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**The Acquisition of the  
Partington Collection by  
Whanganui Regional  
Museum:  
Valuing relationships in museum  
policy & practice**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of requirements for the  
degree of Master of Arts in Museum Studies at  
Massey University, Palmerston North, Aotearoa**

**Rowan Amber Carroll**

**2008**

For my beautiful daughter b

## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to underline the importance of developing useful and mutually beneficial relationships between local iwi and museums, and to consider the subsequent implications for museum practice.

The thesis assembles a variety of contemporary sources in order to document and construct a chronological narrative of events: minutes and communications; interviews with staff and key participants in the process of acquiring the Partington Collection by the Whanganui Regional Museum; media reports; and a survey of recent literature.

The Partington Collection of Whanganui Māori photographs is integral to this examination because of its importance to both Whanganui iwi and the Whanganui Regional Museum. The situation of colonial photography in museums has changed over the century from being viewed as a factual reflection of the cultural imperatives of indigenous peoples, to being viewed as a colonial construct consigning indigenous peoples to their past. Because this Collection is the most comprehensive photographic documentary of Whanganui Māori from the turn of last century it adds immense value to the Museum's existing collections. However to Whanganui iwi the photographs of their ancestors are taonga tuku iho: far more than just photographic images they are demonstrably and undeniably imbued with the mana of their tūpuna.

The public auction in 2001 of the Partington Collection created a catalyst for action and an opportunity for Whanganui iwi and the Museum to work together to ensure the return of the photographs to Whanganui, an outcome that was finally achieved in 2002.

The thesis concludes that the successful return of the Partington Collection to Whanganui could not have been possible without the long term evolving relationship between iwi and the Museum and in particular the more recent emergence of a bi-cameral governance structure.

Furthermore the maintenance of relationships and communication is crucial to the evolution of museum practice. This would suggest a reversal of the traditional perspective that museum practice and procedure is pre-eminent. Instead, this case study demonstrates that relationships are at the heart of museum practice.

## Acknowledgements

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I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to Edith Bell who lost her husband John unexpectedly on 12 April 2008.

Permission to include the images was approved by the Whanganui Regional Museum's Tikanga Māori House and Joint Council<sup>1</sup> and it is with the greatest respect that I include them. The people in these images belong to the whānau, hapū and iwi of the Whanganui region.

My supervisors David Butts and Susan Abasa, at Museum Studies Massey University and Grant Huwyler (Ngāti Apa) of the Whanganui Regional Museum's Joint Council provided wisdom, guidance, constructive criticism, perseverance and encouragement for which I am truly grateful.

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes , Joint Council, Whanganui Regional Museum 17 September 2004.

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**Abbreviations**

CH	Civic House
GWP	Governance Working Party
JC	Joint Council
TMH	Tikanga Māori House
UCOL	Universal College of Learning
WCF	Whanganui Community Foundation
WDC	Wanganui District Council
W. H. T.	William Henry Thomas (Partington)
WRM	Whanganui Regional Museum
WRMTB	Whanganui River Māori Trust Board



## Introduction

Museums were originally tools of colonisation, responsible in part for stripping the chattels of cultural identity from their owners (Clifford 1997: 101, Fredriekse in McClintock 1995: 1). Once removed from their people these taonga were housed in mausoleums with labels that described them in terms of academic anthropological authority (Te Awekotuku 1996). Indigenous people were not encouraged to visit, unless it was to add to the display (Poignant 2004: 1-2). This thesis is concerned with one Museum: the Whanganui<sup>1</sup> Regional Museum, and the relationship it has developed with Whanganui iwi<sup>2</sup>. The acquisition of the Partington Collection case study exemplifies the development of that relationship and the ways Māori have stepped inside the Museum, influencing all aspects of the Museum's programme, policy and practice.

There has been a continuous tradition of indigenous resistance to the practices of colonial institutions. Repatriation of cultural property has become crucial to the process of decolonisation, reaffirming the right to connect with ancestors and the ways of the past. Photographic images are a very tangible way of connecting with the past. For Māori the photograph of an ancestor carries the mauri, wairua and mana of that person (Mair interview 14 December 2005).

Relationships between indigenous peoples and the museums which recognise the legitimacy of these claims are developing. Significant changes in institutional governance structures, policy and practices are taking place as a result. Consequently indigenous peoples are participating more in the

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<sup>1</sup> The spelling of Whanganui is dialectic, the *wh* has a very soft sound as in *whistle*. Over the last 150 years the name has been recorded by Pākehā with and without the *h* because of the confusion over other dialects that make a hard *f* sound.

The Māori meaning is *the long wait* as described by Hau, the person responsible for naming all the rivers between Taranaki and Whanga-nui-a-Tara (Wellington). The tide was in when he came to cross the River and it was too rough, so he had to sit and wait until it was safe. Today the region and the River are acknowledged as having the *wh*, while the town doesn't. There is no Māori word *wanga*.

<sup>2</sup> Whanganui Iwi, for the purposes of this thesis and because Partington photographed iwi members from throughout the region, refers to Ngā Rauru, Mokai Patea (Ngāti Whitikaupeka & Ngāti Tamakopiri), Ngāti Hauiti, Ngāti Apa, Te Āti Haunui ā Pāpārangī, Ngāti Tamahaki and Ngāti Rangi.

developing relationships between museums and indigenous societies to further their sovereignty over their cultural property.

Article two of the Treaty of Waitangi affirms that the relationship between Māori and Pākehā is based on sovereignty over land and other treasures, including taonga. Recent research documents the pattern of changing relationships between Māori and museums at the regional and metropolitan levels (Mead 1986, Te Awekotuku 1991, Murphy 1999, Soutar & Spedding 2000, Butts 2003, McCarthy 2004). Since the 1980s there have been major changes in Māori participation in museum governance and museum practice (Clarke 1998, Bishop 1998, Butts 2003). Change has not been uniform throughout New Zealand museums but there is evidence that many museums with professional staff have made some effort to engage constructively with tāngata whenua. Museums are exploring ways to advance relationships, and museum practices, by becoming more responsive to Māori expectations.<sup>3</sup>

Such changes, while not uniform, support the recognition by museums of tino rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga that are the foundations of whānau, hapū and iwi rights in relation to taonga tuku iho<sup>4</sup>. However, it must be acknowledged that issues relating to cultural property should be seen in the wider context of Māori self-determination and the Treaty of Waitangi. While priority may be given to issues of economic and social development (Jahnke and Taiapa 2003: 39), the significance of tangible and intangible cultural heritage has been widely recognised (Young 1998: 11, Tapsell 2000, Kerekere 2001). Several iwi have developed proposals for the establishment of their own cultural centres and this

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<sup>3</sup> Gerard O'Regan's report (1997) was based on interviews with Māori staff working in museums portrayed the situation very differently. His report demonstrated that Māori regarded museums as predominantly Pākehā institutions with little understanding of Māori culture. Few Māori staff were employed in museums and there was evidence of institutional racism. No subsequent report has been commissioned to track changes and trends.

<sup>4</sup> The nature of taonga tuku iho includes more than the tangible. It includes also the wairua or life force of the taonga. Taonga can be representative of tūpuna, and as such may be the receptacle for that person's mana. The creator or tohunga will have bestowed upon the taonga the ihi, wehi and wana through their craftsmanship and the cumulative knowledge of their ancestors. It includes the kōrerō that tells the story of the taonga. It includes the hau felt for the taonga and its place within ritual and ceremony (Tapsell 1997:326-331).

Taonga tuku iho encompasses ancestral land, land-based cultural heritage, mātautanga Māori, contemporary practices and the objects or structures of cultural expression. Taonga tuku iho (highly esteemed treasures passed on) covers cultural properties such as language, social and environmental properties. Taonga are bequeathed through whakapapa, a conceptual basis that makes sense of the Māori experience of the world (Smith in Strelein and Muir 2000: 279).

may lead to further changes in the location and control of significant aspects of hapū and iwi taonga tuku iho (Durie, M 1998a, National Services 2001: 1).

The Partington Collection acquisition did not occur in a vacuum. Many strong relationships had formed between Whanganui iwi, hapū, whānau and individuals, and the Museum over several generations. It is within this dynamic context of evolving relationships that this thesis seeks to explore the circumstances that led to the acquisition of the Partington Collection by the Whanganui Regional Museum. The acquisition was in partnership with the iwi of the Whanganui region and with the support of other agencies within the wider Whanganui community.

This thesis also explores the management of the Collection following its acquisition. Central to this study is an investigation of the nature of the Partington Collection and the Collection's significance to iwi and the Museum. The Whanganui Regional Museum's long term collection management strategy acknowledges that tāngata whenua have important interests in the Museum, including: as owners of taonga held in the Museum, as kaitiaki of tikanga Māori and mātauranga Māori, and as partners in the Treaty of Waitangi (Whanganui Regional Museum 1998: 5). Reflecting the purpose of this strategic plan has meant professional practice by staff has changed over time from being entirely dominated by museum procedures to being informed and responsive to Whanganui iwi.

The Museum adopted a bi-cameral bi-cultural governance structure in 2001. The changes in staff practice and the governance structure provided a platform for the successful acquisition of the Partington Collection of Whanganui Māori photographs in 2001 - 2002. The governance relationship and the development of the Museum's evolving practice will be elaborated on in chapter two.

The Partington Collection of photographs is integral to this examination because of its importance to both Whanganui iwi and the Whanganui Regional Museum. The situation of colonial photography in museums has changed over the century from being viewed as a factual reflection of the traditional lives of

indigenous peoples, to being viewed as a colonial construct consigning indigenous peoples to their past.

## **Colonialism in Museum Practice**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century museums were making the transition from cabinets of curiosity to providing more systematic interpretations of the natural and cultural worlds, “Despite the fact that the Victorian period was dominated by industrial and scientific progress, it was also an age dominated by a fascination with the past” (Walsh 1992: 11). In addition to the general interest in newly ‘discovered’ cultures many scholars felt there was a need to salvage evidence of these cultures before they disappeared in the face of colonial settlement (Clifford 1997: 109, Butts 2003: 12).

Scholars and collectors took a systematic approach to the collection of taonga for their study. This resulted in a clash of world views and cultural understanding. Māori believe taonga *tuku iho* have their own life-force. Kaitiaki are vested with the care of taonga during their life time, but a taonga may pass through many hands during its lifespan and no one individual, or institution, can claim absolute ownership<sup>5</sup>. Generally in museums, staff and trustees believed that once an artefact was gifted to, or bought by the museum it became the museum’s property and the museum had unconditional rights over that artefact regardless of its origin. In dramatic contrast current collection management practice allows for the Māori notion of *kaitiakitanga* and spiritual ownership to be exercised and access for descendants has increased as a result.

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<sup>5</sup> “Only the most valued taonga, ancestrally connected to particular lands and carrying the mana of the collective tribe, are ever considered worthy to be released to another kin group. The more valuable the taonga given, the greater the prestige bestowed upon the receiver and upon the occasion, and thus the recipient becomes obligated under the lore of *utu* (reciprocity of indebtedness). When such taonga were presented to other tribes, these taonga were literally launched on an unknown orbit beyond the horizon of home consciousness, sometimes for many generations” (Tapsell 1997, 323-374).



With the intention of asserting rangatiratanga over their cultural property, Māori have moved gradually<sup>6</sup> inside museums. At first, this occurred indirectly, by loaning or gifting taonga into collections and acting as advisors to museum staff. Today in many New Zealand museums Māori contribute to governance, work as professional staff, and are kaitiaki for their taonga (Butts 2003: 111-113). Over the last century the Whanganui Regional Museum and local iwi have developed a way of working together.

The purchase of the Partington Collection provides a case study which explores the evolving relationship between the Whanganui Regional Museum and local iwi. This exploration describes the way these relationships operated at the governance, management and staff levels as all parties worked together to achieve a common goal. However, there have also been instances of miscommunication and misunderstanding. Issues to emerge from this case study have general application to museum practice: the ethics of selling taonga Māori at public auction, ownership of taonga, kaitiakitanga, and the physical and intellectual access to collections, including interpretation. An issue specific to photographic images concerns ownership: under New Zealand copyright law ownership resides with the creator of the image, even if the sitter paid for the photographs. Some Māori consider that the person in the photograph has ownership rights<sup>7</sup>.

From a Māori point of view the direct link between identified individuals in the images and their living descendants is deemed to confer some intellectual ownership over the photographs (Graham-Stewart and Gow 2006).

## **Research Objectives**

This thesis questions the established notion that museum policy and practice is driven by the authority of the museum sector. It seeks to demonstrate that

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<sup>6</sup> Durie 2003 "That is reflected in a changing jurisprudence the incorporation of customary law into statutes, a duty to consult, and a recognition, no matter how muffled, of a Māori way of doing things" (p. 113). See also Durie 1994a

<sup>7</sup> Mair interview (14 December 2005).

museum practice is forged effectively by relationships between a museum and its community. When museum practice engages with community effectively that practice evolves in constructive ways.

The thesis has three research objectives:

1. To establish a chronological narrative that documents the acquisition of the Partington Collection, from the viewpoint of the Whanganui Regional Museum, and considers the relationships that evolved throughout the process
2. To consider the impact of those relationships on the Museum's policy and practice.
3. To investigate the nature of the Partington Collection of Whanganui images and the photographer himself.

## **Research Design**

The thesis has two distinct parts: the first researches a contemporary issue; the acquisition and management of the Partington Collection. The second deals with the history of colonial photography particularly that of W. H. T. Partington and positions it in the Whanganui context.

### Part One: Contemporary Museum Practice

The main purpose of the research was to create a chronological narrative as a means to understand the sequence of actions and reactions of several key participants during the acquisition of the Partington Collection.

I was given access to the project archives, comprising the newspaper clippings books, communications files including all related letters, faxes and emails inward and outward, meeting minutes of the Joint Council and Tikanga Māori House and the biographical research file on W. H. T. Partington. This archive material provided a record of events. These archives were sorted into chronological order and placed into a framework that sequenced the actions taken and the outcomes of those actions. In this way the events formed a story that could be clearly understood and interpreted.

Interviews with key participants were also undertaken. Representatives from each of the major contributor groups were approached but not all were able to take part. Sharon Dell Whanganui Regional Museum's director spoke for the Museum, John and Edith Bell spoke as relatives of W. H. T. Partington, Anne and Peter Webb provided a written response for Webb's Fine Art Gallery (Webb's) and Te Kenihi (Ken) Mair, Rhipeti Ngāpera Karena, and Ngahina Gardiner spoke on behalf of the auction protestors. A week prior to the interview, the interviewees were provided with a list of topics to be covered, in order to prepare them. Semi-structured interviews were conducted averaging ninety minutes.

During the course of the research Museum staff and others, who were part of the acquisition process discussed their involvement and volunteered their comments for inclusion in the thesis.

The chronological events of the acquisition were put into a table using all of the Museum's communication documents as the primary information source. This table was important in establishing the interview topics, enabling the interviewer to explore responses and define people's perceptions, opinions and feelings about the acquisition events. This analysis allowed some understanding of the actions and motivations of the people who were involved in the acquisition process, and also those that were not able to be interviewed. Analysis of media reports and current literature on the topic provided an external view of events.

## Part Two: Historical Foundations

In order to investigate the nature of the Partington Collection and the Collection's significance to iwi and the Museum I familiarised myself with the Whanganui Regional Museum's Partington Collection, read diaries and notebooks of photographers of the day, accessed Partington family archives at the Auckland War Memorial Museum and Auckland City Libraries and reviewed the literature on the subject of colonial photography. The interview with Partington's great granddaughter Edith Bell provided a little information about the man himself.

Because Partington left no personal papers I analysed the writings of Benoni White, a photographer who travelled the Whanganui River at the same time as Partington, taking photographs of the landscape. Josiah Martin, Partington's business partner in Auckland wrote articles for the The New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal and Sharland's New Zealand Photographer about his professional experiences and his dealings with Māori. I reviewed the literature on colonial photography focussing on the anthropological use of the medium and the perspective of the descendants' writings.

I analysed the data by sorting the photographic Collection into categories: commissions, solicited work for commercial gain and field documentary. In an attempt to better appreciate the perspective of the photographer and sitter I looked at the photographs, with an imagined viewpoint, from behind, and from in front of the lens. This was done to try to achieve some empathy with both parties in order to overcome the common interpretation of a photograph as a true reflection of a moment in time. I asked the questions - who, what, why, and how. One photograph in particular captured a figure moving just beyond the shot and it made me think in depth about what the situation could have been in the studio space. Were there family members there looking after the children in the scene, or were they friends of Partington's just passing time? This reflection added another nuance to the scenario and brought it to life.

The nature of photographs as taonga tuku iho is a concept discussed by authorities (Mead 1985 and 1986, Te Awakotuku 1996, Tapsell 1997 and 2000, Simpson 2003 and Mair 2005). This issue is not discussed here because of the parameters set by Tikanga Māori House that this thesis will not research the belief systems of Whanganuitanga.

### **The Researcher as Museum Practitioner**

I was given the role of co-manager of the Partington Project with the Museum's Archivist. My duties encompassed fund-raising for the exhibition and liaison with the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board to employ an iwi research and liaison officer. The role of the Iwi Liaison Officer was to visit and talk with the

Whanganui iwi communities to gather kōrero about tūpuna in the photographs. My role was to supervise the Iwi Liaison Officer and the compilation of all identification research.

Another key responsibility was to initiate the Memorandum of Understanding and Heads of Agreement between the Whanganui Regional Museum and the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board to guide the future relationship with iwi and the management of the Partington Collection.

Undertaking these responsibilities allowed an insider's view of the role of staff and trustees during the acquisition of the Collection and beyond, and the politics and relationships that were, and are, in play throughout the project's beginning and middle stages. I also had uninhibited access to the documentation of the acquisition, including personal correspondence, and to the Partington Collection itself.

Because of my close involvement with the process I aimed to create some distance by using a reporter's stance in order to prevent professional and personal judgements adversely affecting my understanding of events.

## **Research Ethics**

The primary principle of ethical research is to protect participants. This principal is based on the premise of informed consent of participants and honesty, transparency and accountability in research methods. All research participants were asked to sign informed consent forms (appendix I) consistent with Massey University Human Ethics Committee requirements. A schedule of interview topics was given to the interviewees two weeks before the interviews (appendix II). Each interview was recorded using an ipod and transcribed by the researcher. Drafts of chapters were sent to the participants for review and all gave consent for the content that appears in this thesis.

Because this thesis proposal involved a collection of taonga Māori it was considered appropriate to have a supervisor with expertise in tikanga Māori,

particular to the iwi of the Whanganui region. Grant Huwyler (Ngāti Apa representative on the Museum's Joint Council) agreed to take on the role of co-supervisor for the thesis and to liaise with the Māori community on my behalf.

Access to the Museum's correspondence concerning the Partington Collection, and the Collection itself was fundamental to the research. To seek approval for access an introductory letter and the ethics application to Massey University<sup>8</sup> were sent to members of the Museum's Tikanga Māori House and Joint Council prior to the Tikanga Māori House meeting<sup>9</sup>.

I was aware that Pākehā who research Māori topics or include Māori participants in their research are often culturally ill-equipped. Māori communities and individuals often express an understandable resistance to Pākehā undertaking certain types of research (Tuhawai Smith 1999: 173-174, Jahnke and Taiapa 2003).

At a presentation I gave to the Tikanga Māori House questions were asked by the members about the breadth of the research. I gave assurance that the scope of the thesis did not include intellectual property or Māoritanga unique to Whanganui iwi. Unanimous support was given for the research to be undertaken and access to the Collection and correspondence was approved. The Tikanga Māori House instructed that the thesis should not include mātauranga Māori particular to Whanganui. When developing the research proposal I took particular care to make it clear that the research would not enter culturally sensitive areas such as whānau, hapū and iwi whakapapa and knowledge (in this case Whanganuitanga). I have been careful to identify the scope of this study within the field of museology.

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<sup>8</sup> This application was supported with a letter from the Whanganui Regional Museum's director that included the Joint Council motion to approve the research. The application was approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. PN Application 04/71.

<sup>9</sup> Tikanga Māori House and Joint Council September 2004 meetings.

## **Insider / Outsider**

There are issues of insider/outsider dynamics in this research. As a Pākehā I am an outsider to the Māori community and recognise that this places limitations on the research. Limitations can manifest in various ways:

- Māori participants may have been constrained by the fact the interviewer was Pākehā.
- Pākehā researchers who work in Māori communities often capture a limited view or interpret results incorrectly, often with negative consequences to the Māori community.
- The research does not capture some key Māori perspectives. In a letter<sup>10</sup> explaining the reasons for withdrawing from the research one interviewee stated that they preferred the thesis be undertaken by a Māori researcher. It is acknowledged that Whanganuitanga is always kept within iwi.

In addition there are limitations due to my own professional background. I was an employee of the Whanganui Regional Museum and closely involved with the Partington Collection and community liaison with Whanganui iwi following its arrival at the Museum. Biases may have arisen due to those professional associations and interests. I tried to correct these biases by gathering as much information from other sources as possible and employing a critically analytical stance in reviewing all research data.

As a museum insider I was especially conscious of the need to provide a balanced account of the actions of the Museum Director and staff. However, my position also provided particular insights.

## **Limitations of the Sources**

Wide ranging sources of information were used to provide differing perspectives and to make the research more rigorous. The combination of museum records, interviews and newspaper reports have strengthened the research, however,

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<sup>10</sup> Letter from Taiaroa to Carroll 12 August 2005.

each source has weaknesses. Limitations connected with interview participants include variable memory of events and what was said on particular occasions. Research participants may also have their own agenda in agreeing to participate. Perspectives on the same event are possibly different depending on cultural background and stance. Multiplicities of voices have been included in the narrative to try and achieve balance and to allow the reader to glimpse the differing perspectives.

That a major participant in the acquisition process declined to be interviewed was a disappointment, resulting in one part of this research (Chapter three) inevitably focusing on the experiences of Museum staff and the auction activists.

Using archival material as a primary source of information has limitations. Museum records and telephone conversations may only reveal one view. Archiving of emails is not always done with the same consciousness as regular correspondence and this may create gaps.

Newspaper reports are often slanted to suit the political bias of the newspaper and small bites of information are given more emphasis than the original context intended. The need to sell newspapers often means sensationalisation of circumstances.

The research was carried out by a Pākehā female living in the 21st century in a country that has been grappling with the impact of colonisation on tāngata whenua for the last 200 years. While every effort has been made to establish balanced view points, the writer is influenced by her background, education and work experience.

The contemporary nature of the research subject provides immediacy, but its interpretation lacks the benefit of distance and time. It is important to be sensitive with the information people have shared, not least because some of them continue in mutually co-operative professional relationships.



“This whole incident is not a happy one to remember for us and feelings ran quite high here at Webb’s after the events on the night of the auction” (Webb to Carroll 15 August 2005).

## **Preview of Chapters and Key Arguments**

Following this introduction, chapter two offers an overview of Māori participation in the Whanganui Regional Museum as contributors to the taonga Māori collection, consultants to the staff and Board, as members of the Museum’s governance and as professional staff. This provides a basis for describing the Museum’s past, current and evolving relationships and the resulting practices of the staff.

An outline of the Museum’s governance structure is presented and the major question of the thesis is introduced: is the structure robust and successful in providing flexibility to respond to a situation such as the purchase and management of the Partington Collection?

A case study from 1990 concerning taonga Māori is reported, and a recent case study of the re-housing of the Whanganui Regional Museum’s Māori Cloak Collection is detailed so that changes in museum practice can be compared.

Chapter three is a narrative that documents the sequence of events that led to the acquisition of the Partington Collection. It is a story of high drama, difficulties and intrigue, characterised by the formation of complex alliances and collusion to manipulate events. Most importantly it is about people working together to achieve a common goal. Relationships are discussed and the resulting influence on the Museum’s policy and practice are summarised.

Chapter four is in two parts. The first provides an historic context focusing on the politics and practice of photographing colonised peoples in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I look to the world view using historic and contemporary writings before enlarging the New Zealand picture. The discussion selectively examines the motives of ethnographers and photographers in photographing indigenous peoples. This context intersects

with museum practice and contributes to understanding change in that practice. Today colonial photographs are interpreted less as true representations of time and place and more as a colonial tool, often consigning indigenous peoples to their pre-European past.

The second part of chapter four concentrates on Partington's Whanganui Māori Collection. To do this the images were sorted into categories to gain a perspective of the motivations of Partington and his sitters.

The value of the Collection is weighed, as a reflection of a moment in time, and as an influence on museum practice. The life of the Partington Collection begins with the photographer and the sitter, setting the trajectory for the many phases of the Collection's life and influence.

The conclusion consolidates the argument of the thesis which has emerged from the narrative: that the Museum's bi-cultural governance structure provided a platform that was robust, yet flexible enough to respond to a situation as complex as the purchase of the Partington Collection. Relationships that had been in place prior to the acquisition and those that emerged throughout the process were critical in influencing the outcome. It further argues that the Whanganui Regional Museum's purpose and capacity has been enlarged by this acquisition.

The relationships that formed throughout the process and the outcomes of those relationships in terms of their influence on the Museum's practice are discussed. By establishing a firm relationship that truly respects two peoples' development, given the range of priorities held by the two parties, and a commitment to contribute equitably to shared goals, the ongoing life of the Partington Collection will be assured, either remaining in the care of the Whanganui Regional Museum or in the future, in the care of Whanganui iwi.

The appendices include research on the life and photographic practice of W. H. T. Partington (appendix IV). It examines the influences of his family and environment, and the pervading colonial culture of photographic practice. Partington's work is considered alongside the work of other photographers of

the era and is found to have aesthetic merit and technical skill. This research was undertaken early on in the thesis as I considered getting to know the man behind the lens was important. Developing an understanding of his motivations for taking such an extensive collection of Whanganui people was critical to anchor the rest of the study. This appendix contributes to the existing, but scant corpus of knowledge, about W.H. T. Partington.

## 2

### The Museum's Evolving Capacity for Change

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of tāngata whenua participation in the Whanganui Regional Museum (WRM) as contributors to the Collection, as consultants to the staff and Board, as members of the Museum's governance and as members of the Museum's professional staff. This provides a basis for describing the Museum's past, current and evolving relationships with Māori and the influences these relationships have had on collection management practices. The relationship with tāngata whenua today is based on trust, acting in good faith and leadership and is able to withstand the tests of time and changes in key personnel.

Because of its evolving practices and bi-cultural governance structure the Museum was able to actively pursue the purchase of the Partington Collection and provide a professional standard of storage, conservation, documentation and interpretation. An outline of the Museum's governance structure is presented and the major question of the thesis introduced: is the structure robust and successful in providing flexibility to respond to a situation such as the purchase and management of the Partington Collection?

To fully appreciate the significance of the acquisition of the Partington Collection, in terms of relationships with iwi and the evolution of the Museum's policy and practice, it is essential to dig deep into the institutional layers of the Whanganui Regional Museum. The historic background of the taonga Māori collection held by the Museum, issues surrounding that collection's development and the Museum's bi-cameral, bi-cultural governance structure<sup>11</sup> will be discussed. A case study of collection management practice a decade prior to the change in governance in 2001 will be described to determine the

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<sup>11</sup> D. J. Butts (2003) doctoral thesis: *Māori and Museums: The Politics of Indigenous Recognition* is referenced heavily throughout chapter 2 as it includes Whanganui Regional Museum primary archival sources.

changes in both relationships and policy and practice that resulted. In contrast to past practice a more recent case study of the re-housing of the Whanganui Regional Museum's Māori Cloak Collection is reported as an example of engaging tāngata whenua in collection management strategies. The chapter will establish the Whanganui Regional Museum's capacity for positive change in the face of changing relationships and the growing professionalisation of its museum practice.

The focus of this chapter is on evolving practices in the Whanganui Regional Museum. However the experiences described here have wider application to museums in New Zealand and internationally. When museum practice engages with a community, it can evolve in constructive ways.

### **The Development of the Taonga Māori Collection**

The Whanganui Regional Museum began, as did many museums in the nineteenth century, with the passion of one man, in this case the jeweller, collector and taxidermist Samuel Henry Drew (Butts 2002, McKergow 1997, Murchie 1995). By 1892, the year that W. H. T. Partington established his photographic studio in Wanganui, Drew's collection of mainly natural history specimens had outgrown the space above his shop in the town's main street, Victoria Avenue. A public meeting was held to discuss the purchase of his significant collection of natural history specimens and taonga Māori in order to secure it for the people of Wanganui. In 1893 the Wanganui Public Museum Society was incorporated under the Public Libraries Powers Act (1875). At the time the collection was purchased it included 1,438 Māori and foreign ethnological items (Butts 2003: 139)<sup>12</sup>. Samuel Drew was the Museum's honorary curator until his death in 1901. He was proud of his role as keeper of Māori cultural property for future generations and the relationship he had established with the local Māori community:

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<sup>12</sup> Butts 2003: 140-142 draws distinctions between gifts and deposit of taonga Māori and the issues of safe keeping (p. 148). This distinction is important because it highlights the cultural difference between Māori and Pākehā in their understanding of ownership and possession. Samuel Drew also draws this distinction in the quote cited on page 19.

Our store of treasures has been increased by many additions of value and interest, particularly so is this the case with our new specimens of Maori work, some of these valuable acquisitions have been presented by our Maori friends, who have the deepest interest in the welfare of our museum. It is gratifying to all that this is so; that the Maori feel they can safely deposit the few treasures that are still left to them under our charge, or, what is better to us, present them to the institution, with the full belief they will be treasured and taken care of, so that for all time the Maori whenever he visits our buildings will view with pride the clever work of his ancestors and the skill of their handcrafts, when long forgotten<sup>13</sup>. I am sure it will be pleasing to you to know we have gained this confidence with Maori (Wanganui Public Museum 1900: 7).

A purpose-built museum was constructed on the brow of Drews Avenue overlooking the central city. It included a small zoological garden in the surrounding grounds. A number of Tupoho<sup>14</sup> families supported the Museum with gifts and deposits to the collection. In March 1900 the curator noted in his monthly report that a large carving was deposited by Wiki Kemp, a carving was presented by Waata Hipango and two kete were presented by Mrs. Hoani Mete Kingi (Wanganui Public Museum 1900: 9)<sup>15</sup>. The taonga Māori were displayed in the ethnological room alongside indigenous cultural property from other nations. The collection increased markedly with regular field trips, bequests and purchases (Butts 2003: 142) from both Māori and Pākehā. Significant taonga tuku iho continued to be presented to the Museum and in 1924 Ema Hipango deposited the waka taua Te Mata o Hoturoa, a veteran of the Battle of Moutoa. In doing so, among other things, it became a symbol of the goodwill between Tupoho and Wanganui Pākehā. Ema Hipango and her uncle and advisor Hori Pukehika were made life members of the Museum in 1930 (ibid.: 143).

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<sup>13</sup> An example of the salvage paradigm. The idea that indigenous cultures would die out because of colonisation and that museums had a role to preserve indigenous cultural property and information on cultural practice (Clifford 1997: 109).

<sup>14</sup> Lower Whanganui River Iwi.

<sup>15</sup> These families continue their association with the Museum to this day as donors, kaitiaki and contributors to Tikanga Māori House. The Mete Kingi, Takarangi and Hipango families have four generations of representation.

The acceptance by Putiki Maori of the Museum as the appropriate place for the preservation and display of their material culture was an influence in persuading other hapu to lodge their taonga there. Hapu in the Ngati Tupoho section of the River, and the Ngati Ruaka at Ranana, presented many substantial items including carvings from meeting Houses and the waka taua, Te Wehi o te Rangi (Murchie 1995: 33).

The standard of care provided for taonga Māori in this early period was typical for museum practice at the time. As professional museum practice developed, particularly from the 1980s, the standards of care and documentation improved significantly. Since then a number of retrospective projects have done much to remedy past practices.

The Museum's collections had outgrown the Drews Avenue building by 1914 but with the focus on World War I a new building was not completed until 1928. A large bequest by Miss Alexander saw the Museum opened as the Alexander Museum. This building remains the grand face of the Museum that attracts visitors from the main street of the city. It is located in Queens Park, creating a cultural precinct with the Alexander Library, Sarjeant Art Gallery and Wanganui District Library. However, this building was not large enough to house the voracious collecting that had characterised the early years of the Museum. By the 1950s it was clear that an extension was needed, particularly to exhibit and store the taonga Māori collection of fine carvings, including the 22 metre long waka Te Mata O Hoturoa. Education spaces and a theatre were also required and the size of the Museum increased substantially with the opening of the 1968 extension. Included in that structure was a two-storey underground parking building administered by the Wanganui District Council. In May 1986 a delegation of tāngata whenua met with the Museum Trustees to express their concern about the Museum's storage facilities (Butts 2003: 159). It was acknowledged that existing storage and staff offices were insufficient and outdated, and so the car parking space was handed over to modernise the facility in 1993 (ibid.: 161). Refurbishment of the former parking level in 1993 - 1994 made it possible to relocate collection storage under the 1968 extension. Storage space increased from 200 square metres to 2,000 square metres. For

the first time the collections were visible and accessible to staff and others in a way that had not been possible before.

