and the specimens being in good order they gave much satisfaction.¹⁰³

The following year it is recorded that Hamilton:

...exhibited a large collection of sponges of various kinds and sizes and all from Hawke's Bay, most of them being from Petane Beach...

¹⁰¹ HBPI *Annual Report* for year ending 31 January 1884, William Colenso, Hon Sec., R. C. Harding, Printer, Hastings Street, Napier, 1884.

¹⁰² HBPI *Annual Reports* for years ending 31 Jan 1882 & 1883.

¹⁰³ HBPIMB, 13 June 1881.

The whole being illustrated by suitable remarks on the nature, varieties and growth of Sponges.¹⁰⁴

Hamilton obviously attended the ordinary meetings of the Institute regularly because he is recorded as proposing or seconding a vote of thanks to the speaker on at least two occasions.¹⁰⁵

Augustus Hamilton was nominated to become a member of the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute by William Colenso at the AGM on 6 February 1883. F.W.C. Sturm seconded the nomination. Then the Honorary Secretary, Colenso, moved the adoption of a new by-law as a necessary clause of the Constitution:

Provided always that whenever any such member or members of other branch societies aforesaid shall become settled residents in the Hawke's Bay district that it shall be incumbent upon them to be duly enrolled as Members of this Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute in order to be entitled to its privileges.

This was seconded by Thomas Tanner "a pioneer sheep farmer and provincial notable"¹⁰⁶ and carried unanimously.¹⁰⁷

Three weeks later Hamilton was given the office of Assistant Curator for one year from 1 March 1883. He was to be present in the Museum and Library on

¹⁰⁴ *ibid*, 10 July 1882.

¹⁰⁵ HBPIMB, 11 September 1882, & 9 October 1882.

¹⁰⁶ Campbell, 1975, p.88.

¹⁰⁷ HBPIMB, 6 February 1883.

Saturdays and “Ordinary Meeting Nights” and to be paid £10 a year by way of remuneration.¹⁰⁸ In his diary Hamilton mentions several meetings with Colenso during January and February 1883 which would appear to be related to both his becoming a member of the Hawke’s Bay Institute and becoming the Museum Curator. He wrote: “On Wednesday afternoon I rode to town on purpose to see Colenso. ... Mr C. and I had a long and confidential talk on various matters relating to the Philosophical Society.”¹⁰⁹ The following week he recorded: “Sat. Feb. ... Called on Colenso and had a long talk about things in general and more particularly about the affairs of the Society.”¹¹⁰ And on Friday (2 March) he wrote: “Had a letter from Colenso saying that it had been arranged that I should be the Curator of the Museum of the Philosophical Society.”¹¹¹

William Colenso tried to resign from the position of Secretary/Treasurer at the 1883 AGM at which Hamilton became a member, but he said: “combined with the known present absolute want of a Member every way suitable and willing to hold the said offices that I feel obliged to give way.”¹¹²

The following year Colenso sent an official letter of resignation and Henry Hill (who had only been elected a member two weeks previously) proposed Augustus Hamilton for Secretary.¹¹³ There was some discussion as to whether Hamilton would be able to give sufficient time to fulfil his duties because he was a non-

¹⁰⁸ HBPIMB, 28 February 1883.

¹⁰⁹ Hamilton Diary 1882/3 p.155.

¹¹⁰ *ibid*, p. 156.

¹¹¹ *ibid*, p. 164.

¹¹² HBPIMB February 1883.

¹¹³ HBPIMB, 16 January 1884.

resident. He lived at Petane in the Esk Valley a few miles north of Napier. It was decided to divide the offices of secretary and treasurer and J.N. Bowerman was elected Treasurer. Hamilton was then elected Honorary Secretary for the ensuing year - with William Colenso dissenting.¹¹⁴

The next seven years were to lay the foundation for Hamilton's future career. It was here in Napier that he developed his skills as a museum curator and librarian and extended and consolidated the network of friends and acquaintances among the scientific and intellectual community of New Zealand which was to be so useful to him when he was Director of the Dominion Museum. His interests were eclectic and his drive and thoroughness enabled him to make a considerable impact on the collection and preservation of New Zealand's cultural and scientific heritage. These characteristics of energy and thoroughness are apparent in the way he organised and developed the Philosophical Institute's Museum in Napier in the 1880s.

In April 1883 Hamilton obtained a specimen of a torpedo fish from a fisherman but was disappointed that the fisherman had "taken out its 'innards' thinking it would keep better." However he paid him the ten shillings he had promised. Hamilton was unable to buy a jar large enough for it, so he and Bowerman, the Treasurer of the Institute and a chemist, put it in a bath and washed off all the epithelial which "greatly improved its appearance." They then put:

¹¹⁴ HBPIMB, 4 February 1884.

... the fish on a large sheet of brown paper and made an exact tracing of it with black chalk, drawing in the exact position of the eyes and spiracles because they are very incorrectly represented in the drawing given in the catalogue of New Zealand fishes.

They were pleased with the specimen so they repaired the under surface:

Placing it on a tray we sent a boy round to Carnell's with it and had both dorsal and ventral surfaces photographed, the electrical organs were plainly visible through the semi-transparent skin of the ventral surface.

The torpedo was later put in spirits.¹¹⁵ [Carnell was a Napier photographer.]

By July 1883 Augustus had begun to reorganise the Museum. New cases and fittings for the collection were ordered from the local firm Large and Townley. Bowerman was asked to procure a large stone jar and 2 gallons of methylated spirits for the purpose of preserving all fresh animal specimens that might be obtained. He was also charged with the task of discussing with a representative from the Athenaeum Society Augustus Hamilton's concern that their specimens should be better ordered and arranged.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Hamilton Diary 1882/3 pp.180-1.

¹¹⁶ HBPIMB, July 1883.

Bowerman can not have been successful in relaying these concerns to the Athenaeum representative because in October Hamilton himself wrote to the Secretary of the Athenaeum committee. He said that as there were various specimens and display cases belonging to the Athenaeum in the room occupied by the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute and as it was his duty to arrange the specimens he would suggest that the committee place all its specimens in the hands of the Philosophical Institute and leave the arrangement of the specimens to the Curator. He added that the variety of specimens made it impossible to keep them all together in one case as a separate collection if they were to be included in any definite scheme of classification.¹¹⁷

One of Augustus Hamilton's first duties as Secretary was to get the library books catalogued in order that they might be classified according to new rules.¹¹⁸

He was an enthusiastic curator of the Museum and frequently urged members to assist in collecting specimens for the Museum. He contributed a large part of the collection himself. Specimens donated by him in 1885 included bones from sea and land mammals; a collection of New Zealand molluscs; collections of local insects, echinoderms; crustaceans from Hawke's Bay; barnacles; fish skeletons; bird skins and specimens illustrating the osteology of New Zealand birds.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Colenso Papers, Vol. 9. Hamilton, A., A.L.S. to Athenaeum Secretary, 1 October 1883, Berry Library, Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust, Napier.

¹¹⁸ HBPI MB 17 April 1884.

¹¹⁹ HBPI *Annual Report*, 1886.

From the time he became Curator of the Museum his diary revolved around his tasks associated with the Museum such as the acquisition of specimens; the preparation of natural history exhibits; the classification and cataloguing of specimens; the writing of labels; and the display of the exhibits.

In his diary he discussed reading a new book on museums and museum work and said he gained some new ideas from it.¹²⁰ He commented:

The author seems to be a thorough taxidermist and has had a large experience - his museum however is not quite the same size as ours, for the main room is 80 by 40. He writes very fairly and is emphatic about the hat-peg system of displaying stuffed birds - he also writes strongly about the absurd length to which "local" sets are carried in English museums - but from our New Zealand point of view which can only be over a specialised field - his arguments are hardly to the point and one is left in the dark as to whether - for instance - we should exhibit fossils, illustrating geology in general, with our strictly local fossils or whether there should be a general collection of fossils in Conchological sequence - or again whether the conchological sequence should be comprehensive and include recent as well as fossil form? This style of General or Plan label I like very much and I must try and get up some like them. One for our whales would be particularly handy. The same might be done for our birds - leaving blanks for the *desiderata* on the labels - Also fishes provisionally -

¹²⁰ This book has not been identified.

Also the Shells. It would not do to follow him implicitly as he thinks nothing of sheets of plate glass 8 ft by 5 - I think he would like our Kauri furniture almost as well as he does oak.¹²¹

In the 1886 *Annual Report* he thanked members for the very many specimens in almost every branch of natural history that had been added to the museum during the year. He then outlined what he wanted to concentrate on for the next year: specimens of the two New Zealand bats; beetles; a collection of cones grown in the district and:

Further it is hoped that members will lose no opportunity of securing any specimens which illustrate the History or Art of the Native Race, as every year adds to the difficulty of procuring authentic and valuable specimens. Even articles which at first sight appear trivial and unimportant are often found to possess considerable ethnological interest.¹²²

Typically Hamilton carried out his intended plan. The following year he donated moa bones dug from the Te Aute swamp, fossils, adzes, wooden carvings from canoes and buildings, bone-wares, tattooing chisels, needles, fish hooks and human skulls among other artefacts.¹²³

¹²¹ Hamilton Diary 1885/6, 14 March 1886.

¹²² HBPI *Annual Report*, 1886.

¹²³ HBPI *Annual Report*, 1887.

This forward planning and organisation were key elements in Hamilton's character. He decided what he wanted, or needed, to collect and followed the decision through - for years if necessary. His determination that it was essential to collect Maori ethnological items had probably developed before he came to Napier but was well formed by the 1880s and remained a constant theme for the rest of his life. In 1912, a year before his death, he mentioned in a memorandum to the Under-Secretary of the Department of Internal Affairs that:

For some time previous to my appointment [as Director of the Dominion Museum] I had urged on the Government the absolute necessity of making a collection of the few remaining specimens of the work of the original inhabitants of this country. On my appointment as Director the late Mr Seddon approved of my recommendation that I should at once take steps to make this collection... ¹²⁴

During 1886 a committee appointed by the Council of the Institute purchased about sixty articles for the museum at various sales. In July Hamilton told of his recent trip to Wellington and said that while he was there he had arranged with Dr James Hector, Director of the Colonial[later the Dominion] Museum, for a considerable addition to the Museum from duplicate stores at the Colonial Museum in Wellington. This was a collection of fossils which he would arrange

¹²⁴ MONZTPT, Box 7, Strongroom, IA & DM Files, "Museum Site and Buildings Nat. Mus. Wgtn."

as “a series of specimens which will be of great use to any student of New Zealand Geology.” However he then pointed out that:

...the limited time at my disposal, and the various calls upon it have prevented my getting the whole of the specimens properly mounted and labelled, but in a few weeks I trust they will be in order.¹²⁵

Hamilton drew the attention of the Council to the help and courtesy shown by the staff of the Colonial Museum to him as the representative of the Hawke’s Bay Institute. The Council responded to this by instructing him to write an official letter to the Director of the Colonial Museum thanking him for the specimens and his kindness. Then the President, Dr Spencer, told Hamilton that the Council had decided to pay the expenses of his journey to Wellington as business connected with the affairs of the society.¹²⁶

Hamilton said in his Curator’s report for this year:

As I pointed out in last year’s report the opportunities for securing material for the illustration of Maori Art and Customs are now few and far between, and much as we now lament the destruction of wooden carvings and other articles of ethnological interest, yet we shall feel still more that we have neglected our opportunities if the History of Maori civilisation has to be gleaned from Museum and private collections in other lands - Whilst I have the honour to be the

¹²⁵ HBPI *Annual Report*, 1887.

¹²⁶ HBPIMB July 1886.

curator of your museum I shall leave no stone unturned to obtain specimens of this department - either originals or casts. I may perhaps mention that I am desirous of completing a series of casts of "Heitikis" [hei tiki] and also of the carved heads of "Taiahas" [taiaha] - any person who can oblige me with the loan of a specimen for casting or will send me a mould carefully taken, will greatly oblige.¹²⁷

The collections and the way they were made reveal a great deal about the attitudes of the Victorian scientists and collectors towards the new land and the indigenous people. Hamilton in the 1880s appeared to regard the burials and bones of the Maori in a similar way to ferns, butterflies and rocks: there to be taken by the observant collector.

Some excerpts from his diary are revealing. He was on a gathering expedition around Mohaka, Wairoa and Waikaremoana in 1886 when he wrote:

Went across the river[Wairoa] and sent a telegram to Hill asking him to come up - then got some Maoris to put me across the river and strolled about the pah, sketching. Drew a tekoteko over one of the whares[whare] and got the natives interested by showing them my sketches. Meinertzhagen's name acted like a charm. The chief took me to see a fine stern piece which was lying in the grass behind a

¹²⁷ Hawke's Bay Branch of the Royal Society of New Zealand: Archives, Department of Conservation, Marine Parade, Napier, "Draft Curator's Report for 1886."

whare. There was also a small stern piece of a canoe stuck upside down in a fence. I offered to buy the two pieces if he would sell. First of all he wanted £2 for the large piece - I said no. I would give 30/- for the two. Then I enquired for the head of the canoe which I had seen some years ago - the chief knew the one I meant, but no-one could find it, and I could not identify the spot where I had seen it. I think it must have been burnt in a fire of which I saw traces. One native (Nikira) took me a long way to see a small second-class canoe head - one side only of which was carved. Told him I did not want it. Came back to the pah and could not get a settlement as the chief had gone across to the hotel and taken the carving with him. - Waited some time till a canoe was available and gave chase to the chief. Finally after several beers we agreed to £1/10/- for the two stern carvings and that he was to give me the tekoteko with the small head from the end of a house. Took delivery of the large and most important piece and stowed it under Pyzer's house. He said he would bring me the other pieces in the evening, but I would not trust him, and made him take me back across the river and then got the tiki and went to the fence and pulled out the stern piece but found it was only carved on one side, the other side had not been finished - I told them it was not worth taking away and felt very much annoyed at their ... getting the best of me especially as it was no good arguing the matter. So I took the head and came away.. Nikola[sic] the one who took me to see the

small canoe head came running down and offered it to me for 5/- so I took it. - Whilst I was looking about the pah for the large canoe head I spied a pigeon-preserving-pot neck which I collared and put under my coat. It was a very fair one so I spoiled the Egyptians in one way ... walked to Apatu's pah at Waihirituri. There are two fine whares well worthy of a photograph. I drew the doorway of Apatu's whare. By the side of the whare was a fragment of a fine barge board and a man and a woman carved in full relief, belonging probably to some other whare. The reed work in one of the whares is very clever. Went to another pah at some distance but saw nothing except some carved posts and a whare with the usual amount of carving. On my way back I came across two carved grave posts at Waihirituri burial ground near the old school church. It turned out a bright moonlight night or these two posts would have been cut off and bagged.

Arrived at Bee's just on tea time. After tea had a long talk over Maori matters and from what I can gather there is an old settlement up the Awhaka river towards Putere. Stone axes are said to be plentiful at Maungaharuru. Bee has also seen a little wooden man at Kakanui and thinks it is probably there yet, he also tells of motu-kakas[motu-kaka], pigeon spears and as the auctioneers say, other things too numerous to mention.

Tuesday morning I walked along the beach to see the tree and timber embedded in the cliffs - some of the trees are evidently in situ and grew in the first valley on a good gravel soil and then were overwhelmed by floods of silt and pumice debris. I could not recognise any pumice in the beds below the roots. Picked up one or two seaweeds. When I got back Mr Bee had a horse ready for me to go over the run with him. We rode along towards Waikare to the Waitata, and just as we turned in from the beach I found a piece of moa bone sticking in the cliff. We then went inland crossing the inland road and going over very wild country. By the side of a little lake or water-hole we found the skull and most of the bones of a man. Could not find the jaw. Brought the skull away with me. Saw some fine nikaus in the bush and got some young ones. Came home by the creek that runs into the Mohaka by Sims.

Had some refreshment and then strolled up to Sims. Had a drink and bought some tobacco. Walked around the cliff to the creek. Then I found part of the head of a canoe - as it was rather broken I hid it in a bush near the bridge.¹²⁸

Later when Hamilton was at a ruined settlement he found a curious kind of trough about 5 feet long and 6 inches wide, but with a square hole at each end of the bottom and the "ends were cut as the handle of a stretcher." One of the natives

¹²⁸ Hamilton Diary 1885/6, 2-4 January 1886.

told him it was a pigeon-snaring trough. He found a box in one of the whares which he “fondly hoped contained the family jewels but alas! It contained four fossilised bulls-eye lollies, a large iron padlock, and some copper nails.”¹²⁹

His expedition took him on to Waikaremoana where he stayed at the Constabulary Barracks where they could only set before him tea and hard biscuits, being out of stores. But he said since there was plenty of milk he “got on all right.” He made three little sketches before dark and strolled down to the “native whares” near the lake. There were paddles and mats in some of them and one had two boat balers or scoops. He commented: “One is quite sufficient for them.” He discovered several remarkably interesting plants in flower on the shore of the small lake in the paddock and as the mail was going out the next day he sent a few plants to Colenso.¹³⁰

Hamilton was very interested in education. During 1882 he mentioned ordering *The Year of the Educational Journal* and reading Mahaffey’s *Early Greek Education* which he said “is a very useful book and disabuses one’s mind of many erroneous ideas on the subject.” Henry Hill, the Inspector of Schools for Hawke’s Bay, was very influential in Hamilton’s life from the time when he first started teaching at Petane school in 1878. They shared common interests in education, natural history, geology and ethnology. Henry Hill was particularly concerned about the training of teachers and held what was probably the first in-

¹²⁹ Hamilton Diary 1885/6, 10 January 1886.

¹³⁰ Hamilton Diary, 1885/6, 11 January 1886.

service training course in New Zealand in July 1879 which Hamilton most probably attended.¹³¹ Henry Hill also started Saturday morning classes for the teachers which were very popular.¹³²

Hill's concern for the quality and improvement of teachers resulted in a plan to publish a national educational journal, *The New Zealand Schoolmaster*. Hamilton and A.B. Thompson, the Headmaster of Napier Main School, were involved with the establishment of this journal and they attended the meeting at which the publishers, Dinwiddie and Co.[a Napier firm] offered very liberal terms.

Hamilton regularly wrote papers for the *Schoolmaster*, one being on the teaching of drawing.¹³³ The first issue was a great success, 3,500 complimentary copies were sent out and "the criticisms in the papers were remarkably unanimous in praising it."¹³⁴

In 1887 Hamilton applied unsuccessfully for the position of Curator at the Canterbury Museum. But several testimonials survive from his colleagues in Hawke's Bay which indicate that Hamilton had enthusiasm, organisational ability and considerable skill as a museum curator.¹³⁵

There are five testimonials, dated in December 1887 and referring to his

¹³¹ Kay Matthews, *Behind Every School: the History of the Hawke's Bay Education Board*. Napier: Hawke's Bay Education Board, 1988, p.33.

¹³² *ibid*, p.41.

¹³³ Hamilton Diary, 1882, p.66.

¹³⁴ Hamilton Diary, 1882, p.19.

¹³⁵ Natalie Wilson, *The Otago years of Augustus Hamilton 1890-1903*, p.8; T M. Hocken MS 184, Hocken Library, Dunedin.

application for the Canterbury position. The first is from John Goodall, M.Inst., C.E., the Harbour Engineer, and the President of the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute. He said:

I may safely say that the welfare of the Institute has been very largely owing to his exertions, and that the Museum has been entirely arranged and managed by him. His great love of Natural History, his scientific attainments and manual skill enabling him to devote time and labour in collecting and mounting specimens with great success...

William Colenso, F.R.S., F.L.S. Lond., &c. said:

Having been well acquainted with Mr A. Hamilton from his coming to reside in Hawke's Bay (now ten years ago) I have great pleasure in giving my opinion as to his peculiar fitness for the situation of Curator of a large Museum; which suitableness I believe to be of the highest class, combining general ability, knowledge, zeal and quickness, good health and strength, and unflagging attention both in rooms and in the field, with care and correctness, cleverness, and neatness in preparing, mounting and arranging specimens. He is also a good draughtsman, and excels in fine and minute Caligraphy[sic]; and above all, possesses exemplary love for, and devotion to, all the necessary work and duties pertaining to the office.

Colenso continued that he believed that all real naturalists and particularly one having the management of a first-class museum must be born with such a taste

“especially in this present age and here in a new Colony” and that he thought Hamilton possessed that natural taste.

The other three testimonials were from: W.J. Spencer, M.R.C.S., F.L.S., Edward C. Stuart, Bishop of Waiapu, both past Presidents of the Philosophical Institute, and Henry Hill, B.A., F.G.S., the Inspector of Schools and Secretary of the Education Board for Hawke’s Bay. These three reiterated the glowing comments made by the previous two writers. Henry Hill commented:

As a field naturalist Mr Hamilton has no equal in this district, and his knowledge of Geology, Tertiary Palaeontology, Conchology and Ethnology is both extensive and practical. Mr Hamilton is the father of the Napier Museum... it offers in itself a striking testimony of Mr Hamilton’s powers of arrangement and of scientific classification.

As a draughtsman, sketcher, painter and mounter of specimens I have never met Mr Hamilton’s equal; indeed, I know of no quality, either physical, mental or scientific, which Mr Hamilton does not possess which is necessary for thoroughness in Museum work. I heartily recommend him for the position he is seeking as Director of the Canterbury Museum, believing he would prove a worthy successor to my old and valued teacher, the late and lamented Sir Julius von Haast.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ *ibid.*

There is a sixth testimonial written in April 1887 by T. Kirk, F.L.S., Chief Conservator of State Forests. Kirk said he had known Hamilton intimately for the last eleven years and he could certify that he was in all respects well qualified to take charge of a museum. He added that Hamilton had a good knowledge of descriptive botany and nearly all branches of zoology which expands the list of scientific skills described by Henry Hill. Kirk finished the testimonial by saying: "Should he leave the country it will be to the deep regret of many friends in the colony,"¹³⁷ which seems to indicate that Hamilton was not satisfied in Hawke's Bay and as early as April 1887 was looking for another position, perhaps in an overseas museum. Hamilton resigned from teaching and became the Librarian at the Athenaeum from the middle of 1887.

In 1888 Hamilton attended the first meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science which was held in Sydney. On 31 August he gave a paper entitled "Maori Art" to Section G. Anthropology. It is worthwhile including the whole of the Abstract of this paper because it reveals Hamilton's attitude towards the Maori people, their history and material culture. Many of the ideas are those prevailing in late nineteenth century New Zealand. This abstract helps to illuminate the ideas and attitudes of the time but more particularly gives us a synopsis of Hamilton's beliefs and attitudes in the late 1880s.

