

Nomination Form



William James
Harding Collection

Section 1

Nominator Details

This section is for information about the source of the nomination and the authority under which it is made. A copy of the Aotearoa/New Zealand Memory of the World programme's privacy policy is available on its website.

Enter details in the space (box) to the right.

1.1 Name of nominator (person or organisation)

Full name of the person(s) or organisation(s) making the nomination. If the organisation has a name more than one language provide them in the preferred order. The nomination may be submitted jointly by more than one person or organisation

- Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa (Dr Louise Garrett).
- Whanganui Regional Museum (Dr Bronwyn Labrum).
- Alexander Heritage & Research Library Te Rerenga Mai o te Kāuru, Whanganui District Library (Sandy Nepia, Pou Herenga; Jasmin Ratana, Pou Whiria; Anna Gilderdale, Pou Taonga Tuku Iho).

1.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

Explain the nominator's relationship to the documentary heritage. For example, the nominator may be a responsible officer of the library or archive which owns it; or he/she may be a private individual with a research interest in it.

Louise Garrett is the curator of the photographic archive at the Alexander Turnbull Library.

The National Library Act 2003 ensures the Alexander Turnbull Library fulfils its purpose to:

- preserve, protect, develop, and make accessible for all the people of New Zealand the collections of that library in perpetuity and in a manner consistent with their status as documentary heritage and taonga; and
- develop the research collections and the services of the Alexander Turnbull Library, particularly in the fields of New Zealand and Pacific studies and rare books; and
- develop and maintain a comprehensive collection of documents relating to New Zealand and the people of New Zealand.

Bronwyn Labrum is the director of the Whanganui Regional Museum.

Sandy Nepia is the Manager of Heritage & Community Services of Alexander Heritage & Research Library | Te Rerenga Mai o te Kāuru, Whanganui District Library – and together with both team members **Jasmin Ratana** and **Anna Gilderdale**.

The Whanganui District Library Heritage Collections are repositories of local history objects, records and information, which has been compiled over time. By collecting, documenting, caring for and preserving these memories, the Library will provide access to the stories they represent and enable people to research and connect with their own and their community's history.

1.3 Contact person

Provide the name of the person who is responsible for the nomination process.

Louise Garrett, Alexander Turnbull Library
Bronwyn Labrum, Whanganui Regional Museum
Sandy Nepia, Pou Herenga / Manager of Heritage and Community Services, Alexander Heritage and Research Library

1.4 Contact details

Provide sufficient details to allow easy communication with the contact person.

Email: Louise.Garrett@dia.govt.nz
Phone: 022 309 0286
Email: BronwynL@wrm.org.nz
Email: sandy@whanganuilibrary.com
Phone: 0272201759

Section 2

**Identity and Description of
the Documentary Heritage**

2.1 Title of inscription

If the nomination is successful, what do you want it to be titled (e.g. for certificates)? Please use a maximum of 6 words in the preferred language with the second language beneath.

William James Harding Collection

2.2 Description of the documentary heritage

This should include a full description of what is included in the documentary heritage, its scope and its size. Include details of the type of documents e.g. letters, film, images etc.

Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa: Harding, William James, 1826-1899: Negatives of Wanganui District. Reference number: PA-Group-00380.

The William James Harding collection (previously the Harding-Denton collection) at the Alexander Turnbull Library comprises 6561 whole, half and quarter plate glass negatives produced by the photographic studio of William James Harding, which operated in Whanganui from 1856 to 1889. The photographs are portraits (normally quarter plates, ca. 80mm x 105mm in size), landscapes and street scenes (whole plates, 160mm x 215mm), largely taken in Whanganui and surrounding districts. They include views of early colonial architecture and streetscapes in Whanganui, portraits of local residents including many of Māori and more recent settlers, and documentary images of civic events and cultural entertainment in the region. Some documentation is provided by negative registers and inscriptions on the glass negatives.

The negatives were produced using a wet collodion process in which glass plates were coated and sensitised by hand, exposed in the camera and developed before they dried. Harding also ground his own lenses and had a travelling darkroom for use in the field.

At the Turnbull, the glass plate negatives are individually housed in archival sleeves and kept in metal cabinets in a store designed, according to ISO specifications, for the extended preservation of photographs on a glass base.

Whanganui Regional Museum

The Whanganui Regional Museum holds over 200 prints of Harding photographs, including a panorama made up of six photographs depicting the Whanganui River and the town of Whanganui from Putiki to Aramoho taken from one spot on the east side of the river on the hill, opposite St Hill Street and many other views of the early township of Whanganui. The photographs are individually described.

Also in the WRM collection are 17 glass plate negatives by William Harding: each photograph is individually described and the negative collection includes various photographs of military activity in the district; a gathering of the Unity Druid Society; and Whanganui Prison and Rutland Stockade, among other street views of early Whanganui.

The WRM also holds several albums containing photographs by William Harding, including the "Wanganui Illustrated" album (1959.66.1), C. H. Collingwood album (1997.78.1), Nixon Family album (2012.47), Henry Drew album (1950.34).

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The Harding & Denton Collection was donated to the Library in October 1965 by Mr H M Denton and his sisters, Mrs E M Powell and Mrs M C Marshall, in memory of their father, Frank James Denton. The 277 images are from the negatives of Messrs. Harding and Martin, Frank Denton's predecessors in the business.