### **Issues Concerning the Taonga Māori Collection**

Māori political, social and cultural self determination initiatives in the 1970s and 80s influenced many aspects of New Zealand's sense of identity and well-being. Perseverance by Māori to have the Treaty of Waitangi acknowledged and respected slowly penetrated the psyche of Pākehā decision makers. In 1985 the Lange Labour Government amended the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 to allow Treaty claims back to 1840. As a consequence many iwi have been able to engage with the Government in a process designed to redress their historical grievances against the Crown (Seuffert 2006: 71-84).

On a local level Whanganui iwi were working to make changes in the way their taonga *tuku iho* were treated in the Museum by both staff and visitors. At a special meeting held on 19 August 1982 between kaumātua and the Museum Board and staff, the Board stated it was aware of its responsibilities to Māori and had always been careful not to do anything to cause offence (Murchie 1995: 27). The meeting had been called following disquiet among Māori over food consumption in the Māori Court Te Ātihaunui ā Pāpārangi. The kaumātua approved a policy proposed by the Trustees that visitors could be welcomed to the Māori Court, but no food or drink was to be consumed there (ibid.: 27). A further instance was the Museum's action to remove human remains from view (ibid.: 28) and by 1988 staff, under the direction of the Whanganui Kaumātua Kaunihera, had documented the koiwi tangata held at the Museum and written policy to cover their security and management (Butts 2003: 160).

While the Museum was moving to accept and integrate cultural differences into working practice there were instances that challenged existing policy and practice. A case concerning photographs was recorded from one Māori perspective in the newspaper Mana Tangata (2001). Ngāti Rangi member Mark Gray from the Kuratahi Marae at the base of Mount Ruapehu, wrote an article about the ten year struggle he and his whānau had with the Museum's



management committee for the return of a series of photographs of his tūpuna, including a number of Partington images.

In the article Gray stated the photographs had been deposited with the Museum on the understanding they would be returned when a more suitable home with the family was secured<sup>16</sup>.

Our photos were of no interest to anyone, they weren't Lindauer's (sic) or Goldie's (sic), but they had a spiritual value to us. More importantly they were the only photos we had of our old people. During negotiations, the museum offered to give us copies of the photos which we could pay for and they would keep the originals. But we said no to that idea. We wanted the originals and nothing less. The museum did not want to let them go without having some commitment from us by wording the actual handing back as a gifting from the museum, as if they belonged to them in the first place (Gray 2001: 20).

Gray found the whole process to be confrontational and unpleasant, describing the Museum's management committee as "difficult and reluctant" (ibid.: 2001: 1). It was not until he was able to get the support of the Kaumātua Kaunihera Whanganui that the Museum paid due attention to his case, but that was not before he threatened court action.

Gray referred to the Museum's governing body's stance as highly patronising, as if they believed that the original creators and owners of cultural property were incapable of looking after it if it were to leave the Museum's professional hands.

"The museum was also concerned about where the photos were to be placed. We told them that they need not worry about it. It was our business not theirs" (ibid.: 2001: 20).

He warned others:

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<sup>16</sup> An example of the Museum used as a safe storage as described by Butts 2003 p. 148.

“The main message I would like to give to people is never give your taonga away to a museum or place like it. I think it is important that Maori people with a bit of initiative be on the committee of management” (Gray 2001: 20).

Gray recommended Māori become proactive in museum governance, perhaps in a bid to prevent others from experiencing the difficulties and bitterness that this encounter created for him and his whānau.

This disagreeable episode happened between 1981 and 1991, a decade prior to the bicameral governance being put in place at the Museum. This was an example of paternalistic museum practice that has tainted contemporary relationships. The alienation of people because of an over-zealous sense of ownership and the ill-feeling that resulted required the Museum to work hard in re-establishing trust. As the Museum approached the turn of the century there was a growing consciousness within the Museum. The need for increased recognition of tāngata whenua in the Museum’s governance and for change in the policies and practices of the Museum was necessary.

### **The Participation of Māori in Governance**

Participation by Māori in the Museum was limited in the early years to gifting and depositing taonga into the collection. The Museum Board recommended ‘a native representative’ be appointed in 1925 to cultivate interest by Māori in the Museum and the preservation of their taonga<sup>17</sup>. From 1938 Māori were appointed as Associate Trustees, but it was not until 1957 that Reverend Kingi Ihaka, from Northland, became the first elected Māori Trustee. His suggestion that the Government be approached to subsidise the Maori Purposes Fund<sup>18</sup> to establish a dedicated Māori exhibition space was a very positive one. Unfortunately the Minister of Māori Affairs did not take up the invitation to visit the Museum until six years later and even then the request for assistance was declined (Murchie 1995: 22). It was acknowledged by the director in 1957 that

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<sup>17</sup> Wanganui Public Museum Annual Meeting Minutes, 20 July 1925. Minute Book 1912-1931.

<sup>18</sup> Government assistance for meeting houses and churches that gave a £ for £ subsidy.

the Museum's reputation was based primarily on the significance of the taonga Māori collection and that the Trustees were responsible for their care<sup>19</sup>.

The Museum's history shows that the care and interpretation of the taonga Māori collection required the knowledge and kaitiakitanga of Whanganui Māori. This had been acknowledged by the Trustees as early as 1925 with relationships being formed, particularly with Tupoho families.

By 1968 there was one elected Māori Board member; H. K. Hipango, and two associate members, H. R. Metekingi and K. Puohotaua. These three men made up a sub-committee to select artefacts for the nearly completed Māori Court. The name Te Ātihaunui ā Pāpārangi was gifted to the new Māori Court by H. K. Hipango at the opening ceremony. The sub-committee's role in preparing the new Māori Court was, up until that time, the most significant contribution to the Museum by Māori (Murchie 1995: 22).

### **The Participation of Māori in Museum Programmes**

Throughout the 1970s and into the early 1980s Whanganui was a scheduled stop for tour buses. Concert parties from Pūtiki and Kaiwhaiki entertained visiting groups providing evening performances at the Museum (Murchie 1995: 23). At that time Museum staff showed scant regard for tikanga Māori, entertaining the tourists with moko mokai and tales of savagery and cannibalism<sup>20</sup>. For most of the Museum's existence it has been largely a Pākehā run institution. The relationship between the Museum and those Māori families with taonga in the collection was managed primarily by the Māori Trustees who facilitated access to the Collection for families and helped to resolve disputes. Māori also contributed in ceremony and entertainment, but that did not mean their participation signified a feeling of high regard or that they visited at other times (ibid.: 24). It has only been since the 1980s that Māori rituals of welcome, cleansing and blessing have become a regular feature of Museum occasions and tikanga has been observed and practised by Museum

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<sup>19</sup> Whanganui Regional Museum Director's Report, February 1957.

<sup>20</sup> Personal communication from Museum Curator Michelle Horwood 18 August 2006.

staff (ibid.: 24). The change in directorship in 1995 has heralded significantly more Māori participation in the Museum. The maintenance of relationships with Māori has become a recognised priority that has established itself in the daily working life of both the Museum's staff and governors.

## **Background to the Adoption of Bi-Cultural Governance**

By the 1990s the Wanganui District Council (WDC) considered the Wanganui Regional Museum Trust Board was not providing suitable employment conditions and protections for staff. The Council was so concerned they set about finding a more robust governance structure. In April 1995 the Council's director of operations wrote a memorandum to the chief executive officer asking for urgent action to be taken to put the Museum's future governance on a sounder footing (Butts 2003: 164). There were three major areas of concern: the staff were working in substandard conditions, the Board had no real sense of direction, and local iwi were voicing their disquiet about museum practice and the storage of taonga:

Iwi were extremely concerned about management of the very considerable items of Maori taonga held in the Museum. The Maori collection is said to be one of the most extensive and comprehensive in New Zealand. This concern is so strong that Maori are considering whether their taonga should be removed from the Museum, and placed in a separate facility managed by them<sup>21</sup>.

In August 1997 the Governance Working Party (GWP) was established to investigate possible models. However, after several meetings of the GWP it was found there were problems with the consultation process from a tāngata whenua viewpoint. The Māori members of the group were participating as individuals and not as mandated iwi representatives. A Māori facilitator was employed to initiate a course of action that enabled tāngata whenua to participate in the governance review. A hui-ā-iwi was organised in March 1998

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<sup>21</sup> Memorandum from R. McGowan, director of operations, Wanganui City Council to Colin Whitlock, CEO, 4 April 1995.

to begin the consultation process with iwi, and at that meeting Professor Whatarangi Winiata (Ngāti Raukawa) and Grant Huwyler (Ngāti Apa) introduced the Mihinare Model, a governance structure that was eventually selected and constituted by the Whanganui Regional Museum Society in 2001 with the election of members of the Whanganui Regional Museum Joint Council (Butts 2003: 167-179).

The Mihinare Governance Model adopted by the Museum is underpinned by the principles of partnership and two peoples' development. The principle of partnership establishes that the parties have equal input and power, while the principle of two peoples' development acknowledges that the two parties come from different cultures and therefore have different processes and procedures in contributing to outcomes. The governing body is the Joint Council, made up of equal numbers from two separate houses: the Civic House, and the Tikanga Māori House whose members represent the 12 iwi of the region.

The Tikanga Māori House meets monthly. Its membership consists of mandated representatives from iwi and hapū including Mokai Pātea (Ngāti Whitikaupeka and Ngāti Tamakopiri), Ngā Rauru, Te Āti Haunui ā Pāpārangi, Ngāti Tamahaki, Ngāti Hauiti, Ngāti Apa and Ngāti Rangi. Any person who is a descendant of these iwi and hapū is welcome to attend the meetings of Tikanga Māori House<sup>22</sup>.

The Civic House also meets monthly. Its membership consists of the six members of Joint Council appointed by the Civic House Electoral College. Civic House Electoral College consists of stakeholder representatives including natural heritage organisations, educational organisations, cultural heritage organisations, the business community, and the territorial local authorities in the Whanganui Region, as well as representatives of the Museum Society and the Queens Park partners (Sarjeant Gallery and Wanganui District Library)<sup>23</sup>.

It is the purpose of each house to bring forward policy proposals or other matters to the Joint Council. All proposals brought forward by either of the

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<sup>22</sup> Whanganui Regional Museum Trust Board Constitution 2000c.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

houses must be consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi and adequate consultation between the partners (houses) must have taken place before the matter is debated in the Joint Council (Whanganui Regional Museum Trust Constitution: September 2000 Section 6.5C). When the Joint Council votes on matters there must be a majority of members from both houses agreeing to a motion before it can be adopted<sup>24</sup>.

The smooth establishment of this bicameral governance structure was hindered by many challenges. It polarised the Wanganui community and a media campaign by long term Museum Society members created stress for the staff, management and existing Board members. Influential factions considered the structure to be racist and undemocratic and managed to sway the WDC into voting against having stakeholder representation in the Civic House, or even the Electoral College that voted on its representation. One councillor described the new governance structure as “shonky” and Cr. Don McGregor reiterated a September 1999 WDC resolution rejecting Tikanga Māori House representation and its voting system<sup>25</sup>. By not passing a motion to action the Museum’s request to nominate two representatives for the Electoral College the WDC had forgone the opportunity for representation within the Museum’s governance structure<sup>26</sup>.

### **Case Study of Contemporary Museum Practice**

Throughout the last century every aspect of museum practice has been examined for its “clarity of focus and function relative to furthering the role of the museum as a cultural and educational institution within the greater fabric of society” (Anderson 2004: 1). This has resulted in the concept of museum reinvention. Museums, once an “ivory tower of exclusivity” have moved “toward the construction of a more socially responsive cultural institution in service to the public” (ibid.).

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<sup>24</sup> ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Laurence 19/12/2000 Wanganui Chronicle.

<sup>26</sup> Laurence 19/12/2000 Wanganui Chronicle.

On the continuum from a traditional museum to Anderson's reinvented museum, the Whanganui Regional Museum has reinvented itself in all areas: governance, institutional priorities, management strategies and communication style. The continuum is limited, in that it does not acknowledge the unique place indigenous peoples hold in museums and the relationships that must be forged with them. To truly reflect the Museum's position an additional category should be included: bi-cultural practice in governance, management and professional practice. Communication with communities and reflecting them within the museum is a core function of the reinvented museum. The Whanganui Regional Museum performs this function very well<sup>27</sup>, demonstrating diverse community viewpoints.

While the governance structure recognises *tāngata whenua* the staffing structure only includes one designated position to be filled by *tāngata whenua*; the *kaiwhakaako* Māori educator. This position is funded externally by the Ministry of Education through a Learning Experiences Outside the Classroom contract, a tri-ennial contestable fund. The Museum employs a further 12 full-time equivalent positions that have no specific Māori requirements. There is no designated position for paid *kaitiaki* Māori, even though the Museum's reputation is largely built on its *taonga* Māori collection. However, professional practice has changed within the last decade to recognise the role of customary *kaitiaki* of the *taonga* in the management of the Museum collection. Liaison with Māori is a routine aspect of the work of all the Museum staff and in particular the director, curator, archivist, collection manager, curatorial assistant, community liaison officer and the education team. It is acknowledged however, that relationships with *iwi* would be strengthened if the staff included an *iwi* member who was locally connected, respected, accepted and with sufficient authority and seniority to sit down and communicate directly with *iwi*<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> *Whanganui Stories* is the strategic platform for all the Museums public programming. It restricts the parameters of collection management and exhibition to the region and includes a requirement to consult with the community and to reflect *Whanganui and our place in the world*. (Whanganui Regional Museum Draft Strategic Plan 1998). E.g. iconic elements of the region such as the Whanganui River are described in the words of Māori kaumatua Niko Tangaroa while the local music scene is described by Whanganui's rock quest winners The Have.

<sup>28</sup> Personal communication Huwyler to Carroll 16 June 2008.

From the Museum's history it emerges that relationships with iwi have relied heavily on relationships with individuals. It is acknowledged that long term relationships with indigenous groups are important: alongside education they are considered to be the centrepiece of the museum model today (Scott & Luby 2007: 265-266). However, museums rarely put in place the structures to support these relationships but rely on individual relationships that are usually project and exhibition based and therefore temporary (ibid.: 267).

The Whanganui Regional Museum is an example of a museum that is using a more robust model to maintain relationships with iwi. The leadership demonstrated at the Museum over the past decade has provided a sound basis for making changes to policy and practice. In establishing regular and direct communication with iwi members the director has created an environment of trust and respect. Her background in caring for and providing access to Māori manuscripts at the Alexander Turnbull Library and her fluency in te reo Māori provided a foundation for her work with Whanganui iwi. The director has guided both the Joint Council and the Museum staff in working towards shared goals using an ethical and transparent decision making process.

The Museum staff are a dedicated group of professionals motivated to advance the Partington project in ways that are consistent with the principles underlying the developing relationships between the Museum and Whanganui iwi. The cataloguing, cleaning and re-housing of the prints and glass plate negatives was fundamental to good collection management practice. This work was labour intensive, methodical and detailed. It required a significant commitment in terms of human and conservation resources. All this needed to be done as part of the strategy for shared care and enriching the Collection data. The Museum's Partington Project Team was committed to making the partnership with iwi work. The focus on the Memorandum of Understanding and the Heads of Agreement with Whanganui iwi to establish a permanent structure for the relationship was considered vital by the team both in terms of the process as well as the outcomes.



The Partington Collection acquisition has been an extraordinary catalyst in moving relationships and museum practice forward. The Whanganui Regional Museum has embraced community input in their collection management projects as the following example from 2003 shows.

### **Māori Cloak Collection: An Example of Current Museum Collection Management**

Within the last twenty years recognised standards of museum practice have been adopted within the sector in New Zealand. Improvements in documentation, storage and care of collections have resulted. Tools such as the VERNON Collection Management System (CMS) have been adopted by many museums and this has resulted in standardised and upgraded data. Collections have more information attached to them than ever before and this provides greater access for staff and the communities they serve. The ability to audit collections and perform inventories is providing registrars and collection managers with significantly more options for informed decision making within the parameters of collection management policy.

In the last fifteen years Whanganui Regional Museum has achieved better care, maintenance, and documentation of its collections by upgrading its storage facilities and adopting VERNON CMS. Greater access to the collections by staff and the community has resulted. For example it is now possible for education staff to search the collections directly in response to a request from a teacher for a specific education programme.

The Museum's relationship with Whanganui iwi has developed to include kaitiaki in taonga Māori collection management practice. The Māori Cloak Project is one of many projects at the Museum influenced by the establishment of the Mihinare governance structure. This project is one more initiative in an on-going major strategy which the Museum is following. Such strategies are recognised internationally as essential to building and maintaining relationships between museums and indigenous peoples:

The profound impact that incorporating indigenous people into museum staff has had in the area of museum collections care and exhibit development should serve as a powerful reminder of the importance of the Native voices in all levels of the museum (Scott and Luby 2007: 282).

In 2003 planning began for a project to re-house the Māori cloak collection of 103 cloaks. This collection was selected due to its cultural, spiritual and ethnological significance and because it was then stored inadequately.

After extensive research to identify possible storage solutions a suitable cloak storage unit was sourced from Click Systems (NZ). Fundraising for the cloak storage units took two years. The size and national significance of this collection attracted a New Zealand Lottery Grants Board grant<sup>29</sup> that was supplemented with funding from Wanganui's Powerco Trust. The applications described the collection's significance and current storage issues:

The Museum has a significant collection of Maori cloaks. They are made of organic materials that are so fragile that handling is a major risk to their survival. They are best stored flat. The majority of this collection (75%) is currently housed in a series of homemade wooden ply drawer-units and the rest of them are folded into boxes. The drawers are over stocked with several cloaks stacked one on top of each other. This means there is not enough room to provide the kind of support and padding for each cloak that ensures that its shaping is maintained. Some of the deep-feathered cloaks are especially squashed. Those in boxes are folded and creased and this increases the risk that fibres will break along the folds<sup>30</sup>.

Significantly such vital collection management is not provided for in the Museum's operational budget. This core museum function is funded entirely through external project support. In this particular case funding was sourced from the New Zealand Lotteries Grants Board and the local Powerco Trust suggesting wide community support for such projects.

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<sup>29</sup> Information on the Māori Cloak project comes from observations and participation in the project and from the WRM Accountability Report to the NZLGB in April 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Horwood, M. (2004) Māori Cloak Collection Powerco Trust application.

A table (Fig 2:1, page 32) was created to show the funders the importance of the cloak collection when compared to the cloak collections of other museums and the research and access museums make available.

The cloak documentation and re-housing project was undertaken by a team comprising Museum staff, weavers from the Whanganui community, tāngata e tiaki (Whanganui kaitiaki), descendants of donors of the cloaks and a UCOL fashion design tutor. Once the new storage units were installed the cloak project was undertaken over a week from 20 to 24 February 2006. Between twelve and eighteen participants plus staff worked on the project on any one day.

Over that intensive five day period the cloaks were taken from the ply wood drawer cabinets they had been crowded into and were condition reported with reference to the documentation that existed. Little was known about the majority of cloaks and the knowledge of the kaitiaki and local weavers was critical in interpreting the weaving and gathering rich data about them. The kaitiaki agreed to allow discussion in the workroom to be recorded while cloaks were being examined and documented to ensure a full record of their discussion was made. Where required, preventative conservation was carried out before the cloaks were re-housed in the new purpose built cloak drawers. Each individual cloak is now placed on an inert fabric, suspended on a powder-coated metal frame that slides easily out of the cabinet and is able to be carried safely (see Fig 2:8 page 35).

One of the outcomes of this project was that the desire of the participants to work on other Māori textile collections was acknowledged. Their intention is to increase the knowledge of Museum staff concerning traditional textiles, as well as learning the correct care and handling of taonga. This will have a flow on effect into houses and marae, securing the taonga in the community.

As a result of the cloak project the Museum obtained considerable further information about cloak types, uses, construction methods and decorative patterns that greatly enhance the use of the collection as a research tool.

Additionally the Whanganui names for some of the cloaks, which differ from those used elsewhere in Aotearoa, were identified. The resulting documentation for each cloak includes a photograph and a detailed and knowledgable description, including a researcher's note (an example is provided in Appendix III).

**Table Cloak Collection Comparison** Fig 2:1

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Number of cloaks</b>	<b>Storage method</b>	<b>Access</b>
Auckland Institute & Museum	c. 300	Drawers and rolls	Full supervised access (research, whānau) frequent, some difficult to access due to storage method
Te Papa	c. 300	Click Systems drawers	Full supervised access (research, whānau), frequent
Canterbury Museum	160	Click Systems drawers	
Otago Museum	c. 120	?	Full supervised access (research, whānau)
Whanganui Regional Museum	103	Drawers, boxes	Full supervised access (research, whānau)
Rotorua Museum	38	?	Access with cloak trustees permission only
Puke Ariki	67	Click Systems drawers	
Te Manawa	23	Drawers	Full supervised access (research, whānau), few requests
Waikato Museum	16	?	Supervised access
Southland Museum	14	Rolls	Full supervised access (whānau, research), loans require 6 months notice and approval iwi liaison committee
Te Awamutu Museum	12	Rolls	Full supervised access (research, whānau) is dependant upon space available to lay cloaks out



Fig 2:2 Cloak Project Team: Museum staff, Whanganui weavers, tāngata e tiaki for cloaks and descendants of original donors. L to R: back row - Carla Purdue, Michelle Horwood, Lorraine Tapa, Heather McGaskill, Lisa Mareikura, Raukura Waitai, Junette Ward, Sharon Ranginui, Anne Handley, Mere Keating, front row – Carol Tyson, Bronwyn Poulson, Huia Kirk, and Kahurangi McGaskill. Absent – Piki and George Waretini, Julie Ranginui, Dale Edwards, Shona Johnston, Koria Davidson, Lee Williams, Niggie Horne, Shane Baron, Marie Leef, Veronica Baker. (reproduced with permission Whanganui Regional Museum)



Fig 2:3 Before

(reproduced with permission Whanganui Regional Museum)



Fig 2:4 Documented



Fig 2:5 Photographed



Fig 2:6 Condition reported



Fig 2:7 Vacuum cleaned





Fig 2:8 Re-housed  
(all reproduced with permission  
Whanganui Regional Museum)

The project improved the Museum's relationship with the community and the confidence of that community in the Museum's ability to care for significant taonga. The collection management outcomes were: improved care of the cloaks; improved knowledge about the cloaks; and improved access to the cloaks. The outcomes for iwi were: working in partnership with Museum staff and gathering their knowledge; a forum for the cloaks to be discussed so that knowledge was disseminated and shared; confidence that the Museum and its staff are dedicated to the care, protection and access of taonga tuku iho.

## Summary

For the first 100 years the Whanganui Regional Museum staff and trustees worked with a number of traditional assumptions, common within the museum sector. Firstly that it was the Museum's role to salvage the cultural property<sup>31</sup> of Whanganui Māori and with that, as the keepers of taonga tuku iho, be the authority on the care of cultural property. Relationships with tāngata whenua were often patronising and there were instances of institutional racism. The Museum followed the recognised path of the traditional museum, as described by Anderson (2004), by pursuing practices that were elitist, paternalistic and created a perception that the Museum was the sole keeper of knowledge.

The Whanganui Regional Museum's policy and practice, and community relationships have changed over the last two decades. They now reflect the reinvented museum (ibid.) a state underpinned by a willingness to engage on an equal footing with tāngata whenua. This Museum acknowledges that Māori are the kaitiaki of their cultural property and often times the physical caretakers also. The Whanganui Regional Museum has established a shared responsibility in the continued management of cultural property. Establishing and nurturing relationships with Māori is an essential component of curatorial work, while the dedication of whānau, hapū and iwi kaitiaki to secure the physical and cultural well-being of taonga tuku iho within museums requires commitment and conciliation.

The outcomes of this change in collection management practice include: improved care of collections, improved access by whānau to taonga<sup>32</sup>, an exchange of knowledge by both the museum and the kaitiaki and a flow on into the community of that knowledge. This in turn increases the Museum's ability to

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<sup>31</sup> Cultural property salvage does not include the tikanga and kōrero belonging to the taonga, as the lack of provenance attached to most taonga in museum collections demonstrates (Personal Communication Huwyler 16 June 2008).

<sup>32</sup> Taonga are made available to researchers and for exhibition in other institutions with the blessing of kaitiaki. Taonga significant to family members are released for important ceremonies. In the time I worked at the Whanganui Regional Museum I witnessed numerous such transactions including Lindauer portraits going to tangihanga, cloaks and taiaha attending graduation ceremonies.



present rich interpretation in its public programmes and provides robust information for researchers.

When you walk beneath the pare, over the mat that reads *Haere Mai* and through the glass doors of the Whanganui Regional Museum you often have to manoeuvre through a slalom-course of gumboots, shoes, jandals and school shoes. The custom of removing your shoes to connect with Papa-tūā-nuku is adhered to here. Rising above the marae ātea are the fine carvings of the wharetūpuna Waiherehere from Koriniti on the Whanganui River. The massive waka Te Mata O Hōturoa is imposing, surrounded by the exceptional taonga *tuku iho* of the people of the Whanganui region. On any given day you will also be surrounded by the people of the Whanganui region; whānau bringing their tamariki to hear the stories of their tūpuna, children from the kura kaupapa Māori taking part in education programmes taught in te reo Māori. This Museum is no longer a Pākehā storage house, an elitist institution that caters for the white academic class; but a vibrant whare taonga embraced and used by a wide cross section of the community. What strikes you most when you enter this museum is the tāngata whenua keeping their taonga warm and the mana of their ancestors cherished.

The regular use of the institution by iwi members signifies a community that is engaged with the Museum, not just visiting when an exhibition, programme or project is targeted at them:

The best way for community-directed museums to serve their audience is to develop close working partnerships with Native communities by formalising their relationships with them and move beyond a project-by-project approach towards a mutually agreed long-term vision (Scott and Luby 2007: 282).

The following chapter is a narrative that documents the sequence of events that led to the acquisition of the Partington Collection. It is about people working together to achieve a common goal. The chapter describes the relationships that are formed to ensure the Collection is returned to Whanganui; and an

analysis is made on the influence those relationships have had on policy and practice at the Whanganui Regional Museum.

# 3

## The Right Thing to Do

### Introduction

“It is a different perspective of the world for some, but for us there is no doubt in our mind that these people are from the River and connected to us, our tūpuna. You just knew it.

They reflect thousands of people who live today.

It is very hard to make people who only have one motivation – money – to understand such a concept. They have no spiritual context to fall back on, they just exist for now, they must be very lonely, and I feel sorry for them really.” (Ken Mair interview: 14 December 2005)

This chapter tells the story of people working together in co-operation and good faith to bring the Partington Collection of Whanganui Māori photographs home to Whanganui. It is a complex and emotional story with many contributors whose relationships were constantly tested. Communication between the participants was pivotal and problem solving ongoing, in a bid to overcome the numerous barriers that were raised against the Collection’s successful return. This is a chronological narrative documenting the sequence of events about people working together to achieve a common goal.

The Partington Collection of Whanganui Māori Photographs is unique<sup>33</sup>. It is valued differently by Māori, by the Whanganui Regional Museum, and by the art market. Its intrinsic value to Whanganui Māori is immeasurable. Photographs of ancestors are valued as taonga tuku iho: they are imbued with the mana of their tūpuna (Huwyler interview 2005a).

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<sup>33</sup> The Alexander Turnbull Auckland Star Collection includes a number of Whanganui Māori photographs but not on the scale that Whanganui Regional Museum’s Collection holds. Auckland City Library holds one studio album of Partington’s Whanganui Māori photographs. Te Papa holds four photographs attributed to W. H. T. Partington.

To the Whanganui Regional Museum the Collection provides the largest documentary collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century local Māori and kainga of the Whanganui River. Its historical, social and regional significance is consistent with the aims of the Museum's acquisition policy (Acquisition Governance Policy 2008: 2).

The Director said that purchasing the entire Partington collection will have benefits as the Museum could then boast to have an authoritative collection for reference purposes (Tikanga Māori House Minutes 27 September 01).

To the art market the Collection is a valuable commodity particularly as highly collectible photographs with historic and aesthetic significance. The availability of these vintage photographs on the open market was in itself a rare event. The opportunity to acquire an extensive collection with impeccable provenance was rarer still. Webb's<sup>34</sup> were attempting to develop a market in vintage documentary photographs for which there had been little precedent<sup>35</sup>.

The Collection was broken into 290 lots for the sale, indicating perhaps, that the auctioneer and vendor had no intention of trying to keep the Collection together. They were positioning the Collection to achieve the maximum return.

There was a lot to be gained or lost for all the players in this intricate game, but for dramatically different reasons. On one side the art market sought financial gain, while on the other side the families and community sought security of the Collection and its return home.

The intention of this chapter is to allow participants' voices to be heard discussing events and commenting on their own motivations and the perceived motivations of others. Differing perspectives concerning museum/tāngata whenua relationships, museum processes, the ownership, protection and

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<sup>34</sup> Webb's Specialist Auctioneers of the Fine and Decorative Arts, Auckland.

<sup>35</sup> Personal Communication Sharon Dell 29 May 2008.

authority Māori feel towards taonga tuku iho and dealing in the New Zealand art market are considered.

## **Relationships**

As outlined in the previous chapter, the Museum's relationship with iwi has developed over the last 120 years; from Māori acting as donors and advisors, to the establishment of the new bi-cameral governance structure that was adopted in February 2001. This significant transition was put in place just as the Partington Collection was offered for sale. The desire of the Museum and the Whanganui Māori community to bring the Partington Collection home was the first opportunity to demonstrate publicly what could be achieved under the new structure and the effectiveness of the new governance arrangements.

## **Auction Notification**

News that an auction of William Henry Thomas Partington's photographs<sup>36</sup> of Whanganui Māori was to be held at Webb's Specialist Auctioneers of the Fine and Decorative Arts (Webb's) in Auckland reached the Whanganui Regional Museum's Director, Sharon Dell, via an email from Sarjeant Gallery staff<sup>37</sup>. The auction was to be held in less than a month on 21 September 2001. Sarjeant Gallery staff stated they were not in a position to purchase the Collection, even though they had a number of Partington photographs. There would be no bidding conflict if the Museum wanted to purchase the Collection.

Working from the auction catalogue the Museum's Director and Archivist compared the images with prints in the existing Museum collection. They made lists of names and places mentioned in the catalogue to include in the letters requesting financial support<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> 560 photographs and 240 glass plate negatives (Purdy 2 September 2001).

<sup>37</sup> Internal email Sarjeant collection manager to Whanganui Regional Museum Director, 11.57 am, 20 August 2001, WRM Partington Purchase file.

<sup>38</sup> Personal Communication Sharon Dell 29 May 2008.

The Director had spoken informally with John Perry, former Director of the Rotorua Art Gallery and Museum, a noted kiwiana collector and writer of the Foreword of Webb's Partington Collection Catalogue. He thought the entire Collection could be purchased at auction for about \$10,000 (Dell interview: 22 March 2006).

That year the Museum's total annual acquisition budget was \$2,000<sup>39</sup>. It was clear that the Museum would need to find external sources of funding. Accordingly, Dell began to rally support.

Through a variety of informal community networks Dell was approached by organisations offering financial backing. In a letter<sup>40</sup> to the secretary of Āti hau–Whanganui and Morikaunui Incorporations (kaitiaki to taonga in the Museum's taonga Māori collection), the Museum Director stated that the Museum proposed to purchase as much of the Partington Collection as possible and that she had been promised some financial support from the Whanganui Community Foundation. Dell suggested the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board (WRMTB) could provide some financial backing. She mentioned that the chair of the WRMTB intended to go to the auction to lend moral support. Dell asked for prudence:

You will appreciate the need for some discretion about the sums we have available, as we do not want the auction house or other potential rivals to know what our financial limits are<sup>41</sup>.

The purpose of the letter was to keep this group of descendants and prospective financial supporters informed of developments.

On 5 September, in response to its application, the Museum received a letter from the Executive Director of the Whanganui Community Foundation confirming a donation of \$35,000 towards the purchase of the Partington

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<sup>39</sup> WRM Annual Report 2001.

<sup>40</sup> Letter to secretary Āti hau-Whanganui Morikaunui from Sharon Dell, 4 September 2001, WRM Partington Purchase file.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, WRM Partington Purchase file.