The author said that in New Zealand no branch of ethnographical enquiry exceeded in interest the investigation of the vast amount of skill, time and labour which must have been expended by the Maori

¹³⁷ Hocken Library, Pamphlet 73/14

on the art of wood carving and similar decoration; and that from a careful study and collation of these carvings, he thought it might be possible to locate that land of shade - the "Hawaiki" of the exodus - the land from which long years ago, the seven historical canoes of Maori story came, laden with a warlike race. But caution was needed in drawing any conclusions from supposed coincidences in a decorative pattern or design, for one characteristic in wooden carved work, known generally as the Greek key pattern - simply a flowing arrangement of the line form - had been common to all nations even from the dawn of civilisation. A document of the decorative kind, worthy to be examined, was the Moko, or face-marking, of the Maori Rangatira. Viewed from our point of view a tattooed Maori chief may be called a savage, but that is an injustice to a noble and (until spoiled by contact and association with the outcasts of European society) an industrious race. Pride of lineage and position among the Maories[sic] covered the face and some parts of the body with an accurate and well-executed combination of lines and symbols, partly conventional, partly totemic, a heraldic blazon high in the scale of abstract art. In the large edition of Cook's *Voyages* there is a sketch, drawn from nature in 1764[sic] of a style of tattooing which is noted by Cook as "rare," and yet occasional specimens of that same pattern are seen now, after the lapse of one hundred years, among the natives on the same part of the East Coast. Thus it may be seen that these people, conservative by predilection, are conservative also by force of

a religious or superstitious code of moral ethics, scarcely inferior in strictness and minutenees[sic] to Aryan caste. It is almost certain that every part of the design had a definite and constant meaning, and that some parts, notably those near the ear, had all the properties of a personal totem. Among the Rangatira class there was a general consensus of ideas as to the necessity of a highly complicated face pattern; hence the amount of work lavished on the face. Among the Samoan the whole figure receives equal attention, but none of their patterns can be classed with any Maori patterns. In addition to the Moko, the Maori chief's craving for ornament showed itself in the bright colours of the feathers which he used as a head-dress on gala occasions, and in the elaborate and gay patterns worked into his mat or cloak. In Maori pictorial weaving, instead of any serious attempt at accurate proportion, the general idea of representing an ancestor was somewhat after the style of a court card, essentially decorative; when the subject was mythical, the treatment was decorative and artistic; when derisive or defiant, the protruded tongue appeared. This protruded tongue also forms the "spear-head" (so-called) on the end of the taiahas[sic] or staves always carried of old by Maori orators. Another very persistent and typical form of ornament was the figure-head of a first-class war canoe. The only approach to the form of these carvings was to be found at Woodlark Island, near New Guinea.

Mr Hamilton concluded by saying: - "All the points I have mentioned will, I feel sure, when properly investigated, place Maori art, in a truly decorative sense, at the head of the Art of the South Pacific."¹³⁸

Hamilton considered that it would be possible to discover the mythical homeland, Hawaiki where the "seven historical canoes" came from by studying and comparing Maori carving. He obviously subscribed to the tradition of the seven canoes created by nineteenth century European scholars and believed in the comparative method to elucidate problems of origin. His late nineteenth century Romanticism defines Maori as "noble savages." The decline of Maori society, once "an industrious race" is attributed to contact with the "outcasts of European society," not European colonial practices, attitudes, diseases, and the cultural dislocation caused by war and land loss. The Maori are lumped with European outcasts on the bottom of the socio-economic heap - their natural place. But in spite of this Hamilton attempted to show Maori superiority (necessary if their culture was to be used to lengthen the European history of New Zealand) by saying their conservatism was the result of "a religious or superstitious code of moral ethics, scarcely inferior in strictness and "minutedness" to Aryan caste." The comparison of the Maori with the Aryan is an idea current at the time which Edward Tregear with romantic and nationalistic enthusiasm developed to absurdity. Even among the "races of the Pacific" such as the Samoan, Hamilton

¹³⁸ A. Hamilton, "Maori Art," (abstract) in A.Liversidge (ed).*Report of First Meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science*, 1888, pp.477-8.

thought the Maori were superior which aided the development of a nationalism based on a borrowed past.

Hamilton's organisational ability must have contributed to his engagement to help with the "Early History, Maori and South Seas Court" as well as the Hawke's Bay exhibits for the New Zealand Exhibition in Dunedin in 1889-90. The size of the Exhibition gave him an opportunity to add to his reputation in intellectual circles.¹³⁹ Dr T. M. Hocken was the Chairman of the "Early History, Maori and South Seas" sections of the New Zealand Exhibition.

Hocken indicates that Hamilton was well-known for his ability to collect Maori material in his first letter. "I purposely refrained from writing so as to give you ample time to look about you to see what can be done by you for my special department of the Exhibition."¹⁴⁰ Later he urged Hamilton: "to find time to go to Nuhaka[a village in northern Hawke's Bay] and elsewhere to pick up something else. Do not stay your hand as regards good Maori exhibitions."¹⁴¹

These one-sided letters from Hocken to Hamilton reveal some of the tensions and difficulties associated with the purchase and collection of Maori material at this time. Apparently Hamilton wanted to acquire a carved house which was associated with the Ngati Kahungunu rangatira Karaitiana Takamoana. Hocken asked whether he had asked Karaitiana's trustees to assist and if there was anyone

¹³⁹ HBPIMB, June 1890.

¹⁴⁰ Hocken Library, MS 102 (letterbook) p.23.

¹⁴¹ *ibid*, p.235.

who would have influence to whom he (Hocken) could apply, because: "We must if possible get the house."¹⁴²

Karaitiana Takamoana had died in 1879. He was a rangatira of Ngati Hori and Ngati Hawea and lived at Pakowhai Pa, on the Heretaunga plains, Hawke's Bay. He had extensive lands, was a Loyalist who fought against Te Kooti at Taupo, and the Member of Parliament for Eastern Maori. There is a panoramic photograph taken at Karaitiana's tangi which shows three meeting houses.¹⁴³

Eventually the house was acquired in spite of Hocken's fears that: "there might be some hitch with the Maories[sic] who at the last moment might attempt to make further demands or complicate in some way."¹⁴⁴

An interesting attitude towards personal collecting was revealed by Hocken over this house:

You will be pleased to know that the Executive have agreed to purchase the carved house for £200 if I fail to raise the money...we must trust to good fortune to its being purchased and kept in the colony.¹⁴⁵

However in a subsequent letter he said:

Like yourself I felt annoyed by the arrangements (monetary) made re the house...and thought that the advance of £200 would be a great

¹⁴² *ibid*, p.67

¹⁴³ Personal communication, Patrick Parsons, Poraiti.

¹⁴⁴ Hocken Library, MS 102 (letterbook) p. 23.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid*, p.124.

convenience of course and would enable you to raise the money by the time the Exhibition was over and so secure the house for yourself...¹⁴⁶

It is apparent that the ethics surrounding personal gain in situations like this did not trouble either Hocken or Hamilton.

Hocken wrote to Hamilton at the end of the Exhibition to thank him for his:

recent valuable labours... on behalf of the committee...
speaking personally I would add that that which began as an acquaintanceship has ended on my part in a feeling of warm regard and friendship towards you and I shall be pleased to know that your cultivated tastes will ere long bring you worth and renown.¹⁴⁷

During Hamilton's years in Hawke's Bay he extended and developed his network of friends and associates among the scientific and intellectual community of New Zealand. He had joined the Wellington Philosophical Society in 1876 soon after arriving in New Zealand. There he met people such as James Hector (1834-1907) Director of the Colonial Museum, Geological Survey and Manager of the New Zealand Institute and Thomas Kirk (1828-98) botanist, naturalist, teacher and first Chief Conservator of State Forests.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid*, p. 154.

¹⁴⁷ Hocken Library, MS 103, Letterbook 2, p.69.

Hamilton corresponded and exchanged specimens with these men and others such as F.W. Hutton (1836-1905) scientist and Professor of Biology; T.F. Cheeseman (1846-1923) Secretary of the Auckland Institute and Curator of the Auckland Museum; T.J. Parker (1850-97) zoologist and Professor of Biology at Otago; G.M. Thomson (1848-1933) scientist, social worker and member of the Legislative Council of New Zealand; and Sir Walter Buller (1838-1906) the ornithologist.¹⁴⁸

G.M. Thomson asked Hamilton to contribute articles to the *New Zealand Journal of Science* which he was responsible for establishing and editing. Hamilton recorded:

I have worked out a short paper on the Hydrozoan that I found in the Petane river - *Cordylophora lacustus all.* - I wrote the paper for the *New Zealand Journal of Science* as G. M. Thompson[sic] wrote up asking if I could send him anything as to his accident he had let the editorial work get in arrears. By the same post I sent him 3 bottles containing specimens in spirits.¹⁴⁹

Later he mentioned that Professor Parker of Dunedin considered his *Cordylophora* distinct and that he should "figure it in the Transactions."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ A.H. McLintock, ed. *An Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, Vols. I, II, III. Wellington: R.E. Owen, Govt. Printer, 1966, (Individual entries)

¹⁴⁹ Hamilton Diary, 1882, p.173.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid*, p.181.

Several years later Professor Parker sent Hamilton a telegram asking him to obtain live specimens of *Peripatus Nova Zelandia*¹⁵¹ and to send them to Professor Thomas of Auckland because: "They are wanted in England, alive."¹⁵² This is an example of "colonial science" when local scientists and collectors were supplying the Metropolitan scientists with specimens. Hamilton met Thomas at Dr Spencer's one evening a few months later and, most unusually, commented on his personality: "He is a very curious fellow - Arranged to take a walk with him in the morning."¹⁵³

From his diary it appears that Augustus Hamilton missed no opportunity to initiate or further an acquaintance with any of the important men of science in New Zealand. In May 1881 he was introduced to Dr Buller. The following day he walked down to visit him and recorded having a very interesting conversation about birds. A *notornis mantelli* had been found at Te Anau and Buller had made a special trip to Dunedin to see and handle the skin for which he offered the owner £50. Hector had offered £25 for it, for the Colonial Museum, but the owner wanted to send it to England although it was unlikely that the British Museum would pay more than £20 for it. Then Hamilton, who was always interested in "collection management," explained that "Buller keeps all his bird skins in drawers made of camphor wood. Nothing but Alum is now used for bird

¹⁵¹ "Zool. A remarkable genus of Arthropods, constituting the family *Peripatidae*. The species are worm-like creatures, inhabiting damp places among decaying wood and the like, in tropical America, South Africa and Australasia." C.T.Onions, ed. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, Vol. II, 3rd ed. 1975, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.1556.

¹⁵² Hamilton Diary, 1885, p.12, p.16.

¹⁵³ Hamilton Diary, 1885, p.72.

skins.”¹⁵⁴ He promised Buller some Blue Rail bird skins which were duly sent and he was rewarded with “a very nice letter from Dr Buller... asking me to accept an author’s copy of his new edition of the *Birds of New Zealand*.”¹⁵⁵

In March 1885 Hamilton was in the “Room” belonging to the Philosophical Institute when Professor Kirk came in. He was pleased to see him and they had a long conversation. Two days later Hamilton went to town and found that Kirk was away until the following day. When they dined together at the Criterion Hotel he “changed his plants for him in the evening and took them over to the Library - spread[ing] out his damp papers so that they might dry.” On the Monday Hamilton again dined with Kirk and this time showed him some of the plants that he had collected from Waikaremoana. Kirk picked out some for himself. The evening was spent at the “Room” where again Hamilton changed Kirk’s plant papers for him while Kirk wrote letters and asked Hamilton to make drawings of several insect pests in all their stages “for a price.”¹⁵⁶

Throughout the years in Hawke’s Bay Hamilton was reading and collecting books on natural history. During 1881 he records receiving a book on the *Mollusca of the Firth of Clude* by Brown and that he had finally got Hastings’ *Rambles in Search of Shells* from England but that it was almost destroyed by saltwater having gone down when the *Sir Donald* sank in the entrance to the harbour.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Hamilton Diary, 1881, pp.7,8.

¹⁵⁵ Hamilton Diary, 1882, p.49.

¹⁵⁶ Hamilton Diary, 1885, p.75.

¹⁵⁷ Hamilton Diary, 1881, pp.5,6.

At this time Hamilton was not a member of the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute, so in order to read the second volume of the zoology of the voyage of the *Erebus and Terror* he had to induce his good friend Dr Spencer to take it from the Philosophical Institute's library and lend it to him.¹⁵⁸ His friendships with the intelligentsia of Hawke's Bay such as Hill, Spencer, Colenso and Tiffen, enabled him to borrow and lend books and magazines.

He wrote:

"Called on Spencer. He returned the three missing numbers of 1881 *Science Gossip*. I borrowed 4 numbers of *Nature*."¹⁵⁹

"Borrowed a number of Linnean Society's *Transactions* from Mr Colenso."¹⁶⁰

"Wrote a letter yesterday to Colenso asking for the loan of some volumes of *Icones Plantarum*."¹⁶¹

"Mr Tiffen lent me Hooker's *2nd Century of Ferns*, a very valuable and useful book with good drawings and dissections. Many of the names are now altered but most of the changes are recorded in the *Synopsis Filicare*."¹⁶²

In 1881 he received a letter from Kirk saying he had been put on the "Free List" of Government publications.¹⁶³ He bought a wide range of books and periodicals from the local bookseller Craig, *The First Book of Knowledge* by Guthrie; a fairy tale book; *Decoration Vols. 1 & 2*; *Mythology* by Brandin; *Science Ladder* and the

¹⁵⁸ *ibid*, p.8.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid*, p.68.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid*, p.72.

¹⁶¹ *ibid*, p.116.

¹⁶² *ibid*, p.122.

¹⁶³ *ibid*, p.11.

Conchologia Iconica.¹⁶⁴ Some were probably resource material for his school teaching.

He ordered from Kirkland, Cope and Co. the periodicals *Science Gossip*, *Annals of Natural History* and the *Zoologist*. The latter he later cancelled because he liked the *Annals* "much better."¹⁶⁵ He ordered books such as Hick's *Polyzoa*, P.H. Gosse's *Marine Zoology* and *The Midland Naturalist*.¹⁶⁶ He subscribed to *The New Zealand Journal of Science*, to which he also contributed papers.

Once Hamilton became a member of the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute he made good use of their library, reading such books as the second volume of the *Sessile Eyed Crustacea*,¹⁶⁷ Darwin's *Monograph of the Cirriped*,¹⁶⁸ and Dawson's *Chain of Life*.¹⁶⁹

He and his local friends encouraged and supported one another in the pursuit of knowledge:

"Called on Spencer ... He showed me a most beautiful slide with a *Nitella* on it, gathered among freshwater Algae at Forrest Gate (Herricks), near Waipukurau. Friday evening went to Spencer's and had a very nice evening at the microscope."¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁴ *ibid*, p.53, p.60, p.72.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid*, p.122, p.173.

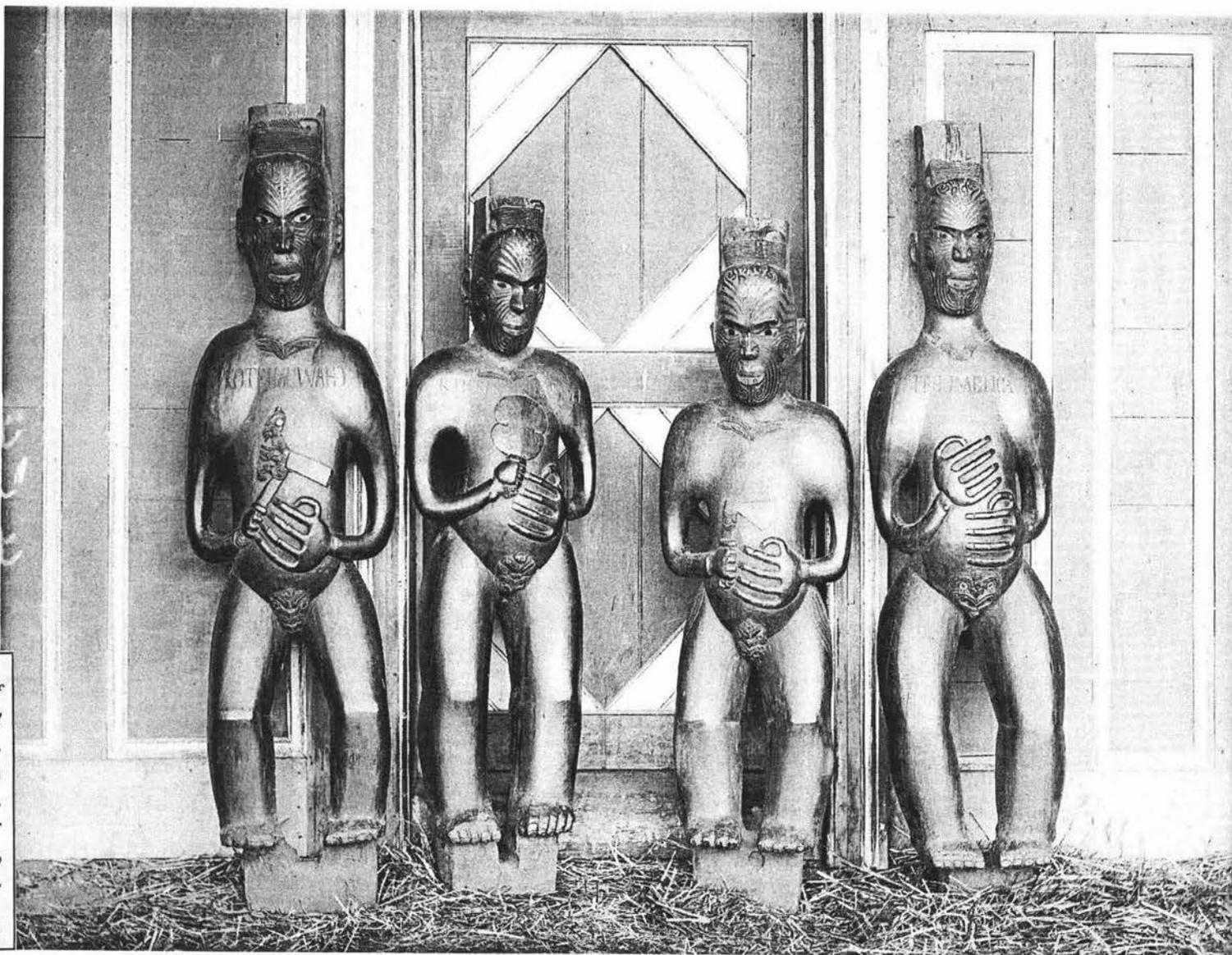
¹⁶⁶ *ibid*, p.70.

¹⁶⁷ Hamilton Diary, 1883, p.182.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid*, p.185.

¹⁶⁹ Hamilton Diary, 1886, p.79.

¹⁷⁰ Hamilton Diary, 1883, p.68.



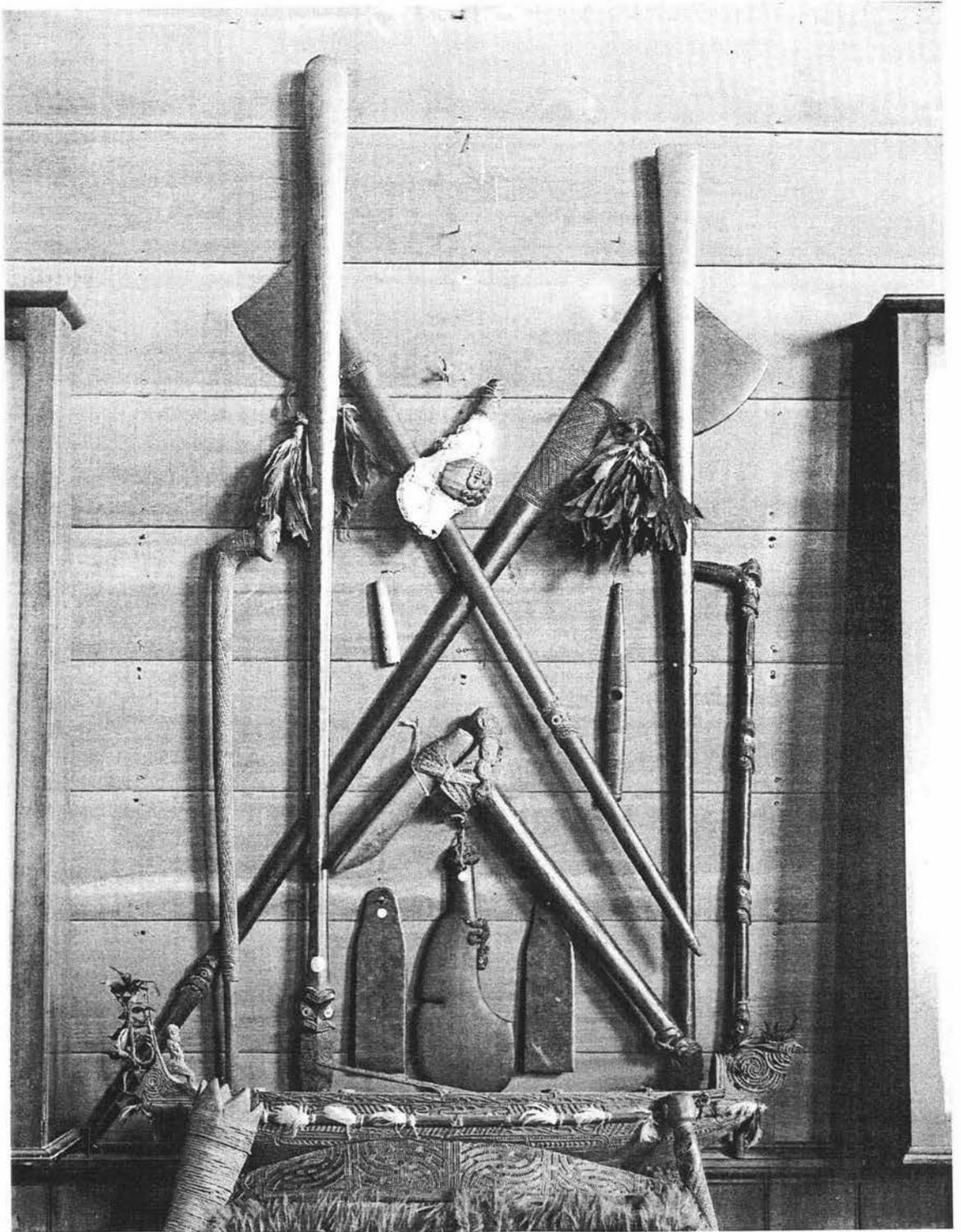
Poutokomanawa in front of Heretaunga, a carved house at Taradale.

1889.