William James Harding set up business on the corner of Ridgway Street and Drews Ave in 1856 and his photographs are amongst the earliest record of Wanganui. Alfred Martin, who had previously practiced in Christchurch, opened his own studio in Wanganui 1882 and acquired Harding's studio in 1889.

Martin sold the business to Frank Denton in 1899. When Denton retired he sold his business to Mark Lampe, but he retained Harding and Martin's negatives and prints. Lampe was the founder of Tesla Studios and the firm became the Tesla-Denton Studios in 1930.

Most of the extensive glass plate negative collection of these Wanganui photographic pioneers now resides at the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington. The Alexander Turnbull received over 6,500 negatives of Harding's photographs in 1948 and at least 23,000 negatives of Martin, Denton and Lampe in 1958-59, with the agreement of Whanganui Regional Museum. Approximately 75 percent of the latter deposit was discarded by the Alexander Turnbull Library in 1960, with the help of Mr Maxwell Smart.

The collection held by the Alexander Library is made up of the studio proof-prints of some of the negatives held by the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington. The photographs range in date from the 1860s to the 1920s.

2.3 Catalogue, registration or bibliographic details

This should include any bibliographic, registration, inventory, classification and/or call numbers that uniquely identify the documentary heritage.

Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa: Harding, William James, 1826-1899: Negatives of Wanganui District. Parent record reference number: PA-Group-00380.

Child records from 1/1-000001-G to 1/1-000343a-G; ½-008339-G to ½-011672b-F (includes film copy negatives); ¼-003751-G-1/4-004121-G.

Search digitised images from the Willam Harding collection at the Turnbull here: [william harding | Page 1 of 332 | Items | National Library of New Zealand | National Library of New Zealand \(natlib.govt.nz\)](#)

Glass plate negatives and photographic prints by W. J. Harding at the **Whanganui Regional Museum** all have unique catalogue reference numbers and descriptions. e.g.:

1802.10933.15 NEGATIVE, GLASS PLATE; A row of Whanganui soldiers

W J Harding, Photographer

Circa 1857-1890

A glass plate negative of a row of unidentified soldiers from Whanganui. The photograph was captured outside and looks at a row of 16 men standing on a grassy area in front of a stand of trees. The men all wear mis-matched uniforms and caps, and nine of them hold swords.

Alexander Heritage & Research Library | Te Rerenga Mai o te Kāuru

The Harding and Denton Collection has been documented with unique Whanganui District Library reference numbers, inclusive of descriptions. They are part of the digitisation project that will be launched in 2025.

2.4 Visual documentation

Where available and appropriate, supply photographs or videos of the documentary heritage. Send image files as separate attachments and record captions here.

Please provide images that can be used for the purposes of promoting Memory of the World.

Between skin and shirt: The photographic portraits of William Harding, National Library online exhibition: [Explore Between skin & shirt: The photographic portraits of William Harding | National Library of New Zealand \(natlib.govt.nz\)](https://www.natlib.govt.nz/exhibitions/between-skin-and-shirt) This is an online version *Between skin and shirt: The photographic portraits of William Harding*, shown at the National Library of New Zealand (26 May to 29 October 2022) and Whanganui Regional Museum (2023).

Image captions (see Appendix to view images):

1. William Harding's studio, Ridgway St, Whanganui. He used this studio from 1860 until 1889, when he left for Sydney. Whole-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, ca. 1870s. Ref: 1/1-000144-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.
2. Street scene in Bulls depicting the business of J. Riley, cabinet maker, on the right. The two men in the left background are bakers, possibly from the Edward Reed bakery listed in Wise's Post Office Directory of 1878. Harding's portable darkroom can be seen centre right. Whole-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, ca. 1880. Ref. 1/1-000017-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.
3. Victoria Avenue, Whanganui, looking from the bridge, including business premises of ironmonger John Duthie. Half-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: Studio of William Harding, ca. 1880s. Ref. 1/2-008388-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.
4. Mr and Mrs Roots with their twelve children in front of their house in Springvale, Whanganui. Whole-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, ca. 1870s. Ref. 1/1-000186-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.
5. Meeting between Dr Isaac Featherston and Wanganui iwi at Putiki Pa after the battle of Moutoa (14 May 1864). Dr Isaac Featherston (centre) is presenting Mete Kingi Te Rangi Paetahi with the resolution of the Provincial Council thanking the Wanganui Māori for their brave conduct at Moutoa. Whole-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, May 1864. Ref. 1/1-000039-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.
6. Eel or fish weir at Pungarehu, on the banks of the Whanganui River. Whole-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photographer: William Harding, between 1856 and 1889. Ref. 1/1-000483-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.
7. Saint Mary's Roman Catholic School, Meanee, boys' class. Quarter-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, October 1879. Ref. 1/4-

- 017170-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.
8. Whanganui Christ Church choir of 1874. Whole-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, 1874. Ref. 1/1-000019-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.
9. Captain Nathaniel Flowers and his wife Margaret, with a dog. Quarter-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, 8 February 1878. Ref. ¼-005003-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.
10. Pango Ngākaari Tukia ("Mrs Trafford") of Rānana, Whanganui River. Quarter-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: Studio of William Harding, ca. 1868. Ref. 1/4-006035-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.
11. Lieutenant Herman with his ventriloquist dummy. Quarter-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, ca. 1877. Ref. ¼-006818-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.
12. Wright family baby of Bell Street. Quarter-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: Studio of William Harding, ca. 1870s. Ref. ¼-008515-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.
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2.5 Bibliography

This should be, where possible, a list of 3-6 published sources that have been produced using (i.e. drawing heavily on) the documentary heritage to attest to the item/collection's significance.