Collection. The letter acknowledged the Community Trusts' "understanding of the significance of the Collection to Whanganui communities."<sup>42</sup> The sum donated was more than had been requested, making it possible for the Museum to enter the forthcoming auction seriously.

Meanwhile Dell was aware that other public institutions could be interested in the Collection. She contacted the curators of photographs at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa), and the Alexander Turnbull Library to find out if these institutions intended to bid. Dell explained the importance of the Collection to Whanganui and that the Whanganui Regional Museum was in no position to compete with the national institution's considerable acquisitions budgets. Te Papa had no Partington photographs in its collection<sup>43</sup> and intended to bid. The curator also thought that Te Papa was a better home for the Collection because of superior facilities of care. He assured Dell that Te Papa would not indicate its interest in advance to Webb's; in an attempt to not inflate the expected sale price<sup>44</sup>. The Alexander Turnbull Library was keen to enhance its collection of Partington photographs and also intended to bid<sup>45</sup>. Public collecting institutions informally discuss such matters in an endeavour to deploy public funding wisely and efficiently<sup>46</sup>.

Knowing that these national institutions were proposing to bid for elements of the Partington Collection of Whanganui interest to the Museum and Whanganui iwi, political networks began persuading these institutions to not compete with Whanganui Regional Museum at the auction:

"Into that situation stepped an influential member of Tikanga Māori House and Joint Council. Whanganui iwi were in discussion with Te Papa at the time because of Teremoe [the Whanganui waka currently housed at Te

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<sup>42</sup> Letter from CE Whanganui Community Trust to Sharon Dell, 5 September 2001, WRM Partington Purchase file.

<sup>43</sup> In September 2001 Eymon Bradley commented to Sharon Dell there were no Partington photographs in the collection. In May 2008 there were four listed on Te Papa's web collection database.

<sup>44</sup> External email from Te Papa curator to Sharon Dell, 4.22 pm, 7 September 2001, WRM Partington Purchase file.

<sup>45</sup> Dell interview 22 March 2006.

<sup>46</sup> In Australia the Trade Practices Act 1974 defines substantial penalties for collusion or price fixing identified by the Australian Competition and Commerce Commission. Cases are rarely proven See Huda, S (nd) Pedigree and Panache: A history of the art auction in Australia. E Books. 142-144 available at <https://dspace.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/46771/1/ch07.pdf>

Papa] and the initial discussions about *Te Awa Tupua*, the Whanganui iwi exhibition.

Te Papa's kaihautu was approached. As a result, Te Papa decided to withdraw." (Dell interview: 22 March 2006).

As Dell did not observe any of its representatives at the auction (ibid.) it was assumed that the Alexander Turnbull Library had chosen to withdraw because of the Whanganui Regional Museum's clear interest.

The Museum Director and Archivist went to Auckland just before the auction armed with research and lists of preferences based on their notes from the auction catalogue. The collection they examined was contained in loose leaf folders with the contents of each lot placed in a copysafe envelope. They contained the vintage prints and the contact prints of the glass plate negatives. They were able to examine the condition of the plates<sup>47</sup>. The reproductions that Webb's commissioned for the catalogue would cause issues later.

On the night of the auction Dell was aware that representatives from dealer galleries were present, and there was interest in the nude photographs of children. She felt a real need to protect the children from continued exploitation (ibid.).

## **Protest Action**

The auction was advertised the week prior in the Wanganui Chronicle<sup>48</sup>. Webb's had not informed iwi that photographs of their tūpuna were to be auctioned. Interviewees Ken Mair, Ngāhina Gardiner and Rhipeti Ngāpera Karena confirmed this. However, Ann Webb stated that Webb's "actually advertised the sale nationally<sup>49</sup> and in Whanganui in order to make sure that the

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<sup>47</sup> Personal Communication Sharon Dell 29 May 2008.

<sup>48</sup> 12 September 2001.

<sup>49</sup> Sunday Star Times 26 August 2001: A3. This advertisement featured a Partington portrait and headline Webb's Rare Maori Portraits. Other Webb's advertisements in the Sunday Star Times in August and September 2001 featured modern art and a written reference to the Partington Collection only.



Māori people there were aware of the sale” (Webb Personal Communicaton 20 February 2006).

The advertisement came as a particularly distressing shock to Karena, as the photograph featured in the advertisement was her tupuna, Ngāpera Pīkinga. The Partington photograph of Ngāpera has hung in Kimihia, the Kauangaroa Marae Whare Tūpuna that is situated close to the middle reaches of the Whangaehu River, for as long as her Mother Uru could remember (Karena interview, 28 October 2005). Karena stated:

“I am the next family member to carry that kuia’s name; there has been no-one else in between: our koro; that is his aunt. I’m the next to carry that name and I am very proud of that name and the direct bloodlines to those who have gone before us.

To see her picture in the newspaper brought out a lot of strong emotions in me and I knew something had to be done about it. Although people see the photos as works of art to me/us they mean much more. They portrayed our tūpuna and we could not allow them to be sold overseas, to hang on a stranger’s wall, for whatever reason.

So, we were not originally aware that there were other Nga Wairiki-Ngāti Apa photographs, but we knew Ngāpera was there and we had to do something about it. We didn’t realise the extent of the collection until we got there, of how important it really was, and we had no idea what would eventuate regarding the auction. We just went with it.

We just knew Ngāpera couldn’t go overseas. We had to try and stop that happening” (Karena interview, 28 October 2005).

While Karena was originally drawn to the auction because of the personal connection, Ken Mair was simply outraged that Whanganui iwi tūpuna were being commodified:

“Here were these tūpuna that were seen by some people as saleable items, to make a quick buck. That was how many of us saw it at the time; and still do for that matter.

Webb’s lot were in it for a quick buck, there was no disclosure about who was selling them, but we think they just wanted to fill up their pockets with money as well. And so a small group of us decided to take direct action, we felt it was an extremely important issue and that the auctioneers and the sellers were not listening to us, and just brushing aside our concerns.

There seemed to be barriers in the way of the [Whanganui River Māori] Trust Board and even the Museum for that matter, from gaining full access to the Collection so they could be brought back home. So it was in that context that we decided the Collection – our tūpuna - needed to be reunited with our people.

It was a very moving, spiritual process, not to overplay it, but you felt this was the right thing to do. We had to do something. We had no choice.”  
(Ken Mair interview: 14 December 2005)

With such short notice it was difficult for Whanganui Māori to get to the auction in Auckland and only 12 iwi members were able to attend, “The time between finding out about the auction and the auction date was only a couple of days. So we didn’t have much preparation time at all before we had to get to Auckland” (Gardiner interview, 28 October 2005).

Whanganui Māori who attended went with two intentions, either to purchase with limited means or to halt the auction. They were faced with an impossible predicament. When asked if he was prepared to bid for his kuia, Ngāhina Gardiner responded:

“We went there with the best intentions of bringing the whole lot home. We didn’t know, we weren’t really prepared.

Our uncle asked us what photos we had come up to get and we just answered that we were here to get the whole lot. We hadn’t come up just to buy the photo of our kuia. That just didn’t seem fair.

Everyone else would lose out on their ancestors.

There were just hundreds and hundreds of photographs.

The emotions we went through, first there were tears, and then the tears turned to anger and frustration.

Not knowing what to do, not knowing if we had enough money to even bid. We would have been outbid if we did go down that system.” (Gardiner interview, 28 October 2005)

Ken Mair said his intention was to stop the auction at all costs, to return our tūpuna to their rightful home. As a veteran protester for Māori rights and self determination he confirmed he was prepared for police intervention:

“People like me are always faced with legal action and in this case we were fully prepared to accept the consequences to ensure the photographs were returned to the rightful owners – Whanganui River Iwi.

We were clear about the purpose; that we had to bring our people back home no matter what.

When we got up there, it was gi-normous [the Collection], so many of our tūpuna, all around us. And potential buyers had flown in from all over the place; Australia, overseas. And when we parked up, there were all these BMWs and Porsches in the car-park; we knew we were walking into a completely different world.

So we went in and talked with the auctioneer Peter Webb and we made it clear that we didn't think the auction should go ahead, that we thought our people should come home and we needed to agree on a process to achieve that.

If it was an issue of money, let's sit down and work it through, it was no barrier to us; we just needed to come to some agreement. We stated it was appropriate that they return home with us.

And of course we were ignored, politely, but ignored just the same. They did not understand the depth of feeling we had about this: about our tūpuna coming home" (Mair interview, 14 December 2005).

Karena and Gardiner felt the same way:

"We were prepared to be arrested though. We made our mother sit in the audience because we didn't want her arrested. But I was prepared to make that stand.

For me as a registered nurse that is a big thing, I was putting my registration at risk.

I didn't care that day. Once you saw the photos you were so emotionally tied to them you would do anything" (Karena interview, 28 October 2005).

It is clear from each of the protesters interviewed that they have a very strong spiritual connection with the photographs of their ancestors. The photographs are not considered to be two dimensional possessions and certainly not commodities, but living, breathing representations, holding the wairua and mana of their tūpuna.

Even before their intentions became clear Mair, Karena and Gardiner felt alienated. There was a definite sense that they were not welcome, and they had no right to be there:

We clearly looked like the odd ones out.

There certainly was a society-type feeling there. You know how you get when you are Māori, stigmatised at times. That happened that day. Little

did they know that we are all professional people (Karena interview, 28 October 2005).

Mair described how the mood in the room felt to him, and the events that brought the auction to a halt:

We had a look around, and positioned ourselves all around the auction room. I don't think any of the public had any idea what was going on until the first photo of our tūpuna came up to be auctioned. And then the character concerned started the bidding warfare and one of our people, Piripi Haami, bought into the bidding process.

I'm not sure quite what the figure was, something like \$50,000 or some ridiculous figure like that. Everyone obviously thought then, gosh what is going on, \$50,000<sup>50</sup> for one photo? And then another couple of our ones started making it very clear how offended they were that their ancestors were being sold off like this.

A kind of slavery type sale.

They still couldn't understand that we saw far beyond the photos; that these were real people, us, and so there was quite a strong discussion and they halted the auction.

We had further discussions in Peter Webb's office and whilst I was doing that some of our other River people were letting the buyers know that this sale was a sham and voicing their opinions.

People were getting quite worried and nervous and we said we had no intention of letting the sale proceed, so they could call the police or whatever, but they may as well leave because it wouldn't make any difference to us. There were enough of us to gather up the photographs while the police were taking 2 or 3 of us down to the station anyway.

We then had some long winded conversations with Peter Webb, an hour or so. Our goal was to hold the sale up as long as possible, so the people

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<sup>50</sup> The auctioneer did not take this bid seriously, no further lots were put up for auction.

would just leave. And in the end that is what happened. Peter Webb was very angry and upset of course, and as people were leaving several people were extremely abusive to me. Terminology such as “You Māori bastards should go back to where you came from.” And this from the likes of the people who drove away in their BMWs and Porsches”. (Mair interview, 14 December 2005).

Ken Mair made it very clear to Peter Webb that if he continued to sell “...our taonga in this way we would continue to come back and back and back, and take the appropriate action if needed” (Mair interview: 14 December 2005). He felt strongly that open and frank discussion with iwi concerning the sale of Māori cultural property was the only way to avoid such conflict and that auctioneers were only interested in taonga as commodities. They needed to be honest about that. “...it would be very good business if they sat down and worked through a process of informing the appropriate parties” (ibid.).

## **Reaction to Protest**

The next day the protest hit the headlines, “Mair Rejects Criticism of Protest”<sup>51</sup>. In a sensationalist quote Winston Peters, leader of the political party New Zealand First, described Ken Mair as using stand-over tactics that were “disgusting and arrogant”<sup>52</sup>.

Mair responded stating his case that direct descendents of the photograph subjects have rights, that the photographs are taonga and should be returned. He felt that as many were studio portraits the sitter’s would have paid a fee. He also expressed concern that the people interested in buying the photographs were only interested in them as an investment and that our tūpuna were not for sale:

Mair said that many, including Pākehā had been supportive of his action – especially when asked how they would feel if images of their grandmother were sold for profit (Wanganui Chronicle: 27 September 2001).

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<sup>51</sup> Wanganui Chronicle 21 September 2001.

<sup>52</sup> ibid.

Mair expressed disquiet that iwi only found out about the auction through advertising and consequent word of mouth shortly before it started. He justified the protest group's action by stating they were not in a position to make a competitive bid and so stopping the auction was the only option.

Letters to the Editor appeared in the Wanganui Chronicle in response to the protest action. In one example G. H. Burns felt strongly that Ken Mair had "No Claim" to the Collection. "With respect, I suggest that no claim can be made against the Partington collection on the assumption that money had been paid to have the photos taken"<sup>53</sup>. Burns argued that many photographers documented Māori life at their own expense. If Māori paid to have their portraits taken it was likely they didn't pay to transfer copyright from the photographer. The gulf between Māori and the auctioneer and vendor appeared to widen. Issues of communication and cultural maintenance raised by Māori were seen by Webb's purely in terms of commercial imperatives. Webb's gave Dell the impression that the Bells<sup>54</sup> would destroy the Collection rather than let Ken Mair get his hands on it (Dell interview 22 March 2006).

A week later Peter Webb had his say in the Sunday Star Times<sup>55</sup>, arguing that while he sympathised with the Māori protesters he was running his business according to New Zealand law. The statute of limitations meant there were no copyright restrictions on the images and copies of the images had been in the public arena for nearly 100 years. He noted that he would require a licence from Internal Affairs to export or sell the images overseas and he had no such licence. He suggested the Whanganui Regional Museum was "the most appropriate buyer"<sup>56</sup> but was aware they had limited funds available.

Webb described the protest action as illegal, insisting that the implications of the protest would be negative in the long run. He asserted that the protest had an impact on the way they and other auctioneers of cultural property operate today. Ann Webb insisted that the implications of the protest would be harmful:

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<sup>53</sup> Wanganui Chronicle Letter to the Editor, 29 September 2001.

<sup>54</sup> John and Edith Bell, the vendors of the Partington Collection.

<sup>55</sup> Purdy in Sunday Star Times 23 September 2001.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*

Auctioneers would be less open than Webb's during the Partington process, the result would be that any artefact seen to be controversial would now be sold a lot more secretly and often by private treaty sales. No-one would know until after the artefact had changed hands. We know of one auctioneer who now does not publish provenance on artefacts, even if it is known, in order to avoid any similar actions<sup>57</sup>.

## **A Coalition Is Formed**

At this stage there was an impasse: Māori had no-where to go, Webb's had shown their commercial hand and unwillingness to negotiate with them. The Museum was another disappointed party, as were the Bells (the vendors of the Partington Collection). The need to create a coalition between the Museum and Māori to ensure positive outcomes became imperative. A strategy to secure the Collection was necessary. However, this did not become clear until Tikanga Māori House (TMH) members were included.

At the time of the auction in September 2001 TMH members on the Joint Council represented Whanganui iwi<sup>58</sup>. The Partington Collection appeared late in general business on the Tikanga Māori House agenda on 27 September 2001. While Tikanga Māori House members who were also members of the Joint Council were aware of the situation regarding the Partington Collection, there was a perception that management had not made Tikanga Māori House aware of the issue formally prior to the sale. It was noted that had people known, they could have helped to access funding. Members expressed their desire to be kept informed about the issues. It was also acknowledged that there would be a range of issues that would need to be addressed once the Collection was purchased and in the possession of the Whanganui Regional Museum<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> Personal Communication Ann Webb to Carroll 20 February 2006.

<sup>58</sup> Rangi Wills (Te Ātihaunui Whanganui iwi, Chair), Grant Huwyler (Ngāti Apa), Kahukura Taiaroa (Tamahaki), Karanga Morgan (Ngā Rauru), Ken Clarke (Ngā Paerangi) and Harete Hipango (Mokai Patea, Ngāti Tamakopiri and Ngāti Whitikaupeka). The Museum's constitution allows for each iwi to have two representatives attending Tikanga Māori House meetings; Dardanella Mete-Kingi Mato, Neil Ranganui and Piripi Haami also attended at this time.

<sup>59</sup> Tikanga Māori House meeting minutes 27 September 2001, Whanganui Regional Museum.



Some members of Tikanga Māori House stated that iwi throughout the region were unaware that their ancestor's images were for sale. One member referred to kaumātua up the River who could recall some of the people in the photographs, demonstrating the close link between those subjects<sup>60</sup> in the photos and their descendants living today. He also put forward the view that the photographs of the River and surrounds were as important as the people because they showed the state of the River and environs prior to the water being taken by the electricity company.

Dell explained the sale process that Webb's had implemented, whereby potential buyers had been approached by the auctioneer to negotiate sales. She said there was a strong desire on the part of the vendors to have the Collection sold to the Whanganui Regional Museum and this was working in the Museum's favour, but the purchase price for the entire Collection had been set at \$150,000. Dell suspected the price would have been considerably less if the auction had continued. The action of the iwi members preventing the auction had clearly given the Museum time to access extra funding to secure a greater proportion of the total collection.

Dell assured members that purchasing the entire Partington Collection would have benefits as the Museum could then claim to have an authoritative collection for reference purposes. However, the primary focus had to be on Whanganui portraits and scenery. Therefore, it was agreed that if they could not afford the entire collection, they would try to secure the photographs relating to Whanganui. If that failed, then they should attempt to secure all the prints and negatives of ancestors, and if that failed, they should go for all the negatives and one of each set of duplicate prints. Dell discussed the option of freeing up non-Whanganui material to be sold, thereby reducing the overall price. An important motivation for Tikanga Māori House members was the removal of the images of naked women and children from circulation.

The external relationships of Tikanga Māori House members stretch deep into the community. Key players were calling on colleagues and supporters to find

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<sup>60</sup> Term used in minutes Tikanga Māori House 27 September 2007, possibly used by minute secretary.

the required finances. Relationships were being cemented to ensure the Collection was purchased by the community. Civic House and Tikanga Māori House members of the Joint Council had been informed about the Collection prior to the auction and were crucial in ensuring the commitment to purchase was advanced.

A fortnight after the Tikanga Māori House meeting Sharon Dell made public<sup>61</sup>, with posters and a notice in the Wanganui Chronicle, notification of a meeting called by the Whanganui Regional Museum and the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board. The kaupapa was to discuss the possible purchase of the Partington Photograph Collection.

At the meeting<sup>62</sup> it was stated that since the auction was halted negotiations with Webb's had resulted in the Partington photographs of Whanganui Māori and kainga being offered to the Museum for \$135,000 with 12 months to pay. In the absence of any national grant schemes it became clear that local support would be the only source of funding for the acquisition. Dell reiterated that the Whanganui Community Foundation and Whanganui River Māori Trust Board were contributing funds. Dell communicated the current situation to those in attendance and described the importance of the Collection and the need to form a coalition to ensure the Museum was in a position to purchase the Collection. The consensus of the meeting was to purchase the Collection. That decision created an unstoppable force.

Directly after the meeting Dell emailed Peter Webb<sup>63</sup> to inform him of the outcomes. She described the meeting as large, with the majority determined to purchase the Collection as a whole. Dell indicated that the next steps were meetings of the Museum's Joint Council and of other 'crucial funding bodies' and promised that outcomes from those meetings would be relayed to him as soon as possible. The next day Webb responded with an email that warned "...any lapse into inactivity is liable to bring about a change of heart on the part

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<sup>61</sup> On 12 October 2001.

<sup>62</sup> 10.00 am 12 October 2001.

<sup>63</sup> 2.00 pm 12 October 2001.

of the vendors.”<sup>64</sup> From this conversation it appears that Peter Webb concluded that the Whanganui community had full buy-in and would purchase the Collection at any cost.

The October 2001 Joint Council minutes<sup>65</sup> document that the Museum and the local community would make application to Morikaunui Incorporated for funding to underwrite the purchase of the Partington Collection. Funding of \$55,000 was already promised and the underwriting of the purchase would give the Museum time to explore other avenues to raise the remaining \$80,000. In her argument to the Joint Council, Dell urged that with money in hand the Museum would be in a stronger position to broker a better deal. There was discussion on the advisability of making the bid for funding public. It was decided to maintain confidentiality to avoid alerting competing purchasers to the Museum’s financial predicament.

At the meeting Dell explained that Webb’s and any individual buyers would require an export licence to ship the Collection off-shore if that was their intention. Since the criteria for Lottery Grants Board support is concerned with retaining cultural material of significance, Dell felt that an application to purchase the Collection would be rejected because no export licence had been applied for and therefore it did not meet the criteria.

In a motion carried unanimously by Joint Council members it was decided:

That the Director be authorised to enter into negotiation and agreement on behalf of the Joint Council for purchase of the Partington Collection when commitment is made in writing by the underwriting organisation<sup>66</sup>.

At this moment the mana of Tikanga Māori House, the authority of the Civic House and the expertise of the Museum Director formed an indomitable coalition. The force of this coalition and the compelling nature of its quest had

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<sup>64</sup> Email Webb to Dell 13 October 2001.

<sup>65</sup> Joint Council meeting minutes 18 October 2001, Whanganui Regional Museum.

<sup>66</sup> Joint Council meeting minutes 18 October 2001, Whanganui Regional Museum.

been successful in attracting community organisations<sup>67</sup> to provide funding to bring the Collection home.

On 2 November 2001 Sharon Dell sent a letter<sup>68</sup> to the CEO of the Whanganui Community Foundation, updating events. Following the Joint Council motion the Morikaunui Incorporation and Whanganui Trust were approached to underwrite the purchase. They declined, preferring to give a set amount. The Whanganui River Māori Trust Board moved into the breach and agreed to underwrite. Having reached this important point, and just at the moment when things were falling into place, Peter Webb<sup>69</sup> phoned to say that the vendors had decided to accept an offer from another syndicate, but that it could still be possible for the Museum to negotiate a sale with them. Dell was concerned that the opportunity to bring the Collection home might be lost<sup>70</sup>.

It could be suggested that the Museum was not responding quickly enough to Webb's, and that Webb's perceived a lack of communication as inaction. However, it is unlikely that Webb and Bell had any idea how difficult it is to secure funding for acquisitions from the community. Going out to the community for the Partington acquisition purchase was a precedent for the Whanganui Regional Museum. The tight timeframe and the amount of funding required made the situation even more precarious.

Peter Webb stated that John Bell had not received confirmation from the Whanganui Regional Museum that they intended to purchase the Collection and so he had decided to accept an offer from a syndicate of dealers<sup>71</sup>. The Museum Director had been waiting to hear the results of her presentation to the Incorporations about their financial support of the purchase before confirming

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<sup>67</sup> The Whanganui Community Foundation, the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board, Maraekowhai Whenua Trust, Ngā Tama ō Ngāti Haua Trust, Āti hau Whanganui Incorporated & Morikaunui Incorporation.

<sup>68</sup> Whanganui Regional Museum Partington Correspondence file.

<sup>69</sup> Mentioned in letter Sharon Dell to Whanganui Community Foundation Chair 2 November 2001.

<sup>70</sup> Letter Dell to CEO WCF 2 November 2001.

<sup>71</sup> Peter Webb confirmed his telephone conversation with a letter dated 9 November 2001.

the sale with John Bell<sup>72</sup>. Webb decided to step in and purchase the collection from the Bells, “to protect their own (Webb’s) investment in the Collection up to that date”. Webb stated that because of this change in circumstances Webb’s now required \$165,000 + gst. He suggested that if that amount could not be raised immediately the \$135,000 + gst could be paid over the next 12 months and that Webb’s would withhold \$30,000 worth of the collection to recover the shortfall in privately negotiated sales. He gave the Museum one week to decide if they wanted the entire collection and requested they keep the circumstances of the matter confidential, as any leak to the media could result in upsetting the arrangements<sup>73</sup>.

At the November meeting<sup>74</sup> of the Joint Council Webb’s offer was discussed. It was felt there was a real need for a process to be developed so that a unified approach to purchasing such material could be made. Initially Dell had been confident that the Museum could acquire a reasonably representative selection of the Collection for about \$55,000. However, without a clear precedent there was mounting concern about price escalations (fig 3: 1 page 60).

There was further discussion on buying part of the Collection only and it was felt that the Director should accept that option and work towards the purchase of all the negatives and at least one image of each of the Whanganui plates. Any other material bought that could be resold would help to reduce the necessary funding<sup>75</sup>.

A letter from the chair of the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board (WRMTB) to the Joint Council<sup>76</sup> confirmed that in the WRMTB’s opinion the Whanganui Regional Museum should purchase the core collection of Partington’s

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<sup>72</sup> Letter from Sharon Dell to chair of WRMTB 14 November 2001.

<sup>73</sup> This ultimatum coincided with the Museum’s development of a major exhibition, *Sports Works*. The Museum was also working with several key staff vacancies (Dell, personal comment 29 May 2008).

<sup>74</sup> Joint Council meeting minutes 15 November 2001 Whanganui Regional Museum.

<sup>75</sup> Because there was no quorum at this meeting the previous decision to offer \$135,000 for the Collection was deemed to stand.

<sup>76</sup> dated 13 November 2001 Partington Correspondence file Whanganui Regional Museum.

Whanganui iwi people photographs and negatives for \$135,000 (+gst) or less, that \$50,000 deposit should be paid to Webb's on 20 December 2001, and that the WRMTB would support the Museum to find other sources of funding and that they would underwrite any shortfall.

Fig 3: 1: **The Escalating Cost of the Partington Collection**

<b>The Escalating Cost of the Partington Collection</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Who Said</b>	<b>Collection Content</b>	<b>Price</b>
Early September 2001	John Perry	All	\$10,000 incl gst \$8,750 excl gst
<b>Auction Abandoned 21 September 2001</b>			
22 September 2001	Sharon Dell	All	\$55,000 incl gst \$48,125 excl gst
27 September 2001	Webb's	All	\$150,000 incl gst \$131,250 excl gst
12 October 2001	Webb's	Whanganui content only	\$151,875 incl gst \$132,890 excl gst
14 November 2001	Webb's	All	\$185,625 incl gst \$165,000 excl gst
May 2002	Webb's	Whanganui content only	\$154,875 incl gst \$135,000 excl gst

The balance was to be paid in full to Webb's by 1 November 2002. The letter stated the Museum would:

...hold the collection, making copies available to descendents at cost and that any use and display of the collection by the Museum would be through consultation with Whanganui iwi<sup>77</sup>.

This statement was congruent with collection management principles and practices advocated by the Museum under the new bi-cameral governance structure, although the process had not yet been codified. In her letter of reply, Dell informed the WRMTB of the change in circumstances and the two options available for purchase:

<sup>77</sup> Taiaroa to Joint Council 13 November 2001.

1. to pay \$135,00 +gst for the highly desired items and allow Webb's to retain \$30,000 worth of the collection to sell off as they wished, or
2. to pay \$165,000 +gst for the entire collection with a view to selling images that did not relate to the region.

Dell asked to know which option the WRMTB preferred to underwrite. She reiterated that time was running short.

Dell emailed<sup>78</sup> Peter Webb and informed him of the decision to purchase \$135,000 +gst worth of the collection, as the WRMTB preferred the first option. She indicated the lots the Museum was not interested in, those being 216 items worth \$180 each, calculated to be \$38,000 and tried to negotiate a reduced price. Webb restated<sup>79</sup> their position and the added charge of \$3,000 + gst to cover the interest on the loan they had to take out to make the purchase. He claimed the material the Museum indicated they did not want did not come close to the \$30,000 and that an alternative solution would be for Webb's to withdraw a number of glass plate negatives, leaving the original prints, effectively raising the bar again. Webb asked Dell to come to Auckland to sort through the collection the following week "to bring about a long overdue settlement to this business."<sup>80</sup>

Dell describes the trip to Auckland to sort out the Collection as "extremely difficult", and having to go through the photographs image by image, she on one side of a table and three members of Webb's on the other:

Everything the Museum wanted they said was expensive and everything we said we didn't want they said was cheap. It was just hideous.

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<sup>78</sup> 16 November 2001 Partington Correspondence file Whanganui Regional Museum.

<sup>79</sup> 30 November 2001.

<sup>80</sup> 17 November 2001 Partington Correspondence file Whanganui Regional Museum.

The process took a whole day, and I was becoming increasingly uncomfortable as the day progressed. I didn't feel that we came out of it well at all. I felt it was a really unfair situation. Any argument I raised was countered by one or other of them, and they simply had the power over me. It was just awful.

At the point that it felt like the Collection wasn't being kept together, and more and more photographs of people were staying in Webb's hands, I became less and less comfortable". (Dell interview: 22 March 2006).

The chair of the Joint Council and the chair of the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board went to Auckland with the intention of taking a strong hand in the direct negotiations. Dell was of the opinion that their mana would mean they would be heard. Their brief was to bring the entire Collection back to Whanganui. They were to reassert that iwi wanted the Collection so that they could control the use of the images and to reunite the descendants with their tūpuna. They renegotiated a deal for \$138,000 including the Whanganui photographs formerly negotiated plus all duplicates of the Whanganui photographs and plates that were previously withheld by Webb's for sale elsewhere. Upon their return they felt they had achieved their mission (Dell Interview 22 March 2006). The renegotiation of the sale agreement required the purchase price to be paid in full immediately. This proposal was to be taken to the May meeting of the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board. Webb's stipulated a 31 May 2002 deadline<sup>81</sup>.

On 17 January 2002 Ann Webb sent Sharon Dell a fax. She asked for confirmation of the purchase according to the outlined terms. She mentioned Webb's commitment to the purchase but said there had been another substantial offer over the Christmas period and they were anxious to receive a final decision. Dell responded with a letter<sup>82</sup>, the Museum agreeing to a deposit of \$55,000 and indicated monthly payments of \$6,600 + gst. There was an

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<sup>81</sup> Joint Council minutes April 2002.

<sup>82</sup> 7 February 2002 Whanganui Regional Museum Partington Correspondence File.



undertaking by Dell that the Museum would try to achieve the balance earlier if funding came to hand. Dell requested the Collection be sent to the Museum as soon as possible so as to generate interest from potential funding bodies.

Partnership, relationships and the coalition were critical at this juncture. Dell was able to identify that she was not bringing the negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion and was willing to call upon the mana of the Joint Council and Whanganui River Māori Trust Board to complete the transaction. The partnership was tested and found to be strong, encompassing both foresight and professional integrity.

### **Publication Treachery**

Whanganui people did not know that an agreement had earlier been made to publish the Partington photographs of Whanganui Māori. In early March 2002<sup>83</sup> the commissioning agent of Random House Publishers rang the Museum to discuss publication of the Collection. Random House had scanned a selection of the Partington sale material in order to publish a book. Museum staff were concerned. They had been in negotiation with Webb's to purchase the Collection for a number of months and this was the first they had heard of the intention to publish a book. The Museum was alarmed that as joint owners of the Collection with iwi, the right to collaborate with iwi and control publication of any image had been usurped.

The Archivist telephoned Ann Webb on 8 March 2002 to find out details of the publishing arrangement. It transpired that Webb's had brokered the deal between Random House and the Bells the morning prior to the Collection originally going to auction<sup>84</sup> and that the Bells sold the publication rights to selected photographs in the Collection to Random House. Ann Webb said that the sale of publication rights or a subsequent publication would not affect the

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<sup>83</sup> Communications in Partington file, Whanganui Regional Museum.

<sup>84</sup> Communication transcript Partington file Whanganui Regional Museum.

Collection's commercial value and she could not understand why the Museum would have a problem with it<sup>85</sup>. Peter Webb agreed,<sup>86</sup> stating that a publication would enhance, rather than diminish the value of the Collection.

At a meeting<sup>87</sup> organised to discuss the publication Random House representatives were asked to explain the purpose of the book. The Random House explanation was that they, and the Bells, were concerned the Collection would be dispersed and this was a way to maintain the Collection's integrity. One member of the WRMTB iterated that it was the descendants' duty to protect the photos of their tūpuna and without their input the book should not proceed.

Joint Council minutes<sup>88</sup> reveal Random House took the proposed book off their publication list in the interim, understanding that as major stakeholders, the Museum had some concerns. As the underwriters of the purchase, the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board also had concerns. They felt strongly that the book deal would seriously devalue the Collection, and that their main objective in supporting the purchase was to have control over the images and their reproduction.

The chair of Tikanga Māori House emailed Peter Webb advising him that his email to Sharon Dell<sup>89</sup> had been tabled at the Joint Council meeting. He claimed that the Joint Council were concerned that the Random House book would significantly devalue the Collection. The Museum assumed they would have publishing rights (that the collection was assumed unencumbered) upon purchase. He also stated that the underwriters required control of the images of

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<sup>85</sup> Briefing paper to Joint Council written by Museum Archivist, 18 March 2002.

<sup>86</sup> 11 March 2002.

