

13. South Island and Chatham Island

The first fighting of the New Zealand Wars took place in the South Island, on the western edge of the Wairau Plain in what is now Marlborough. The Wairau Incident of 17 June 1843 prompted the erection of three fortifications at Akaroa on Banks Peninsula and one in Nelson, to act as refuges and protect local Pākehā communities. An earthwork redoubt at Waitangi on Chatham Island was part of the local military establishment when Māori from the North Island east coast were deported there after the fighting of 1865 and 1866.

SOUTH ISLAND

13.1 English Blockhouse

N36 (2506900E 5710800N); no site record, not located; Fig. 128.

Akaroa; near the point just north of the present wharf (Hight & Straubel 1957: Fig. 14).

Begun after the Wairau Incident to protect Pākehā civilians, but only completed in 1845 when news came of fighting in the Bay of Islands.

A two-storey loopholed blockhouse, with the upper storey extending out from the lower, and surrounded by a rectangular stockade.

Under foreshore road and/or adjacent buildings; largely or completely destroyed.

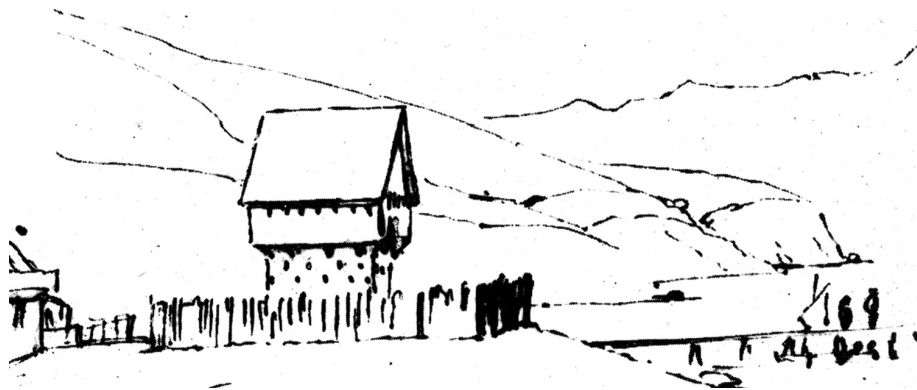


Figure 128. English Blockhouse, Akaroa, 1843. *W.B.D. Mantell sketch, in Hight & Straubel 1957: Fig. 14.*

13.2 Fort Arthur

O27/57 (2533700E 5992200N); S20/48; recorded 1985, update 2003; Heritage New Zealand Category II registration No 5961; Fig. 129.

Nelson; top of Church Hill, beneath Christ Church Cathedral and in surrounding gardens.

Built for the protection of Pākehā civilians after the 1843 Wairau Incident.

An initial timber and earthwork fort was later altered to a five-sided, bastioned earthwork at the top of the hill, enclosing more than an acre (.4 ha) of ground. Within the earthwork, a 47.5 × 15 m stockade was loopholed for muskets, with artillery comprising 18-pounder carronades (a type of mortar).

A bronze plaque marks the remains of an earthwork bastion a few metres from the cathedral's main door; other subsurface earthworks may survive in the gardens. Any remains of the stockade inside the earthworks were probably destroyed when the top of the hill was cut down for the cathedral.