"Old Identities," *Wanganui Chronicle and Patea-Rangitikei Advertiser*, Friday, September 28, 1883.

Bates, Arthur, "William J Harding, Pioneer Photographer of Wanganui," *NZ Camera*, April 1971, pp39-41.

Bates, Arthur, "An Intriguing Pair," *New Zealand Journal of Photography* 20, August 1995, 8-10.

Bates, Arthur, "Wanganui's love affair with photography," *New Zealand Journal of Photography* 40, August 2000, 14-18, 24.

Ellis, Elizabeth Mountain, *Moko: an exhibition of 19th century photographs of Māori with tattoo: from the photograph collection of the Alexander Turnbull Library*, Wellington: Alexander Turnbull Library, 1991.

Lassig, Andrea, "The Harding Girls," *Turnbull Library Record* 50, 2018, 18-41.

Macgregor, Miriam, "Annie Harding," (chapter), *Petticoat Pioneers: North Island Women of the Colonial Era*, Book Two, Wellington, Sydney, London: A.H. & A. W. Reed, 1975.

Pilkington, Dorothy, "But, who was Rangi Kawauw?" *Manawatu Journal of History* 15, 2019, 55-63.

Sullivan, John, Harding, "William James, 1862-1899," *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, [Harding, William James – Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Te Ara](#), [accessed 29/05/2024].

Sullivan, John, "A Fijian in Bulls," *Turnbull Library Record* 43, 2010/11, 106-115.

Section 3

Assessment Against the Criteria

3.1 History/provenance

Provide a summary of the provenance of the documentary heritage. For example, how and when was the material acquired and integrated into the holdings of the institution?

William Harding set up his photographic practice in Whanganui in 1856 and had a studio on the corner of Ridgway Street and Drews Ave, next door to the Whanganui Oddfellows Club. The studio was acquired by Alfred Martin, who had previously practiced in Christchurch, in 1889. Martin sold his studio to Frank Denton, grand-nephew of Harding, in 1899. Denton ran the studio until 1928 when he sold to Mark Lampe, who established the Tesla studio in Wanganui around 1910. Lampe sold to M. G Brent in the 1950s. Denton retained the studio negatives and these were acquired by the Turnbull in 1948 thanks to the combined efforts of the Whanganui Regional Museum and the Alexander Turnbull Library.

The prints and photographs in the Whanganui Regional Museum collection were donated by various people in throughout the 1960s, including descendants of William J Harding. The glass plate negatives are from the same collection that was acquired by the Alexander Turnbull Library. The majority of Harding's glass plate negatives are held by the Turnbull.

The Harding and Denton Collection was donated to the Whanganui District Library in October 1965 by Mr H. M. Denton and his sisters, Mrs E. M. Powell and Mrs M. C. Marshall, in memory of their father, Frank James Denton. The 277 prints are from the negatives of Messrs. Harding and Martin, Frank Denton's predecessors in the business.

3.2. Uniqueness of the documentary heritage

Give a brief explanation of why the documentary heritage is unique and irreplaceable.

The collections of William James Harding's glass-plate negatives and photographic prints at the Alexander Turnbull Library, the Whanganui Regional Museum and the Alexander Heritage & Research Library in Whanganui are undoubtedly of national importance. Harding's studio portraits, street- and landscapes provide a detailed picture of Whanganui society from the 1850s to the 1880s, documenting in rich detail the growth of the settlement during a formative time in the history of Aotearoa. The photographs are a rich source of information relating to Māori and Pākehā individuals of the Whanganui-Rangitikei population and the growth of the settlement at the time. The minutiae of detail evident in each one of the photographs offers an in-depth view into the cultural makeup of the region, revealing elements of social class, ethnicities, fashion and dress, community events, historical situations, colonial conditions, architecture, and the environment.

The William James Harding collection is unique and irreplaceable because it offers a singular insight into a period of settlement in the Whanganui-Rangitikei region dating back to the early days of the colonial period in Aotearoa and covering a period of rapid development of the town.

The completeness and quality of the Harding collection of glass plate negatives, most of them preserved and stored at the Alexander Turnbull Library, makes it a rarity since glass plate negative collections from 19th-century studios were both materially fragile and not highly valued at the time of their production: after individual photographers stopped operating and the studios changed hands glass negative collections were often dumped or dispersed. Their preservation as a complete collection is due to the foresight of the Whanganui Regional Museum and Library and the Turnbull's first dedicated photograph librarian, George Heron, who acquired the invaluable collection of some 6,500 glass plate negatives in 1948, diverting them from being disposed of and forever lost to the nation. This was one of the most significant purchases of Heron's tenure and a huge contribution to preserving the visual-cultural heritage of Aotearoa. The collection offers a unique record of the development of a settler society and is a distinguished source of visual documentation, offering source material that is difficult to find in other collections.