<sup>87</sup> The meeting was attended by the Director and Archivist from the Whanganui Regional Museum, the chair and a board member from the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board, three members of Tikanga Māori House, two members of the Joint Council, a reporter from the Treaty of Waitangi newsletter and five independent iwi members.

<sup>88</sup> Joint Council meeting minutes 21 March 2002 Whanganui Regional Museum.

<sup>89</sup> 21 March 2002.

their tūpuna. The underwriters were meeting<sup>90</sup> to make a decision on the matter but as Webb's required the deposit before then he indicated that the Museum would not be able to meet Webb's timetable<sup>91</sup>. He also stated that the Museum would ask its lawyers to clarify the situation. At this point the Tikanga Māori House chair exerted his authority on behalf of the coalition.

In response Peter Webb wrote that the Museum should have been told of the agreement between Random House and the Bells but stated this was purely an oversight and not intentional. Webb insisted that:

If the board feels the Museum has been compromised to an unacceptable extent, Webb's was prepared to rescind the sale and make other arrangements<sup>92</sup>.

In the meantime negotiations with Random House continued. The publisher needed photograph captions and some history to print with the photographs and agreed to local iwi input in photograph selection. They were also open to the suggestion of making it a joint publication with the Museum<sup>93</sup>. Random House wanted an iwi representative to write the foreword.<sup>94</sup>

The publication was a sideline to the purchase which took energy from the core purpose of bringing the Collection home. This was a test of endurance for the coalition relationship.

## **Decision to Proceed**

Despite all the hurdles put in front of the coalition their resolve to continue with the purchase of the Collection and bring it home did not waiver. What did fluctuate was the amount of money they were prepared to hand over to Webb's

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<sup>90</sup> 12 April 2001.

<sup>91</sup> Email Wills to Webb 23 March 2002.

<sup>92</sup> Email Webb to Wills 25 March 2002.

<sup>93</sup> Joint Council minutes April 2002.

<sup>94</sup> The chair of the WRMTB was invited to write the foreword and was given reproductions of all the photographs to comment on.

given the changes in circumstances. The coalition needed faith that the funding would fall into place and the transaction would be completed.

At the May 2002 Joint Council meeting the decision to proceed with the purchase was made, invoices were sent to the financial contributors and the Museum agreed to pay an additional \$3,000 to Webb's to cover the interest on the loan they took out to pay for the Collection from the Bell Family. The Museum also agreed to pay the interest on a loan of \$80,000 + gst for a period of one year, raised by the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board.

The purchase total was \$154,875, including gst and the \$3,000 interest on the Webb loan. The balance of \$81,750 was to come initially from Museum reserve funds, but this would be repaid by the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board, as the underwriters.<sup>95</sup>

The total cost to the Museum was not calculated officially. However, it included repayment of interest on the loan raised by the Whanganui River Māori Trust; numerous trips to Auckland; various public meetings, publicity, administration, ceremonies of welcome, as well as costs associated with the packing of the Collection in Auckland.

As the Whanganui Regional Museum's acquisition budget is \$2,000 per annum; this purchase was extraordinary in terms of resources committed by the Museum. Also the Whanganui Community has not been called upon to this extent before or since to contribute to a Museum acquisition, making this acquisition the most expensive and unusual in the Museum's 120 year history.

The payment was sent to Webb's along with a list of the lots the Museum did and did not want. From the scheduled auction until the issuing of Webb's receipt on 30 June 2002 the purchase took nine months. The next step was the safe return of the Partington Collection to Whanganui and the welcoming of the taonga by Whanganui iwi, Museum staff and stakeholders.

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<sup>95</sup> Joint Council minutes 23 May 2002.

## Te Hokinga Mai

The coalition sent a designated envoy to Auckland that included two staff members. They couriered the Collection back to Whanganui, ensuring its physical and spiritual care and safety.

In early July 2002 Sharon Dell notified the public of the return of the Partington Collection to Whanganui on Sunday 21 July<sup>96</sup>. Using the WRMTB chair's words Dell described the homecoming as "An emotional time for the descendents of the people portrayed in the photographs"<sup>97</sup>. She described the collection as:

...old, fragile and dirty and it will take a lot of specialised work cleaning and cataloguing them before they can be used safely (Powley 2002: 7).

Invitations to the welcoming ceremony were issued to all interested parties including John and Edith Bell, and Peter and Ann Webb. In a facsimile to the Museum on 20 August Ann Webb expressed her disappointment that their invitation was only received that day and they would be unable to attend at such short notice. She indicated that for the same reason the Bells would also decline their invitation.

The Wanganui Chronicle<sup>98</sup> reported that 200 people, including many descendants of Partington's original photographs, turned out to witness the return of the prints and negatives to Whanganui Regional Museum. The chair of the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board was quoted as saying:

"We are extremely happy that the community have joined together to ensure the whole collection returned to Wanganui iwi and Pākehā and that brings extra happiness. May it continue. I am grateful for that". (WRMTB chair quoted in Wanganui Chronicle, 22 July 2002).

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<sup>96</sup> In a media statement released on the 14 July 2002.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> 22 July 2002.

But he also expressed disappointment that the process to secure the photographs was so difficult:

“When our tipuna pay to sit for the photographs, but then their descendants lose the rights in terms of control of the photographs and publication rights, appropriate legislation needs to be put in place to ensure this does not continue to happen” (ibid.)

Ken Mair was also interviewed for that article, he indicated that the next step would be to sit down with the Museum and work out how the photographs are going to be cared for, and to establish the Collection’s future.

The Collection’s return home was an emotional time for all those involved. Dell recalled that:

“[The chair of the WRMTB] was supportive of the Museum throughout this process, and he was ecstatic when the Collection came home. During the welcoming ceremony he insisted I sit with the Kuia at the front of the porch; that was one of my proudest professional moments. He was recognising that the Museum has done a good job in returning the Collection to Whanganui” (Dell interview: 22 March 2006).



Fig 3:2 **Pictures Welcomed Home.** Iwi members Geoffrey Mariu (left) and Nicholas Nikora (right) carry the Partington Collection up the steps to the Whanganui Regional Museum, Rangi Wills chair of Tikanga Māori House, is far right (reproduced with permission Whanganui Regional Museum).

For members of the coalition the return of the Collection was the culmination of many month's hard work. There were however, other players in the acquisition. The individuals who participated in the protest action were unfortunately not given due credit for their part in the successful return of the photographs, and resentment about this lingers:

"In the photo in the [Wanganui] Chronicle of the pōwhiri when the photos came back, you will notice that none of the people who went to the auction are in that photo. Other people took the leading role, to bring the photos actually into the Museum. That happens. I thought it was a bit sad" (Gardiner interview: 28 October 2005).

"We knew what we had done to bring the photos back, but it would have been nice to be included in that process" (Karena interview: 28 October 2005).

Rhipeti Ngāpera Karena was concerned about criticism from within Museum and iwi circles for the protest action they had taken<sup>99</sup>. Some people were of the opinion that because of their protest action, the Museum and the Trust Board actually paid more for the collection in a private deal than they would have paid at the auction. It was not the best outcome that the Museum and the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board were prepared to allow a significant proportion of the photographs to go to private, non-Māori collectors. Furthermore, Karena said that decisions about what would be purchased and what wouldn't were being made with insufficient information about who the tūpuna were, and who their descendants were. Karena believed that because of the action the protestors took, the Museum and the Trust Board were ultimately able to acquire the entire collection, which is far more beneficial to the tūpuna, their descendants and the Whanganui region as a whole (ibid.).

In a gesture of good-will to the Museum, Ken Mair handed the McGregor photograph album of Partington photographs into the care of Tikanga Māori House that day. The album came from Michael Stanwyck, a Whanganui man living in Sussex, England. Mr Stanwyck didn't know the people in the

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<sup>99</sup> Huwyler 2005

photographs, but always thought they should be returned to their descendants. He was motivated into action by publicity in England surrounding the Partington auction protest<sup>100</sup>. Consequently he contacted Ken Mair by telephone and Mair promised he would return the photographs to the descendants<sup>101</sup>. When asked why he felt the Museum was the appropriate resting place for the McGregor album, Mair said:

“We had a relationship with the Museum, our people within the governance structure of the Museum and we felt that this was the most appropriate place for it to be held, until such time as our people want it to be housed elsewhere, as they so wish. I have no problems with it being here in the interim. All I was, was the waka for it to be handed over to our people, it was not appropriate for it to remain in my possession. If that journey continues and the decision is made for it to be held at a marae then we will enter into dialogue with the Museum for that to happen” (Mair interview: 14 December 2005).

Karena also commented on the Museum being the appropriate home for the Collection.

“I think because they are so old and need protecting, at this stage yes it is appropriate for the collection to be in the Museum. And because there are a number of our people here in this organisation looking after the collection, keeping an eye on them, that is fine. I think ultimately it would be good to have them back on the marae and I know there has been kōrero concerning that, but at the moment it is about preserving them, and maintaining them for future generations.

I realise there has been a huge cost attached to doing all that, and there has been some criticism levelled at the Museum about that but at the end of the day they are taonga that are here now. It about sharing the history, not just about us but for all of Whanganui” (Karena interview: 28 October 2005).

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<sup>100</sup> There was significant media attention given to the auction protest both nationally and internationally. The focus was on the influence the protest action had/would have on the art market and the sale of indigenous cultural property. See Graham-Stewart and Gow (2006).

<sup>101</sup> Wanganui Chronicle: 22 July 2002.



The cost that Karena alluded to is a reference to her misunderstanding over the Museum's role in the publication of the Random House book Te Awa: Partington's Photographs of Whanganui Maori. Like many iwi members Karena mistakenly assumed that the Museum had published the book in a bid to recoup costs associated with the purchase of the Collection. Discussions with Random House entered the public domain when Sharon Dell issued a public invitation, via a public notice in the Wanganui Chronicle, to all those interested to attend a meeting with Random House on 10 April 2002. The invitation however, did not reach its target audience. The first many knew about the book was when it appeared in Whitcoulls shop window on Victoria Avenue, Wanganui. Gardiner felt, "that his tupuna was being exploited all over again"<sup>102</sup>, and Karena felt "very upset, it bought back a lot of still very raw emotions"<sup>103</sup>. The foreword in the book was written by Sharon Dell, and this association confused many. Dell argued that her foreword was an attempt to give the publication credibility and that it was an opportunity to state publicly that the Museum had nothing to do with the publication - to set the record straight (Dell interview: 22 March 2006).

"The Collection was offered to Peter Webb Galleries Ltd. in Auckland....At the same time the Bell family made the arrangements that have allowed this book to be published, anticipating that the collection would ultimately be broken up when it was sold, lot by lot, to numerous individual buyers  
(Dell 2003: intro).

However, Dell's attempt "to set the record straight" was subtle and was therefore easily overlooked.

"I had heard that it was put together to raise money to cover the costs of the purchase of the collection and the conservation of the photographs. I don't really know what the reasons were for publishing the book. I don't know who had control over it, but I thought it was the Museum" (Karena interview: 28 October 2005).

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<sup>102</sup> Gardiner interview 28 October 2005.

<sup>103</sup> Karena interview 28 October 2005.

The Whanganui River Māori Trust Board had been involved in discussions with Random House. The Chair had been given copies of the scans Random House had in their possession and he was asked to put in place a process for selection for publication and to contribute to the introduction<sup>104</sup>. These scans were from the prints Webb's had made for the auction catalogue. Copies of those scans were mounted at the Museum to begin the process of identification so there would be something tangible for people to see. They remained on display for some months and some information was gathered. The chair of Tikanga Māori House was not given permission by iwi to give Random House this information to include in the book<sup>105</sup>. It was considered acceptable to provide names of people in the images for publication but not appropriate to provide whakapapa or further background information<sup>106</sup>. The book was launched on 16 October 2003 at the Whanganui Regional Museum<sup>107</sup>. Members of the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board were invited but did not attend. The Managing Director of Random House Michael Moynihan spoke, while Rangi Wills, chair of Tikanga Māori House, launched the book, making reference to the Museum's lack of knowledge about the intention to publish during the purchase process in his speech.<sup>108</sup>

## Discrepancies Uncovered

An inventory taken after the arrival of the Collection at the Museum by the Archivist revealed a number of discrepancies. The inventory revealed that four images that were not requested were included and 20 images that were requested did not arrive.

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<sup>104</sup> Letter Dell to chair WRMTB 17 June 2002.

<sup>105</sup> Email chair TMH to Dell 20 January 2003.

<sup>106</sup> Tikanga Māori House minutes 30 January 2003.

<sup>107</sup> Archie Taiaroa's grandmother was supposed to be in the book, when it was published I noticed that there were two images of the same woman, and that Archie's grandmother was not there, this other woman had taken her place, the same photo twice. So I rang Tom Beran and asked what had happened, he said that technically it was impossible for Archie's grandmother to be missed out in the printing process and he couldn't understand how it could possibly have happened. So he rang Archie to apologise and Archie simply said that it didn't surprise him that his grandmother didn't want to be in the book (Dell interview: 22 March 2006).

<sup>108</sup> Email Museum Archivist to Carroll 3 January 2008.

A letter was written to Peter Webb about the discrepancies and also asked why the contact prints of the glass plate negatives were not included; as everyone was under the impression they were part of the renegotiated sale agreement. The letter commented that the chair of WRMTB would be very saddened to learn they still remained with Webb's in Auckland<sup>109</sup>, as the intention was to possess all the Collection images.

Dell confirmed that the inclusion of the contact prints in the deal was never discussed with Webb's:

"I don't think any one thought they wouldn't be. They were there; they were part of what you flicked through. And it was made very clear that what the protest was about was sovereignty over the collection, bringing the collection to Whanganui and iwi having rights over the images of their tūpuna. None of those contact prints came with the collection, and that also meant that we couldn't catalogue the collection until we had prints made by New Zealand Micrographics, that was an additional problem for us." (Dell interview: 22 March 2006).

Ann Webb responded with a facsimile<sup>110</sup>. She agreed there were discrepancies but not with the Archivist's detail. Webb stated the original hand written list that Dell drew up at Webb's in Auckland was verbally agreed to and differed from the list sent by the Archivist on 29 May 2002. Webb insisted the Museum had received eight lots they should not have and that there was some disagreement about whether lot 178<sup>111</sup> should have been withdrawn or not. Webb stated lots 192<sup>112</sup> and 193<sup>113</sup> did not belong to the Museum, according to their records, and they had already been sold on. Webb insisted the proof sheets and contact prints were never part of the purchase agreement and she felt the Museum has been very well treated by Webb's, considering the financial loss they had made over the whole deal. Webb included a copy of Dell's handwritten list<sup>114</sup>. However, Dell maintains that the handwritten agreement had been overturned

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<sup>109</sup> Email Museum Archivist to Peter Webb 21 August 2002.

<sup>110</sup> 29 August 2002.

<sup>111</sup> Twelve Wanganui views.

<sup>112</sup> Three prints of paddle steamers.

<sup>113</sup> Five prints of breakwater construction.

<sup>114</sup> Facsimile A. Webb to Museum Archivist 29 August 2002.

by the subsequent agreement reached with the chairs of the Joint Council and WRMTB. No further correspondence was entered into regarding this situation, and the photographs that Webb's sent remain at the Whanganui Regional Museum. Informally, staff at the Museum felt nothing more could be done<sup>115</sup>.

## **Summary**

The narrative has established the relationships that formed throughout this extraordinary process. Comments from those involved have attested to the commitment and loyalty that was shared in the collective act of returning the Partington Collection to Whanganui and to the safe-keeping of the Museum.

The significant outcome of the acquisition of the Partington Collection was the test and affirmation of the Museum's bi-cultural governance structure offering a proving ground for the Museum's interactions with the community.

We would never have been accepted as a repository for the Collection if it hadn't been for our governance structure. And the McGregor album was a great example of faith in the structure by the people with mana in the community (Dell interview 23 March 2006).

The Collection's return to Whanganui and into the care of the Whanganui Regional Museum has provided unequivocal evidence of that Museum's capacity to evolve with its community and to change according to the influence and strength of its relationships.

It is at this point that the relationship between the Whanganui Regional Museum and Whanganui iwi began to influence the Collection's management directly.

## **The Collection's Management**

It is unusual within museum collection practice for a museum not to establish absolute ownership and control over its collections. However, even before the

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<sup>115</sup> Telephone conversation Museum Archivist to Carroll 9 January 2008.

Partington Collection returned the Museum wanted to co-manage the Collection with iwi and began to proceed tentatively with this notion, beginning with a programme of conservation management. The care of the Collection and especially the fragile glass plate negatives was paramount. The Director and her staff assessed the condition of the prints and glass plate negatives. They consulted with a number of specialists and iwi members and set about protecting the Collection.

Funding to accomplish this necessary care and protection was successfully sourced from the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board. The grant included sufficient resources to employ a Partington Project Officer on a fixed term contract for six months. The Project Officer's key responsibilities were the physical care of the Collection, including the cleaning of the glass plate negatives, documentation and research of the photographs. The Officer was guided by National Library New Zealand staff in the cleaning of both the glass and the emulsion side of the glass plate negatives. All of the negatives and photographs were placed in polyethylene envelopes and then stored in negative cabinets. Each of the 738 images was scanned and a master and a research copy printed. The cataloguing and research was undertaken by a photographic historian who described the scenes and portraits, clothing, hair styles and taonga.

To establish a bi-cultural collection management agreement the Partington Project team was established to negotiate with iwi. It comprised the Director, Archivist and Community Liaison officer. The Community Liaison officer communicated regularly with the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board manager to develop policy and procedure for the management of the Collection. A first draft of the Memorandum of Understanding and the Heads of Agreement Concerning the Partington Collection between the Whanganui Regional Museum and the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board were sent to the WRMTB to begin the process. These documents were to establish a formal relationship and to agree on collection management practice for the Partington Collection. The tenor of the Heads of Agreement was to ensure descendants had input into the way the Collection should be cared for, researched, reproduced and

exhibited and to establish kaitiaki for each of the tūpuna in the photographs. The Heads of Agreement also set out to establish ownership of the Collection.

These documents were to formalise the relationship between the Museum and the WRMTB (as representatives of Whanganui iwi) to outline responsibilities regarding the taonga Māori collections and in particular the Partington Collection. A formal document would ensure all participants understood the responsibilities of joint collection management.

While personal relationships between museum personnel and representatives of Native communities are important, there can be misunderstandings, especially when profound cultural differences are in play. In situations where misunderstandings arise, reference to a well thought-out, thoroughly discussed, and organisationally approved written policy can be critically important in resolving any differences (Scott and Luby 2007: 278).

It is worth noting the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board was set up to prepare and research for Whanganui iwi's Treaty of Waitangi claim. It is assumed then that the Trust's staff were fully immersed in that preparation and that this was their absolute priority. Other issues, such as the purchase of the Partington Collection and its subsequent management, while important, were not core business.

The process of liaison with Whanganui iwi to research the photographs and to collate information held by other institutions needed to be carried out by a Whanganui iwi member. Funding to employ an iwi research and liaison officer was granted by National Services Te Paerangi. The iwi liaison role included initial discussions with descendants to establish a way forward in managing the Collection. Policy was to be developed, with those who were designated kaitiaki, and this would govern access, reproduction and use. It was proposed that these policies would be accepted by other institutions as the recognised way to manage Partington photographs in those collections. This would create a precedent; a regional museum, recognised as holding the core collection of a

photographer's work, establishing the collection management of all Partington photographs of Whanganui Māori housed in public institutions.

## **The Exhibition**

The exhibition was guided by a working party with representation from Whanganui iwi, the Museum's Joint Council and Museum staff. Funding from Te Waka Toi was achieved to employ an iwi co-curator. This dedicated tāngata whenua position worked alongside Museum staff to achieve a major exhibition of nearly two years duration, *Te Pihi Mata; the Sacred Eye*.

Funding for the exhibition came from Te Waka Toi, the Whanganui Community Foundation and the Whanganui Regional Museum and included the training of kaiārahi to guide visitors through the exhibition, revealing the kōrero associated with the tūpuna. The exhibition was opened on Friday 7 December 2007 by Tariana Turia co-leader of the Māori Party and local kaumātua. Turia spoke of the unique knowledge the exhibition imparts to the descendants, she mentioned individuals and the way they continue to influence us today.

We look with love on the face of Wī Pauro, te tohunga ahurewa; a spiritual leader whose legacy is still felt and remembered every year in our Tira Hoe Waka, our tribal journey in which we recount our whakapapa, our kōrero, and our tikanga in the place and context where it belongs – within the River, for the River. (Turia 2007: 1)

Turia was mindful of the time period and social context Partington was working in and his role as the external observer looking from afar, recording a time of great transition for the people of the Whanganui River. She spoke of the journey Whanganui iwi had made in working closely with the Museum to create the exhibition and stated it was time to honour the ancestors, Partington's photography and the courage of Whanganui iwi in bringing the images home. Turia commented that for too long the knowledge of tāngata whenua has been the preserve of historians, anthropologist and ethnographers and now is the time for iwi to protect and preserve their ancestral photographs.

We have suffered for too long the cruelty of window dressing approaches that attempt to give superficial recognition to our history, our customs and language – feeling as if, in the words of indigenous Vietnamese academic Trinh Minh-ha, we’ve been “captured, solidified and pinned to a butterfly board”(ibid.: 3).

The chair of the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board also spoke, and while positive about the Museum and the exhibition, he also commented on the ownership of the Collection<sup>116</sup> and unresolved issues between the WRMTB and the Museum.

It has been challenging to establish a formally codified relationship with the WRMTB. However work by Museum staff and contractors have ensured that whānau connections with descendants of many of the people portrayed in the photographs have been developed. Moreover, the Whanganui Regional Museums bi-cameral governance structure models partnership, and the will remains to jointly manage the Partington Collection.

### **Whanganui Regional Museums Collection Management Policy**

At the time of the acquisition of the Partington Collection staff worked from a draft collection management policy written in 2001. It provided for a two-tier approach to accepting items into the collection, firstly through an acquisitions committee whose recommendations were then decided by the Joint Council. Mention was made of the taonga Māori collection in the section concerning the existing Whanganui collection. The method of adding to this collection was deemed to be passive.

The management of koiwi tāngata was addressed with a separate section, stating that koiwi tangata are not regarded as being part of the collection. The policy is to contact appropriate iwi and to follow their wishes. Generally repatriation is preferred.

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<sup>116</sup> Telephone conversation Museum Archivist to Carroll 9 January 2008.



The policy did not mention the establishment of kaitiaki, but in practice the Museum and iwi have established spiritual caretakers for the taonga Māori collection. These roles are recommended and monitored by Tikanga Māori House since 2001 but many had been in place for generations.

In 2005 the Whanganui Regional Museum began rewriting its collection management policy. The Repatriation Policy<sup>117</sup> is specific to the Taonga Māori Collection and acknowledges that the Museum will develop a separate policy or policies for the repatriation of collection items to other sectors of society. The preamble states that the Museum has a substantial taonga Māori collection and that for many taonga clear provenance linking them to whānau, hapū and iwi exists. It is foreseen that there will be more requests for repatriation in the future.

The policy includes a section on how to lodge a claim, the information required and the procedure. The criteria for recommending repatriation are:

- (a) the claimant can establish customary ownership (whakapapa & tāngata e tiakitanga)
- (b) the claimant can establish the taonga has been acquired illegally or in a culturally inappropriate manner by the Museum
- (c) where the return of the taonga is demonstrated to be of great significance to the future wellbeing of the claimant.

However, the Museum may repatriate taonga using its discretion if the claimant cannot establish the taonga has been acquired illegally or in a culturally inappropriate manner by the Museum.

This is a clear signal that the Whanganui Regional Museum is preparing itself for claims against its Taonga Māori Collection, putting in place collection management procedures that will smooth the progress of returning cultural property. This policy provides for the original owners and creators and their

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<sup>117</sup> Draft written by Joint Council members Grant Huwyler and Dr David Butts 2005.

descendants, but also includes those who hold strong spiritual connections to the Museum's Taonga Māori collection.

This is an act of goodwill and understanding. It shows that the Whanganui Regional Museum is cognisant of the wishes of its community. It also shows that the relationship with iwi has influenced the Museum's collection management policy and procedure in preparation for iwi determination to care for and interpret their own cultural property. By putting in place a process that is robust and transparent in establishing connection of original ownership, creation or spirituality, the Museum is showing respect in acknowledging Māori entitlement and rights of tino rangatiratanga according to the Treaty of Waitangi.

## **Summary**

The Museum's relationship with iwi is pivotal. It is a historically rich relationship that has depth, strength and longevity. This case study emphasises that the Museum places relationships at the heart of its practice. It shows that the governance structure is robust and flexible in responding to situations such as the purchase and the management of the Partington Collection. The Museum has the capacity to respond to change, however the maintenance of relationships is paramount and relationships by definition have more than one participant. The Museum must find ways of engaging at the right level, and at the right time with iwi<sup>118</sup>. Iwi must also maintain the relationship if it is to be successful.

This story began with the Museum following the recognised pathway of orthodox museum collection management policy and practice. It was diverted from that pathway by the complexity of the Collection, the complexity of the transaction and the complexity of the relationships the participants shared. The result has been an acknowledgement by the Museum that its collection management policy is a living document that must change to honestly reflect the interests of the community. Work has been done by Joint Council members

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<sup>118</sup> Personal Communication Dell 29 May 2008.

and staff on the rewriting of the collection management policy to include more acceptable practice guidelines on the Whanganui Taonga Māori Collection and the Repatriation of Taonga Māori. The Museum is continually working to make policy relevant, robust and community responsive. The community have reacted to this responsiveness in positive ways. The placing of the McGregor album into the direct care of Tikanga Māori House is an example of iwi acknowledging the authority of the governance structure and also that their taonga tuku iho have a safe place within the institution. Legally however, Tikanga Māori House cannot accept gifts to the collection or establish ownership over collections. The Museum's collections are held in trust for the people of the Whanganui Region by the Whanganui Regional Museum Trust's Joint Council<sup>119</sup>.

The following chapter details the scope of colonial photography and its role in providing a significant documentary of the lives of indigenous peoples. It also discusses the changed value of the Partington Collection from the documentary source of the 19th and early 20th century to the taonga tuku iho of today. The chapter provides evidence of the extent and importance of the Collection and endeavours to introduce the participants in the images – the sitters and the photographer.

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<sup>119</sup> Whanganui Regional Museum Trust Constitution September 2000.

# 4

## The Collection

### Introduction

When a collection of this magnitude comes into the public arena the world of historical New Zealand photography, as we know it, changes somewhat. Through the collection we are given a rare glimpse of a world and its people long gone. We are given an opportunity to travel back in time, to observe details, man made and natural; large and small; simple and complex; new and old, that these images contain (Perry in Webb 2001: 16).

John Perry describes the Partington Collection through the eyes of a former museum director; a dealer in decorative arts and historic artefacts, and an authority on kiwiana. He has observed the obvious: what the images convey visually, indeed, what W. H. T. Partington wanted you to see. He describes the Collection's value in terms of historic artefacts and belonging to the fabric of New Zealand photography.

The value placed on these photographs by Māori comes from the heart and the mind. The importance of this Collection has been reconfigured. It now has a significance that Partington could never have dreamed of when the photographs left Whanganui in 1908. In 2002 the photographs returned, the significance of the images as historic artefacts remains, and other types of significance have been recognised. For Whanganui Māori the Partington Collection has a life force: these are representations of the tāngata whenua of the Whanganui region. The authority of the colonial photographer has been subjugated by the sheer force of this connection. The images of their tūpuna are no-longer lost and unknown.

This chapter explores the nature of photography as an apparatus of colonisation. Photography emerged as a mobile technology in the Victorian age, documenting and facilitating the European expansion into Africa, the Americas and the Pacific. While on the surface photography is seen to offer a

'real' account of the new people and places encountered by explorers and settlers, in fact photographic images offer constructions of reality reinforcing European cultural values and colonial perceptions of indigenous peoples.

This chapter articulates the larger context within which Partington's photography can be located. Partington's work is typical of those photographers whose images reinforced the stereotypical views held at the time of indigenous peoples.

This chapter also provides an analysis of the types of images contained in the Collection of Whanganui photographs. The images were sorted into categories to gain a perspective of the motivations of Partington and his sitters. The value of the Collection is weighed, as a reflection of a moment in time, as an influence on museum practice. The life of the Collection begins with the photographer and the sitter, setting the trajectory for the many phases of the Collection's life and influence.

## **Part One: Colonial Photography**

In the context of this thesis, the nature of colonial photography indicates a tension between the documentary realism of the past and a decolonised present in which taonga tuku iho take their place within a museum collection. The chapter identifies the place of photographs in museum collections, from their earliest use as anthropological tools and as evidence of context, to the current understanding that the images were often staged and not a true reflection of the lives of indigenous peoples.

There is something predatory in the act of taking a picture. To photograph people is to violate them by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed (Sontag 1990).

In response to Sontag's assertion the descendants of the Partington Collection have refuted the symbolic possession of their tūpuna by Pākehā, and in

particular by the commercial sector. Today the value of the photograph is decided by the descendants of the people in the photograph and it is recognised that emotion surrounding their ownership can create cultural disharmony.

The era of focus is from the middle of the nineteenth-century until the early twentieth century. Partington was active in Wanganui and along the Whanganui River between 1892 and 1908. Researching the work of Partington and his contemporaries, both in New Zealand and overseas, provides an insight into the rationale behind the photographs he took. This is despite the lack of personal comment or documentary evidence from Partington himself. In doing so we begin to understand photographs as different kinds of historical objects whose meaning changes in different social situations (Willumson in Edwards and Hart, 2004: 63). In acknowledging contemporary researchers as observers and interpreters of the photographs, it is important to remember that they apply their own set of cultural values and beliefs.

### **Colonial Photography in New Zealand & Partington's Contribution**

The Polynesian Society (Incorporated 1926) was founded in 1892 in a bid to document the peoples of Oceania, before they were overwhelmed by the impact of diseases and other European influences. The Society produced the quarterly Journal of the Polynesian Society, gathering and publishing information on the indigenous cultures of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia in an ethnographic context<sup>120</sup>. President of the Society, Elsdon Best used a Partington photograph in his 1924 book The Maori. This photograph of a Whanganui woman is unidentified and captioned "A Maori woman of so-called Melanesian type. Note the bridgeless nose and distended nostrils<sup>121</sup>." As Appadurai notes, such typicalised captions capture subjects as both tokens and types (1997: 4-5). In this case, tokens of a disappearing race and the archiving of an artefact. By

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<sup>120</sup> Entry in *Te Ara - the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*. Wellington: New Zealand Government. <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/1966/P/PolynesianSociety/en>. 10/03/2006. McLintock (Ed.).

<sup>121</sup> She was in fact Mutu Brandon (Ngamoenga), nee Takarangi, wife of T. Brandon. (Whanganui Regional Museum Partington Collection No. 110b).

1923, however, this notion of salvage<sup>122</sup> ethnography was being questioned; an article in the Auckland Star stated that Māori were too adaptable as a race to perish (Goldie Scrapbook, vol. 2, from Auckland Star 13 September 1923).

It is difficult to appreciate the motives of nineteenth century photographers entirely and indeed it is with different eyes and insight that we now try to interpret their work. Certainly the money to be made selling images to a public eager to consume would have been hugely influential. No personal or professional records left by W. H. T. Partington have come to light to date, but reading the available diaries and articles of some of his contemporaries gives an impression of professionals who did not consciously set out to exploit. They were simply providing a service with honesty and integrity. A number of hardy individuals did go into the field endeavouring to take photographs of Māori in their kainga. Benoni White was commissioned to take photographs of the Whanganui River by the Whanganui River Trust Board River Inspection Party, February 1908. He noted that:

The impression at once strikes one of how natural it always seems to find the Maori amidst these natural wilds and unconventional grandeur. Their duskiness of visage and irregular attire appear in harmony with aspects of nature around, whilst the Pākehā, more often than not, seems exotic.  
(White 1908: 9)

Female photographers were rare at this time, but one in particular, Margaret Mathilda White, stood out as wanting to record Māori as an observer, rather than as a creator of context. She is described as having approached Māori people with openness and sensitivity to the cultural and social realities of her subjects (McDonald 1999: 732). White was unable to be admitted to the Auckland Photographic Society in the 1890s because of her gender, “It is to be presumed that the nature of Margaret White’s images would have accorded rather less well to the traditional, male, outlook” (Walker 1982: 1).

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<sup>122</sup> See Clifford 1987: 121-130.

Such is the power of the placement of Māori in European social constructs through art and photography that these images have shaped the way both Māori and Pākehā perceive the history of Aotearoa. Such images created impressions of fiction rather than fact. The representations of the Te Arawa legend of the love between Hinemoa and Tutanekai are an example, with numerous artists and photographers creating scenes with these Māori characters, but reminiscent of a European love story. Often the Māori woman representing Hinemoa was posed nude, fig 4:1 and 4:2 (page 85), and in an era where nudity was frowned upon by society, with very few images available of European women posed in this way, the artist was in fact creating a symbolic possession for both himself and his European audience.