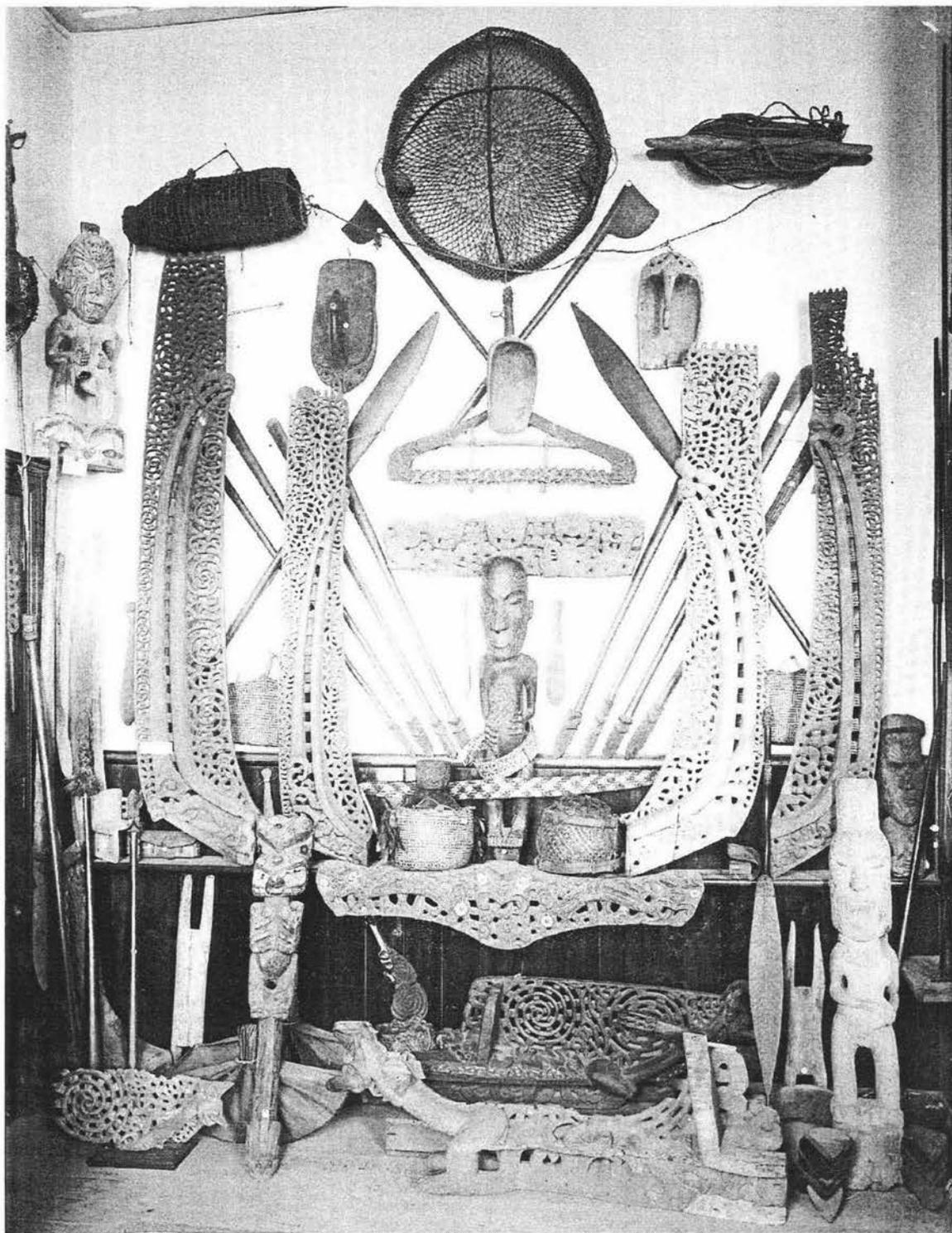
Photographer: William Williams 1859-1948. E.R. Williams Bequest. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Reference No. G.-25857-1/1



Maori artefacts from the Augustus Hamilton Collection, Hawke's Bay Philosophical Society, Napier. Alexander Turnbull Library. Reference No. G-25795-1/1



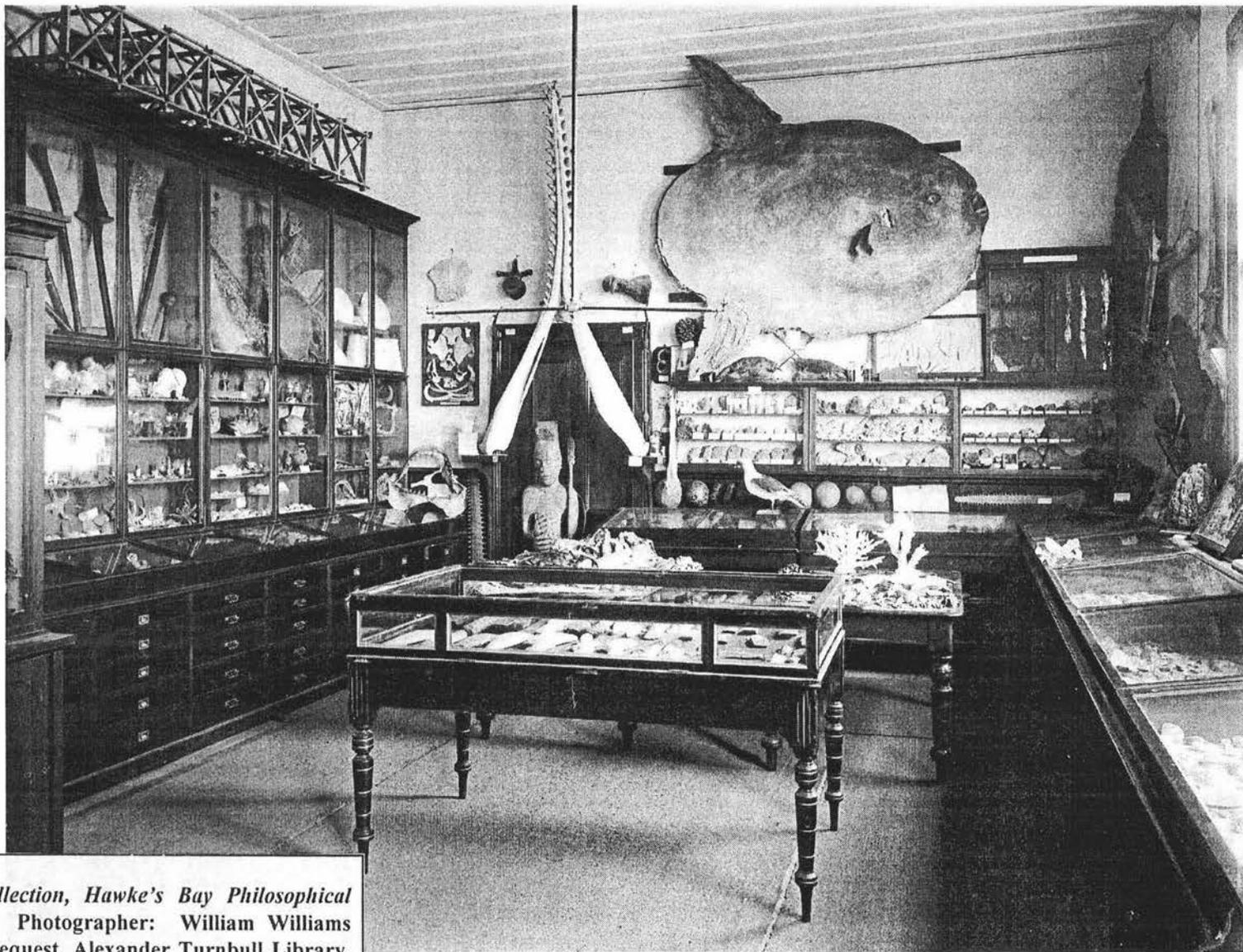
Items from Augustus Hamilton Collection, Hawke's Bay Philosophical Society, Napier. Photographer: William Williams 1895-1948. E. R. Williams Bequest. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. Reference No. G.25852-1/1



Maori artefacts from the Augustus Hamilton Collection, Hawke's Bay Philosophical Society. Photographer: William Williams 1859-1948. Alexander Turnbull Library Wellington, Reference No.G-25855-1/1



Maori artefacts from the Augustus Hamilton Collection, Hawke's Bay Philosophical Society, Napier. Photographer: William Williams 1859-1948. E.R. Williams Bequest, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Reference No.G-25854-1/1



The Augustus Hamilton Collection, Hawke's Bay Philosophical Society Napier. 1886-1889. Photographer: William Williams 1859-1948. E. R Williams Bequest, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Reference No. G-25617-1/1

“Colenso ... took the trouble to write me out a good deal of Cunningham’s Latin descriptions of the Fuchsia which is really excellent¹⁷¹.”

“Borrowed Mr Carnell’s microscope to examine the “organism” that I found in the river that I thought was a *polyzoa*.”¹⁷²

“...must also ask Dr Hector for some Geological specimens. Heath wants to take up Geology and so I must endeavour to get out my geological specimens. To do this I must shake a lot of trays and this will take some time.”¹⁷³

“Lent him [Heath] the list of Rocks that we already have in our Collection, that he might see what specimens would be available for use with Geikie’s *Geology*.”¹⁷⁴

Hamilton was essentially a natural scientist and teacher for whom museums were a vital part of the educational process. He developed his skills in Hawke’s Bay at a most unpropitious time for museum development. While in Napier Hamilton experienced the same frustration which was to trouble him as Director of the Dominion Museum. He was very anxious about the possibility of losing his collections by fire and urged the Philosophical Institute in Napier and the Government in Wellington to provide fireproof buildings, but without success. Neither institution built a new museum until the 1930s, well after his death.

The 1880s were dominated by economic depression which lasted from 1879 to 1895. Wool prices declined, gold production diminished and unemployment and

¹⁷¹ *ibid*, p.113.

¹⁷² *ibid*, p.188.

¹⁷³ Hamilton Diary, 1885, p.71.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid*, p.72.

indebtedness remained high. From 1887-90 more people left New Zealand than were gained by immigration and although the start of the export of frozen meat heralded improved trade with Britain by the end of the decade, it seemed as if the hard times were permanent. The Atkinson Government (1887-1891) ended borrowing and imposed stringent economies on Government expenditure. It was not a favourable climate for the progress of science.¹⁷⁵ Yet Hamilton's dedication and perseverance enabled the Philosophical Institute to develop a fine natural history and ethnological museum while he was Curator.

With the development of the collection the members of the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute did begin to consider the building of a museum. In April 1885 Mr Locke proposed the creation of a committee made up of the President Mr Colenso, and Messrs Hill, Spencer, Bowerman, Locke and Hamilton, to consider the matter. However the formation of a museum never seemed to get beyond setting up committees and discussing the need for a museum. Another committee was set up in 1886 to consider the best means to be taken for the purpose of obtaining from the government a suitable site within the town for a permanent museum building. The next reference to this elusive building was the following March (1887) when it was said that owing to the great increase in the Museum's collection it was desirable to obtain a fireproof building in which to house the property of the Institute.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Fleming, 1987, p.27.

¹⁷⁶ HBPIMB April 1885, March 1887.

Hamilton resigned from his positions as Secretary, Curator and Librarian in June 1890 because he was going to Dunedin “almost immediately” to be the Registrar of Otago University. He was apparently unsure of the future of the Museum after his departure because he said he proposed to leave all his deposited specimens in the Museum and in the charge of the society for six months. If at the end of that time it was found that the Museum was likely to progress and be carried on in a satisfactory manner he would continue to leave on deposit the majority of his specimens. But if no progress was made then he would withdraw such of his deposits as he thought fit.¹⁷⁷

Although Hamilton never again lived in Hawke’s Bay his links with the region remained. His father had been the first doctor to practise in Hastings “having built and occupied and practised in a house at the corner of Market Street and St Aubyn Street, now the property of the Post Office.”¹⁷⁸ He returned to Napier at intervals and his activities are noted occasionally in the Philosophical Institute Minute Books when they are relevant to the Institute. In 1900 he was responsible for the preservation of the archives of the Hawke’s Bay Provincial Government. He wrote to the Colonial Secretary telling him that these archives were in an attic of the old Provincial Chambers in Napier. As the building was wooden and had been damaged by fire already it was thought wisest to move them to safer storage in Wellington where they were stored in a cellar in Parliament Buildings. About

¹⁷⁷ HBPIMB June 1890.

¹⁷⁸ Notes from Ebbett Papers held in Napier Museum.

1906/7 an inventory was made by persons unknown and some archives were separated out and some destroyed.¹⁷⁹

Hamilton was elected a member of the Otago Institute in July 1890, as soon as he arrived in Dunedin and became the Secretary in November of the same year. He occupied council positions regularly and was President in 1895, 1896 and 1903.

He presented numerous papers on a wide variety of topics and was an active participant in the Institute's meetings.¹⁸⁰ Dunedin was the intellectual capital of New Zealand and the Otago Institute included a diverse group of people with backgrounds as biologists and zoologists. Most of the leading members of the Institute were connected in some way with the University.

Natalie Wilson has dealt with this period in her thesis *The Otago Years of Augustus Hamilton: 1890-1903*. She has discussed important aspects of his activities during these years: collecting and excavating; the compilation of *Maori Art* and his persistent appeals for the establishment of a national Maori museum, which led to his appointment as Director of the Colonial Museum when Sir James Hector retired in 1903. Also during the time in Dunedin Hamilton wrote a great number of papers on botany, zoology and ethnology which were published in the *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*.

¹⁷⁹ Ruth Stoddart, "Archives of the Provincial Period in Hawke's Bay," *Archifacts*, 1984/2, Wellington: ARANZ, p.22.

¹⁸⁰ Natalie Wilson, *The Otago Years of Augustus Hamilton*. MA thesis, Otago University, no date, p. 22.

Maori Art, Augustus Hamilton's *magnum opus* was produced in five parts between 1896 and 1900. It deals with the canoes, dwellings, weapons, dress and decoration, and social life of the Maori. It is illustrated with specially taken photographs and includes descriptive notes and essays as well as lists of the Maori words which are used in relation to each subject. The Board of Governors of the New Zealand Institute published it under the general direction of a committee comprising Sir James Hector, the Manager of the Institute and Editor of the *Transactions*, S. Percy Smith, and Edward Tregear, two eminent authorities on Polynesian matters.

Hamilton wrote that the reason for compiling *Maori Art* was:

that it had long been recognised that art as applied to decoration and the elaboration of details, had reached a very high level among the Maoris, but the exact position of this work had never been seriously considered nor its relation to other schools of decorative design.¹⁸¹

He lamented that:

Year after year the "devouring tooth of time" has obliterated carvings and works of skill that can never be replaced - not only on account of lack of practised skill in the present representatives of the race, but on account of the differences of environment caused by the tide of colonisation.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ A. Hamilton, *Maori Art*, (facsimile) London: The Holland Press, 1972, p.7.

¹⁸² *ibid.*

In this work he proposed to form a series of photographs of the “remaining monuments of Maori skill and art” and he regretted that a definite scheme of record of a national character had not been in operation for years.

In *Maori Art* he emphasised several of his perennial worries:

The only way to arrive at any sound conclusion ... is to gather the scraps of the materials still remaining and piece by piece reconstruct the story of the past. A very small and apparently trivial detail may be found some day to be the key to some of those apparently hopeless problems which present themselves at the commencement of the investigations into the past history of by-gone generations. The material for study grows scarcer every year and even those specimens preserved in the public and private collections of the colony are in constant danger from fire, which may at any time sweep away unique and valuable relics. Besides the normal decay and neglect, the museums of the civilised world have for nearly 100 years, through their agents and friends, carried off the most portable and interesting of the carvings, mats and weapons, leaving but scanty remnants for our local museums.¹⁸³

He continued that he thought it would be a step in the right direction if pictures of the Maori art still in New Zealand were published and that such an undertaking

¹⁸³ *ibid*, p. 8.

would be very helpful to the study of New Zealand archaeology and how it was related to the art of Polynesia.¹⁸⁴

Professor Haddon reviewed the last volume of *Maori Art* in the scientific journal *Nature*.¹⁸⁵ He congratulated the author on not having put off any longer the study of his subject, for as he pointed out:

the changes coming over the majority of the backward peoples of the world are so great and so rapid that every year that passes makes it more difficult for us to ascertain the significance of old designs or the use of certain objects.

He considered the illustrations of the book to be of excellent quality and a wealth of material for the student of art. Haddon discussed the manaia which he described as “a problematical creature ... whose interpretation is greatly wanted.” But he insisted that “it is futile to try and work out from specimens in European museums any of this mysterious symbolism... researches of that kind can only be made in the countries where the descendants of the “Old Artificers” are still living.” He finished by saying “*Maori Art* is a great help to the study of comparative decorative art.”¹⁸⁶

Hamilton’s Romantic concept of the “golden age” of Maori art which preceded the arrival of the Pakeha was a fabrication which enabled the European New

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ No date - information obtained from the clippings inserted in A Hamilton, *Maori Art* Part 1 Misc. ZD HAM - in Ethnology Dept. MONZTPT., Wellington.

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*

Zealanders to appropriate the Maori culture and history without demeaning themselves. The lengthening of their history by this method was a useful way of justifying New Zealand's uniqueness and separate national identity. Hamilton's rigidly conservative and ultimately stultifying view of Maori art has been influential until very recent times. Some of these beliefs were expressed in the chapter written by Herbert Williams for *Maori Art*:

In conclusion the great difficulty in obtaining any accurate information, or indeed genuine patterns, lies in the fact that the modern designer, as a rule, thinks himself as good as, or better than, his predecessor. There has, of late years, been a revival among the Ngatiporou,[sic] and the blues and greens, which had been coming into fashion, have given way, in the finer houses, to the old-established red and black. But the artist, having no copy, can only reproduce what he remembers of the old patterns, or put in something of his own. The difficulty of carrying a complicated pattern ... in the mind, has led to the gradual disappearance of all the finer patterns; while those that remain are too often adulterated with diamonds, clubs and other glaring signs of contact with the pakeha. As a rule too the Maori artist is singularly ignorant of his subject, and has positively no idea of producing a new pattern which will be in keeping with his ancient exemplaries.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ H. Williams in A. Hamilton, *Maori Art*. (facsimile) London: The Holland Press, 1972. p.120.

Roger Neich says:

...the first meeting houses built by the Rotorua carvers in the late 1890s for European patrons such as the tourist hotels and the Government Tourist Department all had their carvings painted entirely red. This move back to monochrome red on all carvings was strongly encouraged by an archaising museum-based orthodoxy led by Augustus Hamilton (Neich 1987;1983), even to the extent that polychrome carvings and whole meeting houses in museum collections were repainted in the approved monochrome red. Traditionalist experts of the time, both Maori and European, came to believe that polychrome carvings were a sign of degeneration in Maori art, thereby justifying their traditionalist orthodoxy.¹⁸⁸

Another important international anthropologist was Henry Giglioli, Director of the Zoological Museum in Florence, and the Vice President of the Anthropological Society of Italy who wrote to Hamilton in 1897 to thank him for his "kindness in sending me a copy of your magnificent work *The Art.. Part 1.*" He continued:

It is no easy task, in a language which is not my own, for me to express adequately my admiration for your work, the importance and interest of which for Ethnological Science is immense. As an old and ardent student of Ethnology I am familiar with most that has been published on the Maori ... But truly, nothing comes near to your own

¹⁸⁸ R. Neich, *Painted Histories*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1993, p.28.

in which the accuracy and beauty of the plates and figures is enormously enhanced by the value of the text, which is teeming with that kind of information which students of Ethnology but too often seek for in vain. Pray accept my dear sir, my warmest and hearty congratulations on the singular excellency and high scientific value of your Work.¹⁸⁹

Hamilton betrays a lack of understanding of the necessary dynamism and change inherent in creativity and an insensitivity and patronising paternalism towards the Maori artists of his time. The structure of the book and the composition of the photographs indicates Hamilton's Victorian origins as a classifier and compiler. The artefacts are arranged in comparative groups as specimens. He uses posed photographs of particular activities such as a "Native using the Dart and Throwing Stick"¹⁹⁰ and "A friendly greeting"¹⁹¹ as if they are ethnological truths, not realising that they are loaded with late nineteenth century Romantic stereotypes of what ancient Maori were like. He was intent upon reproducing a non-existent world and he reflected many of the ideas which were current in New Zealand and which still affect our perception of Maori culture and traditions.

Hamilton constantly referred to the loss of information:

¹⁸⁹ Letter: Istituto di Studi Superiori in Firenze, Direzione del Museo Zoologico dei Vertebrati, Firenze, 19 Via Romana, 9 September 1897. inserted in A. Hamilton, *Maori Art*, Part 1, Misc. ZD HAM in Ethnology Dept., MONZTPT.

¹⁹⁰ Hamilton, 1972. Fig. 2, p.244.

¹⁹¹ *ibid*, p.370.

... those individuals who lived among the natives... have recorded very few of what are now considered by ethnologists the important points in the home-life of the kainga; the domestic employments and recreations of the members of the family group.¹⁹²

He was aware that though the missionaries recorded more of the customs and practices of the tribes:

... they viewed natives and native customs from the point of view of their own religious tenets, and saw in many curious and harmless practices - the outgrowth of centuries of practical experiment in local government - only heathenism and superstitions which were to be stamped out, and replaced by practices developed in another sphere of civilisation and by modes of thought, the growth of other times and other manners. How much interesting information has been lost can be estimated by the fragments which have been gathered.¹⁹³

Maori Art was completed as New Zealand's emerging "colonial nationalism" was gathering momentum and the Europeans were seeking symbols of their uniqueness from the world around them. The "natives" and their material culture were, like the birds and the plants, used to represent the new nation. The publication of *Maori Art* established Hamilton's reputation as the leading New Zealand authority on the material culture of the Maori. The political climate

¹⁹² *ibid.*

¹⁹³ *ibid.*, p.269.

seemed to be right for Hamilton to have the opportunity to achieve some of his goals. Augustus Hamilton and the government had different underlying goals.

Hamilton himself subscribed to the view that artefacts are thought to have:

“advantages over written records of behaviour and belief in being concrete, objective, difficult to distort and little subject to personal or ethnocentric bias.”¹⁹⁴

Hamilton was unaware that although his aims were ostensibly scientific the objects themselves develop cryptic meanings which alter as their uses and ownership changes.

¹⁹⁴ N.Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture and Colonisation in the Pacific*. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press, 1991, p.4.

Chapter Three

The Antiquities Act 1901 and the National Maori Museum

This chapter is concerned with the events and ideologies which led to the passing of legislation to prohibit the export of Maori material culture at the beginning of the twentieth century and which enabled Augustus Hamilton and others to press for the formation of a national Maori museum. It also examines the part Hamilton played in alerting the government to the need for legislation controlling the export of Maori cultural material and its corollary: a national Maori museum.