3.3 Assessment against the significance criteria

Provide an explanation of what criteria the documentary heritage meets and why it meets those criteria. The documentary heritage must meet at least one of the criteria in this section. An explanation of each criteria is given on the front page of this form.

Time:

William Harding operated his photographic studio in Whanganui between 1856 and 1889. His work documents the crucial early decades of colonial settlement of Whanganui and surrounding regions, including interaction between Pakeha and Māori of the time and the material development of the town and its society during a period of enormous social change. This includes conflicts arising during the New Zealand Wars, Ngā pakanga o Aotearoa (1845-1872), traces of which appear in some of Harding's photographs. The collection represents an unequalled record of colonial experience in the decades after conflicts between Māori and settlers in Whanganui in the 1840s.

Place:

The Whanganui River gave rise to the well-known whakatauki "E rere kau mai te Āwanui, Mai i te Kāhui maunga ki Tangaroa Kō au te Āwa, kō te Āwa kō au." [The great river flows from the mountains to the sea. I am the river, the river is me.] Along the length of the river, which is released into the Tasman Sea off the coastline of Whanganui, the people of Te Ātihaunui-a-Papārangi (Whanganui Iwi) have descended for over 40 generations. When Harding set up his photographic studio in Whanganui, a military garrison had already been installed in the town for a decade in response to tensions between Māori and settlers due to land appropriation and subsequent disputes. Harding photographed these military forces in Whanganui.

By 1924, the town had developed into the New Zealand's fifth largest city, servicing a huge agricultural catchment industry and busy port. Harding's street- and landscape photography from the second half of the nineteenth century provides a rich source of information of the development of the town, through visual documentation of streets, buildings, bridges, houses, Māori settlements, farms, the burgeoning tourism industry, as well as rich documentation of new settlers and tangata whenua. The collection also provides access to visual documentation of a significant town outside the four main cities of New Zealand.

Whanganui is part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, recognised as an internationally significant UNESCO City of Design. Harding's photographs capture design styles of Whanganui iwi along the Whanganui River, documenting whareniui, carving and kāinga, and other taonga, including shots inside Whanganui Museum. He also documented the rapidly developing city from 1856, recording the appearance of new street layouts and European/colonial-style civic and domestic architecture, industrial design, and changes to the surrounding environment.

People:

During the time William Harding operated his photographic practice in Whanganui, he produced images of a significant number of local Māori and a wide range of members of settler societies of all ages and social classes across the Whanganui-Rangitikei districts and surrounding areas. He also took marriage photos, including rare images of interracial couples. Outside the confines of his studio, he took photographs of bands, choirs, workers, families, groups of school children/class portraits, people at the races and A & P shows, soldiers, and passers-by on the streets of Whanganui. This large variety of subjects means that this archive is an invaluable resource for whakapapa, genealogical and social-history research.

The collection includes some very early views of Whanganui in the 1860s, including important local events, such as the visit by Wellington Provincial Superintendent, Dr I. E. Featherston, to offer thanks to Putiki Māori for their support in the Battle of Moutoa Island in 1865, Mr Vertelli's tightrope crossing of the Whanganui River in 1867, and the laying of the foundation of the first Town Bridge in November 1869.

Business acumen was not one of William Harding's strong suits. His wife, Annie Harding, was able to help support the family by setting up a successful school in Whanganui and through providing music and dancing lessons. The Turnbull holds a photocopy of a diary written between 1861 and 1881 by Harding's daughter, Ruth Crawford (1859-1946). This contains a lot of detail about Whanganui events, particularly those related to music.

Subject and Theme:

As above, Harding's main subject and theme was the residents of Whanganui-Rangitikei and surrounding districts: society, individual identities, built and natural environment, industry, community events and so on.

Form and Style:

William Harding was a meticulous craftsman, who ground his own lenses and built his own cameras. His collodion wet-plate process produced extremely clear and detailed images on glass plate negatives. The most distinctive thing about his style is his desire to produce honest and authentic depictions of his sitters. In order to achieve this and unlike most commercial photographers of the day, he didn't touch up the negatives for cosmetic purposes. Rather, he depicted his subjects as he found them in order to stay close to the unadulterated "truth" of what he saw through his camera lens.

3.4 Testimony of at least two independent experts

The committee requires testimony from at least two independent people or organisations who can give an informed opinion about the significance and provenance of the documentary heritage.

The informed opinion should focus on the criteria for inscription provided above and on the front page of this form. Please provide up to one page from each expert in support of your submission.

Expert One

Name: Angela Wanhalla

Qualification(s): PhD in History

Paragraph in support

I am delighted to provide a testimonial for the nomination of the William Harding collection to the UNESCO Memory of the World register.

I am a history professor based at Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka/The University of Otago, Dunedin. My research specialties are New Zealand and Māori history, and New Zealand's history of visual culture, especially colonial photography. I have worked on aspects of the history of photography and colonial society since 2011. Therefore, I am very familiar with the photography collections held by New Zealand's cultural and heritage institutions.

