

Founders Park, Moturoa – the plaques



The Memorial

“Erected to mark the locality where the Pioneer Settlers landed from the following vessels:

<i>Brougham</i>	arrived 14 February 1841
<i>William Bryan</i>	arrived 31 March 1841
<i>Amelia Thompson</i>	arrived 3 September 1841
<i>Regina</i>	arrived 3 October 1841
<i>Oriental</i>	arrived 7 November 1841
<i>Timandria</i> (sic).....	arrived 24 February 1842
<i>Blenheim</i>	arrived 7 November 1842
<i>Essex</i>	arrived 23 January 1843

Unveiled 31 March 1911”

N. B. Regina was baggage ship to the Amelia Thomson. On November 4 1841 she was blown ashore at the end of Queen Street, New Plymouth and became a total wreck. The wreck was sold at auction for £150. Six months earlier, as a new ship, she had cost £3,600.

1. Otaka and Mataipu

This park has been established on part of the site occupied by Otaka pa and the fishing kainga (village) Mataipu.

Here, early in 1832, Otaka was attacked by a force of invading Waikato fresh from their attack and defeat of the large pa, Pukerangiora, on the banks of the Waitara River. After a prolonged siege, Waikato were defeated by the local hapu, Ngati Te Whiti under Poharama Te Whiti and Te Wharepouri and several Te Atiawa chieftains, including Tautara, Te Puni, Rawakitua, Ngatata, Porutu, Wi Hape and Te Raru. The assistance of three cannons belonging to local Pakeha traders, led by John Love and Richard Barrett were critical to the outcome. (see *Traders* sign)

Although the local iwi were victorious, the continual threat of further invasions from the north caused many to move to Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington) where their descendants remain to this day.

The future Maori leader, Te Whiti o Rongomai, was born here during the siege at Otaka. One of the defenders and paramount chief of Ngati Te Whiti, Poharama, lies in the urupa alongside this park.

2. The Plymouth Company

In 1841, on the beach that formerly existed below this park, the first of the settlers to the “new” Plymouth landed. The Plymouth Company, an offshoot E. G. Wakefield’s New Zealand Company, was formed in January 1840 to provide a settlement for emigrants from Devon and Cornwall. The site for the town was selected by surveyor, Frederic A. Carrington, who arrived from Wellington aboard the *Brougham* in early 1841.

Only those on the first two of the Company vessels landed here. Later arrivals anchored off the mouth of the Huatoki Stream in central New Plymouth and passengers were lightered ashore.

<i>William Bryan</i>	arrived 31 March 1841
<i>Amelia Thompson</i>	arrived 3 September 1841
<i>Oriental</i>	arrived 7 November 1841
<i>Timandra</i>	arrived 23 February 1842
<i>Blenheim</i>	arrived 19 November 1842
<i>Essex</i>	arrived 20 January 1843

The Plymouth Company, itself, collapsed financially in 1842 and was subsequently merged with the more successful New Zealand Company.

The memorial alongside was erected in 1911, 70 years after the arrival of the William Bryan.

Note the incorrect spelling of “Timandra” and the wrong date of arrival for the Blenheim.

A seventh Company vessel, Regina, carrying stores arrived on 3 October 1841.

3. The Moturoa Oilfield

It was in 1865 that the first attempts were made to exploit the petroleum resources of the small Moturoa oilfield.

In that year four individuals formed the Alpha Syndicate and began to hand-dig a shaft on the beach near what is, now, the base of the main breakwater. This pioneer company was followed by several others that, by 1869, had drilled or dug eight wells on Sugar Loaf Point.

Exploration began again between 1890-1901 with nine wells, most completed by a company founded by local lawyer, Oliver Samuel. Of the many companies subsequently founded, the largest, Taranaki Petroleum, was established in 1906 and drilled several producing wells.

A refinery was established in 1913 but closed soon after because of failing oilflows. Following a lull in activity, a second refinery began, in 1931, to process the small but continuing flow of petroleum from the new wells in this immediate area.

During the 1930s and 40s locally produced petrol and other products were marketed throughout Taranaki. In 1954 the trademark, *Peak*, was registered for these products. Of the producing bores the last was closed and capped in 1972.

A third refinery continued to operate, until 1975, on condensate from Kapuni.

4. Port Taranaki

On Saturday 13 January, 1770, Captain James Cook named Sugar Loaf Point and noted in his journal the “2 *Small Islands* [Moturoa and Motumahanga] *near to a very remarkable Point on the Main* [Paritutu]”

From the establishment of the New Plymouth settlement in 1841, the “port” was the stormy open roadstead off the Huatoki Stream mouth where cargo and passengers were transported to and from vessels by surfboat.

Initially, the site selected for the town was much criticised for its lack of harbour, but the vision of surveyor, Frederic A. Carrington, was eventually confirmed. Port Taranaki, is now the only significant harbour facility on New Zealand’s west coast.

Carrington himself laid the foundation stone for the Breakwater in 1881 and the development of the artificial harbour at Sugar Loaf Point began. This was followed, in 1887, by Moturoa Wharf and Newton King Wharf in 1925-26

Over the years a number of extensions have been made to the Breakwater, the last major developments being the Lee Breakwater, 1968, and the Blyde Wharf, 1972.

Westgate Transport Limited commenced operation in 1990 as the result of the Government’s Port Companies Act which required port companies to undertake the commercial operations of harbour boards.

5. The Traders and Whalers

The schooner *Adventure* arrived off Ngamotu in 1828 while on a flax trading trip from Sydney. The partners in the venture, John Love and Richard Barrett subsequently established a trading station at Ngamotu and both later married women (Hikanui and Rawinia) from Ngati Te Whiti, the local hapu.

In 1832, the Pakeha at the station became involved in a confrontation between the local iwi and a warrior party from the Waikato (See *Otaka and Mataipu* sign)

After the battle many of Te Atiawa people, along with Love, Barrett and the other traders moved to the Cook Strait area and settled there.

Dicky Barrett became involved in the land sales between Te Atiawa and the Plymouth Company and, in 1839, returned to Ngamotu with John Love, William Keenan, Bill Bundy, John Wright and others to establish a short-lived shore-whaling station.

A rival whaling enterprise, run by merchant Richard Brown, produced some spirited competition during the 1840s.

It was on the shore near here that temporary raupo accommodation was constructed to cater for the first of the Plymouth Company settlers who arrived in March, 1841.

6. The Ngamotu Mission

In 1839, two Christian teachers, Wiremu Nera Te Awataia and Hohaia were posted to Ngamotu by the Wesleyan Methodist mission at Kawhia. Later, in January 1840, a purchase of about 100 acres [40 ha], now known as the Whiteley Lease, was made for the Wesleyan Mission Society.

The first Pakeha missionary established at Ngamotu was Rev. Charles Creed who landed on the beach here on 8 January 1841. By September a chapel was operating and other mission buildings followed soon after. Henry Turton, who replaced Creed in 1844, then established a day school for Maori children. This institution gained the patronage of Governor, George Grey.

In 1848, the Grey Institute Boys' school was sited on nearby Pukeke pa (Mission Hill). The Girl's School, built in 1854-55, survives as the "Mission House" in St Aubyn St. a few hundred metres away from here. Its adjoining small church, built in 1869, was moved onto the site from an upper Mangorei Road farm in 1940.

The Rev. John Whiteley took over the Mission in 1856 and after some years of fluctuating fortunes and temporary closures, he finally closed the school in 1863.



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