As a nude, as a romance heroine, and as an art museum piece the character from Arawa legend, her Maoriness indicated by skin colour, physiognomy, dress, and ornament, was thoroughly assimilated into European culture (Bell 1992: 217).

## **Commercial Photography**

Suspicion that the demise of indigenous peoples was imminent motivated photographers to record them and their traditional lifestyle. European influence had by this time truly impacted on the life of all colonised peoples, but this was not seen as a hindrance by the commercial photographer. Props were part of every photographer's kit and the same cultural identifiers were seen in images of numerous subjects. The photographer's desire to record traditional cultures was not to be hindered by the fact most indigenous peoples had already been significantly influenced by European contact and had adopted European clothing, hairstyles and affectations. The same *modus operandi* was used all over the world from the harems of Algeria...





Fig 4:1 The original photo of Meri Nereaha taken by Gottfried Lindauer in 1884. Posed to represent Hinemoa. Note her unhappy facial expression indicative of her discomfort.

Private collection  
Reproduced with the permission of  
Leonard Bell

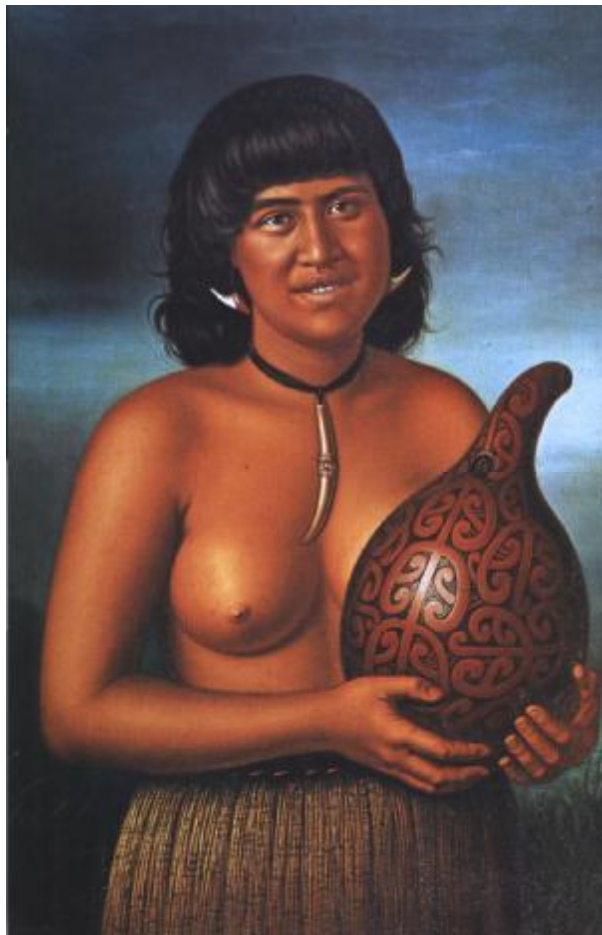


Fig 4:2 *Laughing Girl* by Gottfried Lindauer, 1885, oil on canvas, based on the original photograph of Meri Nereaha. Note the expression is now a happy one.

Whanganui Regional Museum  
Collection  
Reproduced with permission

Everywhere the same inlaid table is covered with the same copper platter on which stands the same cups that are so awkward to drink from. All this paraphernalia, combined with such an obvious poverty of imagination, turns the metaphor into a schema - worse, a stereotype. But that is the rather banal and yet deadly fate that is very familiar to the postcard (Alloula 1986: 74).

To Fiji...

Both the mug shot and the ethnographic photograph transform the conditions of the portraiture from aesthetic to science. The examples of Fijian men holding war clubs, which signify to the colonial observer the barbarity and simpleness of their culture, are examples of ethnographic caricatures. (Art Gallery of New South Wales 1997: 33).

Anne Maxwell (1999) studied a number of nineteenth century exhibitions as well as a wide range of colonial photographs from America, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Samoa. She is critical of the fraudulent authenticity employed by some of the photographers and the resulting "acceptable face of genocide" that resulted (Maxwell 1999: 110-111).

It is clear that the postcard phenomenon that swept the world from the 1890s influenced photographers to create stereotypes because of their popularity with the buying public and that this had consequent effects, stereotyping indigenous peoples in the eyes of the purchasers and recipients.

Several categories of Maori pictures acquired special popularity from this time and in turn influenced the taking of new photographs: nostalgic depictions of 'old time' Maori, last in the line of noble warriors and tohungas; re-enactments of pre-European Maori scenes in allegedly period costume; scenes of country idylls aping those of London photographic salons; Madonna-like Maori women; alluring maidens; depictions of erotic but innocent 'noble' savages; cute renditions of children; and coon humour cards which portrayed Maori as simple foolish folk, unable to cope with the complexities of western civilisation. All these were a more telling reflection of European attitudes than of the features of Maori life. They showed little

or nothing of the squalor and the vitality that more commonly characterised Maori communities of that time. (King 1996: 2)

The commercialisation of images of indigenous peoples became the most common motivation for photographers between 1880 and 1910. Their audience was mostly European and therefore the settings were most often European. Unlike Partington, relatively few photographers went into the field, preferring to photograph 'native' subjects in their studios. The majority had favourite subjects, who were posed – with its double implication of posture as stance and posture as deception (Appadurai 1997: 6) - within their studio, in a truly exploitative manner.

European colonial photographers created culturally loaded images (King 1996: 5). The photographer manipulated the appearance, arrangement and behaviour of the subject according to their preconceptions and adherence to the established conventions of European art. The scenes were artificial constructs and therefore challenge the notion that the camera does not lie. In fact, most

...activities central to the day-to-day workings of Maori communal life are entirely absent because they did not fit notions of what was photogenic, because they did not represent Maori in contexts that a Pakeha audience would recognise, or because it would have been technically difficult to record them. (ibid.: 5)

## **Summary**

Colonial photographers who took photographs of indigenous peoples responded to a range of motivations. They include the classification and documentation of indigenous peoples and the assumed superiority of European society and technology. To demonstrate that indigenous peoples were no threat to potential colonials, tourists were encouraged by colonising governments. Photographs were used to document traditional life styles in the belief that indigenous peoples were dying out or being absorbed into the dominant colonising culture.

While Partington and his contemporaries may have been keen to document colonial society, the need to survive in a harsh commercial world produced different inducements (Sullivan 1990: 75). New Zealand photographers found a ready market for pictures of Māori in traditional attire or to fulfil more specialised tastes for erotica (ibid.: 71).

Māori also employed photographers to take photographs. While Māori determined the nature of these photographs, copyright remained with the photographer.

The documentation of landscapes and rural Māori settlements would have been challenging for photographers given the cumbersome equipment and inaccessibility of the Whanganui hinterland. Nevertheless there would have been sufficient financial incentive for these photographers to capture the River, the landscapes and the small Māori settlements of interest to colonial settlers in the towns and to relatives at 'home' in Great Britain.

The next section focuses on the Partington Collection of Whanganui Māori photographs, providing an analysis of these photographs. By analysing his images closely it is possible to gain an understanding of his studio practice and his techniques while engaged in documenting landscapes.

## **Part Two: Partington's Whanganui Māori Photographic Collection**

Partington described himself as an art photographer and as such would have searched for new and stimulating muses. This, along with financial reward, would have influenced his work with Māori, especially in the studio. The collection of 500 albumen<sup>123</sup> prints and 250 glass-plate negatives was acquired by the Whanganui Regional Museum in 2002, with financial and collective support from Whanganui Māori organisations and other funding bodies. Prior to this acquisition there were approximately 50 photographs identified as being from the Partington studio in the Whanganui Regional Museum collection.

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<sup>123</sup> A technique that used an emulsion of egg white and exposure to daylight; in common use from 1850 to 1920 (McCready 2003).

The analysis presented includes comparisons with the images of other photographers of Māori who were active at the same time, particularly Partington's former business partner Josiah Martin whose stylistic influence on Partington is evident. Margaret Mathilda White, whose images of Māori are considered insightful and honestly reflective of the era (Walker 1982), and Frank Denton, whose early career overlapped with Partington's in Wanganui, will also be discussed. Partington's Whanganui River Māori photographs comprise the River, people and kāinga from Pūtiki to Taumarunui as well as outdoor town shots.

### **Partington's Commercial Photography**

In 1892 W. H. T. Partington stepped wholeheartedly into Whanganui life, he established his studio in the main street and poured time and energy into promoting his business<sup>124</sup>. His photography was very modern compared with other photographers working in Wanganui at the time and he appears to have established a flourishing trade amongst the settlers in a very competitive market. However, while settler studio work was his bread and butter Partington is acknowledged as an important photographer of Māori subjects, alongside Burton, Foy, McGarrigle, Pulman, Carnell and Martin (Main 1976: 6). His reputation is based on his photographs of Whanganui Māori, taken between 1892 and 1908.

The turn of the twentieth century was a pivotal time for Māori with many leaving their traditional rohe and their extended family lifestyle and being influenced by Pākehā cultural practices. Urbanisation reduced populations in the kāinga, sometimes only leaving the young and old to tend the marae (King 1996: 2).

The lifestyle and traditions of the Maori were turned upside down with their gradual infiltration of European material culture into their way of life. Many of these photos capture the speed and nature of that impact. A good example is the wearing of European clothes, shoes and jewellery spearheading that change (Perry in Webb and Perry 2001:16).

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<sup>124</sup> Partington's life and professional practice are described in appendix IV.

Partington's documentation of these changes amongst Whanganui Māori was fortuitous. It is worth noting that Partington seems to have photographed only the Māori of Whanganui, even though he lived in other parts of New Zealand during his career as a photographer.

The identity of the people in the photographs is important to descendants and researchers, but like many nineteenth century photographers of Māori, Partington recorded only the first names of some of his subjects, and no identity at all for the majority. It was common for photographers of this era to show no concern for the sitter as an individual (McCready 2003). Partington would occasionally write a name, location and date on a negative, but more often it would just be a generic first name and the vast majority of photographs have no record of name, location or iwi at all. A striking example of this behaviour is revealed when the Carnell photo reproduced in Main's 1976 book Maori in Focus identified the subject as Albert the Wool Carrier (p. 47). This identifier was written by Carnell on the original glass plate negative. Was this how the person was known by the settlers in the town? Or was it purely an imposition of the photographer? The book, edited by Dr. Miria Simpson in 2003, Nga Taumata: a portrait of Ngati Kahungungu he whakaahua o Ngati Kahungungu 1870 – 1906, identifies the same portrait subjects as Arapata and Ripeka Hakiwai (p. 48) and includes a comprehensive whakapapa. Research with their descendants for the book revealed their true identity, and includes Arapata's wife's name.

Josiah Martin, of Auckland, who took photographs of Māori in this era behaved similarly. A close inspection of Martin's collection at the Auckland War Memorial Museum reveals the same lack of detail, and this makes it difficult, five generations later, to identify the many individuals in the photographs.

However, Margaret Mathilda White a photographer from the same era was notable not only for the quality of her images but also for the collection of information about the people in her photographs. Her collection of Māori portraits, held at the Whangarei Museum and Kiwi House Heritage Park, have comprehensive information attached. Most have the name, iwi, marae and

town recorded, and in some cases, links to other family members also appear. White recorded this information through discussion with her sitters at the time she undertook the work.

The fact that she did this increases the value of the collection exponentially, enabling researchers and descendants to view with certain knowledge the identity of the subject. She portrays her subjects with an acknowledgment of their interests, and the active role they played in 20<sup>th</sup> century New Zealand. An interesting example is accessioned as 1535.340, a portrait of Ruakura Mahupuku, Ngāti Kahungunu, Hastings. Ruakura wears European clothing and a traditional korowai. She is holding an open book, perhaps indicating her love of literature or as a symbol of her status as a keeper of knowledge. It could also simply be a prop or a reflection of the photographer's values.

Where most photographers of Maori portrayed them as captive to tradition, White was intent on showing that they identified with European culture in some contexts and with Maori in others (Maxwell 1999: 183).

In the case of the Partington Collection of Whanganui Māori, research and liaison with the community to date has revealed some names and whakapapa of a small percentage of the previously unidentified people. It is understood that the identification process will be an ongoing one, requiring a great deal of time and resource. It is also acknowledged that many of the people will never be identified. The process to establish names and identity is documented in chapter three (pp72-75).

To gain a better understanding of Partington's methodology<sup>125</sup> as a professional photographer and to position the people in the photographs in a motivational context it was necessary to divide the Partington Collection of Whanganui Māori Photographs into four categories:

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<sup>125</sup> Partington's business records have not survived, though this does not mean that he did not keep comprehensive records. A Partington studio album in the Auckland City Library collection has very little supplementary information to add to the negatives and list that was stored with the photographs and glass-plate negatives which are now held at the Whanganui Regional Museum.

- i. Images produced by Partington for commercial gain, and taken in his studio
- ii. Images taken in the field as documentary
- iii. Images taken in the field for commercial gain
- iv. Images commissioned by Māori for their own purposes

In each category Partington's technique, style and aesthetic quality are analysed. The technological advances of photography and Partington's ability to embrace these advances to his advantage are discussed in appendix IV Partington and His Photographic Practice.

### **Studio Photographs Produced by Partington for Commercial Gain**

Photographs solicited by Partington make up more than 50% of the Collection. They are identifiable by both content and style. Typically the photographs are of a single female<sup>126</sup>, dressed in traditional korowai wrapped around the chest, leaving the arms exposed, or drawn up tight around the neck, probably hiding the European street clothes worn beneath. Many are adorned with greenstone taonga worn around the neck or in the ear with a feather or two in the hair. "Pounamu certainly seems to be the stone of choice" (Perry in Webb 2001: 16). In full body portraits the women are holding a tewhatewha, taiaha, wahaika or poi. Sometimes a backdrop was employed, the triangular composition always placing the subject in the central frame. Age varies from young child to elderly adult, but the young and beautiful were the most numerous because of their commercial popularity. This genre of photograph was sometimes sold as postcards with the legend 'Dusky Maiden' or 'Native Beauty' written across the bottom.

Often the sitter would face the camera, while a profile would encourage a distant gaze (e.g. fig 4:3 page 97). Facial expressions seemed to be the greatest variable, from smiles to frowns, indifference to concern, or even sadness. This is in contrast to the non-Māori portraits of the era that show

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<sup>126</sup> 30% of the total Collection are females taken in the studio.



absolute control, almost expressionless faces<sup>127</sup>, during the formal photographic process.

The aesthetic quality of these commercial photographs varied according to the photographer's skill. There is no doubt that Partington had a very good eye for composition. His subjects were posed thoughtfully, taking advantage of natural light and shadow. He took time to inspire mood and expression. This is evident in the array of tone and feeling that is achieved in his collection. Some of the sitters, however, could not be swayed from their obvious feelings of dismay at the whole process, and their demeanour displays a sense of uncertainty<sup>128</sup>.

In studying the Partington Collection of Whanganui Māori it appears that, unlike Frank Denton, Partington did not experiment with artificial lighting. Figs 4: 3 and 4: 4 page 97, are used for comparison between the two photographers. While they were taken only five years apart their aesthetic qualities are quite different. The Partington photograph fig 4:3 uses natural studio lighting that washes over the girl's back and shoulder. It is a profile portrait that uses light and dark to provide depth and ambience. In Denton's image fig 4:4, artificial lighting floods the girl's right side and floats onto the table creating not only a fore and back-ground, but a mid-ground. Denton's technical and aesthetic quality is superior to Partington's work. The effect creates an implied saintliness surrounding the child.

Josiah Martin has created a very striking foreground: the backdrop is blurred to draw the eye to the face at the centre of the composition fig 4:5 (page 97). The sitter has a generic identifier. If the photographers from this era are to be believed, all Māori women were called either Mere, Pare, Ngapera or Huia! Many of Partington's photographs are after this style; the pose is reproduced time after time, as is the costume, backdrop and aesthetic arrangement and quality. The only thing that varies is the face, the moko, and the taonga worn.

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<sup>127</sup> See appendix IV Partington and his Photographic Practice.

<sup>128</sup> See Fig 4:22 page 111.

Men and boys were also photographed for commercial purposes. They were often posed in a warrior stance (e.g. fig 4:6 page 98), in traditional attire, carrying a weapon and manifesting a fierce expression. Describing Partington's male portraits, John Perry stated "...his portraits of Maori men of stature are strong and powerful" (Webb 2001: 16). Similar to portrait titles of females, this genre often carried a generic inscription like 'Māori Warrior' or 'Māori Chief'. Partington portrayed Māori females as exotic, biddable and able to be possessed, the men as dangerous, savage warriors. Neither stereotype reflected Whanganui Māori in any true sense.

Occasionally an illusion of the outdoors was brought into the studio with tree branches and flaxes lining the studio walls. More commonly the subject was seated passively with a plain background and facing the camera. Partington rarely took photographs of male Māori in street clothes, preferring to dress them in traditional costume. Sometimes trousers and heavy boots peek out from underneath a cloak, ruining the magic completely. Sun tan lines are also a give away; clearly the sitter did not get around with a bare chest in his everyday life.

The blanketed tattoo-spiralled old warrior was a decidedly more interesting type than the present generation of Maori rangatira who as often as not wears tailor made clothes of the latest pattern, and whirls to the races in a motor car. (Smit 1995: 42)

Josiah Martin recreated an outdoor setting for this photograph, fig 4:7 (page 98). The subject is adorned with feathers and holds both a patu and a taiaha, but these are purely props without an authentic context. His face is passive and is similar to many of Partington's studio photographs produced for commercial gain. They were sold to tourist magazines, newspapers and to the general public as postcards (Smit 2003: 11-12). Smit suggests Partington had a sense of humour concerning the artificial stereotype he was promoting (ibid.: 11-12).

We do not know what contractual arrangements Partington had with his sitters but there is some evidence that sitters were paid to pose by photographers at this time. Josiah Martin stated in 1894 that Chiefs of rank were becoming

increasingly reluctant to sit for their likenesses unless they were offered a “substantial consideration”. He commented that “Maori at the major tourist resorts would often pose for a shilling or two” (Main 1976: 68). In 1899 Martin told of an experience a travelling photographer had while camped at Koriniti on the Whanganui River<sup>129</sup>. He was in search of suitable subjects for his camera. Most of the village were in Wanganui attending Land Court hearings and the photographer only found old people. He succeeded in getting one old man to pose for a portrait, but that evening the villagers returned and asked the koro what had happened that day. The old man described the photographer as a “harmless lunatic” who was “making pictures in a box with one eye”. The young people argued that the photographer was out to swindle the old man and sell his photographs from his shop window in Wanganui;

He will sell you to the Pakeha. You will be sold for a bob! You will be sold for a bob! Where is he staying? Don't let him go without paying. You make him pay; make him pay<sup>130</sup>.

The commercial imperatives were understood by Whanganui Māori and they voiced their concern that photographers were abusing their trust and making a profit with their images.

### **Use of Studio Props**

After reviewing the studio images in the Collection several times it became evident that a number of items appeared repeatedly in the hands of, or adorning the bodies of numerous individuals. The obvious conclusion is that they were Partington's studio props. His great-granddaughter mentioned one cloak with peacock feathers that must have remained in the family's possession as she had a vague memory of it. But there are other items such as a taiaha, tewhatewha (e.g. fig 4:19 page 107), wahaika, (e.g. fig 4:20 and fig 4:21 page 110), and kotiate, that grace many of the photographs. A number of hei tiki and other pounamu adornments are worn by different people. It is difficult to tell if

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<sup>129</sup> Martin, J. (1899). On the Wanganui – a reminiscence by the editor. *Sharland's New Zealand Photographer*. September. In Graham-Stewart and Gow (2006).

<sup>130</sup> *ibid.*

the wearers are family members, and therefore have the right to wear the taonga, or if they are simply studio props without any connection to the wearer. There are clues, particularly with family resemblances, but without certified identifications it would be presumptuous to declare relationships on the basis that people are sharing adornments.

A number of cloaks are worn in a variety of ways by males and females. In some photographs cloaks are also used as floor coverings. It is likely the cloaks cover the European street clothing worn by the subject. Partington seems to have owned at least half a dozen cloaks including kahu huruhuru, kaitaka paepaeroa, korowai, korowai karure and piupiu.



Fig 4:3 Unidentified woman  
with poi, wearing a korowai.

Whanganui Regional Museum  
Collection reference Partington  
Collection No.90b  
Reproduced with permission



Fig 4:4 *Māori Girl*, 1903. Frank Denton  
1869-1963, photographer Wanganui.  
Portrait of an unidentified Māori girl in  
traditional costume holding poi.

Permission to reproduce: Denton Album,  
Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z.  
Reference number G- 21010-1/1-



Fig 4:5 *Ngapera*  
Auckland War Memorial Museum  
Josiah Martin Collection

Reference 15.443  
Reproduced with permission



Fig 4:6 Unidentified man with wahaika, wearing a korowai, feather and earring. His face shows the warrior pūkana. This is the last in a series of images of this man portraying warrior stance.

Whanganui Regional Museum  
Collection reference Partington  
Collection No.72c  
Reproduced with permission

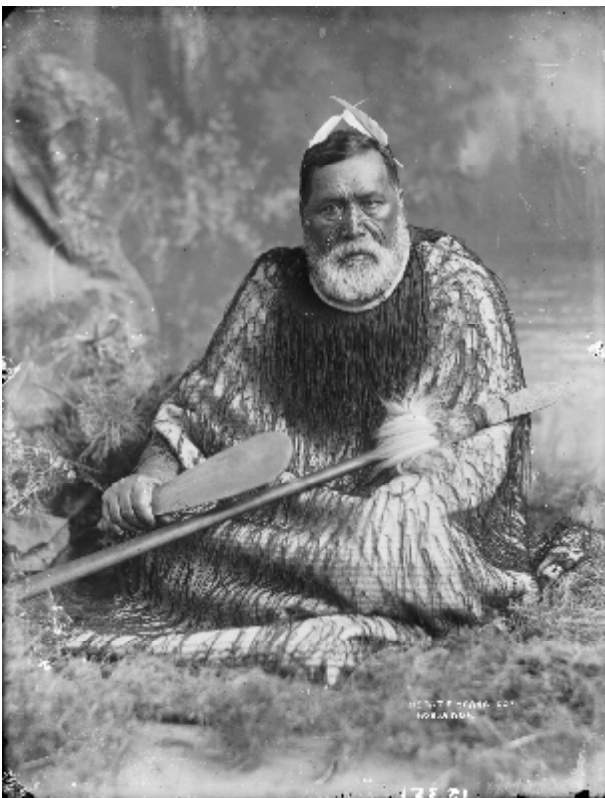


Fig 4:7 Auckland War Memorial Museum  
Josiah Martin Collection  
*Heta Te Haara*

Reference 15.351  
Reproduced with permission

A very large kumete features in a series of photographs with a young man, identified as Hore or Reone, displaying it proudly. This taonga is part of the Whanganui Regional Museum's collection (accession number 1800.18). The kumete has no known provenance. In 2000 Roger Neich, an expert in nineteenth century Māori carving, described it as expertly carved and attributed the kumete to Anaha Te Rahui, from Rotorua, (b. 1822, d. 1913). It is possible that Partington purchased the kumete, however the photographs it is featured in were taken at Pūtiki so it is more likely it was owned by a Pūtiki whānau.

### **Photographs Taken in the Field as Documentary**

The Whanganui Regional Museum Photographers' Index states that Partington went on a Whanganui River expedition in January 1895. This would suggest he took a number of images of Māori on the River at this time, but no records exist that describe this expedition. Whanganui photographer Benoni White's writings acknowledge the difficulties in taking photographs away from the studio. He was part of an expedition to document the River in 1908 for the Wanganui River Trust Board. The equipment available to photographers at this time was still cumbersome and required extraordinary perseverance, and often, physical strength to carry it from location to location. He describes waiting until nightfall to construct a temporary dark room in the cabin of the MV *Ongarue*. And while it is clear he is using the gelatin dry-plate process, it is apparent that working away from the comfort of a studio caused stressful working conditions.

Mr Renney keeps guard over the sanctity of my ceremony performed on knees on cabin floor in cramped distorted pose. For me this is a very bad quarter of an hour. All through the tension of the task are the fretful queries of 'where' and 'which' as plates are groped out of slides, set aside on an insecure, erratic and wobbly plate box lid: new packets opened somewhere, slides refilled somehow, with discharged plates hiding up one place or another. Some plates are now exposed, and some unexposed, and which is which? And what about 'fluff' off the agitated blanket, not to speak of dust-specks (White 1908: 14).

White was often dependant upon the assistance of his Māori guides to ensure he captured the image he was after.

Messrs Cummins, Stewart and Renney get out on shingle below rapid to examine 'walling work', with camera, I am carried across pools and waterholes by sturdy limbed Maori, and eventually find myself elevated on to papa rock, slippery with slimy moisture oozing through the fungus growth covered rock. Being barefoot I count to some extent on toenails for steadfastness. The tripod is best off with spiked feet. A good view is taken, and once more chattels and self are again consigned to the hearty Maori embrace (ibid.: 30).

Another photographer who went into the field was Josiah Martin, the senior partner to Partington during his early career in Auckland. Martin became a regular contributor of images to The New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal and in 1894 wrote an article on his adventures into the wilds of New Zealand with his camera.

There being few explorers among those curious and intensely interesting sights, the Maori have not opened a tract between them, so that travelling, unencumbered with photo gear, is not very easy work; but our party divide the properties between them, and thus share the burdens of the camera man.

On describing his attempt to photograph a geyser that would not perform, Martin elaborated on the difficulties experienced by the photographer in trying to capture a precise image under difficult conditions.

Then we try an incantation, but the Maori have turned Mormon, and have forgotten the ancient charms. Then we curse in Maori, then in terse and vigorous Saxon; but it waketh not his wrath...Then we all declare that the camera has made him sulky and has worked all the mischief and disappointment, and that if the offending instrument was thrown into his bubbling throat he might be appeased.



What a chance for the camera! So we very hastily prepare for action. The effect seen upon the ground-glass is magical; but just as we are pulling out the slide our picture is completely wiped out by a rush of wind, which comes sweeping through the gorge, and our expressions of delight are as quickly changed to despair. Our companions console us by the confident assurance that we can get the photograph again on our return. They cannot realise that there is not one day in a hundred when the conditions will be in such favourable combination (Martin The New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal, 4 August 1894. *An Excursion and a Disappointment*).

Because of Partington's desire to detail the lives of Whanganui River Māori in their kainga, it is possible he was interested in documenting the impact of the changing political and technological climate and the influence this was having on the economic and social life of Māori. His photographs indicate that pā life was sparse with none of the benefits of living in town such as sanitation, gas lighting, flower gardens or footpaths. The housing varied from traditional low roofed and rush walled whare to those with European-influenced sawn timber walls, a higher stud and corrugated iron roofing. Many are a combination of technologies (e.g. fig 4:10 page 103). The larger wharehau feature strongly in his images, showing the beautifully carved poutoukomanawa, poupou and pare that identify them as uniquely Māori. Cultivations and urupā are evident, as indicated by kanuka branch fences.



Fig 4:8 Unidentified children outside a cottage style whare, Tawhata, March 1902. Whanganui Regional Museum Collection reference Partington Collection No.43b Reproduced with permission.

Partington captures a group of children outside their home at Tawhata. The image documents their living conditions and brings to the attention of the general public the less than comfortable situation of rural Māori. It in no way romanticises the circumstances Māori find themselves in at the turn of the twentieth century.



Fig 4:9 Unidentified group of women and children. Whanganui Regional Museum Collection reference Partington Collection No.66c Reproduced with permission

This group of women are seated outside a whare that was built from weatherboard. Two of the women smoke pipes. The young girls are framed by their elders. Partington has captured the role of elders in raising their mokopuna by producing a photograph that doesn't include the children's mothers, thereby embracing the communal responsibility of the extended family.



Fig 4:10 Two women and their babies, Utapu Pa, March 1902.  
Whanganui Regional Museum Collection reference Partington Collection No. 52b

The photograph of Utapu Pa reveals a scene of domestic life. The woollen blankets are hung between the whare on lines or draped over fences for their daily airing, there is an abandoned ball in the left foreground and a contented dog lies sleeping as the young women hold their babies up to be photographed. The baby on the left is resplendent in matching white dress and bonnet, while the mothers wear men's fedora and bowler hats.



Fig 4:11 Unidentified girl paddling a waka on the Whanganui River.

Whanganui Regional Museum Collection reference  
Partington Collection No. 152d  
Reproduced with permission

Waka feature in many of Partington's River photographs. In fig 4:11, a young girl stands at the bow with her paddle in the water. She has turned herself to face the camera at the photographer's behest, as she would be aware that she needs to look where she is going. The waka is small, designed to efficiently transport people and goods at speed, with a very shallow draft to negotiate the many rapids on the River. River craft was taught from an early age. Whanganui River Māori were proficient at navigating and negotiating its difficult shallows and dangerous rocky outcrops.



Fig 4:12 Unidentified group at Pūtiki Wharanui in front of pataka  
Whanganui Regional Museum Collection reference Partington Collection No. 56a. Reproduced with permission.

(Fig 4:12) This pataka is named Te Awa Nui Arua, and still exists at Pūtiki Marae, in the settlement opposite the city centre of Wanganui. The tōtara tekoteko, amo and poupou are mixed with corrugated iron, weatherboards and colonial villa doors. The four foundation poles are crafted from tree trunks with impressive girth, probably tōtara. Carpet and bedding are airing on the fence. A goose passes under the steps. Vast arrays of items from a bath to canoe paddles are stored under the building. The group includes two men, one of whom is Pākehā sitting on a waka tauihu (Fig 4:12a). The possibility that this may be Partington arises; he sits at an interesting angle as if he is doing something with his left hand, perhaps the camera shutter mechanism. No images of the photographer exist, so this is a tantalising photograph. From a technical perspective it is rather poor; the tekoteko is cut off, as are the children in the foreground. It is badly centred, indicating the photographer was not behind the camera.



Fig 4:12a



Fig 4:13 Nypara (sic)  
Waterfall, Wanganui  
(sic) River. N.Z. Photo  
by Partington.

Whanganui Regional  
Museum Collection  
reference Postcard  
Collection River Scenes  
Reproduced with  
permission



Fig 4:14 Waterfall, Pipiriki. N.Z.  
No 4747

Whanganui Regional Museum  
Photograph Collection reference  
Postcard Collection River Scenes  
Reproduced with permission

The same photograph by  
Partington, fig 4:13 and fig 4:14,  
the cropped colourised version  
renamed and edited, perhaps  
even printed at this stage by  
another publisher.





Fig 4:15 Preparing For  
The Haka, Wanganui

Whanganui Regional  
Museum Collection  
reference Postcard  
Collection Māori  
Reproduced with  
permission

The landscape in this photograph is identifiable as down river from Upokongaru. The reason for the event is not recorded. The participants carry taiaha and patu and they challenge the camera with vigour. Partington captures this action shot without any blurring of figures, showcasing his talent with the instantaneous technology available to him.



Fig 4:16 Unidentified  
mother and child.

Whanganui Regional  
Museum Collection  
reference Partington  
52b.  
Reproduced with  
permission

Partington took many photographs of a mother with her baby carried on her back, this one taken outside the studio. Both subjects appear at ease with the baby addressing the camera and smiling.



Fig 4:17 Jane Chadwick or Tini Rangiao with Partington's tewhatewha, a kahukiwi and pounamu taonga.  
Whanganui Regional Museum Collection  
reference Partington 17d.  
Reproduced with permission



Fig 4:18 Jane Chadwick or Tini Rangiao wearing puipui and holding Partington's wahaika.  
Whanganui Regional Museum Collection  
reference Partington 80b  
Reproduced with permission

The collection numbers indicate these photographs of Jane Chadwick or Tini Rangiao were taken some time apart. She looks quite relaxed and perhaps was a regular sitter. In the photographs she wears different garments and holds different props. The puipui looks very similar to the one the girl (right) is wearing on the right in fig 4:19.



Fig 4:19 Three young girls, wearing puipui and korowai and holding Partington's tewhatewha and wahaika. The child far right is identified as Ruakohatu Hunia née Ropata, (Ngāti Apa).  
Whanganui Regional Museum Collection  
reference Partington 109b.  
Reproduced with permission

All three of the garments worn by the girls in fig 4:19 appear on other people throughout the Collection. The tewhatewha and wahaika are used purely as props, without any attempt to place them in an authentic context.