The William Harding Collection is one of the country's most significant collections by a studio photographer operating in the mid-nineteenth century. Comprised of around 6,500 glass-plate negatives covering the period 1850s to the 1880s, Harding photographed individuals, couples, friends and families (sometimes with their pets) from Whanganui society. Through his portraiture Harding used the camera to reveal the inner world of his sitters, creating striking images of people and their social worlds. The size of the Harding collection and its comprehensive nature make it nationally significant. This is enhanced by the fact that Harding was based outside of a main centre in a provincial town. Much scholarly attention has focused on those who operated in the large cities. Harding's collection is particularly exceptional because he worked during crucial decades of New Zealand's colonial history. Of particular note, are his photographs of Māori individuals, depicting Māori engagement with visual culture. Finally, his collection is exceptional because he photographed numerous interracial couples. That such photographs are rarely encountered in other collections of studio photographers elevates the significance of the Harding collection for understanding our past, particularly with respect to helping interpret aspects of New Zealand's social and cultural history that are hard to find in other source materials.

Expert Two

Name: Shaun Higgins

Qualification(s): Curator Pictorial - Auckland War Memorial Museum | Tāmaki Paenga Hira

Paragraph in support

William James Harding's photography has been called an unequalled record of the colonial experience. Operating from 1856 to 1889, Harding photographed both visitors and locals in Manawatū-Whanganui along with urban and rural landscapes. Though his passion was for outdoor landscape, his informal approach to studio portraiture made his images distinctive. This is a rare and significant record of photography retained in the original glass plate negatives, passed down through owners of the studio up to Frank Denton and ultimately acquired by the Alexander Turnbull Library in 1948.

His portraits are very literal, without the retouching that was commonplace at the time. His sitters often appear relaxed and in their own world, gazes falling where they may. This gives Harding's portraits an unusually candid look and feel for the time. People are shown as they are. In the studio, on the porch, on a stool with a sheet backdrop, or even in bed. His portraits of Māori appear without props in a more realistic style than most studios of the time.

In addition to negative registers, negatives have inscriptions some with surnames and occasionally vocation. They act as a cross section of Whanganui and the region and do not stop in the studio, with visits to local schools to take class photographs, the races and more. It is uncommon to see negatives for this time survive, showing details that could be left out in printing/cutting prints. There is a duality to this nationally significant collection in that it shows a society alongside the physical practice of a studio evident in the plates themselves, fingerprints included.

Featuring in multiple exhibitions and publications, Harding's photographs have been shown as a unique and significant record of the time. An inscription on the Aotearoa New Zealand UNESCO Memory of the World Register of Documentary Heritage will confirm recognition of this highly regarded collection.

Expert Three

Name John Sullivan

Qualification(s): BA DIP NZLS

Paragraph in support

I am very pleased to support the inclusion of the negatives from the studio of William James Harding on the New Zealand Register of the UNESCO Memory of the World. This remarkable collection of over 6500 glass-plate negatives, taken between 1856 and 1889 by the Whanganui studio of William James Harding, provide an unparalleled insight into the population of Whanganui and Rangitikei during the period of European settlement.

The highlight of the collection is the assemblage of over 5000 ¼ -plate negative portraits. Harding's studio was patronised by a broad cross-section of the Whanganui-Rangitikei population, and these crystal-clear negatives present them to us with startling immediacy. Most of the plates were made by the wet-collodion process, whose fine grain has recorded microscopic levels of detail. They reveal elements of costume, personal ornament, hairstyle, complexion, and stature which illuminate the health, social stratification and ethnic makeup of the community.

They also record Tangata Whenua. Images of pā along the Whanganui awa form an irreplaceable record of Māori during the period of colonisation. Of particular note is an image showing the meeting between Wanganui iwi and Dr Isaac Featherston at Putiki, captured in such detail that most of the participants can be identified. As unique objects of great aesthetic and documentary value they fully deserve their place on the record.

The above experts have given their written permission to provide this information to the Memory of the World Committee and they have agreed that the provided information can be published without email and contact details and that they can be contacted by the Register Subcommittee if required. Yes No

Section 4

Legal Information

4.1 Owner (name and contact details)

Provide the name and full contact details of the owner or owners, whether an institution or an individual.

Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa

PO Box 12349
Wellington 6144
New Zealand
Tel. (+64) 474 3000
www.natlib.govt.nz

Whanganui Regional Museum

4 Watt Street
Whanganui 4541
Tel. (+64) 6349 1110
www.wrm.org.nz

Alexander Heritage & Research Library | Te Rerenga Mai o te Kāuru

Whanganui District Library
Private Bag 3005
Whanganui 4541
Tel. (+64) 6349 1000
www.whanganuilibrary.com

4.2 Custodian (name and contact details if different from the owner)

Provide the name and full contact details of the custodian, whether an institution or an individual. Sometimes the custodian of the documentary heritage may not be the same as the owner. It is essential to establish both before a nomination can be added to the Register.

As above.

4.3 Legal status

State whether the documentary heritage is owned privately, or by a public institution, or by a commercial corporation. Details of legal and administrative powers for the preservation of the documentary heritage should be the name of the Act, or other instrument of administrative power, that gives the owner and/or the custodian the legal power to preserve the documentary heritage.

Alexander Turnbull Library

The negatives held by the Alexander Turnbull Library are owned by the Crown. Legal and administrative powers for the preservation of the documentary heritage are given under the National Library Act 2003.

Whanganui Regional Museum

The photographs and negatives held by the Whanganui Regional Museum are owned by the Whanganui Regional Museum Trust.