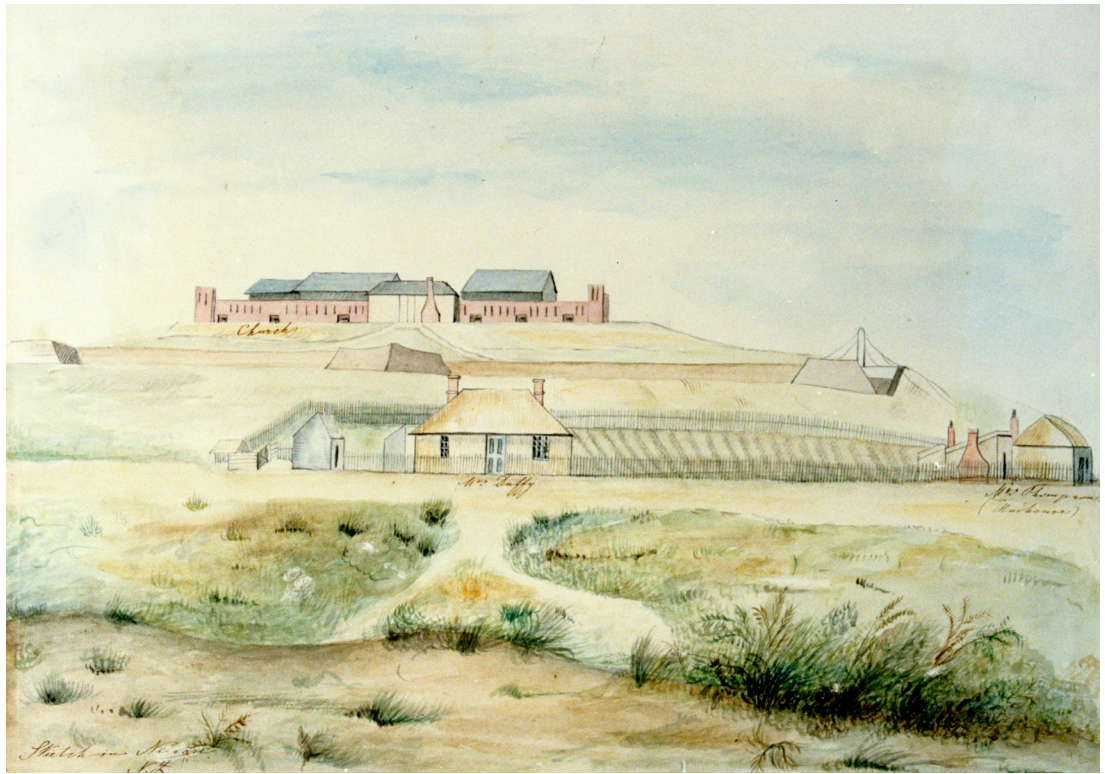


Figure 129. Fort Arthur, Nelson, 1845. 'Sketch in Nelson, N.Z.', Miss Longueville, Nelson Provincial Museum, Bett Loan Collection, AC844.

13.3 French Blockhouse

N36; (2507300E 5711400N) no site record, not located.

Begun after the 1843 Wairau Incident for protection of Pākehā civilians; but completed only in 1845 with news of fighting in the Bay of Islands.

Two-storey loopholed blockhouse, upper storey extending out from lower, surrounded by a rectangular stockade.

Present condition not known.

13.4 Takamatua Blockhouse

N36 (2507400E 5713900N); no site record, not located.

Akaroa, Takamatua Bay; in reserve behind beach at the centre of the bay.

Established after the Wairau Incident to protect local Pākehā.

Two-storey loopholed blockhouse, upper storey extending out from lower, surrounded by rectangular stockade.

Present condition not known.

CHATHAM ISLAND

13.5 Waitangi Redoubt

Chatham Islands Sheet 1 (c. 450E 553N); no site record, not located; Fig. 130

Waitangi; terrace edge above the beach, at or near the end of Waitangi Tuku Road.

Built in 1866 by Māori prisoners who were mostly Te Aitanga-a-Mahaki and Rongowhakaata from Turanganui (Poverty Bay), and included Te Kooti Arikirangi (Binney 1995: 58–60). The redoubt was captured by Te Kooti and his fellow-prisoners on 4 July 1868, before they seized the schooner *Rifleman* and departed for Whareongaonga, south of Poverty Bay, and from there to several years of fighting in the central and eastern North Island.

Contemporary pictures show a rectangular work, c. 35 × 20 m, with sod walls and bastions at the northeast and southwest angles covering all sides. Largely filled with ponga and flax buildings. Contained a square magazine in the central courtyard (see also Cowan 1983 II: 227).

Present condition not known.

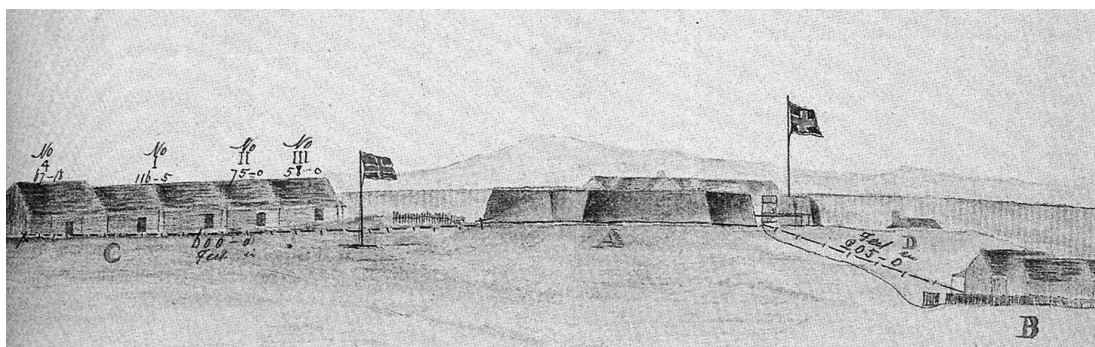


Figure 130. Waitangi Redoubt, Chatham Island. *Papers relating to Maori Prisoners of War and their guards on the Chatham Islands, Archives New Zealand, The Department of Internal Affairs Te Tari Taiwhenua, AD 31 3/15.*