These photographs are distinct from those taken for commercial gain due to the clothing the subjects are wearing, generally well-worn European garments. The only remnant of traditional style is the multi purpose woollen blanket that was worn like a korowai. There is no attempt by Partington to recontextualise participants or to place them in unauthentic clothing, as was the commercial norm at the beginning of the 20th century (Main 1976). The women and girls often wear skirts and blouses, but none dress themselves in the restrictive corsetry their settler counterparts wore. Some wear shoes or boots but most are barefoot. Males wear trousers and shirts with a number sporting waist coats, jackets, hats and boots. Both sexes are fond of neck scarves. Partington poses them in family groups, often consisting of many generations. There is a fondness for cats and dogs, as they are often included in the rather unusual event of being photographed (e.g. fig 4:9 page 102). These images do not appear in any commercially sold album that have been viewed by the researcher. This is an indication that they were not sold commercially.

The fact that people and their animals move while their image matures on the glass plate negative adds an extra kinetic dimension to these strong and powerful images (Perry in Webb and Perry 2001: 16).

### **Photographs Taken in the Field for Commercial Gain**

Most of the photographs Partington took in the field for commercial gain are landscapes or riverscapes. Many of these images were sold as postcards. There are examples in the Museum collection of colourised Partington scenes, (e.g. fig 4:13 and 4:14 page 105). Those that have Māori as their main focus are group shots marking an occasion, (e.g. fig 4:15 page 106), or the formulaic pose in traditional costume in an outside environment.

### **Colourisation and Negative Enhancement**

Like a number of his contemporaries, Partington enhanced many of his glass plate negatives by adding ink and detail to the moko of a number of his subjects. William Hammond's diary, held at the Auckland War Memorial



Museum, records that Arthur Iles, photographer of Rotorua, touched up the tattoo of an old chief prior to taking his photograph (Main 1976: 27). The Partington Collection holds a number of photographs of the same person (e.g. figs 4:20 and 4:21 page 110) so it is possible to compare the actual moko with the enhanced ones (e.g. figs 4:20 and 4:21 page 110). The original pigment, often a mixture of carbonised vegetable matter, such as kauri gum, and a carrier such as shark liver oil or water (Kopua 2005), faded after a number of years, leaving only the incision. The photographer either painted the subject's face prior to taking the photograph or inked the negative before printing (ibid.)

In this way the photographer used artistic licence by retouching the moko. In her thesis concerning the repetitive use of European representations of Māori in the construction of New Zealand nationalism, Katrina Smit described the retouched moko as a desecration of the tapu nature of this cultural practice. Smit discusses a series of photographs taken of her great grandfather Ihaka Tatu Whaanga (Ngāti Kahungunu). In one image taken by Samuel Carnell he is in Pākehā dress and his moko is hardly noticeable. In the photos taken by Carnell and Harding where Whaanga is in traditional dress, his moko has been enhanced by the use of grease paint and the retouching of the negative. She believes that in each case the photographer had a reason for portraying Whaanga the way he did. The photographer wanted to portray her ancestor either as an assimilated Māori, or as a curiosity or relic of traditional Māori culture (Smit 1995 case study 1: 34). In the photograph where the negative was retouched the moko had been changed, eliminating its original meaning and distorting his lineage. The intrinsic value of the moko had been compromised (Smit 1995: 41).



Fig 4:20  
Waiwarere with  
moko enhanced  
on the glass plate  
negative.

Whanganui Regional  
Museum Collection  
reference Partington  
106a  
Reproduced with  
permission



Fig 4:21  
Waiwarere with  
her moko  
untouched

Whanganui Regional  
Museum Collection  
reference Partington  
106b.  
Reproduced with  
permission



Fig 4:22 'Rita' colourised portrait by W. H. T. Partington.

Collection of Peter and Rita Riddle, reproduced with permission



Fig 4:23 'Pare'

Whanganui Regional Museum  
Collection reference  
Partington 84a.  
Reproduced with permission

A rare example of a colourised Partington portrait (fig 4:22 page 111) came to light by chance when Englishman Peter Riddle contacted the Whanganui Regional Museum after hearing about the purchase of the Collection in the media. He wanted some information on a portrait of 'Rita' that had hung in his hallway all his married life. It had been given to his mother-in-law by her kiwi fiancé, and his wife Rita had been named after the portrait. He was very keen to find out who the 'Rita' in the portrait was. A search of the collection uncovered 'Pare', the same beautiful girl, but alas no clue to her true identity. The handwritten inscription on the back of the Riddle portrait reads:

*Rita*

*Chief Hirawanu*

*By WHTP*

Chief Hirawanu is identified in a number of Partington's photographs; however the nature of his connection with Pare or Rita is not yet established. Very little of the detail is changed from the original portrait through colourisation, although the band at the top of the piupiu (same piu piu in 4:18. 4:19 page 111) has been tidied with an added bias detail. The girl herself is simply given a life-like hue while her features remain unaltered.

### **Appropriation by Others**

Appropriation is the act of paying the photographer to use their photographs to produce new artworks. The artist J. E. Ward used Partington's photographs to lend authenticity to his work. This was not uncommon as sets of images of Māori could be purchased easily and sometimes these photographs were used as inspiration by artists. The person in the photographs never met the artist and was probably not aware that their image had been on-sold. This was almost certainly the case with Ward, but personal connections with Charles Goldie as a family member and Gottfried Lindauer who lived close by in Feilding may have been with greater collaboration.



The photograph of Ward's oil painting, fig 4:24. Perhaps the most romantic of all images; placing Māori in a pre-colonial fantasy. This image was used by Pataka in their travelling exhibition *Kiwiana*. Reproduced with permission Alexander Turnbull Library Collection NON-ATL-0038.



Fig 4:25  
Unidentified  
youth  
Whanganui  
Regional  
Museum  
Collection  
reference  
Partington 98b.  
Reproduced  
with permission



Fig 4:26 Ward  
detail  
Alexander  
Turnbull  
Library NON-  
ATL-0038  
Reproduced  
with  
permission



Fig 4:27 Ward  
detail Alexander  
Turnbull Library  
NON-ATL-0038  
Reproduced with  
permission



Fig 4:28  
Rangitupu Take  
Take  
Whanganui  
Regional  
Museum  
Collection  
reference  
Partington 75 a.  
Reproduced  
with permission

Main (1976: 3) considered that while this may have been an unethical arrangement it worked well for all concerned, the photographer, the artist and the purchaser. He doesn't mention the sitter in this equation, assuming we will never know the sitters' feelings about this commercial exploitation.

J. E. Ward has taken Partington photographs and put the sitters into a fantasy world, where Māori ride on giant moa and have kiwi following like pet dogs (fig 4:24 page 113). A photograph of the original Ward painting is housed in the Alexander Turnbull Library, the only information about the artist is his name and a note that the location of the original artwork is unknown. On closer inspection it is possible to identify some of the individuals in the painting from the Partington Collection.

This is perhaps the best example of the subjects losing control of their own image. In the event that Partington paid the sitters it is unlikely he asked their permission for their likeness to be on-sold and incorporated into other artworks, for the financial benefit of yet another agent.

The Gottfried Lindauer portrait of Ana Rupene and Huria<sup>131</sup> was painted in the 1881. It depicts Ana wearing a traditional korowai over her shoulders and covering her baby who is carried on her back. Ana wears a serene expression, glancing over her shoulder and interacting with her child. Huria is contented and bouncingly healthy. This image was an attractive one that reassured the European public Māori were living in harmony with their colonisers and were in good heart. Partington used this image as a template and recreated it many times, both in the studio and outside (e.g. fig 4:16 page 106). He has almost replicated the image completely in fig 4:29 page 118, Rhipeti Kurahoro of Koroniti and her child being almost doubles for Ana Rupene and Huria.

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<sup>131</sup> Whanganui Regional Museum Buller Collection 1928.57.10.

## **Group Photographs**

The Whanganui Regional Museum's Partington Collection shows that Partington recorded a number of community events throughout his time in Whanganui, particularly at Pūtiki. There are many images on the marae, and some in the studio of preparations for events, particularly performance. He records groups in their performance costume, posing with their poi or taiaha and also practicing in their everyday attire. There are formal group shots also, with kaumātua, one titled 'Pūtiki Komiti', fig 4:31 page 119, but unfortunately there is no date or explanation as to the function of the committee. Whether these were commissions or not is not clear, however appreciating Partington's eye for a commercial success one might assume he sold a copy to each of the members of the troupe.

## **Pornographic Images**

The collections of many photographers of this era, including Partington's photographic negatives and prints, contain many images of both pre-pubescent girls or women in naked and semi-naked poses. They are all studio portraits and there are numerous poses of each model.

The depiction of Indigenous women, particularly those from the South Pacific Islands, often catered to European licentiousness. Even when subjects were named they are rarely named correctly and, often the object within the image is named while the person standing next to it is not (Art Gallery of New South Wales 1997: 5).

The young women have been arranged by the photographer to look as accessible to the observer as possible. However, very few meet the camera's gaze, their eyes are downcast or averted and there is a definite sense of shame from the subjects and coercion on the part of the photographer. This coercion may have come in the form of money, or perhaps simply the power of an influential European male.

More often the facial expression is vague, distant, absent, or vacuous. Preoccupied with setting up his shot the photographer has failed to notice this withdrawal which his plate has captured and preserved. In any case he does not want to see it (Alloua 1986: 98).

The use of a generic name may have been a mechanism for protecting the true identity of the sitter, who perhaps chose to be known in this way. It is almost impossible to make an identification using just a first and probably made-up name. The commercial markets these images were produced for were probably secretive, and the photographs were unlikely to have been displayed in studio windows. It is also unlikely that sitters in pornographic photographs were given copies to take home to place in the family photo album.

Much has been written on the exploitation of indigenous women in this manner<sup>132</sup> and it appears Partington was also a willing participant in this abuse. Alloua contends that indigenous women were in an unequal and disadvantaged situation compared with their male counterparts prior to colonisation (McClintock 1995: 6).

However, a Māori viewpoint argues that the traditional roles of indigenous women required full participation in the life and welfare of the community, including political decision making. Gender separations were “complementary in order to maintain harmony and stability” (Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 151-152). Colonisation resulted in a loss of equity for women across all aspects of indigenous society, in accordance with the status of European women. On contact they were in fact demoted to have less power and influence than indigenous men (ibid.: 151).

We can make comparisons between Partington and other photographers such as Alfred Burton, who toured Fiji and Samoa in the early 1880s and insisted on local women removing their blouses for the photographic sessions in order to “underline the higher moral reputation of Anglo-Saxon women and afford the European male voyeuristic pleasure” (Maxwell 1999: 153). Similar to the Pacific

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<sup>132</sup> Alloua, 1986, McClintock, 1995.



Island women Burton exploited, the young women of the Whanganui River had long been exposed to Christian and Victorian values and it was unlikely they would have disrobed without some inducement on the part of the photographer. What was the role of the child's parents in this transaction?

A striking example of Partington's complicity in this exploitation is a series of three glass plate negatives. The subject is a girl, possibly as young as eight. The first image<sup>133</sup> described only as *Girl Portrait*, has the prepubescent child posed by Partington in a style that suggests availability. She is reclined in a chair and holds her korowai close to her chest. Her facial expression is uneasy, and reveals unhappiness at the situation she finds herself in. In the second image<sup>134</sup> the same child lies on the floor, the korowai is now down around her waist and her head is thrown back in a suggestive pose, the photographer is trying to capture a seductive expression, but the child seems to be close to tears. In the third image<sup>135</sup> her eyes are averted, head hung with shame, the child again grasps the cloak to her chest and appears to be trying to cover herself up. It is difficult to describe fully the complex expressions the child emotes with words, however to include the images in this paper would continue the abuse perpetrated against her.

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<sup>133</sup> Whanganui Regional Museum Partington Collection glass plate negative 233b.

<sup>134</sup> Whanganui Regional Museum Partington Collection glass plate negative 236.

<sup>135</sup> Whanganui Regional Museum Partington Collection glass plate negative 234a.



Fig 4:29 Rihipeti  
Kurahoro and child

Whanganui Regional  
Museum Collection  
reference Partington  
113b  
Reproduced with  
permission



Fig 4:30 1881 Gottfried  
Lindauer oil portrait of  
Ana Rupene and Huria

Whanganui Regional  
Museum Collection  
Reference Buller Collection  
1928.57.10  
Reproduced with  
permission



Fig 4:31 Pūtiki  
Komiti

Whanganui Regional  
Museum Collection  
Reference Partington  
123b  
Reproduced with  
permission

### **Photographs Commissioned by Māori for Their Own Purposes**

Enlarged framed photographs of tūpuna photographed by Partington are to be found today in the whare tūpuna of Whanganui River iwi and Ngāti Apa. The placing of photographs of ancestors beside poupou in whare tūpuna is consistent with the Māori adaptation of western technology within the framework of Māori values (King 1996: 2). It is probable that these photographs were commissioned by Māori. However, it is difficult when looking at the Collection to separate those that were solicited by Partington and those that were commissioned by the sitters. There are very few clues to substantiate this one way or the other. For example, it is impossible to make a judgement about the portrait of Ngapera Pikinga of Nga Wairiki/Ngāti Apa that hangs in that whare tupuna. Ngapera looks quite sad and there is none of the pride or showmanship that you would associate with a commissioned portrait. Perhaps this copy of the photograph was her payment for sitting, or perhaps it was purchased by the family after her death. An interview with her descendants provided no clarification of this issue (Karena & Gardiner interview Oct 2005).

Some Māori sought the ownership of the photographer's negatives. An example occurred when the descendants of King Tawhiao commissioned the photographer Enos Pegler to take photographs at the King's tangihanga, to

distribute positives to a number of key descendents and to hand over the negatives to the commissioner. The photographer disregarded these wishes and sold the images for publication (Main 1976: 93). Such requests for absolute ownership were possibly not uncommon, as:

the commercialisation of such images of Maori led to a powerful belief that the acceptance of money from the photographer for your image created a loss of mana. (King and Marsden 1992: 3)

Although it is difficult to identify commissioned photographs there are some criteria that together may indicate a commission. Fig 4:32 (page 121) may be one, as the sitters wear both European and Māori clothing, and their pose reflects a mood more common to Partington's European subject commissions. He uses conventions that isolate the sitters from one another. They gaze into individual worlds, as if there were three separate portraits being taken. Where there is more than one sitter in Partington's Māori images there is usually a connection, or familiarity between the sitters that is absent in this photograph. The verso of fig 4:32 has the reproduction price list. This is not included on the back of any other photograph in the Collection. The two P's, also on the verso, may indicate that the photograph has been paid for.

A search of the two commercial Partington photograph albums sighted by the researcher, the McGregor Album<sup>136</sup> in the Whanganui Regional Museum and the Partington Studio Album in the Auckland City Libraries Special Collections Archive<sup>137</sup>, confirms they do not include photographs of Māori in European dress.

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<sup>136</sup> Whanganui Regional Museum Archive Collection 2002.128.

<sup>137</sup> Auckland City Library Special Collection Archive Album 51.



Fig 4:32 Three unidentified females  
Whanganui Regional Museum  
Collection Reference  
Partington 21a

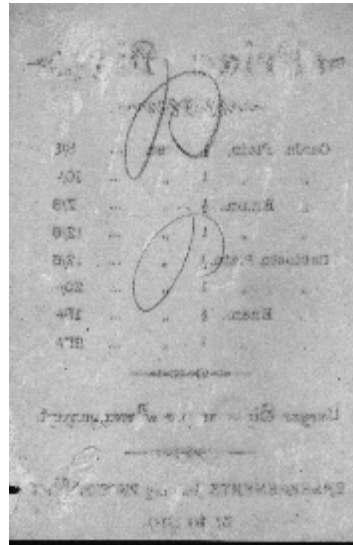


Fig 4:33 Verso of fig 4:32 price list  
Whanganui Regional Museum  
Collection Reference  
Partington 21a

Reproduced with permission

It is likely that the majority of negatives remained in the possession of the photographer. Therefore, Māori in the photographs, and their descendants, lost control of their image. The right of ownership of a photographic image is subject to dispute today. Legally the photographer owns copyright, however, some would argue that this is immoral and offers no protection to the sitter<sup>138</sup>.

### Distribution of Partington Photographs

Initially Partington sold his images of Māori from his studio, and some were also published by the Auckland Star early last century. However, most of the images had not been available since Partington's death in 1940. The Auckland Star Collection was acquired by the Alexander Turnbull Library in the 1950s<sup>139</sup> and made available through the National Library of New Zealand's *Timeframes* database from 2004. The Partington family collection remained out of circulation until September 2001 when it was offered for auction at Webb's in Auckland. The Collection had been rediscovered a few months earlier by

<sup>138</sup> Copyright Act 1994, section 21 vests ownership of photographic negatives with the photographer (creator of intellectual property).

<sup>139</sup> Email from John Sullivan Alexander Turnbull Librarian to Rowan Carroll 13/06/2006, states there is no record of the acquisition of the Auckland Star Collection indicating if it was a purchase or donation or in which year. However, the library's negative register indicates the Collection was accessioned in the late 1950s.

Partington's great-granddaughter Edith Bell after her mother's death. They had been stored in a cupboard, forgotten since his death.

In 2003 Random House Publishers published Te Awa: Partington's Photographs of Whanganui Maori. It contained reproductions of 120 photographs from the Whanganui Regional Museum Collection. The right to produce the book was negotiated through Webb's between the Bell family and Random House on the morning of the Collection being auctioned<sup>140</sup>. Those attending the auction (including the Whanganui Regional Museum representatives) were not told about this contract prior to negotiating a purchase agreement<sup>141</sup>. The events prior and post the books publication and its subsequent impact on the Museum's relationships with iwi are recorded in chapter three.

## Summary

This chapter demonstrates that the Partington Collection of Māori images from the Whanganui region consists primarily of portraits, group shots and landscapes. Partington's motivations were both commercial and documentary. Many of his images were influenced in their composition by public expectation and preconceptions. His photography consistently demonstrated a high level of technical competency.

Analysis of the style and demeanour of the sitters suggests Partington's motivation was primarily for commercial gain. The fact that the majority of sitters were posed in traditional clothing courtesy of his studio props and equipped with a weapon selected from his collection suggests Partington was not interested in portraying Whanganui Māori as they were at that time. Rather, he had re-consigned them to their past because such images were in popular demand. His working style was emulated by many photographers for decades and some of the photographs that he took from the 1890s until 1910 continued

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<sup>140</sup> Telephone conversation transcript Webb to Museum Archivist 8 March 2002, Communication Partington file Whanganui Regional Museum.

<sup>141</sup> Dell interview, 22 March 2006.

to be published by the Auckland Weekly News until the end of the 1930s (Goldie Scrapbooks 1933: vol. 10 p 34). Some photographers chose to create commercial photographs that took a more positive stance, positioning Māori within the context of New Zealand's future (e.g. fig 4:34 page 123).

There is little evidence to explain why people agreed to sit for Partington. Evidence from other photographers from the era suggests payments were made, but there is no contractual verification that states how much was paid or if the sitter relinquished all rights to their image then or in the future. We do not know if Partington negotiated these matters with the sitters.



Fig 4:34 'Young New Zealand' 1905 Frank Denton Photographer Wanganui.

Sarjeant Gallery/ Te Whare O Rehua / Whanganui. Accession number 1965/1/44. Photograph courtesy of the Sarjeant Gallery.

A highly posed studio image of two unidentified children looking bright and full of potential. None-the-less Denton chose to portray Whanganui Māori, not facing an inevitable demise, but as an important and vital part of the Dominion's future.

His non-commercial documentary images are a more genuine reflection of the Whanganui Māori community at this time, providing a no-frills account of living conditions and life-style. Some of these images were published (Goldie Scrapbooks: vols. 7 & 8) in the Auckland Weekly News and the New Zealand

Graphic, but most were unpalatable to the general public and have not had wide exposure. These images include photographs taken in settlements up the Whanganui River and expose the fact there was a distinct gap in living conditions between the races.

There are some clear differences between Partington's Māori and European photographs. Appendix IV establishes that Partington encouraged candour and familiarity between his European subjects, however convention decreed they approach a portrait sitting with some formality and deference. His commercial Māori sitters show no such adherence to Whanganui society's norms, engaging the lens with a vast array of emotions, facial expressions and body language. Māori who commissioned portraits were much more conformist and were showing the world their status and wealth (Smit 2003: 12).

Nowhere amongst the collections of Partington's work have I seen photographs of Pākehā suburbs, streets or houses. Would the residents of Gonville Avenue have opened their homes to a roaming photographer to be documented? This indicates there was a clear difference in Partington's mind between the treatment of Māori in their own space and Europeans in theirs.

The evidence shows the extent and importance of the Partington Collection. It has significance as a large and comprehensive body of documentary photographs and value as an example of well produced and aesthetically pleasing images. The range of locations used is important, Partington demonstrated he was not just a studio photographer but a social historian of the Whanganui River and its people. Without his lust for capturing Māori in a contrived, and in a natural setting, many of these people would have been lost to their descendants forever.



# 5

## Discussion & Conclusion

“It was about all our wonderful tūpuna who were around all those years ago, they are a reflection of who we are; we are a reflection of who they are.

Our tūpuna came back in a way that was appropriate and now they are here” (Mair interview: 14 December 2005).

The thesis began with three research objectives, firstly to establish a chronological narrative documenting the acquisition of the Partington Collection from the Whanganui Regional Museum viewpoint. The second objective was to consider the impact of relationships on the Museum’s policy and practice. The final objective was to investigate the nature of the Partington Collection of Whanganui images and the photographer himself.

The argument developed within the thesis is that the Whanganui Regional Museum’s bicultural, bicameral governance structure is robust, and able to provide the flexibility required to respond successfully to a significant acquisition and the ensuing management of a collection as important and complex as the Partington Collection.

Research has provided understanding and interpretation of the actions and motivations of key participants involved in the Partington acquisition. It has also provided insight into the consequences of the communications of the participants, as the events surrounding the acquisition and te hokinga mai were reconstructed. The process of reconstructing and interpreting events of the recent past was compared to other similar processes to recover and understand events and figures of the distant past, notably the identity of W.H.T. Partington and his subjects. It is this deeper understanding and interpretation of human

relationships and communications within the context of bi-cultural museum governance policy and practice which informs and expands the initial documentary intention of this thesis.

### **Summary of research outcomes: 1. Documenting the acquisition**

The acquisition of the Partington Collection as related here provides an in-depth account which captures different positions and perceptions about the Collection, then explains the impact of such acquisitions on museum practice and ultimately suggests questions about its disposition. From the perspective of the photographer, the creator of the photographs, the Collection provided a service to the settler community, a documentation of a people whose lives were changing dramatically and whose pre-European culture was (perceived to be) being lost. Photography was his profession and therefore provided an income.

From the perspective of the commercial art community of the early twenty first century the Collection is a commodity that can be traded for money and possessed. Art dealers consider the Collection belongs to the fabric of New Zealand photographic history, and is interpreted as historic documentary with aesthetic and monetary value.

From the perspective of the museum community such a collection enhances collection holdings and provides opportunities for research and public programmes. For the Whanganui Regional Museum the acquisition of the Partington Collection has provided all those things, but more importantly it has become a vehicle for sustaining and maintaining its relationship with Whanganui iwi.

From the perspective of the descendants of those photographed, Partington's images are taonga tuku iho and revered as such. The photographs are imbued with the mauri of the tūpuna. For Whanganui iwi these photographs bring the past into the present and connect the present with the past. The return of the Collection to Whanganui has reconfigured the Collection's value; the descendants of the people in the photographs have restored the mana and

identity of their tūpuna. They are no longer lost and unknown, a document of the past.

The thesis demonstrates the challenges involved in developing more effective working relationships between the Museum and Māori that recognises tāngata whenua as mana whenua, as kaitiaki of the taonga held in the Museum and as partners in the further development of the Museum's collection and programmes. This particular case study establishes that relationships are at the centre of museum practice when a museum is responsive to its community's needs.

### **Summary of research outcomes: 2. Understanding the importance of maintaining relationships in a bi-cultural museum**

Recognising this fundamental difference in world views challenges existing orthodoxies in relationship to ownership, care and control of museum collections. Furthermore, as the case study suggests, museums have opportunities to reconsider the role, use and interpretation of colonial photography and to align collection management procedures and interpretation in accordance with those views.

The return of the Partington Collection to the Whanganui Regional Museum is an outcome of a resilient relationship between the Museum and Whanganui iwi nurtured over time and re-vitalised by the recent establishment of a bi-cameral bi-cultural governance structure. That relationship has depth, strength and longevity. There is considerable evidence that the Whanganui Regional Museum, working with iwi, worked against severe odds to successfully bring the Collection home.

The heartfelt pleas of the descendants for the Collection's return have been answered. The integrity of the Collection has been preserved. It is safe, re-housed, accessioned into the Museum's Collection and cared for in accordance with the highest museum standards. The exhibition *Te Pihī Mata – The Sacred Eye* opened in December 2007. It provides access to 190 Partington images. It

was co-curated by the Museum Archivist and a Whanganui Iwi Curator. They worked together to gather the kōrero and interpret the images using mechanisms and symbolism that provided authority and safety, as only iwi support could achieve. The exhibition has been acknowledged as “a shared journey, to give expression to the deepest feelings of our people”<sup>142</sup>.

“It provides us with the unique knowledge through the aeons of time, that brought to us, the return of our tupuna. The gallery space of Wai Kamo, literally the Fountain of Tears, takes us all through that journey of reunification with our ancestors” (Turia 2007: 1).

At the Museums Aotearoa sector excellence awards in April 2008 the Whanganui Regional Museum won an award for involving iwi and the local community to develop the culturally significant exhibition:

“By working closely with iwi, the museum has presented the photographs to emphasise their historical, cultural and spiritual significance to the whole community and its visitors”<sup>143</sup>

## **Relationship Discussion**

Throughout this story a multitude of relationships were formed: people joined forces because of their strong belief in what is the right thing to do. However in some situations, self-interest was evident, as some people cared less for public good and more for personal gain. The relationships that have formed the primary focus of this thesis have been with tāngata whenua, however there have been some other relationships that have been important too. The Whanganui Community Foundation has sat quietly in the background, responding positively when needed to support the Museum and the purchase of the Collection. This relationship is guided by mutual respect for the Museum’s professional practice and for the WCF’s knowledge and understanding of what is significant within its community. The Museum’s Civic House has worked in a supporting role and has been proactive in moving the Partington Collection

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<sup>142</sup> Turia 2007: 1

<sup>143</sup> Jenny Gibbs quote in Museums Aotearoa media release 10 April 2008.

acquisition forward<sup>144</sup>. While there were many groupings of people, I have identified three sets of relationships that were crucial to the Collection's returning to Whanganui.

### **The *Coalition* (for the purpose of bringing the Collection home)**

The coalition comprised the Whanganui Regional Museum, the Joint Council and Whanganui Iwi.

With the halting of the auction of the Partington Collection and the determination of the Whanganui community to purchase it, the auctioneers realised they had a lucrative sales opportunity. As a commercial company they understood the value of cultural property to *tāngata whenua*, and knew that these people would be highly motivated to purchase the Collection.

When the purchase price of the Collection was escalating the Museum realised that a coalition of interested parties was the only way to secure the finance required. A natural relationship formed between the Whanganui Regional Museum, its iwi liaison the Tikanga Māori House and Whanganui iwi. Their motivational goal was simple: to bring the Partington Collection of Whanganui Māori photographs home to the rohe.

While it was a relationship born out of necessity there has been a long history of the Museum and iwi working together. Tikanga Māori House was established to represent iwi interests and to provide expertise on Whanganuitanga on the Whanganui Regional Museum's governing body. There were members in common with other iwi bodies and therefore significant knowledge of available resources. Members were pivotal in securing commitment and mobilising the Māori community to take action.

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<sup>144</sup> Joint Council meeting minutes 18 October 2001, Whanganui Regional Museum.

## **The Challenging Relationship**

The Whanganui Regional Museum and Webb's.

This relationship began when Webb's offered a collection of significant interest to Whanganui for auction. When the auction was stopped because of protest action the Museum began negotiations with the auctioneer. The Museum offered to purchase all the Partington material that related to the Whanganui region to ensure the Collection was kept intact.

What ensued was a challenging and protracted relationship. While the Museum was galvanising community support, Webb's was agitating to gain the best price for the vendors. The commercial world of buying and selling art and artefacts at auction is usually very speedy. In this case the negotiations took far longer than Webb's were happy to tolerate. They raised the asking price at regular intervals in order to draw the deal to a close. In this case though, all it did was cause further delays as funding was sought. There was no common ground in this relationship. The Whanganui people wanted to sign a contract for purchase with a set price and realistic settlement timeframe, while the auctioneers were working with other interested parties to sell to the highest bidder. Webb's had no interest in doing the right thing for Whanganui Māori or the Whanganui Regional Museum. At one point Webb's purchased the Collection from the vendors and maximised their profit margin.

The Museum Director stopped negotiations because she felt the photograph selection process was stalemated. Members of the coalition were then sent to Auckland to take a strong hand in direct negotiations. They were positive they had made an agreement with Webb's that the entire Whanganui Collection would be included in the purchase price. However, when the Collection arrived Webb's insisted that the Director's earlier handwritten selection was binding.

This has been a difficult relationship. However, Webb's were invited to the opening of the Partington exhibition *Te Pihi Mata - The Sacred Eye* and the staff continue to liaise with them concerning Whanganui artefacts and taonga that

come up for auction. These are indications that the Museum is working to repair and maintain the working relationship with Webb's.

### **The Necessary Relationship**

A triangle: The Whanganui Regional Museum, The Whanganui River Māori Trust Board and Tikanga Māori House.

After the Collection returned home a need to jointly manage the Collection between the Museum and iwi was identified. The Museum set about caring for the Collection in the physical sense but the identification of the people in the photographs and researching their stories required iwi support and knowledge. It was only after this was done that kaitiaki could be nominated for the ongoing management of the Collection. The group designated to speak for iwi are the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board as key supporter of the acquisition and underwriters of the purchase.

The liaison between the Museum and the WRMTB was handled by the Trust Board Manager and the Museum's Community Liaison Officer. The will to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concerning the relationship and a Heads of Agreement (HoA) specific to the Partington Collection was evident, and discussions were fruitful. However, in reality it has been challenging for the Museum to establish a formally codified relationship with the WRMTB. Such negotiations take time to work through and this process is ongoing. Nevertheless, the informal and necessary relationships with whānau have deepened and strengthened as Museum staff and contractors work with individuals to identify tūpuna portrayed in the photographs.

There is a general acceptance that the Museum is the appropriate pataka for the Collection. There is also evidence that indicates some iwi members would

prefer to have physical as well as spiritual ownership of the Collection. Ken Mair is not alone<sup>145</sup> when he says,

“We felt that this was the most appropriate place for it to be held, until such time as our people want it to be housed elsewhere, as they so wish” (Mair interview 14 December 2005).

The Museum’s governance structure was certainly sufficiently robust to galvanise and sustain support to return the Partington Collection to Whanganui. The common goal strengthened the resolve of individuals throughout the tribulations of the long negotiation process. However, there has been some reluctance to conclude legal agreements to realise total partnership arrangements for this Collection. And yet optimism prevails. As the cloak re-housing project and *Te Pihi Mata* reveal, the respect for ideas and the expression of creative excellence dignify the work of managing, safe-guarding and interpreting the Collection. The Museum’s role in these matters has been strengthened and enlarged through the necessary collaboration with whānau, hapū and iwi.

### **Summary of research outcomes: 3. Documenting Partington**

The research about W.H.T. Partington has exposed something of his life story and photographic practice, however very little about the man exists in the public arena. Understanding and interpreting his motivations, and getting a feeling for the sitters were just as important. I became interested in the difference between the snapshot as documentary evidence, presenting a moment in time that encourages a cursory interpretation, and creating photographic portraits, the use of lengthy exposure and availability for critique and elucidation.

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<sup>145</sup> Archie Taiaroa, chair of the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board also spoke, and while positive about the Museum and the exhibition, he also commented on the ownership of the Collection and unresolved issues between the WRMTB and the Museum (Taiaroa speech opening *Te Pihi Mata* 8 December 2007). Turia commented that for too long the knowledge of tāngata whenua has been the preserve of historians, anthropologist and ethnographers and now is the time for iwi to protect and preserve their ancestral photographs (Turia speech opening *Te Pihi Mata* 8 December 2007). I think ultimately it would be good to have them back on the marae” (Karena interview 28 October 2005).



