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## Of passing interest

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Historic features in our landscape observed by Puke Ariki heritage collections manager Kelvin Day and Aotea Utanganui/Museum of South Taranaki arts, culture and heritage manager Libby Sharpe and museum staff.

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On the southern outskirts of Manaia, just before Winks Road on the left side of the road, is a low square concrete structure. This is the remains of the crushing-mill building, constructed in 1900, for the Manaia Flour Mill. The original mill building was built for Daniel McVicar and the flour mill commenced operation in January 1883. It had a chequered history and a few months after starting the business was trading as McVicar and Heskett. A few years later a court case was held over the payment for the land, followed by another, against the surveyor who surveyed the water race to the mill. In 1888 it was reported that the mill had about 2000 sacks of wheat, all locally grown, on hand.

After McVicar defaulted on a mortgage to John Milroy of Manaia the mill passed to his widow, Louisa, and the mill was auctioned in November 1895 although the McVicar family continued to be involved. In 1900 the partnership of Patterson and McVicar constructed the new crushing mill and this continued in commercial operation until about 1918. Patterson is said to have continued using the crushing mill to crush barley for his pigs, powering the mill with his Sampson tractor until the 1930s.

While a number of flour mills were established in Taranaki from 1844 with the last closing in 1935, it was a combination of climatic factors and the increasing profitability of the pastoral and dairy industries that saw the demise of the industry in Taranaki.

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