The protection of cultural heritage is closely associated with the development of a sense of nationalism. The control of the export of cultural property is the most common way by which governments restrict its movement. The earliest states to impose export controls were those which were the target of excavators. Papal concern about the excavation of relics dates back to 1462,¹⁹⁵ but two Edicts in the early nineteenth century (the Edict Doria Pamphili of 1802 and the Edict Pacca of 1820) were the basis of the first modern case which raised the issues of export control. The first Edict prohibited absolutely the export of ancient, or Renaissance, works of art from Rome or the Papal States, and the second one introduced the idea of pre-emption by the state.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ P.J. O'Keefe & L.V. Prott, *Law and the Cultural Heritage Vol. I*, London: Professional Books, 1983, Foreword.

¹⁹⁶ P.J. O'Keefe & L.V. Prott, *Law and the Cultural Heritage, Vol.III*. London: Butterworths, 1989, p.453.

This case involved a prosecution by the Italian government of Prince Barberini Colonna di Sciarra who, in 1891, had sold part of his collection to a French citizen, the Marquis de Ribiers who was living in Rome. The Marquis then sent the works out of Italy. The case illustrated the major difficulties associated with export legislation: the retrieval of exported material; the reluctance of courts to regard illegal export as a serious offence; and the small effect of penal sanctions on exporters when the profits are substantial.¹⁹⁷

The countries in the Ottoman Empire which were subject to the depredations of the Northern European excavators quickly adopted legislation controlling export of antiquities as soon as they were in control of their own government. Greek independence was recognised in 1832. Antiquities legislation was implemented immediately as part of the Greek assertion of national identity. It was the first modern legislation to prevent the despoliation of sites and the export of archaeological material. It forbade the export of any works of artistic or archaeological value from Greece. This legislation was the result of the fierce nationalism which had united the Greeks in their struggle against the Turks. Nationalism and the search for demonstrable roots in the past has been the catalyst responsible for most of the antiquities legislation in the world.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ *ibid*, p.454.

¹⁹⁸ J.R.McKinley, *Archaeology and Legislation: A Study of the Protection of Archaeological Sites and Material by Legislative Action*. MA Thesis, Auckland University, 1971, p.8.

Egypt had adopted legislation controlling export of antiquities by 1879, although their ruler was still nominally under the control of the Ottoman administration and Egypt was to be occupied by Britain in 1882.¹⁹⁹

In Australia agitation to control the export of aboriginal material began with the setting up of an ethnological committee in New South Wales in 1906. Customs controls were applied by the Federal Government in 1913. It is noteworthy that the early legislative initiatives of these countries were in existence some years before the adoption of export controls in many Western European states.²⁰⁰

Two colonised areas which did not follow this pattern were Canada which did not enact export controls until 1975, and the United States of America where a similar lack of government commitment allowed the loss of indigenous material although an Antiquities Act of 1906 did prevent the movement of objects of antiquity from federally owned land.²⁰¹

Olssen says that New Zealand was prosperous and content in the years between 1899 and 1906. The "Boer War and jingoism united the colony in paroxysms of imperial patriotism."²⁰² But it was during this time that the sense of a separate New Zealand destiny - termed "colonial nationhood" by Richard Jebb²⁰³ began to

¹⁹⁹ O'Keefe & Pratt, 1989, p.454.

²⁰⁰ O'Keefe & Pratt, 1989, p.458.

²⁰¹ O'Keefe & Pratt, 1989, p.458.

²⁰² Judith Binney, Judith Bassett, Erik Olssen, *An Illustrated History of New Zealand. 1820 - 1920*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1990, p.271.

²⁰³ Richard Jebb wrote *Studies in Colonial Nationalism* which was published in London in 1905. Sinclair says that he was in New Zealand from 1899-1900 at a great symbolic moment in New Zealand's history and he made the first remarks by anyone either tha a

emerge. It was a transitional stage in the development of "nationhood," a time when European New Zealanders, socially and politically, were beginning to identify themselves as a separate nation rather than as a colony of Britain.²⁰⁴

Many of the icons for the emergent nationalism were based on the Maori culture, but they were superficial. It was useful for European New Zealanders to assert that "Maorilanders" were separate from the "motherland" as they began to acknowledge their differences from Great Britain. Maori material culture was - like the birds and the scenery - a tangible symbol of New Zealand's and European New Zealanders' uniqueness. It was appropriated by the European colonists and used politically to emphasise the achievement of "assimilation." Assimilation was a euphemism for the subtle extinction of the Maori people by the European colonists who coveted their land.

The political policy of assimilation assumed that the two races Maori and Pakeha would be "amalgamated" by intermarriage resulting in the absorption of the Maori into the predominantly European population and their ultimate disappearance. By 1852 Governor Grey was asserting that the two races were "insensibly forming one people." He encouraged the "civilisation" of the Maori and the amalgamation of the races by promoting Maori education, establishing hospitals, aiding Maori agriculture and commerce and by bringing Maori within

few New Zealanders on the beginnings of a New Zealand sense of national identity. K. Sinclair "The Beginnings of a Colonial Nationalism: Richard Jebb in New Zealand 1899," in John Eddy & Deryck Schreuder, eds. *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988, p. 111.

²⁰⁴ Eddy & Schreuder, 1988, p.1.

the scope of British law. But the settlers had no sympathy for the Maori speaking disparagingly of them as “niggers” and resenting their occupation of land which they would not sell.²⁰⁵ By 1890 the fate of the Maori was in balance. Their population was still declining and the prognosis that “native” races confronted with European colonisation were doomed to extinction seemed to be confirmed. Most Europeans accepted this prognosis with equanimity. The best that could be hoped for was that a remnant of the Maori would, through miscegenation, survive in the “blood” of many Pakeha New Zealanders. Henry Sewell was able to recommend that the principle of communism which ran through all Maori institutions should be destroyed because it stood as a barrier in the way of all attempts to amalgamate the Maori into the European social and political world.²⁰⁶ The assimilation policy was said to offer hope for the survival of the Maori. But assimilation involves the absorption and eventual demise of the less powerful and subordinate minority culture.

At the end of the nineteenth century many European states were insisting on the importance of trade and receiving the creative works of other cultures. The colonists who had settled overseas found themselves responsible for a different trading problem: the rapid export of the artefacts of their indigenous populations. The material evidence of these indigenous cultures was frequently not renewable and disappearing at an alarming rate. The indigenous people quickly adapted to the new technologies and goods introduced by the European settlers, but it was

²⁰⁵ Oliver & Williams, 1981, p.179.

²⁰⁶ *ibid*, p.189.

often not possible for them to pursue their traditional arts because they had been decimated by disease, had lost their traditional lands, and had suffered the alienation and despair resulting from these factors. A further major cause of the impoverishment of the local culture was the colonists' practice of sending indigenous cultural objects "home" to the "mother country."²⁰⁷

It is in this context we should note that as early as 1898, Hamilton had read a paper before the Otago Institute expressing the desirability for legislation which made it compulsory for owners of valuable specimens of Maori art to offer them for sale to the Government before sending them out of the country.²⁰⁸

The matter of the protection of the cultural and scientific specimens unique to New Zealand was first raised in Parliament, also in 1898, by Hamilton's friend, Robert McNab, the Member for Matakana, Southland. McNab was concerned about the possibility of the export of the *notornis mantelli* which had recently been discovered, after having been thought to be extinct. [The specimen was bought by the Government and deposited in the Dunedin museum.] Robert McNab wanted to know whether the Government would introduce legislation "to prevent the continuous removal from this country of rare and valuable specimens of native art and workmanship, or unique objects of scientific importance peculiar to this colony."²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ O'Keefe & Prott, 1989, p.458.

²⁰⁸ McKinley, 1971, p.29.

²⁰⁹ *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, (NZPD) Vol.103, 1898. p.450.

He also expressed his concern at the way in which rare New Zealand specimens were taken away to enrich overseas collections:

No sooner was anything discovered in this colony of more than passing interest than it was secured by some wealthy visitor to the colony... instead of being collected together in a central place for the benefit of New Zealanders.²¹⁰

This is a very significant statement. It is thought to be first public mention of a national museum, even if it is couched in general terms.²¹¹

As McKinley says:

This small exchange... does serve to illustrate the fact that by 1898, at least some people were beginning to appreciate their cultural and scientific heritage and to see that there was a necessity to bring a certain body of artefacts together within New Zealand in order to ensure their preservation in a place accessible to New Zealanders - the first germ of the idea of a Dominion museum.²¹²

This debate also introduced another issue which has bedevilled the formulation of satisfactory heritage protection legislation ever since: the rights of the individual to dispose of his or her property as she or he wishes, as opposed to the rights and responsibilities of the nation. The Premier, Richard John Seddon, said: "Should

²¹⁰ *ibid.*

²¹¹ McKinley, 1971, p.23.

²¹² *ibid*

they prevent the natives disposing of what belonged to them? There would be a general outcry if this restriction were applied to Europeans.”²¹³

The visit of the Duke and Duchess of York was an opportunity for New Zealand to celebrate its achievements and its uniqueness. Seddon was loudly proclaiming New Zealand’s special destiny, the self-reliance of its people and the “humanities” of his government. He took particular pride in what he saw as the country’s successful bi-racial society. It was this visit which was the catalyst for the passing of the Maori Antiquities Act. There were several articles in the newspapers which raised the problem of gifts from the Maori people to important visitors. *The Otago Daily Times* noted on 13 June 1901:

The presentation which will be laid at the feet of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall by representative Natives at Rotorua this week will be of considerable commercial value as well as of distinct historic interest. Some of them it may be impossible to replace in the colony.²¹⁴

The following week *The Otago Daily Times* again discussed the need to preserve the early records of the colony and specimens of Maori art. It was suggested there was a need for a special institution for the custody of the memorials of the arts and crafts of the Maori people - one which was not the appendage of a

²¹³ NZPD, 1898, p.450.

²¹⁴ AI&M, MS 131, 11/1/3 *Otago Daily Times*, 13 June 1901.

general museum but which was quite distinct and separate from any other institution.²¹⁵

Augustus Hamilton was obviously associated with the people who were writing the articles that were appearing in the newspapers suggesting the need to pass an Act to control the export of Maori antiquities and prevent the loss of any more of the carvings and curios which should be in a national collection. It is possible, considering his 1898 paper, that it was he who was the original instigator of the idea. He may also have been one of the correspondents to the *Otago Daily Times*. He believed fervently in the importance of museums as research institutions, repositories for scientific specimens, art, and cultural material, and as educational centres.

Hamilton was one of the most determined advocates of the need for legislation to protect New Zealand's scientific heritage and used the opportunity aroused by the discussion of the Bill to press for the formation of a national museum of Maori material. He was deeply involved with many of the people who were interested in collecting Maori cultural material and aware of the issues which resulted in the passing of the Maori Antiquities Act in 1901. The recognition of the need for an Antiquities Act to control the export of Maori ethnological material and the need for a national museum developed together and seem to have been constantly inter-related in people's minds.

²¹⁵ *ibid*, 18 June 1901. This is possibly written by Hamilton himself.

In June 1901 Hamilton circulated some suggestions entitled *National Collection of the Ethnology of the Maori People established on a permanent basis in Wellington*. In this circular Hamilton said he felt this:

... was the “psychological moment” for a movement in the direction of repairing past omissions and for initiating a fresh departure:

The period of the Maori Wars is gone for ever and in the peaceful times which have come after has arisen a generation of colonists who know not the warrior and stout-hearted patriot of the olden time, save, perhaps, an old Kaumatua, who still lives on, but in obscurity and without even a shadow of his former mana.²¹⁶

He continued in the circular that:

There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that there is a necessity for a special building in Wellington in which there should be a well-arranged, representative collection of the articles illustrating the past history of the Maori people, not a side show to a general museum, but a real live memorial to the arts and crafts of the Maori people. The cost could be considerable, but it will be impossible at any price in the future.²¹⁷

The aim of this museum would be to show visitors and others what New Zealand was like before the advent of the white man, what manner of people

²¹⁶ AI&M, MS 13, 11/1/2.

²¹⁷ *ibid.*

lived here long ago: their tools and weapons; their houses; and their works; the refinement of their carvings and the artistic spirit shown in the distribution of the ornamentation.²¹⁸

On 9 July 1901 Seddon wrote to Hamilton, acknowledging his letter dated 27 June which had enclosed an advance copy of Hamilton's circular. Seddon told Hamilton that the matter was under consideration by the Government, and that he would communicate with him as soon as a decision had been made with regard to Hamilton's proposal.²¹⁹ A fortnight later the Premier's secretary acknowledged yet another letter (undated) containing suggestions for the establishment of a national Maori museum.²²⁰ In a letter to Thomas MacKenzie written on 15 July 1901 Hamilton said:

As I said before if the Museum were firmly established by Act as a National Institution I feel more than sure - I am positive, that it would be an immediate success - I can put my finger now upon nearly everything that would be required and I am assured of the hearty co-operation of several important Collectors: I cannot say more on this head just now.

As a matter showing how urgent it is to do something I find that Craig a dealer in Auckland who has some very fine things is offering his Collection as a whole and it may be purchased by a foreign Govt. at any moment.²²¹

²¹⁸ *ibid.*

²¹⁹ AI&M, MS 131, 11/1/13. 9 July 1901.

²²⁰ AI&M, MS 131, 11/1/19. 23 July 1901.

²²¹ AI&M, MS 131, 11/4/4.

Hamilton appears to have been bombarding people with his ideas for a national museum to be built as a corollary to the passing of the proposed Maori Relics Bill.

Hamilton believed the formation of the museum was a matter for the Government. He was also of the opinion that although reforms were urgently needed in other scientific departments the one he was advocating was one of the most pressing and one which would lead to increased good feeling between the rising generations of both races which he hoped would continue to inhabit the country in peace and unity²²²

According to Hamilton “nearly all countries” had recognised their responsibilities in the matter and had taken steps to secure such collections and to provide suitably for their security and proper custody. And several of the “world famous countries” had found it necessary to pass Acts which prohibited the sale or export of any work of art unless the article had been first offered to the government because so many antiquities had been purchased and removed from their original association.²²³

He appears to have been a “resource” person for people interested in the protection of Maori cultural material. Thus, for example, in the letter he wrote to

²²¹ AI&M, MS 131, 11/4/4.

²²² AI&M, MS 131, 11/1/2.

²²³ *ibid.*

MacKenzie on 15 July 1901 he said that he did not think the Italian Acts, as they were mainly of the Criminal Code, would be much use in New Zealand but instead he thought something very simple in the way of legislation should be done at first and he made the following suggestions:

All persons shipping Maori carving, implements, or relics of the Maori race in wood, bone or stone shall declare the articles at the Customs Office of their port of departure at least _ days before the departure of the vessels in which they are shipped giving a full and complete list of the articles. It should be the duty of the Customs to communicate with Head Office in Wellington who shall submit the list to the Curator of the National Maori Museum.

The Curator shall then report in writing to the Minister as to the desirability, or otherwise, of issuing a permit for the export of the articles. If it is deemed undesirable that any of the specimens should be sent out of the country the Government should have the right to purchase the specimen. The value to be ascertained by valuers appointed by both parties.

I do not quite see how private persons - tourists - are to be got at - and they are some of the worst offenders.

I think if haste were made and the museum well-stocked and an active look out kept for anything that turned up by a qualified man we could afford to overlook minor articles. Too great strictness would cause irritation among tourists.

Provision should be made to compel persons who get permission to send out things to allow the Govt. Representative to take such photos or casts as he may think necessary for the Museum.²²⁴

The question of restricting the exportation of Maori relics in Parliament was first raised by Mr. Barclay (Dunedin City) although McNab had raised the question three years earlier in 1898. Barclay asked the Government on 4 July 1901:

... if they will take steps to legislate, as is done in other countries, to prevent valuable historical, artistic or scientific relics, documents, articles or things being disposed of outside New Zealand without first being offered to the government for purchase.²²⁵

A few days later MacKenzie asked in Parliament whether the Government would introduce legislation prohibiting the export of Maori artefacts. The Native Minister, James Carroll, agreed that such legislation was needed. Carroll then, perhaps as the result of having received Augustus Hamilton's circular, raised the issue of the state museum, "in which could be collected valuable articles, relics and carvings, characteristic of the country and its nativity."²²⁶

When Carroll wrote to Hamilton on 6 August 1901, acknowledging the receipt of a letter referring to the establishment of a national Maori museum, he said that:

²²⁴ AI&M, MS 131, 11/4/4.

²²⁵ AI&M, MS 131, 11/1/18.

²²⁶ NZPD Vol.117, p.195.

It has long been a desire of mine to see established in this, the centre of the Colony, a museum in which would be deposited Maori works of art, carvings, weapons etc., and I feel grateful for your efforts in this direction.²²⁷

Carroll continued by saying that the Government was considering a suitable building for the storage of Maori relics and he did not think there would be any difficulty in “furnishing a fairly good museum.” He proposed that:

... all the leading Maori families and tribes should deposit all their historical relics and family heirlooms together with their respective histories and general information about them in this museum so that the relics would remain as a constant reminder to the coming generations of the capabilities and taste of the Maori race... I have a hearty appreciation of your continued efforts in rescuing from oblivion that which I consider most important and which is associated with the Maori and Maoriland. I feel sanguine that with the co-operation of yourself and gentlemen in various parts of the Colony the efforts to establish a National Maori Museum will be crowned with success.²²⁸

It appears that Hamilton had considerable influence in alerting Members of Parliament to the need for an act restricting the export of Maori antiquities and

²²⁷ AI&M, MS 131, 11/2/2. 6 August 1901.

²²⁸ AI&M, MS 131, 11/2/5. 6 August 1901.

even more, the need for a national museum in which to keep those ethnological specimens that had been purchased by the Government. He was particularly focused on the idea of a national museum and he realised that the Bill when passed would enable the Government to make a "National Collection of Maori Art if it was willing and had a suitable place to house the material collected."²²⁹

But other people and groups were also concerned about the loss of Maori antiquities overseas. W.H. Skinner told Augustus Hamilton on 15 August 1901 that the Polynesian Society had at the previous meeting of its Council sent a strong resolution to the Native Minister protesting against the wholesale exportation of valuable and historic Maori curios and works of art. And although they had not yet received a reply from the Minister, he had noticed that the matter had been raised in the House and the Government was going to take immediate steps to prevent the denuding of the country of its Maori art treasures.²³⁰

Sir Walter Buller who was living in England reiterated the common fear in a letter to Hamilton dated 29 August 1901, saying "I fear H.R.H. the Duke of York will bring away many things that are irreplaceable."²³¹

In early August Seddon stated that Maori carvings and other works of art which could not be replaced were being sent out of the country and that a law should be passed absolutely prohibiting their export. He said the Government had engaged

²²⁹AI&M, MS 131, 11/1/2.

²³⁰AI&M, MS 131, 11/2/6. 15 August 1901.

²³¹AI&M, MS 131, 11/3 /2.

Mr. Stowell of Hawera (who had made a life study of Maori habits) to secure a complete collection of Maori curios and Parliament would be asked to authorise expenditure for that purpose. Mr. James Allen (Waikouaiti) suggested the co-operation of Mr. A. Hamilton of the Otago University, and the Premier consented to his assistance being obtained, as well as that of Mr. Percy Smith and Commissioner Gudgeon.²³²

Hamilton asked W.H. Skinner about Stowell and was told that he was:

... a half-cast living at Hawera who had communicated articles to the *Polynesian Journal* under his native name of Hari Hongi ... He is, I believe, intemperate and I have my doubts about the choice. - He is a friend of Hon. Carroll.²³³

In October 1901 Stowell was voted £250 by the Government for the compilation of a Maori history.²³⁴ But this was obviously not satisfactory because two years later in September 1903 Mr. Parata, the Member for Southern Maori, referred to an item in the expenses: "Compilation of Maori History: £400." Parata was of the opinion that there was no doubt that much of the genealogy contained in this publication had been manufactured. "Many of the Natives had already protested against this useless expenditure, because the work when completed would be valueless on account of its inaccuracy."²³⁵

²³² AI&M, MS 131. 911/3/2.

²³³ AI&M MS 131, 9/11/8. 29 September 1901.

²³⁴ AI&M MS 131, 9/11/15.

²³⁵ NZPD, 1903, p.382.

Mr. Wilford (Hutt) asked with reference to these complaints that the Maori history being compiled was incorrect in some of its details whether the Minister knew that in the last edition of the book now being published, a whole page respecting the Maori folklore had recently been deleted? The Minister of Justice, the Hon. Mr. McGowan said a great deal of material had been received from Mr. Stowell and the idea was to submit it to such competent authorities as Mr. Percy Smith, Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Best for careful examination.²³⁶

These comments, although separated by two years, raise some interesting issues. First, Stowell's "character" is questioned. He is "intemperate" and Skinner has "doubts about the choice" and hints that he has been asked to compile the Maori history because "he is a friend of Hon. Carroll's" with the suggestion of nepotism. Secondly all the material that Stowell submitted was to be given to competent European authorities for "careful examination." There is no thought that some of the "Natives" who had protested that the history was full of inaccuracies would be consulted.

There are historiographic and ethical difficulties associated with the collation and interpretation of orally transmitted traditional stories by a person from another cultural perspective. It is not easy to incorporate Maori oral history into written history. As Judith Binney says: "The telling of history' whether it be oral or

²³⁶ *ibid.*

written, is not and never has been neutral. It is always a reflection of the priorities of the narrators and their perceptions of the world.”²³⁷

The purposes of the oral narrative tradition are to establish meaning for events and to give a validation for the family's and the group's particular claims to mana and knowledge. Maori history is structured around kin and thus the whanau and hapu are the basic concerns of Maori history. The exploits of the ancestors are the source of the mana of the whanau. Genealogy is the background for all Maori history so key narratives may be rearranged in both time and place around the appropriate leaders. Maori oral narrative is concerned with the leaders of the hapu or whanau which is relating the story and there are inevitably conflicts between narratives as whakapapa and kin order their priorities and their truths.²³⁸

It has been customary for Pakeha writers to try and produce simple chronological Maori histories so that their cultural need for “ordered” history is satisfied. But Maori oral history is focused quite differently from the linear history of the European academic historical tradition. J.H. Mitchell commented in the Introduction to *Takitimu*:

The Maori people differed so widely in versions of their history that it was found useless to call them together for discussion. Many times these meetings ended in uproar. It was found that only by encouragement could the Maori be prevailed upon to make a

²³⁷ Judith Binney, “Maori Oral Narratives, Pakeha Written Texts: Two Forms of Telling History,” in *The New Zealand Journal of History*. Vol.21, No.2. April 1987, p.28.