Alexander Heritage & Research Library | Te Rerenga mai o te Kāuru

Under the authority of the Whanganui District Council.

4.4 Accessibility

Provide a brief description of how the documentary heritage may be accessed. All access procedures and restrictions should be clearly stated.

There are three levels of access:

- access to verify the significance, integrity and security of the material. This is the minimum condition for inscription
- access for reproduction, which is strongly encouraged
- public access in physical, digital, or other form

Alexander Turnbull Library

The negatives held by the Alexander Turnbull Library are housed in secure, environmentally controlled conditions, in closed stacks located in the National Library building, Molesworth Street, Wellington. A small number of authorized staff have access to these areas by swipe card. Many of these negatives have surrogates in the form of “file prints” in the Library’s General Reading Room. The majority of the negatives held by the Library has been digitised and can be viewed on the Library’s website at <https://natlib.govt.nz>. The viewing of surrogates is encouraged in preference to the negatives themselves.

Search digitised images from the Willam Harding collection at the Turnbull here: [william harding | Page 1 of 332 | Items | National Library of New Zealand | National Library of New Zealand \(natlib.govt.nz\)](#)

Whanganui Regional Museum

The photographs and negatives held by the Whanganui Regional Museum are housed in secure and predominantly environmentally controlled conditions, individually encapsulated and housed in closed storage within the Museum building. Only authorised staff have access to the items by swipe card or key. The images have been digitised and the files are housed on the Museum server, which is only accessible by staff. Copies of the digital files may be purchased by the public and other institutions. Viewing of the originals is only permitted with authority by the Archivist or other authorised staff member and viewed in a dedicated reading room supervised by staff. The images are not yet available on the Museum’s website which is under re-development and will be available in the future.

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The photographic prints are housed in secure, environmentally controlled conditions and available for viewing by the public on request, under the supervision of staff. Images are available in digital format in the Alexander Heritage & Research Library | Te Rerenga Mai o te Kāuru on request.

4.5 Copyright Status

For documentary heritage items that are subject to copyright, details should be provided on the relevant copyright legislation and copyright owner(s). Any other factors affecting the legal status of the documentary heritage should be noted. For example, is any institution required by law to preserve the documentary heritage in this nomination?

The William James Harding collection is now out of copyright and classified as public domain.

The Alexander Turnbull Library is required under the National Library Act 2003 to “preserve, protect, develop, and make accessible for all New Zealand the collections of that Library in perpetuity and in a manner consistent with their status as documentary heritage and taonga.

Section 5

Stakeholders

The nominating institution is accountable for consultation with all relevant stakeholders before submitting the nomination.

5.1 Owner

The owner(s) of the documentary heritage has been consulted:

Yes No

5.2 Custodian

The custodian(s) of the documentary heritage has been consulted:

Yes No

5.3 Significant Stakeholders

Stakeholders with a significant interest in the content of the documentary heritage e.g. iwi, family members, have been consulted, if relevant:

Yes No

Identify any risks to the survival of the nominated documentary heritage. We understand if you have not done a formal risk assessment.

Note: a successful inscription may assist you to obtain funds to preserve and care for the nominated documentary heritage.

If your nomination is successful, we may request additional information on the care and preservation of the inscribed documentary heritage.

Alexander Turnbull Library

The requirements for long-term preservation of the Alexander Turnbull Library's glass negative collections are informed by the International Standards Organisation's standard ISO 189118 Imaging Materials – Processed photographic plates – storage practices.

The Library's glass negatives, including the William James Harding negatives, are held in a storage space kept at $13^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 2^{\circ}$, $45\%\text{RH} \pm 5\%$. The negatives are stored in steel cabinets which are to a high standard of earthquake protection with seismic engineering of the floor anchoring, and cross-bracing of the cabinets. The cabinets are latched without locks and have soft-closing drawers. In addition, further support and restraint is provided through packing of the interior cabinet spaces with corrugated card.

Risk/Likelihood of risk occurring

Water/Low – There are overhead water sprinklers in the storage areas, but materials are stored in cabinet that would prevent water damage. The building is managed and monitored by Property Services, Department of Internal Affairs.

Theft/Low – Good level of security and monitored alarms. CCTV cameras operate in the reading room and are recorded to video. Security gates operate at entrance to the first floor of the National Library building. Security guards patrol the public and storage areas.

Fire/Low – Protected by smoke detectors, alarms and water sprinkler fire suppression.

Reader/staff handling/Low – Staff trained in care and handling. Clients use original materials only when surrogates are not available and then only in a supervised reading room.

Inherent vice/Low – Collections are kept in secure storage under controlled environmental conditions, including low temperature, humidity and light levels, in rigid archival protective enclosures. Cabinets give good protection and support.

Whanganui Regional Museum

The requirements for long-term preservation of the Whanganui Regional Museum's are informed by International Standards.

The Museum's glass negatives, including the William James Harding negatives, are held in a storage space kept at 4°C, 55%RH ± 5%. The negatives are individually housed in acid-free enclosures and stored in steel cabinets fitted with floor anchoring and cross-bracing.

The collection prints are individually housed in PAT tested polypropylene sleeves, supported with acid-free card if necessary, and housed vertically in steel cabinets with groups of photographs supported by acid-free card. Albums are bound with tape or rest in custom-made acid-free card boxes and are stored on steel shelving fitted with floor anchors and cross-bracing.

