



# Pioneer Cemetery

**Regan St**

**1885**

**Use:** Closed cemetery  
**Materials:** -  
**NZHPT Registered:** Not registered  
**Legal Description:** Lot 3 DP1805

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

**Overall Heritage Value:** 5 out of 20



The Stratford Cemetery (or Pioneer Cemetery as it is now known) was opened in 1885, and is Stratford's first official cemetery. The first recorded burial was not until 15 December 1886, when Mortimer Frederick Hassall was buried. Before this, the dead were taken to Midhirst, to be buried in the cemetery there. Many children died, and because of unsuitable roads, they were usually buried on the farms.

When the cemetery was first opened, the "Cemeteries Act 1882" was published, citing that the Town Board of Stratford shall have the entire control and management of the cemetery, and that lots from 1 to 30 inclusive shall be set aside exclusively for Roman Catholics, among other rules and regulations.

By 1900 the Stratford Borough Council decided a new cemetery site was needed, and so they started looking for a suitable place. Later that year, however, it was moved during a meeting that the cemetery should be enlarged, after this was recommended by the Cemetery Committee.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 1905, at the ordinary meeting of the Stratford Borough Council, it was moved that the old cemetery be closed, after the Kopuatama Cemetery was pegged in February 1905. However, the old cemetery was still available to anyone who owned unoccupied portions for burials.

The last recorded burial was 10 February 1975, when Cuthbert Hargreaves Taylor passed away. However, it was not until January 1980 that steps were taken to convert the cemetery into a Pioneer Memorial. This was done through the proposed building of a memorial wall containing the names of all who had died, with built-in seats, to provide a relaxing and contemplative environment.

The mayor of Stratford at the time, Mr. Leo Carrington, said the name "Stratford Pioneer Memorial Cemetery" was appropriate to the memory of the district pioneers who rested there.



*Examples of graves at the Pioneer Cemetery*



## **Bibliography**

Council Records

Stratford Press, Wed 18 Jan 1984 "Cemetery to be a Memorial"

Taranaki Daily News, Wed 18 Jan 1984