²³⁸ *ibid*, p.21.

contribution and even then he had to tell history in his own way and without interruption. Under these circumstances I was forced to adopt the course of taking down different versions and deciding on their relative merits.²³⁹

Mitchell, a Maori, acknowledged the difficulties associated with recording Maori oral traditions but considered that his judgement of the “relative merits” of the various stories was sufficiently sound to decide which stories to include and which to reject

The debate in Parliament prior to the passing of the Antiquities Act in 1901 indicated that the loss of the material culture to overseas collectors was a major concern of the Members of Parliament. The material culture was perceived to belong to New Zealand and thus the European New Zealanders “owned” it. During the debate in October when the Maori Relics Bill, which became the Maori Antiquities Act, was introduced Mr Monk (Waitemata) said he thought: “the greatest delinquents in carrying off the antique treasures of this land are the notables who come to this country - such as the Royal visitors we had lately and the various Governors of the colony.”²⁴⁰ Mr Napier (Auckland City) also had definite views on the removal of antiquities from New Zealand by important people:

²³⁹ J.H.Mitchell, *Takitimu*. (facs.) Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1972, p.8.

²⁴⁰ AI&M, MS 131, 11/3/6, NZPD 1901, p.228.

Governors will visit the Maori people and they in the exuberance of their generosity - for they are one of the most generous people on the face of the earth - will bring forth their ancestral relics, their household goods, things that have been treasured for generations and will present them to visiting Governors. Now I say that we ought to set our faces against any Governor carrying away such presents, because he represents us for the time being. He goes to the Natives in our name, and he receives these things as the representative of the people and of the sovereign and not as an individual. He speaks to the Maori people in an official capacity and any presents he receives should be given to the National Museum and retained by the colony. We ought to take it out of the power of Ministers to grant permission even to the Governor of the colony to remove beyond the jurisdiction of the colony priceless relics of that kind.²⁴¹

This is an interesting speech because it reveals some of the contradictory and paternalistic attitudes towards the Maori people which were held by even well-intentioned Europeans at the time. Napier speaks of the “exuberance of their generosity” in a benevolently paternalistic tone, while obviously considering the Maori to be “childishly” unwise in their actions. He objects to the Governors “taking away antiquities,” but is blind to the parallel acquisitiveness of the European New Zealanders. It does not occur to him to return the treasures to their Maori owners, but instead they are to be taken from the recipient and put in

²⁴¹ AI&M, MS 131, 11/3/6, NZPD 1901, p.221.

a national museum. There is no thought of consultation with the original owners. Napier said the Governor “goes to the Natives in our Name and receives these things as the representative of the people and of the Sovereign.” The “Natives” are not included as either people or citizens of New Zealand although their works of art belong here in a national museum for the benefit of European New Zealanders. Napier advocates the repatriation of Maori antiquities so that “our Children” do not have to go beyond their own country in order “to get an adequate knowledge of ancient Maori carvings and the artistic treasures of the noble race with which we are now living in peace in New Zealand.” This is an expression of the colonists’ appropriation of the Maori material culture which is a result of both the appreciation of the material culture and the political doctrine of assimilation. The “nation” is claiming ownership of the material culture of the indigenous people.

Nicholas Thomas makes the very pertinent point that the appreciation of objects leads to their appropriation. He says that the “aestheticizing” of a spear (or any other object) is inevitably a political act and presupposes some denial of its former context and of the capacity of the indigenous producers to perpetuate their own uses and construction of things.²⁴²

The Maori Relics Bill was introduced into Parliament on 4 October 1901 by James Carroll and it appears that although the Maori Relics Bill owes much to the initiative of Augustus Hamilton its inception provided the opportunity for

²⁴²Thomas, 1991, p.174.

Hamilton to press for the formation of a national museum of Maori cultural material as a vital corollary to the Act. The articles in the *Otago Daily Times* were reiterated by Hamilton in his circular, and most of the ideas in the circular preview the debate in Parliament. Several members allude to Hamilton in their speeches. Carroll himself said:

I take this occasion for specially thanking many eminent gentlemen in New Zealand for the services and assistance they have given in promoting the object in view - notably Mr. Percy Smith, Mr. Hamilton, and other leading members of scientific bodies which have for their duties and functions the carrying-out of work akin to what is proposed here. My opinion is that we ought to establish a State museum, and it should be in Wellington, being the most central part of the colony and the seat of Government.²⁴³

Barclay added:

It is not necessary for every member who rises to sing the praises of Mr. Hamilton, but as that gentleman lives in my town and is Registrar of the University there and as I have the pleasure of his acquaintance it may not be out of place if I add my mead of appreciation to his skill, his enthusiasm and his unflagging industry in the acquisition of knowledge and the collection of everything available in connection with Maoris and Maori art. I sincerely trust that his knowledge and ability will be taken advantage of in connection with this Bill and with

²⁴³ AI&M, MS 13, 11/3/6. p.217.

the work which the Government very wisely is doing in connection with a permanent storehouse of Maori articles of interest.²⁴⁴

When Carroll introduced the Bill he said:

In looking up such data as is provided by other museums with respect to the establishment of museums for the preservation of art and literature peculiar to those countries I have found very little to go on.²⁴⁵

He commented that most of the information he had been able to gather had come from the reports on "Egyptology" to the Imperial Government by Lord Cromer in 1897 and 1898. Lord Cromer said the people of Egypt had passed a law with the intention of retaining in Egypt all the relics, art, treasures, records, antiquities, and archaeological matters of interest to the people and connected with the people of the country. This law was applicable to everyone and prohibited the exportation of anything.²⁴⁶ Carroll explained that the Government proposed to follow on the same lines as Egypt and that the establishment of a state museum was essential because there would be nothing gained in passing the Bill if there was no building in which to preserve, catalogue and arrange the collections which would be made.²⁴⁷

During the debate, MacKenzie [who had been primed by Hamilton] agreed with Carroll's statement that there was very little legislation bearing on the subject

²⁴⁴ *ibid*, p.229.

²⁴⁵ AI&M, MS 131, 11/3/5&6.

²⁴⁶ *ibid*.

²⁴⁷ *ibid*, p.217.

anywhere in the world, but he had noted that although works of art were safeguarded in Italy it was in the Criminal Code law, which he thought would not be applicable to New Zealand.

However Mr. Napier (Auckland City) was of the opinion that the New Zealand law should be similar to that which existed in Italy and absolutely prohibit the export of any article of archaeological or historical value or which related to the history of the country.

MacKenzie said that he thoroughly agreed with the idea of establishing a museum and went on to say in Parliament:

I think a very excellent plan has been prepared by Mr. Hamilton whose name ought to be most honourably associated with this subject. I believe he is the chief promoter of it in this colony and there is no more competent person to suggest ideas to the minister.²⁴⁸

Interestingly Parata took exception to the provision in the Bill:

...which seems to establish a system of pre-emptive right on the part of the Crown alone to purchase such articles on similar lines to the pre-emptive right that the Crown has hitherto claimed and exercised in regard to the purchase of Native land. This would mean the Maori must first offer their relics to the Government and must accept that

²⁴⁸ AI&M, MS 131, 9/11/3/6. p.219.

price or nothing even though there may be private purchasers who are prepared to give much more...

But then he concedes that:

I have received a communication from Mr. Hamilton requesting me to support this Bill, and I feel that I am justified in doing that as it is with the object of conserving Maori relics.²⁴⁹

It is clear the members of Parliament and the Government realised the purpose of the Bill was to control the export of Maori artefacts and that there was a need for some form of state right to purchase material for a national museum, and as Seddon said the material should be collected "as a duty to the colony and future generations."²⁵⁰

The comments by the member for Christchurch, Mr. Colleens, illuminate some of the perceived reasons for making a collection of Maori material:

We shall be providing the scientific and intellectual world with specimens and objects which will have value for all time to come to those who take an interest in archaeology by marking out the actual position the Maori race occupied in the races of the World and in the intellectual, artistic, and industrial development of Mankind.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ *ibid*, p.233.

²⁵⁰ NZPD, Vol.117, p.247.

²⁵¹ McKinley, 1971, p.26.

The evolutionary biologists believed that “primitive” people were living examples of the different stages of mankind’s development: from the apes at the bottom of the evolutionary ladder to the Western Europeans who had reached the highest level of civilisation and evolution.

When the Maori Antiquities Act was passed in October 1901, Maori “antiquities” were defined as including Maori relics, articles manufactured with ancient Maori tools and according to Maori methods, and all other articles or things of historical or scientific value or interest relating to New Zealand, but not including any private collection not intended for sale or any botanical or mineral collections or specimens.

The sections of the Act prescribed that:

The Governor may acquire such antiquities as he deems expedient, and provide for their safe custody;

All Maori antiquities should be offered to the government before being exported;

Any antiquity being exported contrary to the Act may be detained;

The Colonial Secretary may give his consent to the removal of any Maori antiquity from the Colony;

The Colonial Secretary shall determine whether any article comes within the scope of this Act;

And the Governor may make regulations prescribing the duties of the police and custom, penalties for breaches, and anything required for the more effectual carrying-out of the Act.²⁵²

This legislation was neither clear nor consistent and did not achieve some of the wider aims of its sponsors. It specifically excluded botanical and mineral specimens and made no provision for a national museum. The definition of a Maori antiquity was ambiguous and difficult to interpret because it did not distinguish between old artefacts and modern ones made with “ancient Maori tools and according to Maori methods.” No criteria were set under which the Governor might acquire antiquities or the Colonial Secretary give his consent to the export of any antiquity. The “offer for sale” provision gave no protection if the offer was unrealistic thus if the Government declined to purchase an antiquity because of the price it could then be exported. It appears that the Colonial Secretary was allowed to permit the export of an antiquity even if it had not been offered for sale. No penalties were included in the Act. Neither were Regulations promulgated, nor Government Purchase Officers appointed until the Amendment in 1904.²⁵³

In 1904 Amendments were added to the Maori Antiquities Act in an attempt to make the Act more successful. Considerable agitation had been provoked between 1902 and 1904 when Mr. Nelson of Rotorua had sold a carved meeting

²⁵² Maori Antiquities Act, 1901, No.21.

²⁵³ McKinley, 1971, p.29.

house to a German buyer and subsequently exported it in defiance of the Colonial Secretary's decision not to issue an export permit. The Amendments redefined a Maori antiquity by omitting the words "but does not include any private collection not intended for sale;" provided a monetary penalty for breaches of the Act and declared the article involved forfeit; and provided 24 hours notice of intention to export. The right to export once an offer for sale was made and the permission of the Colonial Secretary obtained was clarified and the Colonial Secretary was empowered to copy any article before it was exported. In 1908 the amended Act was consolidated and in 1912 regulations were promulgated. This was the legislation which controlled the export of Maori antiquities from New Zealand for the next fifty years.²⁵⁴

The Maori Antiquities Act 1901, and its successor passed in 1908 attempted to provide a mechanism that would control the export of Maori "antiquities." According to McKinley it was not until 1953 that steps were taken to promote, supervise, and authorise excavations of "relics," and in 1954 to protect archaeological sites.²⁵⁵

During the debate on the second reading of the Maori Relics Bill, Milford had suggested "the addition of a stringent penalty clause, to deal with the robbers of old chieftains' graves for the sake of relics." This comment passed without any recorded acknowledgement which suggests such activities were of little concern to

²⁵⁴ McKinley, 1971, p.30.

²⁵⁵ *ibid.*

the Members of Parliament. But it is interesting to note that two years later on 23 November 1903 the Maori Councils Act 1901 was amended. Section 11 stated:

Every person who knowingly and wantonly without due and lawful authority trespasses on or desecrates or interferes in any manner with any Maori grave, cemetery, burial cave, or place of spectre is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding twenty-five pounds, or to three months imprisonment, or to both fine and imprisonment.

Provided that jurisdiction in the case of such offences shall only be exercised by a Magistrate on information laid by the Chairman of a Maori Council.²⁵⁶

The passing of the Act in 1901 gave Augustus Hamilton and S. Percy Smith the opportunity to press for the establishment of a Maori museum. They were asked by the Government to consider the rough form in which a Bill authorising the establishment of a Maori museum in Wellington should be drawn up. In early 1902, in response to this request from the Government, they provided a set of suggested regulations which would enable the provisions of the Maori Antiquities Act to be carried out, as well as a list of those articles for which it was always necessary to get permission to export. They also recommended that Government Purchasing Officers be appointed for each district and suggested suitable people: Captain Gilbert Mair for Auckland; Judge Scannel for Rotorua; Mr. Percy Smith

²⁵⁶Section 11 of The Maori Councils Act Amendment 1903 was used to convict Sonny Hovell in September 1933 for "committing mischief by entering upon the Oruarangi Pa and digging holes thereon..." He was fined two pounds ten shillings, costs and expenses. There had been a public notice in the local paper under the name of the Minister, Sir Apirana Ngata, warning of the consequences of offending under that section of the Act. Pers.Comm. Louise Furey, Auckland Institute and Museum.

for New Plymouth; Mr. A.L.D. Fraser for Hawke's Bay; and Mr. Tregear for Wellington.²⁵⁷ Hamilton and Percy Smith recommended that in order to carry out the full requirements of the Maori Antiquities Act 1901, a Bill should include the following provisions:

- (1) That a museum, to be called the National Maori Museum, be established in Wellington, for the preservation of the antiquities of the Polynesian race,
- (2) The power to appoint a Board of Governors of not less than seven of whom not less than three shall be members of the Native race,
- (3) The power to appoint the Director and assistants,
- (4) The Board of Governors shall act as Trustees for the safe custody of the property,
- (5) £15,000 be appropriated by Act for the museum buildings - not more than £3,000 to be spent in one year. Plus a further £3,000 be given each year for the carrying on of the museum, which shall include the staff salaries: Director - £500; preparator - £200; clerk - £160; messenger and caretaker - £100. The total being £960.²⁵⁸

Augustus Hamilton and S. Percy Smith also appended a rough plan for the museum buildings.

Then in mid 1902 Augustus Hamilton sent a second circular to the Members of the Legislature. This was on the subject of the national Maori museum. James

²⁵⁷ AJHR, 1902, G-8, p.2.

²⁵⁸ *ibid.*

Carroll said he thought it was "all that is required" but he doubted whether the members would be willing to sanction the necessary expenditure that year.²⁵⁹

Hamilton wrote:

The object of the circular is to show the necessity for a National Maori Museum which may be a common meeting ground for the two races, and what should be done to make it a Scientific Institution, a Popular Educator and a Bureau of Information for Students and Travellers.²⁶⁰

But the concept of a national Maori museum faltered until the retirement of Sir James Hector enabled changes to be made in the Colonial Museum. On 29 July 1903 Thomas MacKenzie asked in Parliament what steps the Government intended taking for establishing a national Maori museum. James Carroll replied that no definite steps had been taken because of certain changes and retirements that had taken place in connection with the local institution in Wellington and that pending the appointment of a suitable and capable curator it was necessary to pass legislation to give effect to the changes passed, before the establishment of a national museum could be envisaged. Carroll was referring to the fact that Sir James Hector had just retired from his position as Manager of the New Zealand Institute, which included the management of the Colonial Museum, after 35 years in the position. This was the opportunity for the New Zealand Institute to be reconstituted under a new Act. The Colonial Museum was perceived to be totally unsuitable as a national museum and a new one was envisaged.

²⁵⁹ AI&M, MS 131, 11/4/7.

²⁶⁰ *ibid.*

MacKenzie suggested that Hamilton would be a suitable curator, with which comment James Carroll agreed.²⁶¹ Several days later when again questioned about the museum he repeated his earlier comments but added that an efficient man should be appointed before the question of building a museum was dealt with.²⁶²

Augustus Hamilton was being suggested as a suitable man to develop a national museum of Maori antiquities as early as 1901. A letter from James Carroll to Hamilton's friend and fellow archaeologist, Frederick Chapman, later a Judge of the Supreme Court, stated:

With regard to Mr. Hamilton I am quite satisfied from my knowledge of that gentleman and the interest he has taken in this kind of work that no person in the Colony would be better fitted for the position than he is. I am of the opinion that a central council should be established in Wellington (with branches in different parts of the colony) to govern, arrange, regulate and undertake all that was necessary for the successful ... of the project. With Mr. Hamilton at the head of such a body there would be no need whatsoever for any fear as to the ultimate success.²⁶³

The passing of the Antiquities Act and the interest in the formation of a national Maori museum resulted in the opportunity for Augustus Hamilton to become the

²⁶¹ NZPD, 29 /7/1903, p.63.

²⁶² NZPD, 12 /8/1903, p.428.

²⁶³ Copy of letter dated 30/10/01, J.C. to F. Chapman, AI&M, MS 131, 11/3/11.

Director of the Colonial Museum in December 1903 when Sir James Hector retired.

As soon as Hamilton took up the directorship he began planning for a new museum building. By the middle of January 1904 he had obtained the plans of the grounds, the museum buildings, the particulars of the Crown Grant and other dealings with the land. Then he bought some tracing cloth at Whitcombe and Tombs to copy the plan and make suggestions for new buildings.²⁶⁴ This was the beginning of the struggle to get a new museum building.

Hamilton gave interesting suggestions for details of the national Maori museum building. The main building should be of brick with an entrance porch with figures in stone or wood in Maori style. The entrance hall - the walls of which were to be used at first for portraits of distinguished Maoris - was to be lighted from the top and to have a number of pillars with a figure at the base similar to the main post in a whare tipuna. The upper part of the post was to be inscribed with the genealogy of a tribe. Each post was to represent one of the original canoes. The floor, roof and rafters were to be ornamented with Maori patterns. If possible there was to be a life-size marble statue of "old Epuni" in the centre of the entrance hall.²⁶⁵ On the left hand side of the ground floor would be the

²⁶⁴ *ibid*, p.10.

²⁶⁵ This is probably Honiana Te Puni-kokopuri (? - 1870) who was a Te Ati Awa leader and government adviser. According to the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* his name was usually shortened to Te Puni. Another form is Epuni, which was recorded in error by early Wellington settlers and is now the name of a Lower Hutt suburb. At the time of the settlement of Wellington by the New Zealand Company in 1839 the position of Te Ati Awa was precarious because they were surrounded by enemies. Thus Te Puni welcomed the establishment of the settlement at Wellington. He became a firm friend of

office and Director's room and the stairway to the upper storey. The library would be on the right hand side. On the left hand side of the first floor there would be the room for preparing specimens and general workroom. The photographic studio and the dark room would be on the right hand side.

Hamilton envisaged the main exhibition hall to be beyond the entrance hall. Both the width of the building and its depth would depend on cost and the ground available. The building should have a cement floor, partly covered with linoleum and be lighted from the top by the "ridge and valley system of lighting." The end wall would be largely of plate glass as the building would be extended for some distance as a kind of winter garden or conservatory in which would be placed a Maori meeting house which would have in front of it an open space or marae where meetings could be held and which would be useful as a place to take photographs of groups of Maori or groups arranged to represent ancient ceremonies. In another part would be a pataka (elevated storehouse), a whare (common house), a rua (underground storehouse), a memorial canoe, a part of a pa palisade etc.

Near the entrance under the plate glass windows would be a fully decorated war canoe and a second class canoe ready for sea and as they would be exhibited transversely, it would be necessary for the building to be at least 60 feet wide.

the settlers, encouraging his people to sell their land, but by the time of his death in 1870 he had become bitter and disillusioned. He was buried at Petone with what amounted to a state funeral. His pallbearers included Donald McLean, now Native Minister and William Fitzherbert the Superintendent of Wellington. The Bishop of Wellington, Octavius Hadfield read the funeral service. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Vol.I, pp. 481-3.

Around the canoe would be groups of *papier mache* models of Maori working at the decorations of the war canoe.

The sides and back of this building would have borders with native trees and shrubs growing in them and around the houses. Hamilton considered that there would be advantages in cost and general effect in having the larger objects such as houses and canoes in a building of this kind.

At the sides of the main brick building there should be a fireproof brick and concrete room, at a lower level than the main floor, into which certain cases in the Museum could be run on light rails every night for security. Hamilton thought that these special cases should be used for the ancestral possessions deposited by Maori.

The library would be fitted with the modern appliances as in the new Parliamentary Library and it was hoped that the services of honorary curators or librarians would be obtained for the large amount of work which would have to be done in this department.

Although the entrance hall was to be used for a picture gallery Hamilton was of the opinion that provision should be made in the plan for an additional, properly

lighted, permanent gallery in which a special collection of portraits and pictures connected with the history of the Maori race was hung.²⁶⁶

But Hamilton died ten years later frustrated in his attempt to have a new museum built. He said in his final Report to the Government in 1913:

Since 1903 the question of a new Museum has been under consideration by the Government and numerous sites have been selected and plans drawn, but none finally decided upon. At the time of the fire which destroyed the Parliamentary buildings tenders had been called for and received for the commencement of a new building which unfortunately came to nothing and many other schemes have since been considered.²⁶⁷

This chapter has considered the reasons for the passing of the first legislation in New Zealand to prevent the export of Maori “antiquities” and the part Augustus Hamilton played in alerting people to the need for the legislation and in promoting the concept of a national Maori museum and briefly discusses Hamilton’s efforts to have a new museum building erected. It has also discussed some of the underlying social and political ideas which contributed to both the passing of the legislation and the support for a national collection of Maori ethnology at this time. An alliance of thought and purpose is demonstrated between the politicians of the day and the network of scholars who had made it their business to preserve the material heritage of Maori culture. However the

²⁶⁶ AI&M, MS 131, 11/1/12. This is similar to the suggestions for a Maori Museum made in AJHR, 1902, G-8, p.1, by S. Percy Smith and A. Hamilton.

²⁶⁷ AJHR, 1913, H-24, Dominion Museum Annual Report for the year ending 31/3/1913: A Hamilton, Director.

limitations of the legislative instrument meant that significant taonga Maori continued to be exported. Hamilton recognised the urgency of creating a national collection of Maori Art whether or not a national Maori museum was built.

Chapter Four

The Years in Wellington as Director of the Dominion Museum

While Hamilton may have been frustrated at the failure to have a national Maori museum building erected he could claim many significant achievements during his period as Director of the Dominion Museum.²⁶⁸ This chapter documents and analyses aspects of Hamilton's work as the Director focusing primarily on his strategy for creating a national collection of taonga Maori. When he was appointed Director of the Dominion Museum in December 1903 his first priority was to secure a representative collection of Maori art.²⁶⁹ Seddon, the Premier, was a proponent of assimilationist policies and Hamilton's desire to appropriate a major collection of Maori art for the national museum received his enthusiastic support. A second theme of his tenure was his constant advocacy for a new museum facility which has been discussed briefly in the previous chapter.