Partington was certainly a colonial photographer but his work with Māori reflected two different methodologies: the colonial construct of his studio work, and the honest documentary of recording the people of the Whanganui River in their kainga. For the former, the situation of colonial photography in museums has changed over the last century from being viewed as a factual reflection of the lives of indigenous peoples, to being viewed as a colonial construct consigning indigenous peoples to their past.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis contributes a New Zealand case study to the literature and establishes that museum practice is responsive to a community's needs when it is outward looking. The determination to embrace that community rather than maintaining a myopic focus or professional isolation influences the Museum governance and staff in the writing and enacting of policy. This thesis suggests then, that relationships are at the heart of museum practice and that this view challenges the traditional perspective that museum practice and procedure is pre-eminent. Furthermore, it also indicates that the Whanganui Regional Museum's bi-cultural governance structure provides a foundation for the negotiation of these complex social relationships.

When the Partington Collection of Whanganui Māori photographs returned to Whanganui in July 2002 it was warmly and emotionally welcomed by Whanganui iwi and the wider Whanganui community. The McGregor Album of predominantly Partington photographs was also placed in the care of the Museum's Tikanga Māori House by iwi members at that time. This was interpreted as a show of faith in the governance structure and the Tikanga Māori House's role as kaitiaki (Mair interview: 14 December 2005).

The experience of purchasing a Collection of this size and complexity and the resulting need to establish better ways of managing it may have a wider influence on current practice within the museum and arts sector. It shows why public museums and art galleries need to establish robust and open lines of communication with the spiritual owners of cultural property. The sector will

have to acknowledge that while Pākehā law establishes the photographer as the copyright holder and legal owner of the photograph they have created, Māori consider the images to be taonga tuku iho and that the person in the photograph (and their descendants) want ownership rights, management and use of the image (Graham-Stewart and Gow 2006).

Even with the best intentions and the will to work bi-culturally, a museum may not achieve its goals while tāngata whenua have other priorities. The most successful projects are initiated by Māori, for Māori and are delivered within their timeframes.

The digitisation of the Collection will be discussed with iwi in the future, further complicating the debate over ownership and the assertion of cultural guardianship and the spiritual significance of digital copies (Brown in Healy and Witcombe 2006: 09.7). Ken Mair was clear in his interview that the original copies and negatives held greater significance for him and that the Museum could retain the digital copies (Mair interview 14 December 2005). It may be debated however that:

The essential qualities of a taonga, those that provide its meaning and significance, are transferred to a digital copy (Brown in Healy and Witcombe 2006: 09.7).

This thesis opens up further possible opportunities for research: Māori perspective about the same issues; additional research on the Partington Collection, particularly on the people in the photographs; the collection of mātauranga Māori, whakapapa and kōrero by Whanganui iwi. Issues related to collection management, aspects of the Collection deserve greater attention than has been possible on this occasion.

My time with the Partington Collection has been a deeply emotional one. The connection with the people in the photographs transcends culture; it captures a time and a place that is significant in New Zealand's history but it is the connections that museums and iwi are making today that are remarkable. The

Collection provides useful historical evidence but the big story is the partnership between a museum and Māori to do what is right, restoring the Collection to its people, working together to provide appropriate access and care for the Collection.

Will the Collection be controlled by Whanganui iwi in the future? Given that Māori work with a long-term view this is most certainly the intention.

The original prints and glass plate negatives belong at home; where the photographs were taken, the home of the tūpuna.

Museums should not be considered the only holders of history. We can look after our own history, and should.

Whanganui iwi keep their knowledge very close, I like the saying that if you give knowledge away too easily it will become common (Mair interview: 14 December 2005).

## Appendix I

# ***The Acquisition of the Partington Collection***

## **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being audio taped.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being video taped.

I agree/do not agree to the tapes being placed in the Whanganui Regional Museum archive to be accessed without my permission.

or

I agree/do not agree to the tapes being placed in the Whanganui Regional Museum archive only to be accessed with my permission.

or

I agree/do not agree to the tapes being returned to me.

or

I agree/do not agree to the tapes being destroyed.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

.....

.....

**Full Name - printed**

.....

## Appendix II

4 August 2005

Dear Ann & Peter Webb,

Thank you for agreeing to an interview. These are the areas of interest I would like to hear your thoughts on;

The collection purchase -

- Significance of the Partington Collection.
- The protest at the auction and its implications for future auctions/sales of Māori cultural property
- The importance of the return of the collection to Whanganui and your role in insuring its return
- The purchase process

The Random House publication -

The importance of ensuring the collection reached publication.

Please let me know if there are any of these areas you would not like to discuss.

I will be in Auckland on August 18 & 19. Could you let me know a convenient time to interview you, I think an hour would be sufficient and I am able to come to you at a time that suits you best. Please contact me with a date and time at your earliest convenience on 06 349 1110 ext 711 or [rowanc@museum.queenspark.org.nz](mailto:rowanc@museum.queenspark.org.nz)

Regards

Rowan Carroll

30 June 2005

Kia ora Archie Taiaroa,

Thank you for agreeing to an interview. These are the areas of interest I would like to hear your thoughts on;

The collection purchase -

- Significance of collection to uri.
- Reasons for the protest at the auction.
- Importance of returning collection to Whanganui.
- Role of Museum in purchase – why did you decide to work with the Museum?
- Photographs as taonga tuku iho.
- Future management of collection.

The Random House publication -

- Thoughts on the publication.
- Your personal feelings about the photograph of your tupuna appearing in the book, why you feel / felt that way.

Please let me know if there are any of these areas you would not like to discuss.

Could you let me know a convenient time to interview you, I think an hour would be sufficient and I am able to come to you at a time that suits you best. Please contact me with a date and time at your earliest convenience on 06 349 1110 ext 711 or [rowanc@museum.queenspark.org.nz](mailto:rowanc@museum.queenspark.org.nz)

Regards

Rowan Carroll

11 November 2005

Kia ora Ken Mair,

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed concerning the acquisition of the Partington Collection of Whanganui River Māori photographs. These are the areas of interest I would like to hear your thoughts on;

The collection purchase –

- Significance of collection to uri.
- Reasons for the protest at the auction
- Importance of returning collection to Whanganui
- Role of Museum in purchase – do you feel the Museum is the appropriate place for the collection to be kept
- Photographs as taonga tuku iho
- Future management of the collection

The McGregor Album of Partington Photographs –

- Motivation for gifting to Tikanga Māori House

The Random House publication –

- Thoughts on the publication
- Your personal feelings about the photograph of your tupuna appearing in the book, why you feel / felt that way.

Please let me know if there are any areas you would not like to discuss.

Could you let me know a convenient time to interview you, I think an hour would be sufficient and I am able to come to you at a time that suits you best. Please contact me with a date and time at your earliest convenience on 06 349 1110 ext 711 or [rowanc@museum.queenspark.org.nz](mailto:rowanc@museum.queenspark.org.nz)

Regards

Rowan Carroll

17 October 2005

Kia ora Rhipeti Karena & Ngahina Gardener

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed concerning the acquisition of the Partington Collection of Whanganui River Māori photographs. These are the areas of interest I would like to hear your thoughts on;

The collection purchase –

- Significance of collection to uri.
- Reasons for the protest at the auction
- Importance of returning collection to Whanganui
- Role of Museum in purchase – do you feel the Museum is the appropriate place for the collection to be kept
- Photographs as taonga tuku iho
- Future management of the collection

The Random House publication –

- Thoughts on the publication
- Your personal feelings about the photograph of your tupuna appearing in the book, why you feel / felt that way.

Please let me know if there are any areas you would not like to discuss.

Could you let me know a convenient time to interview you, I think an hour would be sufficient and I am able to come to you at a time that suits you best. Please contact me with a date and time at your earliest convenience on 06 349 1110 ext 711 or rowanc@museum.queenspark.org.nz

Best wishes

Rowan Carroll



22 March 2006

Questions for Sharon Dell, Director Whanganui Regional Museum concerning the acquisition of the Partington Collection of Whanganui River Māori photographs. Interview with Rowan Carroll.

- Did Te Papa bid at the auction?
- When the auction was abandoned and you sat down with Peter Webb to discuss a possible purchase of the collection, how did the conversation go and who was present?
- The discrepancies over the collection when it arrived; what were the outcomes of discussions with Webbs?
- Did Archie Taiaroa have any discussions with Random House? Did he decide on any processes regarding the selection of images? Why did he not write the forward?
- Do you think there have been any repercussions in the Whanganui Māori community concerning the Museum's participation in the Random House publication?
- Can you tell me who the members of Tikanga Māori House were at the time of the acquisition, and which iwi/hāpu were represented?

## Appendix III

Report produced from Museum collection database with enhanced documentation following cloak documentation and re-housing project.

**Accession No** 1802.19

**Name Title** KAHU HURUHURU: CLOAK

**Brief Description** Kahu huruhuru, cloak; muka (processed flax fibre), kereru, kaka, kiwi feathers. The selvedge commencement at the bottom edge is whatu aho rua (double-pair twining) as is the body of the cloak. The kaupapa is coarse (undressed/not beaten) muka, horizontal weave, central and lower puka (darts/elliptical inserts). Good featherwork, side and lower border of kiwi feathers, inner side and lower borders of green kereru feathers with single underwing kaka feather at regular intervals, second innerlower border of alternating squares of white ?kereru and orange underwing kaka feathers. Upper border tui feathers, below this strip of kiwi, then strip of underwing kaka and kereru feathers. This is followed by a 70mm row of kiwi feathers, 100mm underwing kaka feathers in blocks separated vertically by white ?kereru feathers, below this is a row of blocks of white ?kereru feathers in an upsidedown triangular shape surrounded by orange kaka, white ?kereru, below this is main section of kiwi feathers with fine white diamond pattern made of ?kereru feathers in lower half of this section.



**Department** Maori

**Other Id** T826, Kahu 1, B1

**Classification** Clothing - Outerwear/Clothing/Personal Artifacts/Nomenclature

**Cataloguer** Michelle Horwood (b.1960); Ms

**Date Catalogued** 20 Feb 2004, 25 Sep 2001

**Current Location** WRM/S4/Unit 3/Drawer 12

**Media Materials** Muka/Flax/harakeke, Keriuru/Feather, Kiwi/Feather, Kaka/Feather

**Measurement Reading** 72 x 115cm (2' 4 3/8" x 3' 9 1/4")

**Primary Prod Date** Circa 1900

<b>Acquisition Method</b>	Unknown
<b>Internal Value latest</b>	\$***
<b>Condition Keyword</b>	Very Good, Good
<b>Condition Person</b>	Michelle Horwood (b.1960); Ms, Nic Edwards (b.1971); Ms
<b>Condition Date</b>	20 Feb 2006, 03 Jul 2003
<b>Current Condition</b>	Excellent condition; does NOT lie flat naturally, acute body shaping; curled PL edge, no ties; for display would drape well over form, sturdy but needs support to hold form; OK to consider for display but would need specialised form. Nic Edwards 3.7.03
<b>Researcher Comments</b>	Recent work due to the quality of the weaving, especially the coarseness of the muka, the joins showing and the feathers coming through onto the back. Possibly made by a learner.
<b>Researcher</b>	Sharon Ranginui; Mrs
<b>Date</b>	20 Feb 2006

## Appendix IV

### Partington and His Photographic Practice<sup>146</sup>

#### Introduction

This appendix documents the life of Partington and places his photography in context, within the boundaries of the technology available to him and alongside the work of his fellow photographers. Photography was still a relatively new technical innovation when Partington joined the profession. Photography's genesis had been a long one, but by the middle of the nineteenth century the technology available was evolving rapidly, requiring the photographer to embrace new processes and equipment to ensure the buying public received the most up-to-date images. Photographers were required to provide images consistent with the public's notions of quality, economy and style in what was becoming a very competitive market.

The acquisition of the Partington Collection of Whanganui Māori photographs by the Whanganui Regional Museum in 2002 created a focus on his Māori work. However, Partington was a professional photographer for 50 years and the greater percentage of his work was commissioned by the European community in both Auckland and Whanganui. His images fill many family photograph albums and take up significant space in the collective photographic archives of a number of New Zealand institutions. This appendix will examine this aspect of his work and put together the little that is known of his life. In the absence of detailed archival material and family knowledge the images become the primary source for understanding the photographer. Partington therefore remains

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<sup>146</sup> Research for the biographical section of this chapter has been carried out using the archives of The Auckland War Memorial Museum, The Auckland City Libraries Special Collections Archive, The Whanganui Regional Museum Archive, the Alexander Turnbull Library and the Alexander Library Archive, Wanganui. A Partington family scrapbook is held by the Bell family of Paihia (Edith Bell, Partington's great grand daughter), and this has also been sighted by the researcher. A brief interview was also undertaken with Edith and John Bell. Partington himself left no known diaries or personal letters to inform the research, therefore there is some speculation concerning his actions and motivations. Edith Bell commented that she knew nothing of her photographer great grandfather, and it was not until after her Mother's death in 2001 that the suitcase full of glass plate negatives and prints came to her notice. Her husband John found the suitcase at the back of a high wardrobe shelf, he bruised his foot badly as it came crashing down upon him. He had not realised just how heavy it was and certainly had no idea of the importance of the contents. Any enquiries Edith made to her relatives concerning Partington yielded no fruit and she thought there had been some falling-out amongst family members and perhaps Partington had been excommunicated. No living family member remembered 'the old man' and unfortunately one of Edith's uncles, who did have some recollections, died just as this research project was begun.

something of an enigma, known primarily through the remaining public collections of his photographs. Any conclusions should be treated with caution and an awareness of change in attitudes and practices since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

A brief account of Partington's life appeared in the introduction to Te Awa: Partington's Photographs of Whanganui Maori (2003). He is also mentioned in publications on early New Zealand photography, in particular William Main's 1976 book Maori In Focus: A Selection of Photographs of the Maori from 1850 – 1914 and John B Turner's and William Main's New Zealand Photography from the 1840s to the Present. A photograph caption from Main's book reads:

This print of Hirawanu (Print number 30) provides a clue to the identity of the Auckland Star photographer whose work appears a lot in this book. Labelled, like so many, in the Alexander Turnbull Library as once belonging to the Auckland newspaper - a published version of this portrait has been seen with a credit to William Partington. Perhaps he was retained by the paper. Whatever the lineage of these negatives, they are perceptive and full of interest (Main 1976: 70).

However, it seems Partington was not nationally renowned within his lifetime and indeed many of the images that are definitely Partington's work appear in the Auckland Star attributed to Brett, the owner of the newspaper<sup>147</sup>. Perhaps Brett had bought the rights to Partington's photographs at some stage. It is revealing that William Main, however, considers the greatest photographers of Māori to be Burton, Foy, McGarrigle, Pulman, Carnell, Partington and Martin (Main 1976: 6). While Partington is perhaps best known for his photos of Māori, most of his subjects were European. I am primarily concerned here to outline the wider context of Partington's professional work. Chapter four of this thesis has outlined Partington's images of Māori. It will become evident that there are both similarities and differences in the conventions he adopted in each type of photograph.

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<sup>147</sup> In the 19th century and into the 20th century, it was common commercial practice for any new owner of a photography studio to use the negatives acquired with the business under their own name. Signatures indicate *ownership*, not necessarily *authorship* (Ireland 2003: 5).

## The Auckland Years

William Henry Thomas Partington was the seventh child born to Charles Frederick Partington and Frances Johnston. Frances emigrated from County Fermanagh, Ireland, to Sydney, Australia in 1840, but after only one year she boarded SS *Big Surprise* bound for Auckland. Charles emigrated to Sydney from Oxfordshire in 1841. Four years later he is known to have moved to Mechanics Bay, Auckland (Taylor & Glen 1977: 5). Charles and Francis were married on 13 March 1845 at Charles' residence in Auckland. Their first child and only daughter, Maria was born later that year when the family was living in Paget Street, Freemans Bay (ibid.: 5). Maria was married to David Goldie in January 1868. Their son was the portrait artist Charles Frederick Goldie (ibid.).

After Maria, Charles and Frances Partington had two sons, Charles Frederick born in April 1847 and George born September 1848. Their next three sons William (1850), Henry (1851) and Thomas (1853) all died within a few weeks of each other in September and October 1854 presumably of a contagious illness. William Henry Thomas was born on 8 December 1854; his names indicate the loss felt by his parents over the death of their three infant sons, and their desire to keep the boys memory alive. Two more sons followed; Edward Robert and Henry, both of whom followed in their father's footsteps in the family business, as they were listed as millers in the 1881 Auckland Directory (Whanganui Regional Museum Archive).

In 1850 Charles Partington purchased land in Symonds Street, Auckland and built a windmill. The Partington Windmill was also known as 'Te Mira<sup>148</sup> Hau' (The Wind Mill). His first flour was advertised for sale in August 1851. The Mill was a familiar Auckland landmark until it was demolished in 1950 (Auckland Museum Archive, Partington File). Charles Partington is listed as part owner of the Epsom Mill, purchased in 1847, and a steam flour mill. The Partingtons were described as a well established family, both socially and financially (Taylor & Glen 1977: 5).

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<sup>148</sup> Mira is a transliteration of mill

No records have been found of Partington's early life or the influences that convinced him to take up a career in photography. His father Charles was described as having an interest in watercolour painting, a skill he passed on to his children Maria and William (ibid.). William took part in the Auckland Technical School art examinations in 1896 and his results in the South Kensington examinations were a first class placing in the grade one Light and Shade section. A number of reviews of William's adult art work appear in various newspapers, including the Wanganui Chronicle.

At 23 years of age Partington married his sister's sister-in-law Mary Jane Goldie. They had three children; their son Arthur Victor was born in 1881, a daughter Ethel Maude was born in 1882 and Charles was born in 1884.

W. H. T. Partington<sup>149</sup> was apprenticed to Hemus and Hanna. The Hemus and Hanna partnership was commenced in 1875, and provided a start for a number of photographers. The business was well respected and won medals in Melbourne & Sydney. In the Auckland City Library special collections database of photographer biography Hemus is attributed as being the first photographer in New Zealand to retouch photographic negatives. The Hemus and Hanna partnership was dissolved in 1885 (Auckland City Libraries Special Collections Archive, Hemus & Hanna file), but it is noted that Josiah Martin sold a business to them in 1891 (Auckland City Libraries Special Collections Archive, Josiah Martin file). There is evidence that Partington was also under the tutelage of Robert Bartlett who had studios in Auckland from 1865 until 1895 (Auckland City Libraries Special Collections Archive, R. H. Bartlett file).

After his apprenticeship Partington formed a partnership with Josiah Martin, a photographer who undertook field work for the Auckland Weekly News, particularly studies of Māori. Martin was originally an educator but resigned his headmastership in 1879 to concentrate on photography. He toured England and Europe in 1879 and on his return established a studio in Auckland, with W.

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<sup>149</sup>Professionally Partington used his initials W. H. T., but there is some evidence that he may have used Thomas as his first name (Te Awa introduction, 2003).

H. T. Partington in early 1880. An advertisement in the 1882 Auckland Directory stating that Martin's Portrait Gallery at the Market Entrance, Queens Street was the business of Josiah Martin (Late Martin & Partington) but the Archive states they were in partnership in premises on the corner of Queen and Grey Streets until 1884. This suggests they had at least two distinct periods of business collaboration. The 1883 – 1884 Auckland Directory has an advertisement for Partington & Kinsey, Photographers and Portrait Painters, in Grey Street, Auckland, N.Z.

After this Partington went into business on his own in Grey Street, Auckland, where he remained for eight years, (Fig IV:1 page 155). In 1891 the block of businesses, of which his studio was a part, was consumed by fire and completely destroyed.

The reputation Mr Partington possessed in Auckland of being decidedly one of the very best artistic photographers there, especially in the enlargement process, and it was particularly unfortunate that he should have suffered so severely by the fire, by which he lost the whole of a valuable collection of negatives and appliances, the result of eight years work. (Wanganui Chronicle March 1892<sup>150</sup>)

Dell (2003) suggests there was probably some link between the work of Partington and his nephew portrait painter Charles Frederick Goldie. Perhaps Partington provided photographic portraits to inform Goldie's work. The Auckland War Memorial Museum holds a large number of C. F. Goldie scrapbooks and many unidentified images contained within them have been identified as Partington photographs. This evidence supports the premise that they had some professional dealings, or at the very least, admired one another's work. The fact that they are all published photographs does indicate, however, that they did not come directly from Partington. The scrapbooks were created between 1900 and 1940, but many of the clippings are unprovenanced.

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<sup>150</sup> No day date noted on clipping



It is possible many of the clippings may predate 1900<sup>151</sup>. All the photographs identified are of Māori.

The Wanganui Arts and Crafts Society purchased a C. F. Goldie painting in 1901. The oil portrait, thought to be of the Reverend Dr John Kinder, titled 'Of Making Many Books There Is No End, And Much Study Is A Weariness To The Flesh' was secured for 17 guineas and was presented to the future Sarjeant Gallery collection. It was exhibited in the Auckland Society of Arts Exhibition in 1900 and at Canterbury in 1901. The oil was painted in 1900 and is accessioned by the Sarjeant as 1901/1/1. The value of the painting at that time may be indicated by the fact that in 1903 Goldie's portraits 'Darby and Joan' and 'The Widow' were purchased for £100 each, while in 1899 his earlier collaboration with Louis John Steele, 'The Arrival of the Maoris in New Zealand', sold for £200 (Blackley 2005).

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<sup>151</sup> Goldie Scrapbooks 8 Partington content

Page 6: newspaper published photographs titled *Maoris at home: in the foreground is a long tapering wickerwork trap made by the natives for catching eels*. Identified as Partington photograph 182d

Page 19: photograph of two young Maori women - the same girls and pose as Partington photographs 111a & 112b the girls are in reverse pose.

Page 23: newspaper published photograph from *New Zealand Graphic* series titled *An Old Maori Warrior* same man as Partington photograph 412b.

Page 38: newspaper published photograph from *New Zealand Graphic* series titled *A Wanganui Native* of a young woman with short hair, piu piu and sharks tooth earrings. Her Moko has white painted edging. Partington signature appears lower right. Identified as Partington photograph 124b.

Page 40: newspaper published photograph Brett titled *A Wanganui Chieftainess*, Identified as Partington photograph 11b.

Page 40: newspaper published photograph, Brett, titled *Pare*. Same woman on the right in Partington 3a and the cloak & tiki on the other woman is being worn by *Pare* in this photograph.

Page 40: newspaper published photograph, Brett, titled *Pai*, identified as Partington 36a.

Two stereoscope cards from the *New Zealand Graphic* series *A Maori Belle and Parinui Wanganui River* 222, possibly Partington.

Page 46: elderly man with cloak, sepia photograph. No attribution, possibly Partington

Page 48: newspaper published photograph *New Zealand Graphic* series *Their First Photograph, Maoris on the Wanganui River*. Possibly Partington

Page 49: newspaper published photograph *Shy Sisters*, Partington photograph 65b, another photo same girls 65a.

Page 53: newspaper published photograph *New Zealand Graphic* series *Wanganui Maoris Making Mats*, probably Partington photograph.

Page 56: newspaper published photograph *New Zealand Graphic* series, *Two Maori Belles*, identified as Partington photograph 3b.

Page 60: newspaper published photograph Partington 33b, same woman 34b

Page 73: Lindauer portrait Ana Rupene and son from Partington photographs 115a & 116a.

Goldie scrapbook 10 Partington content

Page 341: newspaper published photograph *Mother and Child*, Partington. In Edith Bells possession.

## The Whanganui Years

Partington and his family left Auckland after the fire that destroyed the business he had built up. His reasons for leaving Auckland and moving to a small town with his wife and three children are intriguing, considering Whanganui already had a number of established photographic portrait studios and a population of only 8,524 (according to the 1900 census) (Chapple 1939: 236). Photographers working in Whanganui at this time included: Alfred Martin, (1882 - 1899); William Henshaw Clarke (1888 - 1910) and John Dunlop (1891 - 1899) (Whanganui Regional Museum Archive Photographers Index).

After Partington established his studio in 1892 more photographers moved to the township<sup>152</sup>, providing a very competitive environment, the average length of time that photographers stayed in business in Wanganui during this era was only five years. Exceptions were those who established themselves early, such as Clarke and Martin, and Frank Denton who joined the ranks after Partington's departure from Wanganui. Denton maintained a successful business for 31 years (ibid.).

At the time that Partington and his family settled in Whanganui, 1892, it was a prospering township financed mainly through the farming community and commercial business providing provisions for the settler farmers. Since 1875 Whanganui had changed from a little village to a thriving town. Early manufacturing industries were established; breweries, soap works, an iron foundry, a flax industry and a rope factory were in production (Chapple 1939: 131). A description of the town in 1894 suggested a level of sophistication and wealth, considering the small population.

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<sup>152</sup> They were: Ernest Edward Wells, in business from 1898-1900 of Wanganui and Patea 1902; Mence and Bell, in business from 1899, on the Riverbank; Frank James Denton, in business from 1899-1930, of Victoria Avenue; Alfred Archibald Willis, in business from 1899-c1902, of Victoria Avenue; The American New York Photography Company, established 1900, of Taupo Quay next to Foster's Hotel; E M Collis and Annie Davis in business from 1900, of Ridgway Street; Charles Percy Wood, in business from 1902-1905, of Victoria Ave; Charles Frederick Newham, in business from 1902 -1907, of Victoria Ave; John de Courey Brady, in business from 1902 – 1907; David Clarke (Elite Studios) established 1903, of Ridgway Street; Cecil Cowper Tennant, established 1905, of Wicksteed Place; Albert Ramsay, in business 1905 – 1912, of 39 Dublin St; Arthur Edgar Watkinson, established 1905-1912, of 138 Victoria Avenue and John Newman, in business from 1906-1909, of Victoria Ave (Whanganui Regional Museum Archive Photographers Index).

In the lower parts of Victoria Avenue were the Banks of New Zealand, New South Wales, the Colonial and National Banks. On the south side were Christ Church, St Mary's, St Paul's and Trinity Churches. Next to St Paul's was the School of Design and behind it an infant school with three hundred and twenty children. Further up was the Collegiate School and a little beyond the Boys' School with a roll of two hundred and ninety. In Ridgway Street were the Oddfellows' Hall and the approach to the Museum, the Court House, the Druids' and the Freemasons' Hall and the Bank of Australasia. The Jubilee Band Rotunda stood on the site of the old Rutland Stockade. Along Taupo Quay were factories and the principal wholesale buildings. Further along Taupo Quay was the cemetery, the rifle range, the race course and the site of the new hospital. The Castlecliff railway line ran from the end of the Quay (ibid.: 133).

According to the Women's 1893 Electoral Role the Partington family lived at a residential property on Mathieson Street, Wanganui, while the photographic studio was in the lower block of Victoria Avenue, near Taupo Quay, (fig IV:2 page 155). The studio opened in March 1892, and an early description of the studio revealed that Partington used state-of-the-art technology that impressed the Wanganui Chronicle reporter.

We paid a visit this morning to Mr Partington's photographic studio, situated in the upstairs portion of Mr Remington's shop, and were very gratified at noting the completeness of the arrangements obtaining there. The studio itself is very large and lofty, with the essentials so necessary for the production of good specimens of the art, namely, a judicious distribution of light, while the accessories are in excellent taste. Leading from the studio are several rooms, including a dark room, dressing room, vestibule, etc, all fitted up neatly and with the latest appliances. Distributed in different parts of the studio are some really excellent specimens of the opal process, finished in carbon - one of the best processes of modern photography, and certainly showing artistic workmanship in the general effect produced. The bromide process, a cheaper but almost an equally good one, is also shown in a variety of pictures...The price list, which is given in another column, shows considerable reductions in every description of photographs, and as Mr Partington during the short space of

time that he has opened his studio here has been visited by a large number of townspeople, there is every reason to believe that he will not regret settling in Wanganui, but that he will soon find himself surrounded by numerous clients, who may be assured that they will meet with every attention from a thoroughly practical and efficient photographer (Wanganui Chronicle 16 February 1892).

Partington was quick to participate in the cultural life of the town, and within a month of establishing his studio took the opportunity to photograph the April 1892 production of the opera *The Sorcerer*. The Wanganui Chronicle critiqued his work and found it to be of the highest standard.

The artist has caught both expression and attitude splendidly, and his pictures would form a good record of the opera for those who have occasion to remember it. The workmanship revealed in the photographs is of high order, and we admit that either as pictures or portraits it would be difficult to improve on them (Wanganui Chronicle, Local & General 12 April 1892).

Nor did he rest on his laurels, seeking to improve the studio chattels with new furnishings and props that included a number of handsome rustic chairs, a magnificent Elizabethan chair, grass mats, vases, flower bowls and elaborate screens. The studio camera was described as large, with lenses for the purpose of taking photographs as large as 12 x 10 (inches) and it was commented that a print that was large format was far superior to an enlargement. The cost for enamelled photographs was 20 shillings per dozen or opallete cabinet photos at 12 shillings and 6 pence. It was noted that Partington had ordered scenery backdrops from Germany and was waiting on their arrival (Wanganui Chronicle 1893, undated Whanganui Regional Museum archive). Perhaps his effort to be cutting edge was a reflection of the competitive environment in which he found himself in the small city.

Partington was entrepreneurial and could see the value in capturing the city's events. Using his technology for swift development and processing he was able to take photographs in the street and have them available for purchase to the

public the very next day. The novelty of these snapshots created a successful market, with people eager to acquire images they, or friends and family, appeared in.

During Tuesday's Jubilee procession, Mr Partington succeeded in taking a number of instantaneous photographs. Seven of them were displayed outside his studio today, and were much admired as showing considerable skill in bringing out such clear prints of the proceedings. Amongst the views may be mentioned one showing the procession as it passed along the Quay just before crossing the Avenue intersection, then follow others showing the Volunteers, the various tableaux, the Maori with their canoe, and the large crowd congregated at the different vantage points. The photos are meeting with ready disposal (Wanganui Chronicle 1893, undated Whanganui Regional Museum archive).

The Wanganui Photographers Index compiled at the Whanganui Regional Museum states that Partington was absent from Wanganui in January 1895 as he was on a photographic expedition up the Whanganui River, taking photographs of Manganui-o-te-Ao<sup>153</sup>. It was possibly during this expedition that Partington took photographs of a number of kāinga on the River, including Taumarunui, Parinui, Pīpīriki, Hiruhārama, Rānānā, Parikinō and Kaiwhaiki<sup>154</sup>.

It was while Partington was away on this expedition that his eldest child, Arthur Victor, drowned in the Whanganui River near Pūtiki<sup>155</sup>, on 10 January 1895. A news story that appeared in the Wanganui Herald the following day described the events leading to his drowning and the heroism displayed by his would-be rescuer, Wikirini, a 73 year old Māori man who was invalided with chronic lumbago<sup>156</sup>.

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<sup>153</sup> A tributary river near Pipiriki, originated from Mount Ruapehu and flows down into the Whanganui River.

<sup>154</sup> Partington photographs of the kāinga have been located in the Whanganui Regional Museum photographic collection

<sup>155</sup> Pūtiki is the kainga closest to the Whanganui River mouth

<sup>156</sup> That afternoon Arthur and his younger brother Charles went swimming in the River off the cattle wharf at Pūtiki. Arthur got out of his depth and sank, Charles called for help and Wikirini, who was on the river bank rushed to his assistance. Wikirini reached the boy and proceeded to bring him to shore, but Arthur panicked and in so doing pushed the old man under the water. Wikirini was able to escape the boy's grasp and made it back to shore, but Arthur disappeared without trace.

It is difficult to appreciate the impact Arthur's death had on the Partington family. He was the first born son and had reached young adulthood. Both Partington and Mary Jane were separated from their Auckland based families at such a traumatic time and probably felt isolated in their grief. It would be easy to presume that because Arthur's would-be rescuer was Māori the family were grateful for Wikirini's selfless efforts to save the boy. This may have been influential in the way Partington felt about Māori in general. In such emotional times it is reasonable to assume that both Māori and European came together to grieve for the boy, and strong bonds were formed between some Whanganui River Māori (particularly those from Wikirini's home of Pūtiki) and the Partington family. Partington may have been bestowed with opportunities not offered to other Europeans because of this bond. However there is no evidence to support this premise. Although William Main noted that Partington was able to take a photo of an adzed canoe (print number 131), and that the recording of such processes was unusual, as tapu practices were hidden from the gaze of Europeans. However, it is known that Partington was privileged on this occasion to be in the company of the tōhunga as he performed the ceremony to Tane, at the cutting of the tōtara log (Main 1976: 78).

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*Willing hands arrived at the scene when the accident became known, several parties manned canoes and boats, and dragged for the body, but up to the hour of going to press the remains had not been recovered* (Wanganui Herald 11 January 1895: 3).