Risk/Likelihood of risk occurring

Water/Low – There are overhead water pipes in some storage areas, but materials are stored in cabinets that would prevent water damage. The building is managed and monitored by staff and any issues reported timely to the landlord, the Whanganui District Council, for prompt repair.

Theft/Low – Good level of security and monitored alarms. Access to the collections are by keys and swipe cards possessed by staff only.

Fire/Low – Protected by smoke detectors, alarms and water sprinkler fire suppression.

Reader/staff handling/Low – Staff trained in care and handling. Clients use original materials only when surrogates are not available and then only in a supervised reading room.

Inherent vice/Low – Collections are kept in secure storage under controlled environmental conditions, including low temperature, humidity and light levels, in rigid archival protective enclosures. Cabinets give good protection and support.

Alexander Heritage & Research Library

The requirements for long-term preservation of the Alexander Heritage & Research Library are informed by International Standards.

The collection prints are individually housed in PAT tested polypropylene sleeves, supported with acid-free card if required. The collection is housed vertically in small groups of photographs in acid-free enclosures

and archival boxes. They are stored securely on movable Lundia shelving.

Risk/Likelihood of risk occurring

Water/Low – There is internal guttering on one side of the storage area, but materials are stored on our movable storage shelving that sit well away from this area to prevent any possible water damage. The building is managed and monitored by staff and any issues reported timely to the landlord, the Whanganui District Council, for prompt repair.

Theft/Low – Access to our Heritage Collections are by staff swipe-card only, and the building has a good level of security and monitored alarms through Whanganui District Council.

Fire/Low – Protected by smoke detectors, alarms and water sprinkler fire suppression.

Reader/staff handling/Low – Staff are trained in care and handling. Clients view digital copies in the Alexander Heritage & Research Library only.

Inherent vice/Low – Collections are kept in secure storage under controlled environmental conditions, including low temperature, humidity and light levels. Shelving storage units give good protection and support.

Section 7

Summary

Provide a brief summary describing the documentary heritage and how it meets the criteria for inscription on the Aotearoa/New Zealand Memory of the World Register.

Keep your summary to no more than 300 words as, if successful, it will be used on the website unescomow.org.nz to describe why the documentary heritage has been inscribed on the New Zealand Register and given UNESCO recognition.

The collections of William James Harding's glass-plate negatives and photographic prints at the Alexander Turnbull Library, the Whanganui Regional Museum and the Alexander Heritage & Research Library are undoubtedly of national importance. His studio portraits, street- and landscapes provide a comprehensive picture of Whanganui society from the 1850s to the 1880s, documenting in rich detail the growth of the settlement during a formative time in the history of Aotearoa.

The photographs are a unique source of information relating to Māori and Pākehā individuals living during a period of significant conflict and rapid expansion, characteristic of early settler colonialism in New Zealand towns. The minutiae of detail evident in each one of the photographs offers an in-depth view into the cultural makeup of the region, revealing elements of social class, ethnic background, fashion and personal ornamentation, community entertainments, the impact of life under colonial conditions, urban growth and architecture, and changes to the environment.

The variety of the images preserved in the archives and the sheer extent of the collection are also remarkable, since many such collections of nineteenth-century glass plate negatives were dumped or dispersed – there are few early photography collections that are as extensive.

Harding was able to achieve a high level of detail in his glass plate negatives using a wet plate collodion technique typical of the period. He also had a portable studio for processing negatives in the field, when he photographed street- and landscapes in Whanganui and the surrounding districts, also when attending community events, schools, the races and A & P shows, or when travelling up the Whanganui River to photograph local Māori residents. But what is unique about his approach to photography is his dedication to a faithful depiction of his subjects. Unlike most commercial photographers of the time, Harding did not retouch his photographs to flatter his sitters so there is a striking immediacy to these images of people who seem to look directly back at us, warts and all.

Section 8

Promotion of documentary heritage

Inscription to a UNESCO Memory of the World register provides an opportunity to promote the importance of documentary heritage. We shall provide you with a branded 'tile' to use on websites / social media and in catalogues.

Give a brief overview of how your institution will use the opportunity of a successful nomination to promote the Memory of the World programme and the importance of documentary heritage. You may wish to consult with communications staff in your organisation to provide an answer to this question.

The Harding collection in the Turnbull will be identified as inscribed on the Memory of the World New Zealand register. This will appear as part of the metadata in our catalogue records. The inscription will be promoted in both internal and external publications and through various media channels including social media, and potential external communications. The certificate of inscription will be displayed in the Library.

The WRM will send out a press release and promote on our social media platforms, as well as branding references in online catalogues. We will use the occasion of the inscription to promote the programme and the importance of documentary heritage with a pop-up exhibition of our collection and media opportunities.

The Alexander Heritage and Research Library will mark the occasion of an inscription to promote the collection the importance of documentary heritage through Whanganui District Council and Libraries' various media channels. Key amongst these will be the promotion of the collection and the Memory of the World programme on our forthcoming digital collections platform. In terms of physical presence, the certificate of inscription will be displayed for the public within the library and the collection will be featured in our exhibition space.

Section 9

Permission to use visual documentation

The Aotearoa/New Zealand Memory of the World Committee will also work with you and your communications staff to obtain publicity for the programme and for the successful inscriptions.