Hamilton's appointment was greeted with enthusiasm by the scientific and intellectual community in New Zealand. Comments on Hamilton's appointment,

²⁶⁸ This was the Colonial Museum from its establishment in 1865, but was renamed the Dominion Museum in 1907. K. Thompson, *Art Galleries and Museums of New Zealand*. Reed, Wellington, 1981, p.71. I have used the latter name throughout although for the first four years of Hamilton's directorship the museum was the Colonial Museum.

²⁶⁹ Hamilton Diary 1903/4., p.15.

include a letter of congratulation from Alexander Turnbull which declares:

“... really it is we who ought to be congratulated on having you in our midst.”²⁷⁰

There is a telegram from Seddon to Inspector Henry Hill of Napier, which notes:

“Very pleased indeed to find that our selection of Mr Hamilton meets with your approval. I realise we have secured a good man whose heart is in his work.”²⁷¹

Another telegram was from Willi Fels, merchant, collector, and major benefactor of the Otago Museum.²⁷²

It was not a difficult transition for Hamilton to move from Dunedin to Wellington; from the university to the museum. A small circle of scholars and collectors gathered around him. These included Alexander Turnbull, the bibliophile, Elsdon Best, the ethnologist, the collector-politicians such as Robert McNab, and George Fowlds from Auckland, the Dunedin lawyer William Downie Stewart, as well as Herbert Williams the Archdeacon and Maori scholar, Charles Wilson, the Parliamentary Librarian, and Frederick Chapman a Judge of the Supreme Court

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Hamilton's first diary as Director of the Dominion Museum starts on 19 December 1903. He obviously fitted easily into the Wellington community and was part of it from the beginning. His first paragraph starts:

²⁷⁰ AI&M, MS 131,11/1/ 5.

²⁷¹ AI&M MS 131,11/1/8.

²⁷² A.H. McLintock, *An Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, Vol. I. 1966, p.637. Fels was responsible for the creation of the Department of Anthropology, and paid half the salary of the keeper from 1919 to 1923. He established a fund for a new wing of the Otago Museum to which he donated his collections which amounted to over 80,000 pieces as well as gifts of money amounting to more than £25,000.

²⁷³ Rachel Barrowman, 1996, p. 17.

Today I met Prof. Brigham from the Honolulu Museum and had a long talk with him at Donne's office.²⁷⁴ After I left him I met Tolhurst and he asked me up to dinner tomorrow to meet the professor. He also promised to put my name down at the Club.²⁷⁵

Later in the day he met several people at a swimming tournament. On the Sunday he went to the cathedral to hear Bishop Weldon of Calcutta speak and met another acquaintance - Mr Kay. In the afternoon he went for a walk, and called in to visit Alexander Turnbull, because he wanted to borrow a catalogue of the New Zealand Exhibition of 1889-90, but Turnbull was "out on his yacht."²⁷⁶

After spending a sociable weekend Hamilton was ready for action by Monday morning. He was a very energetic and organised person and obviously impatient to get on with his new job. He wrote: "Tried to get hold of Wilson, but he has gone on his holiday. So I am to try and see Sir Joseph at noon or thereabouts. This waste of time is awful." He saw Sir Joseph Ward²⁷⁷ at 12 pm. and then had to go back to get his letter of appointment from him at 2 o'clock. He went back, only to be sent "to the other building to see Mr Pollen."²⁷⁸ From him I got the letter." However his irritation was soothed by discovering that the salary

²⁷⁴ T E Donne was the General Manager of the Government Department of Tourist and Health Resorts. James Cowan, *Official Record of the New Zealand International Exhibition of Arts and Industries, held at Christchurch, 1906-7*. Wellington: John MacKay, Govt. Printer, 1910. p.23.

²⁷⁵ Hamilton Diary, 1903/4, 19/12/03.

²⁷⁶ *ibid*, 21/12/03

²⁷⁷ Sir Joseph Ward was Minister of Tourism and Health Resorts. AJHR, 1906, H.2.

²⁷⁸ Hugh Pollen (1851-1912) spent his life in the public service and rose to become Under-Secretary of the Colonial Secretary's Department. McLintock, Vol.II, 1966, p.815.

commenced from 1 December which he considered “very good of the government” and that he had “travelling pay and allowances on the Civil Service scale according to Regulations.”²⁷⁹

The letter of appointment mentioned the Maori museum and the administration of the Antiquities Act. He talked to Pollen about the staff and the site discovering that nobody had a very clear idea about the site. He also learnt that he “would have to look after the weather records for the present and that the Museum kept no books, but that everything was done by voucher to the Treasury.”²⁸⁰

Finally on Tuesday morning Hamilton got into the Museum. He gathered together all the staff and ascertained the particulars of their appointments. Then he went around the building and examined all the rooms. “I found that they were all filthy, there is no other word for it. Nothing has been done for years.”²⁸¹ He was appalled by the years of neglect and gives a useful description of the state of the Museum at the end of the Hector era.

The laboratory building is only fit for firewood and must be removed as soon as possible. The Maori house is in the same line with it and will I think have to be shifted so that a row of workshops etc. can go along the back of the section.

²⁷⁹ Hamilton Diary, 1903/4, 21/12/03.

²⁸⁰ *ibid.*

²⁸¹ *ibid.*, 22/12/03

The levels however are rather curious. The house now used by the Public Health Dept. is apparently a large one, but I did not go over it, it also comes very close to the museum.

The taxidermist has apparently been given permission to stuff birds and specimens for the Tourist Dept. in the museum house which I certainly object to. It appears that the museum is to be credited with the value of the work, but only one item has been paid and another item has been paid to the taxidermist privately. Freyberg the cadet will I think do. He seems smart. Old Captain Beamish wants to retire if he can get the £150 retiring allowance to which he has no legal right. They offer him £50. The two offices which are mine are in a most filthy state and I have had everything taken out of the first one and have sent to Public Works to get a man down to arrange for repairs. If he comes tomorrow I might get something commenced before I return from Dunedin on 20th. ... The second office room is in a fearful state of mess with huge stacks of *Transactions* filling up the whole place. Some definite arrangement must be made for the storage of these books. The meteorological records must all be put in the little outside office with Freyberg and I hope they will eventually go to Erwin.

The Geological papers and maps will eventually go to the Geological Division when constituted. It requires a good fireproof storage room of considerable capacity for all these records and printed papers.

This must be along the back boundary line and have the workshops

above. I find that there is no typewriting machine for the office.

There is no proper catalogue and I think that I shall have to introduce the card system for Deposits and for Acquisitions. There are no books of accounts. I must start something of the kind - with separate accounts for the departmental votes so that I may see how the expenditure goes on from time to time - the book as present kept shows nothing.

The taxidermist's building is tidy enough but the little room at the end is full of odds and ends which he claims as his own. He must clean out everything of that kind.

Under the main building is stored away a quantity of old cases, glass, casts and moulds and lots of odds and ends - mainly exhibition relics. There is no place here anything can be received or unpacked. I shall have over 50 cases to deal with shortly and no place to handle them in unless the "spirit" room and the "Maori Art" room can be cleared out.

I do not suppose that there is any Insurance on the Museum - that I must find out.²⁸²

Hamilton was required by his letter of appointment to build up a national collection of Maori ethnological material. He began his collecting as soon as he returned from Dunedin after Christmas. As well as responding to offers of gifts to the government he used his extensive network of friends and collectors to build

²⁸² *ibid*, pp.4-7.

up the national collection. Some excerpts from his diary illuminate both his method of acquiring objects and his opinion of the material he was offered.

Tamahau Mahupuku, who had given a house to the government as a gesture of support towards the Antiquities Act and the establishment of a national collection of Maori material, died in January 1904. Hamilton went to the funeral on the Premier's special train. It was on a Sunday and he met James Carroll at the railway station and had the opportunity to discuss the purchase of the Butterworth collection in New Plymouth with him prior to going to the funeral. It was also an opportunity for Hamilton to evaluate the house that Tamahau had given the government because the burial place was near the big house. Hamilton considered it a "poor specimen and would not be worth moving, especially as it would take up much room."²⁸³

He had to seek permission from Sir Joseph Ward to go to Auckland for the election of the Primate of the Anglican Church and to see the Butterworth collection en route at New Plymouth. Some of this material was stored in a bank in New Plymouth. Percy Smith and Skinner had made a list of the items in the collection but Hamilton did not think that there was much of great importance in their list and he also considered their prices too high - their list added up to £450 while his was only £250 but he realised that it was unlikely that Mrs Butterworth would accept the lower price. He describes the collection:

²⁸³ Hamilton Diary, 1903/4 p.13.

There are 2 fine spears and a good taiaha or two. Also some odds and ends, but the greenstones are poor. Everything is in a very dirty and mixed up condition. Heaps of fishhooks with their cords rotting and perishing. She has a tiki for sale for £13 that is fair and some good mats especially some pakes and common kinds. All the better kinds are tainted with wool.²⁸⁴

Here he demonstrates the typical focus of ethnologists of the period and later. Inclusion of European materials was seen as a corruption of the traditional methods of manufacture.

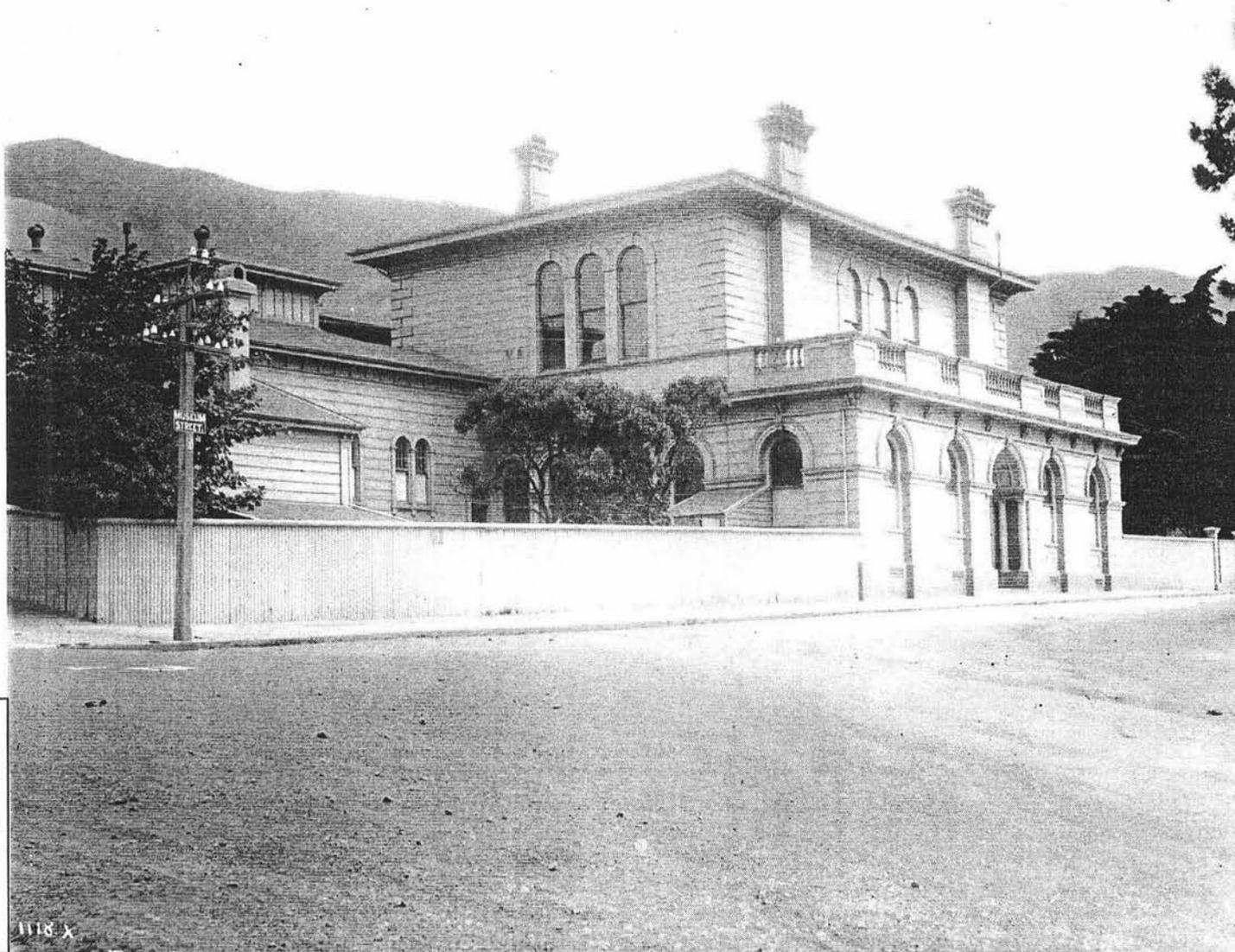
Hamilton was very involved with the Anglican church and his reason for going to Auckland was for the General Synod which included the election of a new Archbishop:

...went up to Communion at St Mary's, Parnell and to the Synod Hall in the afternoon. Election of the Primate fixed for Monday evening so I am stuck here until then.²⁸⁵

Nevertheless Hamilton made good use of his time. He went to Takapuna for a picnic with two friends and saw gumlands and mangroves for the first time, and decided that "the beaches appear to be good collecting grounds." On Saturday there was no sitting of the synod so he went to the Auckland Institute and

²⁸⁴ Hamilton Diary, 1903/4, pp.14-15.

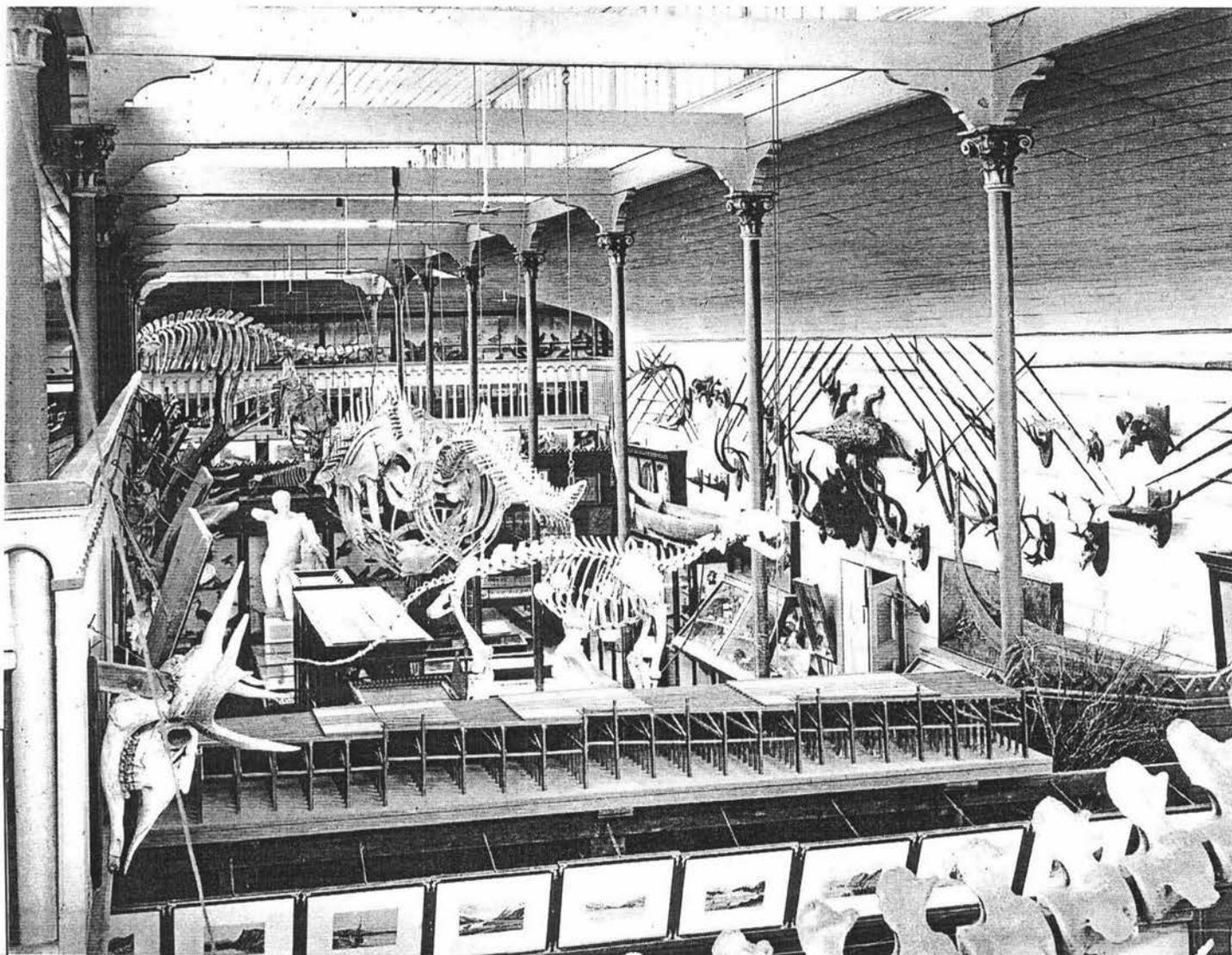
²⁸⁵ *ibid.*



*The Dominion Museum,
Wellington.* 1904.

Photographer: Augustus
Hamilton 1854-1913. Museum
of New Zealand, Te Papa
Tongarewa, Wellington, Neg.
No. C.001054

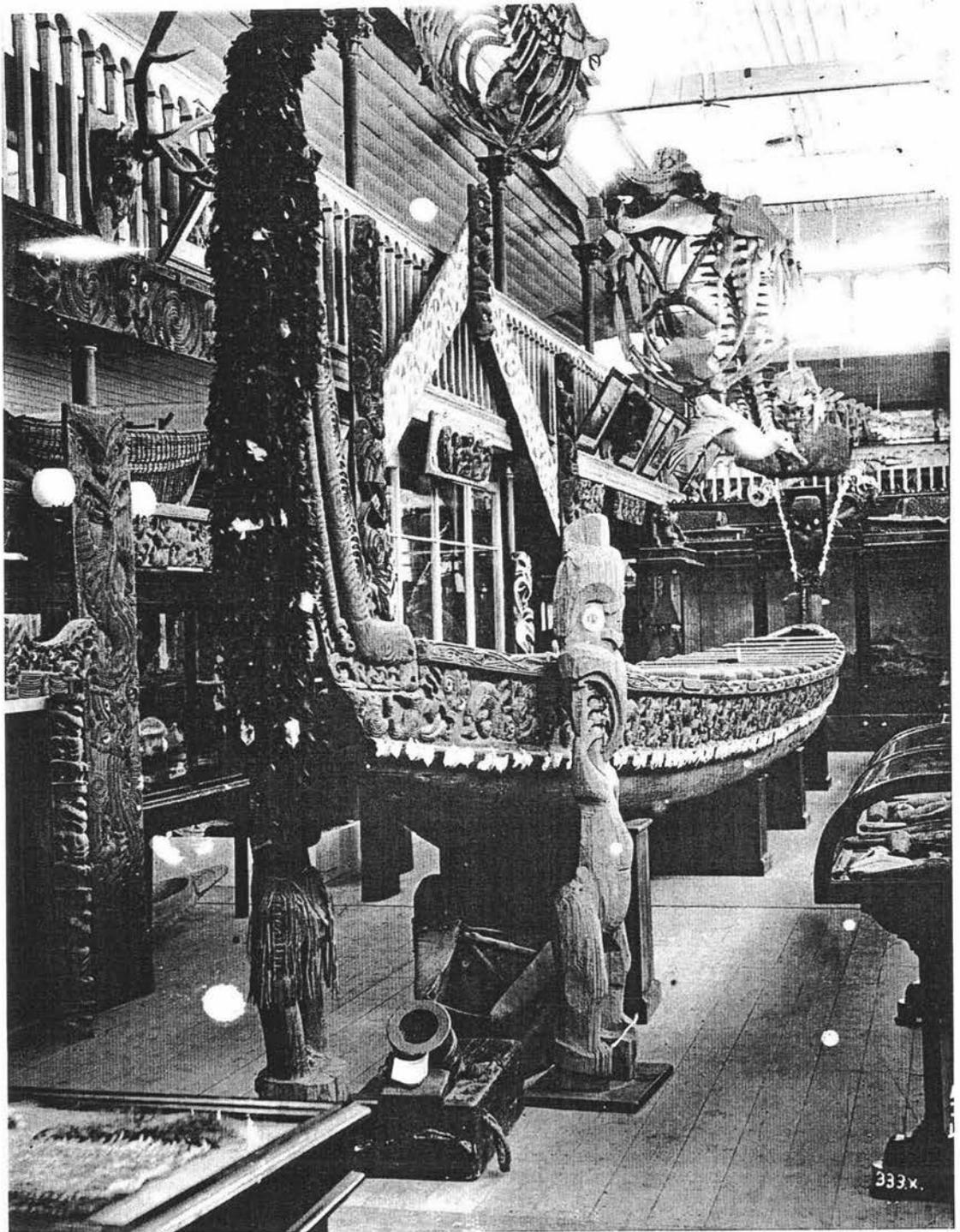
1118 X



*Interior of the Colonial
Museum.* c.1900.
Photographer: unknown.
Museum of New Zealand Te
Papa Tongarewa, Wellington.
Neg. No. B 011506