The bravery of the old man was applauded, and it was noted "that Wikirini is completely prostrate from his exertions yesterday, and grave fears are entertained of his ultimate recovery. We sincerely hope that the brave old man will recover" (Ibid.). Deepest sympathy was extended to the Partington family by the Herald reporter. It was not until four days later that Arthur's body was recovered, by a young Māori boy, Matieu Patapu of Pūtiki. Matieu was wandering the high tide line at 5.00 am, just metres from the drowning site. He quickly called the police and Arthur's body was transported to the Partington family home. A coroner's enquiry was held that afternoon. Charles was the key witness and described his panic at being unable to help his brother and mentioning the bravery of Wikirini. A verdict of accidental drowning was reached. The Herald article informed readers that,

*By pigeon express today we learn that W. H. Partington, photographer, left Pipiriki this morning for Wanganui on being apprised of the sad intelligence concerning the death by drowning of his eldest son* (Wanganui Herald 14 January 1895: 3).

In the Public Notices of January 17 Partington "desired to return his thanks to those who were so kind in endeavouring to recover the body of his late son" (Wanganui Chronicle 1895).

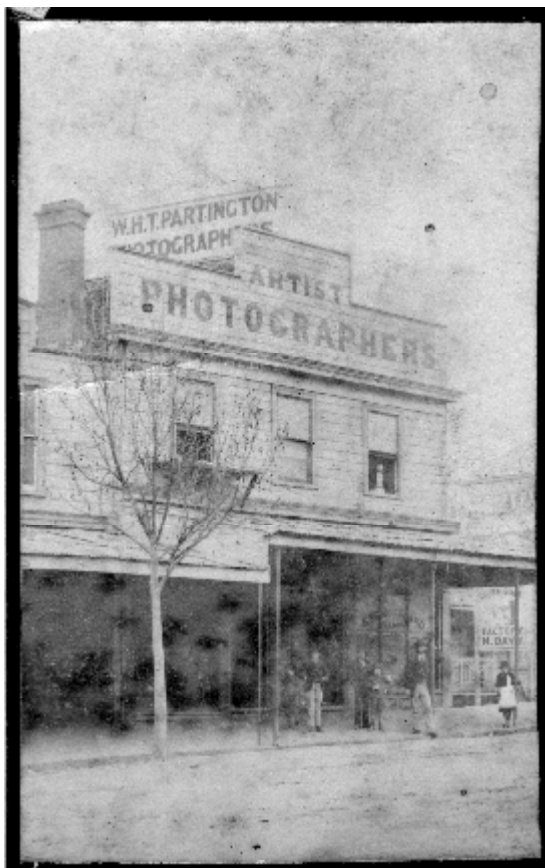


Fig IV:1 Unidentified people outside the studio of Partington on Greys Avenue (Grey Street), with Henry Davy, boot maker (on right). Probably looking from the vicinity of Queen Street, circa 1890. Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries (N.Z.) Reference 772.1. Reproduced with permission.



Fig IV:2 Corner of Victoria Avenue and Taupo Quay, Wanganui. Partington's studio is in the second building from the corner, his premises were upstairs and the advertising sign is clearly visible. This photograph was taken during the 1902 flood. Partington Photographer Whanganui Regional Museum Photograph Collection reference Partington Collection No.166a. Reproduced with permission

Partington was a Corporal in the Wanganui Volunteer Rifles (Wanganui Chronicle May 1895). Men of all ages and from all walks of life took part in these volunteer groups during this era. Firearm skills were considered essential for European settlers and more recently there had been the external threat of a Russian invasion, due to rumours of an increased Russian presence in the Pacific region. The call to arms was thought to be a distinct possibility.

The family shifted to Taylorville on the Pūtiki side of the Whanganui River (Wanganui Post Office Directory 1896), and remained there until they left the district for Auckland in 1907. This relocation to Auckland coincided with the death of Partington's mother Frances. Frances' obituary mentioned she had been a widow for some 30 years. Perhaps she left Partington an inheritance of money and/or property. Mary Jane and W. H. T. Partington appeared in the supplementary electoral role of November 1908 as residents of Grey Lynn. The Auckland Directory for 1909 and 1911 list Partington as resident at New North Road, Kingsland and that his occupation was photographer. In fact he continued to be listed as a photographer in the directories until 1928. He died on 22 July 1940, aged 85 years. Mary Jane had predeceased him, by ten years.



Fig IV:3 Ethel Maude Partington with unidentified woman  
Partington Photographer

Whanganui Regional Museum Photograph  
Collection reference Partington Collection  
No. 60d. Reproduced with permission

Ethel Maude, the Partingtons' only daughter (left), was married in July 1904, when she was 22, to Albert Edward Patterson<sup>1</sup> (interview Edith Bell November 2004). Edith Bell confirmed that the European girl in the Partington photograph No. 60d was her grandmother Ethel Maude Partington.



## The Practice of Nineteenth Century Photography

Photography is as old as the European settlement of Aotearoa. New Zealand's first known attempt at photography occurred less than a decade after the first New Zealand Company immigrant ships left from England in 1847. The subject of this first attempt at photography was of Eliza Grey; whose husband was Governor George Grey. Although this early attempt was unsuccessful, it marked the beginning of a rich photographic record of New Zealand (Dalley 2000: 9).

During his long life Partington witnessed a great many innovations in photographic technology. This section describes the technological advances of photography during his lifetime and explains the processes and techniques he used, and compares his photographic image conventions (styles) with those of his contemporaries.

As a young boy he would have come into contact with the Daguerreotype<sup>157</sup> photograph. This revolutionary process of achieving photographic images was embraced all over the world. The first New Zealand daguerreotype was made at Government House, Wellington in 1847 by Lt Governor Eyre. Eyre was a good friend of the Reverend Richard Taylor, CMS missionary at Whanganui (Bates: 14). Richard Taylor's daughter Laura described the scene when travelling daguerreotype photographer, Mr Innesley, 'the daguerreotype man', took portraits of the Taylor children. Laura commented that during his time taking portraits in Wanganui most of the sitters were unhappy with their likenesses (Taylor 1852:15). However, by the time Partington became an

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<sup>157</sup> The first practically viable format of photograph was The Daguerreotype, invented by Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre and reported to the French Academy of Sciences in January 1839. This photographic process produced a one-off image; created when a silvered copper plate was exposed to iodine vapour in an iodizing box, and then exposed in a camera. The image was formed by the action of light, and developed by vapour of mercury heated over a spirit lamp and fixed in a strong solution of salt or sodium thiosulphate. The process required a long exposure time of several minutes in strong sunlight. The daguerreotype needed to be sealed behind glass to protect the easily scratched surface and to prevent oxidation and degradation; exposure to air meant the silver tarnished, causing discolouration. In 1840 Englishman John Goddard discovered that if the plate was subjected to vapour of bromide the exposure time was reduced considerably from between ten seconds and two minutes. Because the daguerreotype produced a one-off image it could not be used commercially, (commercial photography would require mass production to be economically viable, for illustrating books for example). The daguerreotype was, however, very successful with the public, right up until the 1850s, providing a faster and cheaper form of portraiture than had previously been available. (Bernard 1980: 251)

apprentice photographer, the daguerreotype was obsolete and commercial photographers embraced the Albumen Print<sup>158</sup> using the Wet Collodion Process<sup>159</sup>. By 1871 the albumen print was being produced using the Gelatin Dry-Plate Negative<sup>160</sup>, an advance in the process that enabled photographers far more flexibility and capacity because it eliminated the need to cart around heavy stores of dangerous chemicals.

It is almost certain this was the period that Partington started his photographic apprenticeship, and that this is the process of photography he first experimented with. Examples of his studio work, including albumen carte-de-visite work, are typical of the era in both style and quality. Partington started his photographic career in Auckland and a number of Partington photographs exist to compare with his contemporaries' work. Fig IV:4 page 165 is a albumen carte-de-visite of an unidentified family (husband, wife and infant child) produced at his Grey Street Auckland studio where he operated from 1883 to 1891.

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<sup>158</sup> The Albumen Print was introduced by Louis Désiré Blanquart-Evrard in 1850 and became the most commonly used photographic process during the next thirty years. Wet collodion negatives were introduced in 1851 and became the most popular kind of negative used throughout the life of the albumen print. The almost simultaneous introduction of these technologies enabled the development of large format photographs. Being contact prints the resulting images retained incredible detail and richness, producing some of *the most spectacularly beautiful prints ever produced*. (Bernard 1980: 254) Albumen prints, in good condition vary from a dark, purplish chocolate colour through to russet tones. The dark colours appear blacker than black while the light tones are a characteristic creamy white. Fading caused an alteration in the colour to a common yellow, regardless of the colour bias of the print when new. This did not necessarily destroy the visual power of the print, because the range of tones produced was retained. (Ibid.: 254)

<sup>159</sup> The Wet Collodion Process on glass caused a revolution in photography from 1851. A perfectly clean glass plate was coated with prepared collodion that had bromide and iodide salt dissolved in it. When the film was set the plate was immersed in a solution of silver nitrate, forming silver iodide in the collodion. It was then exposed in the camera and developed while still wet with a proto-sulphate of iron developer. The negative was usually intensified, fixed in a solution of sodium thiosulphate and washed. To prevent decomposition and scratching the negative was varnished with a spirit varnish. The entire process needed to be carried out in the dark, on site, while the plates were still wet. This made it necessary to transport dark tents, apparatus, glass plates, and chemicals to every location. However the positive advantages outweighed the disadvantages. The process was quicker than previous methods and created incredible detail and tonal range. It became virtually the only negative process in use between the mid 1850s and the 1880s, when dry plates became available. (Bernard 1980: 254)

<sup>160</sup> The Gelatin Dry-Plate Negative was developed, using light sensitive silver halides suspended in a gelatin emulsion that never dried out, by Dr Richard Maddox in 1871. Within two years commercially prepared ready-made emulsion was available to photographers and by 1878 ready-made dry plates were available. They superseded the Wet Collodion Process (WCP) rendering the portable dark tent obsolete. The resulting prints were impossible to tell from the WCP however printing techniques were also changing at this time so it is likely that an albumen print uses the WCP while a silver gelatin print has been printed from a gelatin dry-plate negative. (Ibid.: 255)

## Photographic Style Conventions

In her book on dating family photographs Lenore Frost states there were certain conventions used in the backgrounds of photos that could help distinguish various decades. The 1880s studio portrait often used a rustic look, with grasses and branches in the foreground, papier-mâché rocks and tree stumps, and rustic benches. Props could include hammocks, swings, and buckets, spades and hoops for children. Backdrops were romantic with trees, oceans or a castle (Frost 1991: 13).

Nineteenth century photography conventions included iconic poses that conveyed specific meanings. Recommendation that two sitters could express affection by having one sit while the other stood to the side and slightly behind, with a hand resting 'familiarily' on the seated individual's shoulder (Girvan 2005).

By the 1890s rustic gave way to the late Victorian palm-tree and cane furniture, with backdrops hinting indistinctly at a conservatory (Frost 1991: 13). Partington, however, seemed to prefer a more sumptuous setting that suggested quality of furnishing and a more formal room. He used brocade draperies and tapestries, plants in extravagant jardinière, and fur rugs on the floor.

In critiquing photographs of this era it is difficult not to put 21st century values on the photographer or sitter, with our contemporary notions of romantic love. It has been asserted that usually in the nineteenth century people did not get married primarily because they were in love: they got married because that was the social expectation and in many cases for women, an economic necessity. Love came later, or was a bonus. Even as late as these photographs were taken there were strong social strictures against even working class women joining the paid workforce, so unless they had an independent income (rare in colonial New Zealand), or were supported by their families, women had to marry to avoid penury and social exclusion (Ireland 2005).

Young women had a limited knowledge of sex in an era of puritanical Victorian morality. For a large number of timid and inexperienced women their wedding day would have been overshadowed by considerable apprehension about what was to come. Given the likelihood their new husband would claim his rights as a husband, that apprehension was not unfounded (ibid.).



Fig IV:4 studio albumen portrait circa 1885 of an unidentified family group Partington Photographer

Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries (N.Z.) reference 7-A154196. Reproduced with permission.

The style of this albumen print is typical of the era. A studio set with rustic seating, a plant and a plain backdrop, the woman stands while her husband is seated. Their shoulders touch. Apart from the formal setting the family look quite relaxed and the baby boy is smiling and his limbs are in focus, indicative of a short exposure time.



Fig IV:5 studio albumen portrait of the Gilbert Family, Wanganui Partington Photographer

Whanganui Regional Museum Photograph Collection Reference P/E/13. Reproduced with permission.

This family portrait from the 1890s is a fine example of the fluidity and interconnection Partington is able to create between his subjects. The family appear to be very relaxed with one another and a circle is created with the daughter touching her fathers shoulder, the parents' knees touch, and the son connects with his mothers shoulder. She is holding a pamphlet, or perhaps some sheet music in a manner that indicates we have happened upon a casual family moment. Almost as if she had glanced up to find the camera in her sitting room. There is little sign of the usual rigidity associated with studio portraits of this era.

Smiling in photographs is a twentieth century phenomenon. Early photographs had long exposure times. From 1839 until the late 1880s the time involved diminished very slowly, so the subjects simply had to freeze before a camera. This did not encourage spontaneity, and a frozen smile has never been considered attractive. Having a studio photograph taken was a formal, and therefore, serious occasion. Often it was also an opportunity to demonstrate one's position in society. Smiling would have been seen as inappropriate, slightly indecent and possibly even a bit 'fast'. For us to assume that those being photographed might smile is to misunderstand an extremely important aspect of the whole 'being-photographed transaction' as it existed at the end of the nineteenth century (ibid.).

### **Technology Impacting on Convention**

W. H. T. Partington's partner in the early 1880s was Auckland photographer Josiah Martin. An advertisement kept by Martin in his personal papers describes the service they offered to the public, and the breakthrough of the instantaneous photograph:

The New Photography is now open. Instantaneous Pictures! Martin and Partington Photographists. Market Entrance, Queen-Street. Mr Josiah Martin having made a special study of the Royal College of Chemistry, London, of the Latest Improvements In Rapid Photography by the Gelatine-Bromide process, has entered into partnership with Mr W. H. T. Partington (late with Messrs Hemus and Hanna and Mr Bartlett) and will Open their new Portrait Gallery in a few days.

The great success which has attended these new Dry Plates in Europe and America has established their superiority, and produced quite a Revolution In Photography.

The most beautiful Pictures, preserving the Natural Attitude and Expression of the sitter, can now be taken in scarcely one second of time, and without any delay in preparation.



Fig IV:6 studio albumen portrait circa 1891.  
Gentleman is identified as WJ Davis.  
J Dunlop Photographer

Whanganui Regional Museum Photograph  
Collection Reference P/Bu/VIII. Reproduced with  
permission.

Using a similar form to Partington's 1885 carte-de-  
visite fig IV:4, but Dunlop, fig IV:6, does not  
capture the candidness of Partington's subjects  
and nor may he wish too. Dunlop uses the  
standard photographic conventions of the day.  
Essentially the researcher is placing a value  
judgment on both the sitters and the  
photographer.



Fig IV:7 studio albumen wedding  
portrait.  
Alfred Martin Photographer

Whanganui Regional Museum Photograph  
Collection reference P/Bu/5. Reproduced  
with permission.

Alfred Martin was in business in Wanganui  
from 1882 until 1899. The white wedding  
dress and suit style worn by the subjects,  
fig IV:7, suggest this photograph was taken  
close to the end of the nineteenth century.  
The formality and static nature of the image  
is very different from Partington's work.  
The subjects do not engaged with one  
another, even though there is physical  
contact. Stylistically Partington was using  
different techniques with his sitters when  
compared with both Martin and Dunlop.  
His sitters appear less wooden and posed,  
and more relaxed, allowing glimpses of  
their personalities.

Children's Portraits and Family Groups, can be photographed in an instant, without the least constraint.

For Out-Door Photography this process has superior advantages. Picnic Parties, Portrait Groups and Views, also Photos of Horses and other animals, will be taken on the shortest notice. Now Open (Martin, undated, probably circa 1880)<sup>161</sup>.

The Auckland City Library special collections database of photographer biography states that Partington was considered an expert in dry plate photography and is said to have introduced this technology to Auckland. Researching Partington's studio portraits reveals he was very good at capturing personality. His use of the instantaneous dry plate technology meant his subjects did not have to stay motionless for as long and he was able to allow them to relax sufficiently to lose the rigidity evident in many of his contemporary's work. This technology also allowed the photographer to move out of the studio and take photographs in the field.

An analysis of the remaining collection photographs in the Whanganui Regional Museum suggests that Partington's daily life as a photographer was filled with sports teams, school classes, military groups and town life. His work was considered to be of high quality, in both style and production values. Although at least a century has passed since many of his photographs were developed and some of the mounting boards have foxed, the quality of chemicals and photographic-papers have ensured the longevity of his photographs. Many examples of his work still exist in family records and museum archives.

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<sup>161</sup> See Record 2380 Auckland War Memorial Museum

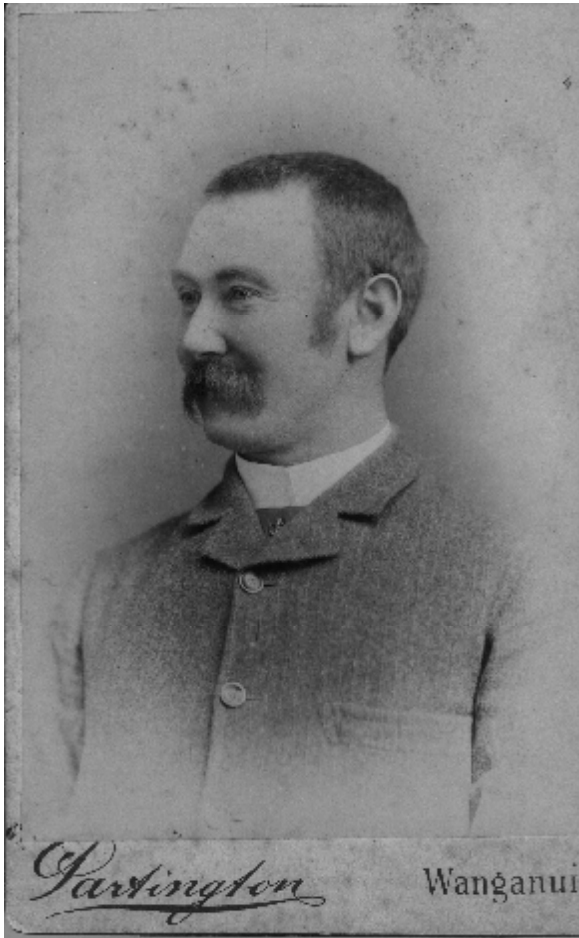


Fig IV:8 studio albumen portrait of Pat London. Partington Photographer

Whanganui Regional Museum Photograph Collection reference P/L/89. Reproduced with permission.

This photograph reveals a man who is happy with life, his grin is unmistakable, fig IV:8. How Partington managed to break down social conventions, adhered to for decades, is fascinating. But it is certainly the beginning of new convention, the one that insists the subject 'say cheese'.

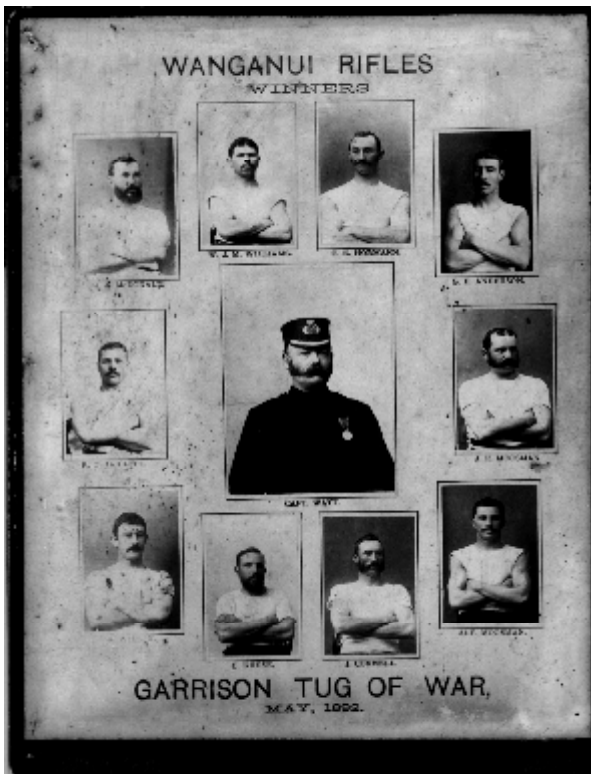


Fig IV:9 Wanganui Rifles, Winners Garrison Tug of War May 1892. Partington Photographer

Whanganui Regional Museum Photograph Collection Reference M/G/70. Reproduced with permission.

A photographic montage from Partington's very early days in Wanganui, fig IV:9. The winners of the Garrison Tug of War were certainly very manly men.





Fig IV:10 Wanganui District High School Primary Department 30.11.03. Studio photograph. Partington Photographer

Whanganui Regional Museum Photograph Collection Reference SCS/WBH/24. Reproduced with permission

Partington took class photos in his studio of students from Wanganui District High School, Wanganui Boys School and Wanganui Girls School throughout his Wanganui career. In this photo, fig IV:10, students at the front sit on fur rugs, and in the middle a korowai. The draperies at the back are identifiable in a number of Partington's photographs. With such a large group it is difficult with the exposure times to get a photo that is not spoilt by at least one child's movement. This photograph captures a range of facial expression and attitude, but was taken quickly enough so that none of the faces are blurred.



Fig IV:11 A studio portrait cyclist & coach. Partington Photographer.

Whanganui Regional Museum Photograph Collection Reference Sp/Cg/9d. Reproduced with permission.

The cyclist and his trainer pose in front of a familiar Partington backdrop while the studio rugs are replaced with coir mats, to simulate the outdoors.

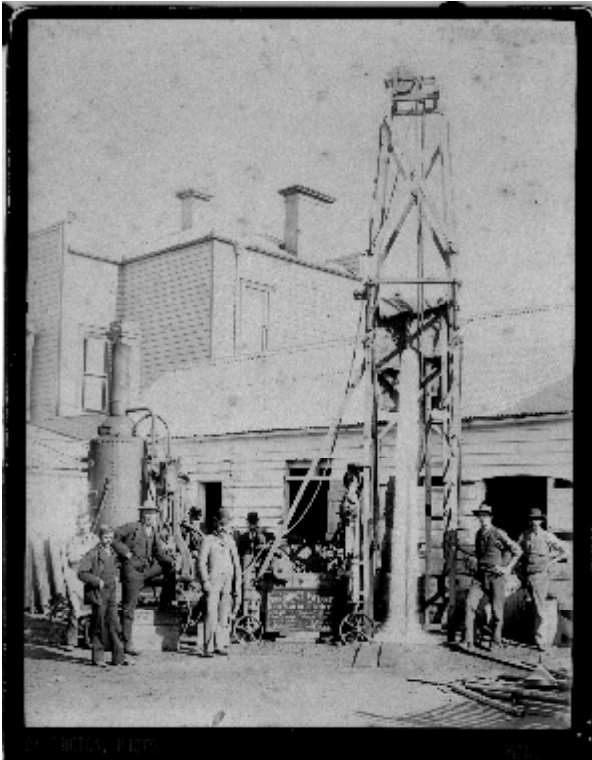


Fig IV:12 an outdoor shot of the artesian well at the back of Wanganui's Fosters Hotel, 1893. Partington Photographer.

Whanganui Regional Museum  
Photograph Collection Reference  
B/H/56. Reproduced with permission.

Partington photographed numerous events in Wanganui's daily life, recording activities that would easily have been lost from living memory.

This well was bored in April 1893, by Mr. G. Smith, a representative of Mr. Job Osborne, of Christchurch, and the pipes go down to a depth of 245 feet. The water rises to 27 feet above the surface and there is a flow of 75 gallons per minute, or 108,000 gallons in 24 hours. The pipes are 2 inches in diameter (Fig IV:12, verso, Whanganui Regional Museum Photograph Collection Reference B/H/56)

## Art Photography

Partington and a number of journalists referred to his photography as art photography in both advertisements and newspaper articles. The term is misleading to us today as we have a notion of art photography that does not equate to what was termed as art photography in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Initially photography was regarded as a technical science. The belief that photography is not art because it was made by a machine is still debated today, and has its roots back in this foundation period. In the early days of photography there were a few practitioners such as Englishwoman Julia Margaret Cameron (1815 – 1879) who made artistic photographs. Today the power of her imagery is recognised and she is considered a master photographer, however, she was regarded as an eccentric during her lifetime and not a mainstream photographer (Ireland 2005). Mainstream was about documenting real things.

The first movement that consciously attempted to marry art with photography originated in Europe in the 1880s, but this made no impression on New Zealand

photographers until the 1890s when it gave rise to the style known as Pictorialism<sup>162</sup>. As a commercial photographer Partington was conceptually and philosophically untouched by this. The niche of pictorialism was in the hands of the hobbyist, the members of the camera clubs that sprang up throughout New Zealand from the 1890s. Most commercial photographers continued the practice of setting and posing their subjects well into the second decade of the 20th century (ibid.).

Applying the term art photography to Partington's work is misleading. His definition of art photography probably related to his detail of style and not a withdrawal from a documentary approach.

Partington perhaps had a better 'eye' than his peers and was capitalising on this ability as a point of difference to give him a commercial edge, but essentially this was about style, not art (ibid.).

## **Summary**

Facts concerning Partington's life are scant, but the public record featured a number of tragic events. The loss of his photographic studio by fire after eight years of hard work required him to start completely afresh. He decided to retreat to a small provincial centre. For a man with a wife and young family of three children to support the move to a new town must have been a challenge. It appears, however, that he took up the challenge wholeheartedly, creating a very successful niche for himself and his family in the small town of Wanganui. The drowning of their eldest son Arthur in the Whanganui River may have influenced the Partington's decision to return to their extended family in Auckland.

Partington was proactive in the use of new photographic technology in New Zealand throughout the 1890s. His studio portraits were arguably technically superior to many other photographers of the time. Stylistically his photography

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<sup>162</sup> Putting the finished picture first and the subject second, a photograph that stressed atmosphere or viewpoint as opposed to creating accurate, factual and detailed images (Leggat 1999).

was equal to the best professional photographers of the era. When compared with other Wanganui photographers his work was superior. He was able to create candid situations that revealed the personality in the sitter. Such images placed him in the forefront of the new wave of studio photographers who embraced such techniques and left the conventions of Victorian photography behind. His use of the term art photographer to describe himself did not mean his style married art with photography in the way that the pictorialists did. During his professional career he did not divert from the documentary style.

The fact he also went out into the field to document the Māori people of the Whanganui River shows a level of dedication to his profession, or perhaps a commercial entrepreneurship. Searches of government records do not reveal if his expeditions were funded by national or local government, or if they were an initiative driven by Partington's own curiosity and funded by him.

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**Glossary of Māori Terms**

<b>amo</b>	carved bargeboards that form the apex of the roof of a whare
<b>Aotearoa</b>	New Zealand (literally ‘long white cloud’ or ‘long twilight’)
<b>awa</b>	river
<b>haere mai</b>	welcome
<b>hapū</b>	clan or sub-tribe
<b>hau</b>	sense of responsibility
<b>hei tiki</b>	ancestral shaped pendant
<b>hīnaki</b>	eel trap usually made from supplejack
<b>hui</b>	meeting or gathering of people
<b>ihi</b>	power
<b>iwi</b>	tribal grouping
<b>kahu huruhuru</b>	cloak made with post European contact materials
<b>kahu kereru</b>	kereru feather cloak
<b>kahu kiwi</b>	kiwi feather cloak
<b>kahu raukenga</b>	child’s cloak
<b>kahu toi</b>	warrior’s prestige raincape of toi fibre
<b>kahu weka</b>	weka feather cloak
<b>kaiaarahi</b>	exhibition guide
<b>kaihautu</b>	chief executive officer (Māori)
<b>kaitaka paepaeroa</b>	fine cloak with taniko border vertical weft
<b>kaitaka pateā</b>	fine cloak with taniko border horizontal weft
<b>kaitiaki</b>	physical and spiritual caretaker
<b>kaitiakitanga</b>	the essence of caretakership
<b>kainga</b>	village

<b>kanuka</b>	small tree with straight slender branches
<b>kaumātua</b>	elder, speaking with authority
<b>kaunihera</b>	council
<b>kaupapa</b>	function; agenda
<b>kawa</b>	protocol
<b>kō iwi tāngata</b>	ancestral bones/remains
<b>kōrerō</b>	talk, story, explanation
<b>korowai</b>	cloak woven from harakeke muka and decorated with feathers, dyed tassels etc
<b>korowai karure</b>	flax tag cloak
<b>kotiate</b>	short weapon shaped like a paddle
<b>kuia</b>	female elder
<b>kumete</b>	bowl
<b>kura kaupapa Māori</b>	school
<b>mana</b>	prestige, influence, authority
<b>mana whenua</b>	people of the rohe, authority over the land
<b>Māoritanga</b>	the cultural mores of the Māori people
<b>marae atea</b>	courtyard, usually in front of a whare nui, used as a meeting place
<b>mātauranga</b>	knowledge
<b>mauri</b>	spiritual life force
<b>Mihinare</b>	Anglican Church
<b>moko</b>	tattoo
<b>moko mokai</b>	preserved tattooed head
<b>mokopuna</b>	grandchildren
<b>pah or pa</b>	village, settlement



<b>Pākehā</b>	New Zealander of European descent
<b>pake karure</b>	waist garment
<b>Papa-tūā-nuku</b>	the Earth Mother
<b>pare</b>	carved door lintel
<b>pataka</b>	store house
<b>patu</b>	hand weapon
<b>pihepihe</b>	shoulder cape
<b>piupiu</b>	decorative skirt
<b>poi</b>	flax ball on a string, used to encourage flexibility and strength of the wrists and also in dancing
<b>pota</b>	raincape
<b>pounamu</b>	greenstone/jade/nephrite
<b>poupou</b>	carved post that represents an ancestor
<b>poutoukomanawa</b>	carved ancestral figure stationed at the entrance of the wharenui for protection
<b>pūkana</b>	facial expression using bulging eyes
<b>rangatira</b>	Chief/leader
<b>rangatiratanga</b>	the spirit of chieftainship/sovereignty
<b>rohe</b>	iwi or hapū territory
<b>taha Māori</b>	Māori perspective
<b>taiaha</b>	long weapon with a blade edge
<b>tāngata e tiaki</b>	caretakers designated by whanau, hapū or iwi to care for individual taonga
<b>tāngata e tiakitanga</b>	the spirit of caretakership
<b>tāngata whenua</b>	original inhabitants of the land
<b>tangihanga</b>	funeral ceremony

<b>taniko</b>	fine decorative patterned weaving
<b>taonga</b>	treasured aspects of Māori cultural property including both tangible and intangible
<b>taonga tuku iho</b>	taonga imbued with the mana of generations
<b>tapu</b>	sacred
<b>tāratara</b>	rough raincape of undressed tags of flax
<b>tauoho</b>	figurehead of a canoe
<b>te hokinga mai</b>	the return home
<b>tekoteko</b>	carved ancestral figure at the apex of a whare
<b>tewhatewha</b>	long weapon with a club end
<b>tikanga Māori</b>	Māori customs
<b>tōhunga</b>	holder and teacher of tikanga Māori (priest)
<b>toi</b>	cabbage tree leaf
<b>tōtara</b>	very robust tree, often used for constructing large structures such as whare ridge poles and waka. A preferred wood for carving.
<b>tupuna</b>	ancestor
<b>tūpuna</b>	ancestors
<b>turangawaewae</b>	The rohe where a persons ancestors bones lie, literally 'a place to stand'
<b>urupā</b>	burial site
<b>wahaika</b>	short weapon with a blade edge
<b>wāhi tapu</b>	sacred place
<b>waiora</b>	health
<b>wairua</b>	spirit, soul
<b>waka</b>	canoe
<b>waka taua</b>	war canoe

<b>wakahuia</b>	carved box, shaped like a waka, but with a lid. Used to hold tapu head adornments
<b>wana</b>	authority
<b>wehi</b>	awe
<b>whakapapa</b>	genealogy or descent
<b>whakatipu</b>	rain cloak with flax tags
<b>whānau</b>	family, generally describes the extended family group
<b>Whanganuitanga</b>	cultural practice specific to the iwi of the Whanganui River region
<b>whānui</b>	wider group / extended family
<b>whare</b>	house
<b>whare nui</b>	meeting house
<b>whare tūpuna</b>	ancestral house
<b>Sources:</b>	<p>Williams, H. (1975). <i>A Dictionary of Māori Language</i>. Wellington:Government Printer.</p> <p>Karetu, T. S. (1991). <i>Concise Maori Dictionary</i>. Auckland: Reed Books.</p> <p>Whanganui Regional Museum. (2005). Māori Cloak Glossary.</p>