Do you give permission for the Committee to use the visual documentation you have provided for Aotearoa/ New Zealand Memory of the World publicity purposes (e.g. for brochures/website)?

- Yes No
 I would like to be consulted first

Section 10

Declaration of Authority

I am authorised to nominate the above documentary heritage to the Aotearoa/New Zealand Memory of the World Register.

Name: Dr Louise Garrett

Date: 30/5/2024

Appendix: Images and captions



William Harding's studio, Ridgway St, Whanganui. He used this studio from 1860 until 1889, when he left for Sydney. Whole-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, ca. 1870s. Ref: 1/1-000144-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.



Street scene in Bulls depicting the business of J. Riley, cabinet maker, on the right. The two men in the left background are bakers, possibly from the Edward Reed bakery listed in Wise's Post Office Directory of 1878. Harding's portable darkroom can be seen centre right. Whole-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, ca. 1880. Ref: 1/1-000017-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.



Victoria Avenue, Whanganui, looking from the bridge, including business premises of ironmonger John Duthie. Half-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: Studio of William Harding, ca. 1880s. Ref. 1/2-008388-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.



Mr and Mrs Roots with their twelve children in front of their house in Springvale, Whanganui. Whole-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, ca. 1870s. Ref. 1/1-000186-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.



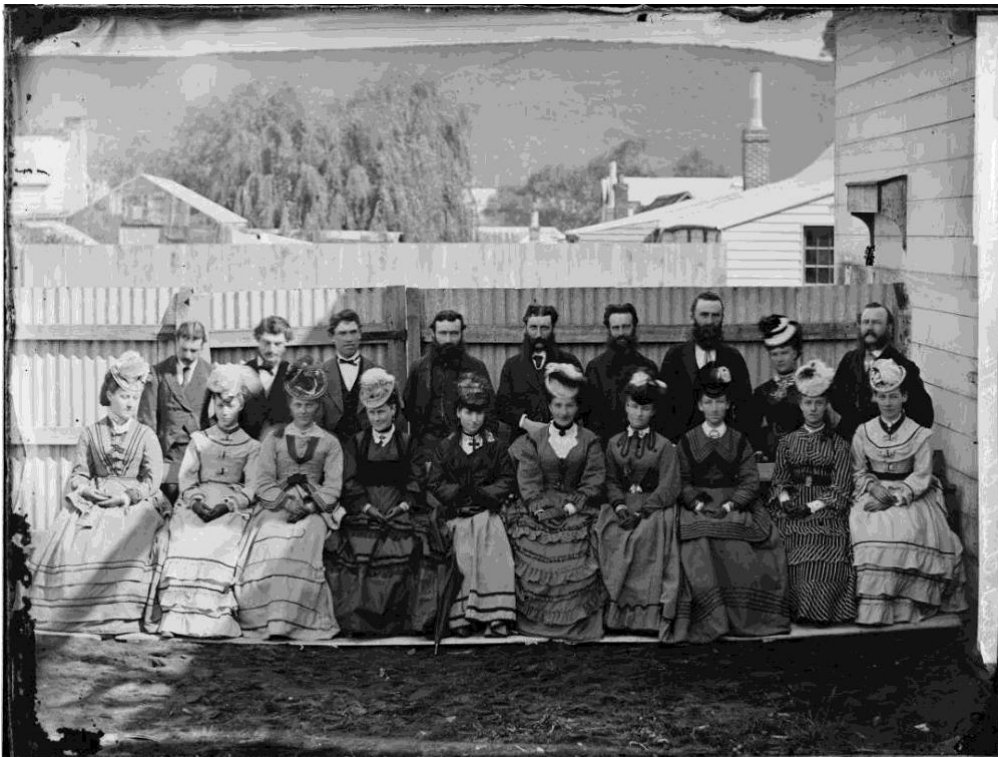
Meeting between Dr Isaac Featherston and Wanganui iwi at Putiki Pa after the battle of Moutoa (14 May 1864). Dr Isaac Featherston (centre) is presenting Mete Kingi Te Rangi Paetahi with the resolution of the Provincial Council thanking the Wanganui Māori for their brave conduct at Moutoa. Whole-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, May 1864. Ref. 1/1-000039-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.



Eel or fish weir at Pungarehu, on the banks of the Whanganui River. Whole-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photographer: William Harding, between 1856 and 1889. Ref. 1/1-000483-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.



Saint Mary's Roman Catholic School, Meaneer, boys' class. Quarter-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, October 1879. Ref. 1/4-017170-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.



Whanganui Christ Church choir of 1874. Whole-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, 1874. Ref. 1/1-000019-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.



Captain Nathaniel Flowers and his wife Margaret, with a dog. Quarter-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, 8 February 1878. Ref. ¼-005003-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.



Pango Ngākaari Tukia ("Mrs Trafford") of Rānana, Whanganui River. Quarter-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: Studio of William Harding, ca. 1868. Ref. 1/4-006035-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.



Lieutenant Herman with his ventriloquist dummy. Quarter-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: William Harding, ca. 1877. Ref. ¼-006818-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.



Wright family baby of Bell Street. Quarter-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photograph: Studio of William Harding, ca. 1870s. Ref. ¼-008515-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.