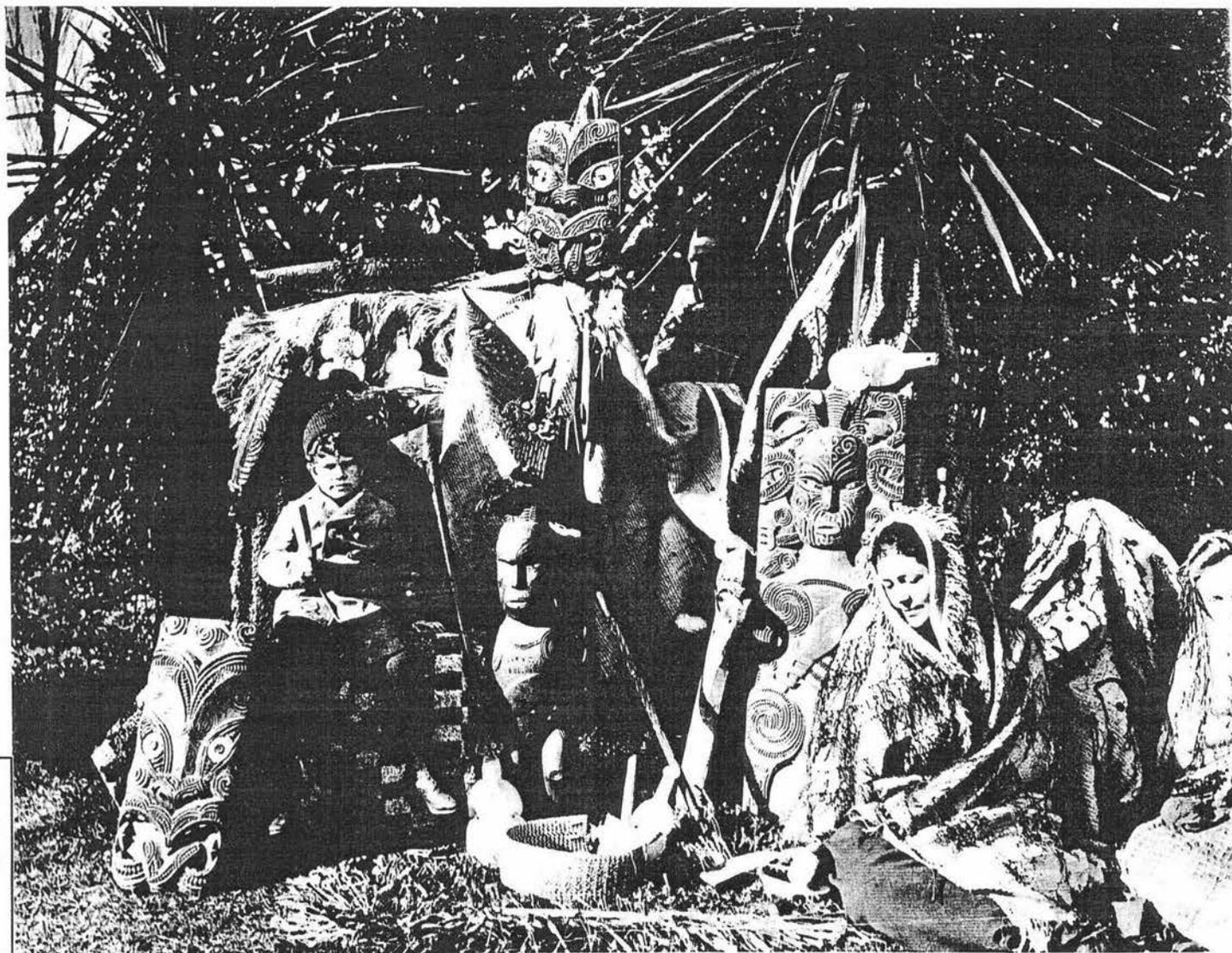
*Old Dominion Museum -
interior view of the Main Hall,
1903-1913. Photographer:
Augustus Hamilton 854-1913.
Museum of New Zealand Te
Papa Tongarewa, Wellington.
Neg. No.C.001050*



Old Dominion Museum - interior view of the Main Hall, 1903-1913.
Photographer: Augustus Hamilton 1854-1913. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington. Neg. No. C.001048



Old Dominion Museum - interior view of the Main Hall,, (with bust of Isaac Featherston), 1903-1913. Photographer: Augustus Hamilton 1854-1913. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington. Neg. No. C.001047



Collection of Carvings
Museum of New Zealand Te
Papa Tongarewa,
(MONZTPT)
Neg.No.B.021215

Museum to see their “wonderful coffins” and other things that they had lately acquired including “two curious and very rare stone flutes.” In the afternoon he visited Cheeseman, the noted botanist and Curator of the Auckland Institute and Museum, and saw his plants. Mrs Cheeseman showed him her curios and gave him a little cashmere box. On Monday he went to Spencer’s and examined the wonderful carvings and decided that they belonged to at least three buildings. Spencer also “had a wonderful pendant of bone, one of those I call book fashion[sic] - only this is notched and slightly different in shape.”²⁸⁶ Later he went back to Spencer’s and drew the pendant. He remarked: “Spencer of course will not sell any of his things but is willing that I should have photos of anything that he has. Winkelmann does any photos that are required.” Although Hamilton was buying Maori ethnological material for the government he had no qualms about adding to his personal collection at the same time. Before he left Auckland he bought himself a small pekapeka that he “fancied.”²⁸⁷

On his journey back to Wellington he went to the Rev. Hammond’s house, which was some way out of Patea, to look at his specimens, which he had “all spread out on the floor of his sitting room.” Hamilton wrote:

I must confess that I was disappointed at the collection on the whole.

I should not like to see £325 given for it. Nearly all the weapons are poor specimens. There is one Hoeroa, only fair. The best of all are 2 paddles not in the original list, regular twin paddles. They

²⁸⁶ *ibid.*

²⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p.16.

were found evidently in a swamp and bear the marks of being long buried. Their shape also is quite different from any recent Maori form. The handle continues into the blade ... I gave these as the gems of his collection. The next best thing is a mat with a border of taniko work, a beautiful specimen. Then there is a small dogskin mat without collar, almost square, over a dark reddish brown dogskin cut into the normal strips. There is a good bone mere formerly belonging to Te Kooti. The greenstones are very poor. He has some curious, naturally shaped stones which he places great value on being Whatu-kura, or fetish stones from sacred places. There was also a table covered with axes, one very large indeed. Also a lot of kete and waistmats and about 500 sinkers.²⁸⁸

He continued on to Wanganui, but he had to wait until eleven o'clock to get into the Museum. After his visit he noted:

They have now got a large Hall added and a bust of Drew [the founder of the museum.] The collection is badly arranged, but in the Maori part they have some good things. Two magnificent hei tiki, also a good bone flute, a good bone poua - Mr Hanley's[sic] collection that I was to go and see is I found deposited in the Museum. He also has one of those square dogskin mats without collar of the same reddish brown colour as Hammond ... He has a good Hoeroa and some bird snares which are quite different from the

²⁸⁸ *ibid*, pp.17-18.

East Cape ones. He has two good trumpets and two very good paddles.²⁸⁹

On the Monday after his return to Wellington he sent in his report recommending that £225 be spent on purchasing part of Mrs Butterworth's collection and that Hammond be offered a 10% advance on the prices agreed to. The next day Cabinet passed the £225 for the purchase of the Butterworth collection.²⁹⁰

The following day, Wednesday, Hamilton went up to New Plymouth where he stayed with Percy Smith because the town was crowded with people for Race day. In the morning he went down to Mrs Butterworth's and selected the things that he wanted from the bank and from the shop. He then gave her until 2 o'clock to decide whether she would sell the things to him at that price. When Hamilton returned she had decided to accept. He packed up all the small things but could not pack up those at the bank as the bank was closed since it was a half holiday. Neither could he pack the big things so he asked Skinner to do it for him. While he was at Mrs Butterworth's he spoke to Mr. E.H. Smith, M.H.R., who said that he had been under the impression that the Government was going to buy the whole collection and distribute what was not wanted for the national museum to other museums. Hamilton thought this "a grand idea."²⁹¹

²⁸⁹ *ibid*, pp.19-20.

²⁹⁰ *ibid*, p.21.

²⁹¹ *ibid*, p.22.

A few days later he noted that he had selected from Hammond's list the specimens which he wanted for the Museum and that he only took 100 sinkers (of the 500) and no axes. The total cost was about £110.²⁹²

In March he wrote to Henry Hill asking him to offer his collection to the Government.²⁹³ A great deal of this material had been obtained by Hill while he was journeying around Hawke's Bay and the East Coast inspecting the schools. Hamilton himself had acquired material gathered by Hill in this area.²⁹⁴

By March 1904 Hamilton was well established in his new position. He was busy numbering all the Maori specimens in the Maori house and he had ordered cards so that he could start on his card catalogue.²⁹⁵ He was hopeful that the Public Works Department would approve his plans for improving the facilities at the Museum. These involved shifting the Maori house and cutting off part of the Museum and providing a building at the rear which would contain workshops, photographic room, and fireproof storerooms.²⁹⁶

Two years later Hamilton was able to record that Parliament had passed "appropriations" for the purchase of specimens and the main collections which were offered and acquired under the provisions of the Act were: the Hill collection which was acquired in two instalments and mainly represented the

²⁹² *ibid*, p.23.

²⁹³ *ibid*, p.25.

²⁹⁴ *cf.* Chapter 2.

²⁹⁵ Hamilton Diary, 1903/4, p.25, p.27.

²⁹⁶ Hamilton Diary, 1903/4, p.27.

ethnology of the people between Napier and East Cape; the Butterworth collection which was a selection from the late Mr Butterworth's stock at New Plymouth and represented the area from Mount Egmont north; the Hammond collection which was from the area between Waitotara and Mount Egmont; the Handley collection from the Wanganui district and the Fischer collection from East Cape northwards.

Many important donations had been given to the Museum including some historical carvings of great interest from Tukino Te Heu Heu of Tokaano; a fine canoe, formerly on the Wairarapa lake, which was bequeathed by Ani Te Hiko; and an old dug-out canoe from the Taieri which was donated by Judge Chapman. A number of deposits had also been made including the collection made by Hamilton himself before he became Director. Some of this collection had been in the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute's museum in Napier. Major-General Robley's collection of 70 sketches which he made during the war of 1865 had been purchased from him. There was also a quantity of valuable articles "under offer."²⁹⁷

In the *Colonial Museum Bulletin* published in 1906 Hamilton discussed the achievements of his first two years as Director. "There is a full card catalogue of all the Maori collection which now contains over 2,500 specimens."²⁹⁸ But as far as improvements to the building were concerned Hamilton was only able to say:

²⁹⁷ Augustus Hamilton, *Colonial Museum Bulletin*, Vol 1, Wellington: John McKay, Govt. Printer, 1906, p.20.

²⁹⁸ *ibid*, p.21.

The Director has altered the general arrangement of the present Museum so as to leave the main hall entirely for specimens of Maori art, the north wing being devoted to New Zealand natural history and the south wing and the tablecases in the gallery being still occupied by the collection of the Geological Survey. ... About 400 photographs of specimens in the Museum have been taken in a new photographic studio constructed from a portion of the building formerly used by the taxidermist. ... A very representative collection of greenstone ornaments has been made, but it cannot be set out as the present building is not sufficiently protected from attacks from burglars; and it is much to be regretted that so many valuable articles - many which could not be replaced - are in an old wooden building at the mercy of fire. The Government have, however, under consideration the question of making suitable provision for the safe custody of the collections, and will no doubt do what is necessary as soon as possible.²⁹⁹

He said that although the work of making and caring for the collection of the national Maori museum had claimed most of his time during the past two years some valuable work had been done in the natural history collection as well. Mr Suter had been engaged to examine the collection of New Zealand *mollusca* and a report had been prepared which was included in the *Bulletin*. The taxidermist from the Otago Museum had been employed for three months working on the

²⁹⁹ibid, p.20.

shells and the bird collection. The Herbarium needed to be thoroughly examined, but most of the specimens appeared to be in a very bad condition. The large collection of New Zealand plants made by the late Mr. Colenso had been deposited by the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Society but needed accommodation.³⁰⁰

The report on the position of the Museum in the *Bulletin* reveals one of the ironies in Hamilton's collecting: on one hand he has a particular notion of authenticity, for example, scorning "mats tainted with wool" and yet he can with equanimity say:

The canoe-hull presented from the Wairarapa has also been fitted with topsides and carvings, but is not yet finished, owing to the difficulty of procuring the necessary feathers and cord.³⁰¹

There prevailed at the time a belief among Europeans that Maori art was in the last stages of decadence. The incorporation of European motifs (and materials) was taken as evidence of this decline.³⁰² Hamilton had a painter come into the museum and paint red all the carvings "that had been disfigured with blue and other paint."³⁰³ Hamilton promoted a very conservative view of Maori art.

As Roger Neich says:

³⁰⁰ibid, p.21.

³⁰¹ibid, p.21.

³⁰²Neich, 1994, p.32.

³⁰³Hamilton Diary, 1910, 7/1/10.

Most interest in Maori carving resulted from a romantic or scientific attraction to the exotic. European criticisms ... continually stressed the formal aspect of the art at the expense of any semantic communication. This criticism was founded in an antiquarian museum mentality attached to the forms of the past, and all new work was judged on the criteria of earlier forms. ... Carvers ... could be graded according to their ability to produce standard, "correct" carving forms. Carving was treated as an object to be bought and sold for a certain price...³⁰⁴

Hamilton was very involved with C.E. Nelson, the Manager of the main tourist hotel in Rotorua, who was the son of a Swedish anthropologist and considered himself an expert in Maori matters. Nelson did not hesitate to correct Maori carvers and ritual experts on points of Maori culture and liked to be known as "the white tohunga."³⁰⁵

Nelson purchased some old Ngati Tarawhai carvings in 1897 and then employed three carvers, Anaha Te Rahui, Neke Kapua and Tene Waitere to erect them, with new additions, into a meeting house called Rauru. His new meeting house was a deliberate effort to produce one better than any Maori had ever built before.³⁰⁶ In 1904 it was sold to a German museum which provoked a considerable amount of dismay and the realisation that the Antiquities Act was not effective.

³⁰⁴ Neich, in Mead & Kernot, 1983, pp.251-2.

³⁰⁵ *ibid*, p.255.

³⁰⁶ *ibid*, p.255.



Group of Te Arawa and Whanganui Maoris at the Christchurch Exhibition, 1906-1907. Original Photographer: James MacDonald Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington. Neg. No. B.28228

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*Group Portrait at the
Christchurch Exhibition, 1906.*
Photographer: James
MacDonald, Museum of New
Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa,
Wellington. Neg. No.
C.001958

Hamilton and Nelson together set up an orthodox doctrine of what “unchanging traditional Maori culture” should be like. At the same time other European experts were constructing an orthodox account of the traditional Maori discovery and settlement of New Zealand. A basic tenet of these orthodoxies was that Maori culture had virtually remained unchanged throughout a long history and had only become decadent as a result of European contact. These experts saw their mission to be the preservation of a pure ancient Maori culture. So well did these orthodox views take hold that it is only now that both the Maori and European public are emerging from their sway.³⁰⁷

Hamilton had considerable influence on the development and production of Maori art in a variety of ways other than from his position as Museum Director. He was influenced by some of the activities of the museums in the United States of America. It could be argued that the activities of museums portray the underlying cultural concerns of the people.

The development of the great industrial exhibitions of the nineteenth century was a feature of life in America resulting from the need to display the achievements of industrialisation. The emphasis on material achievement was a response to the sense of dislocation prevailing in American culture. Chaos was a major social and intellectual concern of Victorian Americans - both the personal and social chaos caused by mass immigration, disorderly urban growth and class antagonism.

The celebration of civilised power that characterised American public

³⁰⁷ *ibid*, p.255.

expositions and museums between 1876 and 1917 could not completely hide a sense of loss and fear: loss of innocence and natural vigour, and fear that civilised man was also losing control over the products of his own genius.³⁰⁸

The museum as an institution embodies order. Between the American Civil War and World War 1, American museum anthropology served anthropologists and the public as a bastion of certainties, as an important defence against racing change, social toil and a world of more human variety than was previously imagined or desired. Museums along with public schools began to assume the moral and political functions of educating and socialising the public. At the same time the focus of museums shifted from the natural wonders of God to the artificial inventions of man, particularly the material achievements of the Anglo-Saxons. While industrial museums and expositions displayed the superiority of Western civilisation anthropological museums made the same point by exhibiting the inferiority of other peoples.³⁰⁹ Many of the issues the people of the United States were dealing with were applicable to the New Zealand situation.

George Brown Goode from the Smithsonian Museum was an apostle of scientific knowledge, a public spirited naturalist and an eloquent spokesman for the museum as a cultural instrument and index of civilisation. His ideal museum would preserve the material foundations of scientific knowledge, encourage research and educate the "popular" mind. A system of public museums and libraries would

³⁰⁸Curtis M Hinsley Jr., *Savages and Scientists: the Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology 1846-1910*. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981, p.83.

³⁰⁹Hinsley, 1981, p.84.



Neke, his wife and friends,
C.1910. Photographer/artist:
unknown. Museum of New
Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa,
Wellington. Neg. No.B 013225

provide adult education, civilise the masses and assure America's front rank among the enlightened nations of the world.³¹⁰

Another important contributor to the popularisation of museums and innovative display techniques was William Henry Holmes (1846-1933), the Director of the National Gallery of Art. He recognised the desirable effects of drama, plot, action and emotional involvement in the lifegroup approach to popular museum anthropological displays. Perhaps reflecting the growing influence of photography in anthropological fieldwork at the time, his displays were intended as snapshots of primitive life long vanished.³¹¹

Under Holmes' direction the Smithsonian's exhibits at the Chicago World Fair displayed an impressive number of life-size realistic groups of North American aborigines working in pristine pre-Columbian surroundings. The concept changed displays from pieces of sculpture to pictures from life. In a professionally important departure the ethnologists, Frank Cushing, James Mooney and Walter Hoffman along with Holmes, personally supervised the construction of the exhibits contributing their invaluable field experience. After the Chicago World Fair nearly every government anthropological exhibit featured primitive peoples in appropriately naturalistic environments. In the St Louis Exposition of 1904, W. J. McGee surpassed them all by importing half a dozen groups of live "savages" from all over the world to set up "housekeeping" on fair grounds in the

³¹⁰ Hinsley, 1981, p.83.

³¹¹ Hinsley, 1981, p.92.

middle of America.³¹²

The St Louis Exposition influenced the design of the New Zealand Exhibition held in Christchurch in the summer of 1906-7. The prime credit for the inception of the Exhibition was Richard John Seddon, the great patriot and nation builder, who said an Exhibition was:

... requisite if full justice is to be done to the settlement and development of the colony, its resources, and manufactures, its commerce, its grand, unique and beautiful scenery, and its arts and products.³¹³

The New Zealand Exhibition enabled New Zealanders to assess their achievements for as James Cowan declared:

The Exhibition was a wonderful record of progress for a land that only three generations ago lay in the hands of the cannibal savage. ...it showed how a new wild country was made fit for civilised man: it epitomised the story of our nationhood.³¹⁴

There was the singularly picturesque Native section, where Maoris and South-Sea-Islanders lived side-by-side in a palisaded village, all of the olden times; danced their ancient festive and war dances and sang their old, old songs - a display that was equally the delight of the ethnologist and of the folklorist and of the ordinary pleasurer.³¹⁵

³¹²Hinsley, 1981, pp.108-9

³¹³James Cowan, 1910, p.22.

³¹⁴ *ibid*, p.2.

³¹⁵ *ibid*, p.5.

New Zealand had sent some exhibits and a Commissioner, T.E. Donne, to the World's Fair in St Louis. Donne was requested by the Government to visit other centres in the United States as well as Britain and Europe so that he could interest manufacturers and others in New Zealand's proposed Exhibition.³¹⁶

Donne was the Vice-president and Executive Commissioner of the International Exhibition when it was held in Christchurch.³¹⁷ There was a number of committees organising the various sections. The Maori Committee was composed of T. Maude, G. McGregor (Superintendent), W. Uru, Dr P. Buck (Te Rangihiroa), E.J. Righton (Secretary of Exhibition), A.H. Turnbull, H.W. Bishop, S.M.(Chairman of Committee), A. Hamilton, Professor Macmillan Brown and J.F. Wachsmann.³¹⁸

Hamilton was in charge of the erection of a complete model Maori village. He employed Neke Kapua [one of C.E. Nelson's carvers] and his sons to produce the necessary carvings and to produce copies of museum specimens and he closely supervised and directed the work.

As Cowan says:

While primarily illustrating the material progress of New Zealand since it was first redeemed from barbarism by the white man, the

³¹⁶ *ibid*, p.23.

³¹⁷ *ibid*, p.45.

³¹⁸ *ibid*, p.68.

Exhibition scheme also made provision for a section without which no exposition of human endeavour, arts, and education is complete - the ethnological side. An attempt was made to do what America did so well at the St Louis Exposition in 1904, to organise a gathering of aboriginal peoples living in the country and those having racial affinities with them and who live under the same flag; to show them moreover, in surroundings approximating to their olden conditions of life, and to revive something of their ancient social customs, their handicrafts and their amusements. It was recognised that not only would this from a mere business point of view prove a desirable adjunct to the Exhibition and provide a source of novel entertainment to visitors, but it would also have its scientific aspect, and its value for those whose interest lies in the observation and recording of linguistics, primitive customs and folklore. It was a seasonable reminder that "the proper study of mankind is man."³¹⁹

In Rotorua between 1904 and 1910 the Government Tourist Department, under the guidance of Hamilton, employed several carvers to erect a model village for tourists. The aim was to get selected "natives" to live in the village and carry on the traditional activities for the benefit of the tourists and in the hope that the survival of the old skills might be encouraged.³²⁰ Hamilton has been credited with the development of pseudo-traditional carving. He directed carvers to work

³¹⁹ *ibid*, p.308.

³²⁰ Neich, in Mead & Kernot, 1983, p.259.

from “authentic ancient Maori” sources such as early carvings held in museums, photographs taken in the early colonial period or images from his book. But the copies were not faithful facsimiles because he was motivated by an improving spirit. One particular carving by Tene Neke and Neke Kapua was described by Hamilton as:

I know of none more perfect or beautiful and truly representative work of Maori Art. It is not merely a facsimile, as it is larger than the original, but it reproduces the technique and design with spirit.³²¹

In 1909 Hamilton commissioned Anaha Te Rahui [another of C.E. Nelson’s carvers] to carve a display series of the main Arawa carving patterns. Anaha could not accept the European imposition of one pattern standing alone for one concept and Hamilton’s impatience with Anaha meant that the interpretation of these representative design samples became confused.³²² Hamilton took photographs of these carvings before he put them up in the Museum.³²³ But he was not pleased with them saying:

I wrote ... to say I was not at all pleased with the carvings and did not know exactly what I had to pay for them. I expect the old wretch will want 10/- a piece for them. I do not know what to do at any rate with five of them.³²⁴

³²¹ Ben Dibley, “Telling Times: Narrating Nation at the New Zealand International Exhibition 1906-7” in *Sites* No.34 (Autumn 1997) p.11.

³²² Neich, in Mead & Kernot, 1983, p.259.

³²³ Hamilton Diary 1909, p.18.

³²⁴ Hamilton Diary 1909, 1/11/09.

Hamilton and Nelson used museum collections of earlier carvings as models for copying and to set the standard for judgement of the new work, and emphasised formal qualities at the expense of meaning. There was no understanding of the way art form changes through time in response to the changing artistic problems presented to the artist. These Europeans did not appear to understand that they too were active agents in subtly changing the artistic problems.³²⁵

Ben Dibley says:

Hamilton's ...conception of a pseudo-traditional style of carving, as exemplary of what Maori Art should be, came to supply a standard by which to judge such carving activities and the cultural objects generated - a criterion based on the notion of an authentic Maoridom of the past....[this] construction is... explicable as a complex colonial product generated in the interaction between Maori and settlers...[and] was available for, and put to, particular government purposes at events such as the 1906-7 Exhibition, supplying an otherness against which a national social cohesion was manufactured, and a ruling on contemporary Maori activities.³²⁶

Hamilton's Diary for 1909/10 indicates the enormous amount of work he undertook both as Museum Director and adviser to the government on a variety of heritage and cultural matters.

