



Mary Kings' Grave Site

Vera Rd, Whangamomona

1897

Use: Grave Site
Materials: -
NZHPT Registered: Not registered
Legal Description: -

Historic Value: 2 out of 5
Architectural Value: - out of 4
Technical Value: - out of 2
Symbolic Value: - out of 3
Rarity Value: - out of 2
Townscape Value: - out of 2
Group Value: - out of 2
Overall Heritage Value: 2 out of 20



With negligible access available, in November 1894 the government opened the area of Whangamomona as the Whangamomona Small Farm Settlement. This area contained 4,219 hectares divided into 111 sections, which were brought from June the next year.

A group of seven settler families became the first to live in this area, with John Jodde King, his wife Mary Margaret King and their two children settling in the district as part of this group. The King's bought a piece of land, and had a third son born there.

Life, as it can be imagined, was hard, and in June 1897, Mary King developed peritonitis. No doctors lived in Whangamomona, and so she was nursed by the other women settlers. Unfortunately, this was not enough, and she died within 48 hours. At this time, Whangamomona had no cemetery, and as a result Mary was buried in the front garden of their house. It is thought that her youngest son (who died three months later) was also buried here. When Mary died, her husband, John, planted one tree at her head, and one at her feet, in order to mark the gravesite. He continued to live there with his two sons until approximately 1922.

In 1914, the railway was put through the district. Initially, it was planned to cross over the grave, but after the officials were notified of this, the line was moved over 12 feet, and the grave site became a railway reserve. During the 1950s, the King family was notified that the trees were too big, and were a problem for the railway line. No action was taken, as the family was in Auckland. Nothing resulted, but in approximately 1975, Railway workers (who did not know the importance of the trees) cut them down, leaving no marker.

A move was recently made to erect a cast bronze plaque to mark the grave. However, due to the fact that the sight is not able to be safely or legally accessed, this plan was abandoned. The site is protected by the Historic Places Act 1993, and can be seen as a memorial to the lives of all the early settlers of Whangamomona, especially the women.



Site of Mary King's Grave