³²⁵ Neich, in Mead & Kernot, 1983, p.260.

³²⁶ Dibley, 1997, p.12.

David Colquhoun, with some qualifications, credits Hamilton with being the first National Archivist, because for a very short time he was recognised by the Government as having authority to establish a separate repository for Government archives and he had the support of the Department to draw up regulations.³²⁷

From 1906 Hamilton promoted the idea of a public record office to look after the Government's archives. In 1909 the Department of Internal Affairs decided to use the Victoria Barracks to store their increasing number of records.³²⁸ Eighteen rooms of the Mt. Cook Barracks were approved as a store place for the archives.³²⁹ Hamilton used this opportunity to press for a record office and as to establish his claim to the barracks which he was interested in as a new home for the museum.³³⁰ In June he wrote to his Minister saying that "as the museum is now to be at the Victoria barracks" then the archives "would be best administered by the Director of the Museum."³³¹

The museum was allocated the north end of the upper floor of the barracks which Hamilton thought "rather awkward" as he had intended to have reserved the whole of the upper floor for government archives, and wanted to put the Public Works archives on the bottom floor, but since that was not available he would have to put the Public Works archives on the upper floor as well.³³²

³²⁷ David Colquhoun, *The State, Archives Keeping and History Making in New Zealand 1840-1930* a research essay presented as part of Diploma of Museum Studies, Massey University, 1996, pp.25-6.

³²⁸ *ibid.*, p.24.

³²⁹ Hamilton Diary, 1909/10, p.3.

³³⁰ Colquhoun, p.24.

³³¹ *ibid.*

³³² Hamilton Diary 1909/10, p.6.

He was personally involved in all the details of collecting the archives together. One morning he was going to Parliament buildings so he took with him some boxes of the New Zealand Co.'s papers which had just arrived from Britain, intending to take them to the barracks in the afternoon.³³³ Then he mentions that the Minister had forwarded instructions for certain work to be done on the N.Z. Co.'s records:

But do not see how I can do it, at any rate at present unless I get some further assistance. Somehow I do not think what he recommends is exactly what he desires.³³⁴

Hamilton discussed with Pollen the drafting of a circular to be sent around to the Under Secretaries and Heads of Departments in the matter of the storage of archives and mentions that it is a difficult matter to say what shall be excluded. A few days later he says that he had sent the keys and the file relating to the archives to Pollen and received a memo from him stating that the Minister proposed taking no further steps in the matter of the archives at present.³³⁵ This was because the officers of the Department of Public Works refused to allow Hamilton to have the keys to the rooms their records were in and Hamilton's superiors realised that this intransigence would "render the supervision of Mr. Hamilton rather a matter of form" thus they abandoned the proposal for the storage of archives at the barracks for the time being.³³⁶

³³³ *ibid*, p.21.

³³⁴ *ibid*, p.24.

³³⁵ *ibid* p.31.

³³⁶ Colquhoun, p.25.

In October 1909 Hamilton recorded that he has forwarded the amended regulations of the Maori Antiquities Act to the Minister.³³⁷ Mr Buddo, M.H.R. (Kaiapoi) and Mr Carroll, Native Minister, asked him to make some alterations to the Dominion Coat of Arms before it was brought up in the house and finally adopted.³³⁸

Hamilton was an extremely dedicated worker and did the work of both the Director and of a museum assistant. He did not employ an assistant because he did not consider it “desirable that an assistant should be appointed as no lasting or new work could be undertaken until the new museum was built.”³³⁹ He was involved in every aspect of the Museum: acquisition, display, accessioning, conservation, cleaning, education, research, publication, administration, staff management, and public relations.

Hamilton was constantly worried about the damage being done to the carvings by the borer insects which riddled the old wooden Museum building. “Yesterday the Minister came in with Mr Buxton and I showed them where the carvings are being destroyed by the borer.”³⁴⁰ In his search for methods to destroy all insects he went over to:

³³⁷ Hamilton Diary, 1909, 1/10/09.

³³⁸ Hamilton Diary, 1909/10, 13/6/10.

³³⁹ R.K. Dell, *The First Hundred Years of the Dominion Museum*, unpublished typescript, MS-Papers 5156, MONZTPT. p.112.

³⁴⁰ Hamilton Diary, 1909/10, p.37.

Mr Collie's furniture warehouse at Newtown where he has a fuming room in which he fumes all his timber with ammonia. He considers that it destroys all insects. I am anxious to find if the fumes of ammonia will affect the colour of the carvings that have been painted with kokowai or white. He very kindly offered to test this for me if I send over a specimen. I propose to do so shortly.³⁴¹

Later he says:

In the afternoon I took several photographs of the Maori carvings which turned out successful. The wind had gone down and it was a muggy afternoon with a good light. Re-arranged the cases containing the canoe sterns, canoe appliances and swept out the borer. Also put permanent labels on some of my canoe sterns that only had written labels before. There are two more canoe sterns in the case. One of the canoes wants repairing. The carver has not been in lately and I do not know exactly what he is doing.³⁴²

A carver came into the museum to repair the carvings when it was necessary.

This assumption of having the ability to "repair" something to its original state is another form of appropriation.

The museum had no heating apart from in the offices which meant Hamilton had difficulty controlling the temperature and humidity with disastrous consequences for some of the collection.

³⁴¹ Hamilton Diary, 1909/1, p.1.

³⁴² *ibid*, 1/11/09.

Found this morning that a good number of the large *Porina ensyii* were smothered with mould, apparently owing to the excessive moist weather we have had which promotes the growth of mildew. Tried to remedy it by emersing[sic] one male and two females in methylated spirits. This seemed to take out a good deal of the colour so we contented ourselves with brushing them over with a brush dipped in a solution of Carbolic acid. Also got some calcium chloride from Dr Maclaurin to put into the drawers. A good many of the specimens were spoilt and will probably be subject in future to mould. Also found that a drawer of *Hepialus* which had been out to dry had been forgotten and the mice had got in and spoilt about ten specimens.³⁴³

Hamilton arranged all the displays:

I had a man in from Clarks to cut off the end of the tree trunk in the yard on which I propose to place the small Pataka that was at the Exhibition. I have had a small kerb fixed to the floor of the Museum just behind the model of the Maori Pa in which to place the trunk, which will be supported by rods or chains from four pillars. What delays me now is the question of getting some totara bark for the roof. I do not exactly know where to get it. It is difficult to get it here.³⁴⁴

³⁴³ ibid, 28/2/1910.

³⁴⁴ Hamilton Diary, 1909/10, 4/1/1910.

A Mr Berti of the Albion Hotel presented an albatross to the Museum. Hamilton considered it to be a "fairly good one" and decided "to hang it over the Maori Pa."³⁴⁵

He continued to develop his network of connections with international museums and people. In August 1909 he met Professor Dixon the Professor of Anthropology at Harvard University. He mentioned that he:

Had a long talk with him about Anthropological matters in America generally and gained much information from him as to the work that has been done and the conditions under which the work is to be carried on. It appears that he has a student who is working up a thesis on the relation of Maori ornamentation to other ornamentation of the Pacific. The Professor is therefore very much interested in what we can show him. ... I spoke to him strongly on the question of obtaining casts of the various objects from Museums and suggested that it would be a suitable subject for discussion at the next Museums Association meeting in America as to the practicability of establishing a kind of central depot or bureau ... Museums in want of them could ... purchase them when required.³⁴⁶

If Hamilton wanted information or aid of any kind he did not hesitate to seek it from whomever or wherever he thought the best. People and institutions he wrote

³⁴⁵Hamilton Diary, 1909/10, 24/2/1910.

³⁴⁶Hamilton Diary, 1909/10, 2/8/1909.

to included Fagan of the British Museum; Madam Giglioli in Florence, asking for the first offer of the late Professor's Maori and Polynesian collection; and the Smithsonian Institute for the design of cases; and Dr Tempest Anderson, sending particulars of some of the museums in New Zealand. He developed an efficient network of correspondents which kept him up to date with the activities of the international museums.

He was a very successful museum director building up a valuable Maori ethnological collection for the people of New Zealand and his period in office had a considerable impact on the Dominion Museum. Hamilton's ethnological acquisitions continued until his death. As Skinner says in his Obituary of Hamilton:

The confidence he inspired in other collectors and ethnologists is shown by the splendid gifts to the Museum of the Buller collection, the Turnbull collection, the objects brought to England by Captain Cook and presented by Lord St Oswald, and by many other gifts.³⁴⁷

During Hamilton's years at the Dominion Museum he did not restrict his attention to the collection of ethnological material. The natural history collections were expanded and in some cases completely reorganised. He established the following objectives for the museum:

³⁴⁷ Skinner in TPNZI Vol. XLVI 1914, p.vi.

- (1) A collection illustrating all the branches of Maori ethnology, including the inhabitants of the groups included in the Dominion by specimens, models, pictures, photographs, casts etc.,
- (2) A collection illustrating the Ethnology of the Pacific, more especially the Polynesian race and for comparison with Maori customs, arts and manufactures,
- (3) New Zealand Natural History - Zoology and Botany,
- (4) Art Collection - Pictures, Statuary, Prints, China, Glass, Antiques etc.,
- (5) Special collections of a limited size in General Ethnology, General Numismatics,
- (6) Specimens illustrating the History of the Dominion.

The Dominion Museum does not propose to collect large stuffed mammals of all countries - Birds in general - Reptiles - but only sufficient for educational purposes. Nor does it include General or New Zealand Geology, Palaeontology or Mineralogy.³⁴⁸

This Dominion Museum Annual Report reveals the appalling state of the Museum by 1913. Augustus Hamilton provides a straightforward description:

The whole of the Museum building is infested with the boring beetle and although repairs have from time to time been done leaks are the result of every heavy storm. The boring beetle is also liable to damage

³⁴⁸ Dell. p.115.

specimens. It is difficult under the present conditions to do anything that will check these unsatisfactory circumstances.³⁴⁹

Hamilton then discussed the poor conditions in which the newly acquired, and very valuable, ethnological specimens were kept:

Until recently half of the old brick built power house in Sydney St. has been used by the Museum for storing a large number of curios, including the Buller and other collections, the other half being used for Government kinematograph works by Mr McDonald. Recently however the work at Parliament House necessitated the pulling down of the part used for the storage of the curios and a large iron shed has been built at the corner of Sydney and old Museum Streets in which they are now stored together with the collections which have recently been received.³⁵⁰

On every score Hamilton's plans for improved accommodation for the Museum were thwarted by the Government. This was done by the simple procedure of giving no decision on the offer of alternative sites or allowing negotiations to move beyond the planning stage. A more frustrating situation can hardly be imagined for a conscientious director with valuable and inflammable collections in his care and only a dilapidated wooden building in which to store them.³⁵¹

³⁴⁹ *ibid.*

³⁵⁰ *ibid.*

³⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 122.

Although Augustus Hamilton did not succeed in persuading the Government to build a National Maori Museum he did succeed in laying the foundation for a significant national collection of taonga Maori. He had the vision and determination, the network and the government resources necessary to acquire these private collections. His romantic evolutionary biologist's ethnology created a version of Maori art and culture which accorded with the late nineteenth century European compilations of Maori traditional history and culture. Hamilton was very influential during the ten years he was Director of the Dominion Museum: he was the official authority on the material culture of the Maori and his interpretation and construction of Maori art had a profound impact on Pakeha beliefs and perceptions of it which still persist as part of New Zealand's mythicised national identity.

The years in Wellington as the Director of the Dominion Museum were years of achievement tempered by utter frustration for Augustus Hamilton. He managed to make a remarkable collection of Maori ethnological material for New Zealand. However the commitment of the Government was only superficial. There was a total lack of understanding of the need for adequate facilities for the ethnological material which had been collected. The Government and its bureaucrats seemed to be oblivious to the importance of caring for the objects in order to preserve them for as long as possible. The objects were acquired as icons of the new Dominion. It appears the neglect is symptomatic of the underlying attitude towards the Maori culture and people. They were "savages" and it was anticipated that they would die out. But the Pakeha settlers had a need for a past and a need for a sense of

continuity which the original inhabitants were able to supply. Ironically the Pakeha appropriated the Maori culture so as to establish themselves on the new land. They forged their unique identity separate from the motherland by using the culture of the repressed indigenous people who were expected to become extinct or at least be assimilated into a dominant European culture.

Hamilton died on 12 October 1913 at Russell in the Bay of Islands when he was on a trip to collect old church records relating to well-known early New Zealand families.

Conclusion

This study has documented four aspects of Augustus Hamilton's career: his collecting and museological activities in Hawke's Bay; his contribution to the development and passing of the Antiquities Act 1901; his advocacy for the development of a national Maori museum; and his contribution to the development of the Maori collections at the Dominion Museum. It has been demonstrated how Hamilton's skills and aspirations in relation to Maori material culture evolved from being primarily those of a provincial scientist to those of a skilled museologist who understood the need for a national preservation strategy for the traditional material heritage of the Maori.

It is the first study attempting to establish a developmental sequence throughout the whole of Augustus Hamilton's career. Previously Neich³⁵² and Bell³⁵³ focused on his influence on the ethnology and practice of Maori art. Wilson concentrated on the period when Hamilton was at Otago and *Maori Art* was written.³⁵⁴ This study documents his career, his networking with scientists, ethnologists and collectors, his museum management, the frustrations he endured in the pursuit of his vision and his influence on Maori art. Hamilton was a man of substantial accomplishment. Had he lived beyond 1913 he would almost certainly have gained a wider and more enduring reputation. Today in the absence of a major published biography, he is a shadowy figure known primarily

³⁵² Neich, 1994.

³⁵³ Bell, 1992.

³⁵⁴ Wilson, n.d.

for *Maori Art*. Hamilton's career unfolded over thirty-five years during a significant period in the development of New Zealand as a nation. An underlying theme throughout the thesis is an exploration of the appropriation of cultural property in the colonial context. Hamilton's own development from a "rapacious hunter" to a considered advocate for the preservation of taonga Maori within New Zealand may be seen to document progressive change in the mode of appropriation as well as the objectives of appropriation. Just as Hamilton's focus moved from that of a regional scientist to a national policy advocate so the recently settled European population shifted their focus from the exploration and documentation of a new environment to the challenge of creating a nation state.

Chapter One examines the major ideas and developments of the nineteenth century. Social Darwinism combined Darwin's theory of evolution, the Victorian belief in progress and the ancient idea of *scala naturae* into a philosophy which could be used to justify the extinction of the indigenous people in the new colonies. Ethnology developed from the classification and comparative methods of the biological sciences and was institutionalised in the natural history museums of the nineteenth century. The development of anthropology was concerned with the origins of mankind and the diversity of humanity so apparent to the imperial Europeans.

Chapter Two outlines the development of Hamilton's career as a scientist, collector and museum curator from his arrival in Hawke's Bay in 1878 until his departure to Dunedin in 1890 and briefly discusses his philosophy and attitudes

towards the Maori, their history and their material culture. It examines his role in the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute as the curator of the society's museum; his methods of collecting; the intellectual influences on him as a provincial scientist; and the establishment of the extensive network of professional contacts. The key themes are Hamilton's recognition of the need to preserve Maori art for future generations, the appropriation of Maori cultural property, his systematic collecting, his interest in the technology of manufacture, typology and art but not in the provenance and history of the taonga. His methods and philosophy reflected the prevailing attitudes and activities of the nineteenth century and reveal the strange distance within the anthropology of the nineteenth century: the distance between the anthropologists themselves and the "other," the people they were examining, observing and classifying in their quest to understand the origins of mankind. The people themselves were of less importance in this very material, imperialistic world than their artefacts and goods which were of interest and significance because they had scientific, educational and economic values in Europe.

Chapter Three examines Augustus Hamilton's part in the passing of the Antiquities Act 1901 and in promoting the idea of a national Maori museum. This provides further insight into the appropriation of Maori cultural property for the cause of developing the new nation state which runs parallel with the policy of assimilation. "Assimilation" had been achieved by the simple procedure of disinheritting the indigenous people from their land and taking over their material culture and traditional stories in order to create a romantic myth of peaceful co-

existence. Thus European New Zealanders could both justify their presence in the land and express their emergent national identity. The passing of the Antiquities Act in 1901 demonstrates the colonists' need to control the indigenous people (symbolised by their material culture) and to assert their separate identity from Britain. The reluctance to erect a suitable building reinforces the premise that the appropriation of the material culture of the Maori was for the purpose of icons to demonstrate the success of the nineteenth century assimilationist policy of the government. In reality the taonga were appropriated and then neglected.

Chapter Four documents the problems faced by Hamilton when he became the Director of the Colonial Museum in 1903 and his influence on the perception of Maori culture. Evidence is provided to show that although he faced bureaucratic, logistical and funding problems particularly after Seddon's death in 1906, he had the energy and vision to advocate for a new museum and to begin building a significant national collection of taonga Maori. It was fortunate that at a time when a number of major private collectors were ready to sell or gift their collections Hamilton was actively acquiring for the national collection. Hamilton spent his term as Director of the Colonial Museum urging the Government to build a national Maori museum in which to house the valuable and irreplaceable collection he had formed on the Government's instructions. He constantly lamented that the collection was threatened by fire, decay, theft and general neglect. The chapter reveals his influence on the material culture of the Maori people at the time and notes the impact this has had on New Zealanders' perception of Maori culture until the present time. There can be no doubt of the

need for the publication of a major biographical study of Hamilton to establish his position in the history of cultural heritage management in New Zealand.

This study enhances our understanding of the use of Maori culture and Maori cultural property in particular to support the development of the new nation state. By assimilating Maori into the mainstream European society the Government could avoid the need to reach a political accommodation with the Maori people. By appropriating Maori material culture European New Zealanders assumed an “ownership” of their nation’s history. It has been established that cultural appropriation is a political issue.

The collection of taonga Maori during the nineteenth century, exemplified by Augustus Hamilton’s activities, was an important strand in the development of New Zealand’s national heritage. He believed that it was essential to make a collection of taonga Maori for New Zealand for scientific and educational reasons. Museums were research institutions, repositories for scientific specimens, art and cultural material and educational centres. Hamilton thought the establishment of a national Maori museum would be “a real live Memorial illustrating the Past History of the Maori people”³⁵⁵ and it would enable visitors and others to discover what New Zealand and the Maori were like before the Europeans arrived. He perceived the collection of Maori taonga to be a “scientific” activity.

³⁵⁵ Augustus Hamilton, Circular, n.d. p.1.

As Nicholas Thomas explains, objects take on their own meanings and the tangibility of the object itself is extended to the social facts that the object stands for. It is possible to “scientifically” collect the things which embody the customs and social differences of various kinds. This array can then be used for political purposes.³⁵⁶ By the beginning of the twentieth century Hamilton’s “scientific” collecting was taking on a political purpose and he too was expressing the opinion that the creation of a national collection of Maori taonga would encourage the two cultures to live in peace and harmony.

Hamilton was able to use the period of “colonial nationalism” to press for and build a national collection of taonga Maori. But when the great patriot Seddon died in 1906 the impetus behind the new nationalism went with him. Nevertheless Hamilton continued to make the collection. The creation of the collection itself symbolised the success of assimilation and the peace and harmony existing between the two races. The Government’s appropriation of taonga Maori may also be seen as a symbol of the European dominance in the new culture.

Nineteenth century natural history museums were institutions which preserved and ordered the natural world. They were an integral part of the colonisation of both place and indigenous people.

Appropriation enables institutionalisation and subsequently professionalisation of the control of the collections with the result that the professionals gain the authority to interpret and authenticate the artefacts they “own.” Augustus

³⁵⁶ Thomas, 1991, p.170.

Hamilton's career follows this pattern. He appropriated the material culture of the Maori initially for private, scientific and aesthetic reasons. Later as his career took on a public and national focus he fostered the development of a professionally staffed museum with the facilities to care for and interpret a national collection of taonga Maori. His professional expertise and position enabled him to influence and dominate the interpretation and production of Maori material culture for many years.

This study argues that the making of the Maori collection for New Zealand was a powerful and very visible political act. The government and people of New Zealand have used aspects of Maori culture and artefacts in particular as symbols of the uniqueness of New Zealand and to proclaim their independent national identity. But significantly once the Government had appropriated the material culture of the Maori people it then neglected to provide suitable premises for the objects. It would appear that the treatment of the Maori ethnological material is symbolic of the political climate and reflects the treatment of the Maori people by the European colonists. The Europeans came to establish themselves in a new land, speaking benignly of "assimilation" and opportunity while generally preferring the disappearance of the original inhabitants except for the tangible remains of their culture: the stories and art which the Europeans appropriated as icons of their new national identity. These remains, representing a primitive stone-age culture, would in themselves explain the demise of Maori culture in the face of European civilisation. The effect of representing Maori culture as a dead

culture in the museum context was to reinforce the notion that the government did not need to treat the living Maori population as people with ownership rights.

The value of this research rests not only in the elucidation of Hamilton's career but also in an increased understanding of the appropriation of Maori material culture by European colonists for private and public purposes during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. A knowledge of this history is important in understanding contemporary issues relating to the ownership, management and interpretation of Maori cultural property. In particular the review of the Antiquities Act 1975, the Taonga Maori Protection Bill and the Department of Conservation's review of the management of Historic resources signal a period of significant change is upon us. The rights and responsibilities of Maori in relation to taonga tuku iho are being effectively advocated by tangata whenua throughout the country. There is strong advocacy for separating the management of Maori heritage so that it can be controlled by Maori. Maori assertion of indigenous and Treaty rights is paralleled by similar movements in North America and Australia, (for example), where indigenous land rights and rights to manage cultural heritage are being vigorously claimed. In the United States of America the passing of the NAGPRA legislation, requiring the repatriation of human remains and other cultural property wrongfully removed from the traditional owners, anticipates the sort of legislation and constitutional change that is beginning to happen in New Zealand with the promotion of the Taonga Maori Protection Bill and the return of the Mataatua Whare from Otago Museum to Ngati Awa.

This work has only examined the activities of one collector of taonga Maori during the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century and it has not explored the Maori attitudes to the collecting of their taonga by Europeans. However this case study of Augustus Hamilton, the most influential colonial New Zealand collector of the period, does illuminate some of the patterns and reasons for collecting the material culture of other peoples.

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