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**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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A Record of the FISHING PAS on the TIDAL ESTUARY of the WANGANUI RIVER

by M.J.G.Smart

The majority of these fishing pa were adjacent to the river, constructed without earthworks or fortifications and occupied only during the summer fishing season. In the case of the Wanganui River this season extended from the end of November to March. During this period fleets of canoes left at daylight for the tribal fishing grounds off the coast, returning to the river again at dusk. Fish not required for the immediate needs of the pa were spilt and hung on the drying racks. These drying racks were a feature of all the riverside villages to which reference has been made in the early diaries and records relating to this area.

In most cases the location and identity of the sites were obtained from local Maori informants and published references by early visitors. The sites were then visited and checked in the field and an effort made to locate any material evidence originating from the sites. Work has been carried out over a fairly extended period.

Progressive settlement on both banks of the river, coupled with thick deposits of flood silt, have almost entirely destroyed many sites whose location has been obtained from some of the older Maori residents of the area. In cases where no visible traces of the site remain, the information is listed here to ensure that the record is as full as possible.

PATAPU: This is the name given to the seaward pa situated on the South Spit of the Wanganui river. It was the fishing village of Patapu, a Ngapatokotoko chief living at Waipakura which was a large area of land below the present township of Upokongaro.

KAIWHARAWHARA: This was the riverside pa of Wiremu te Tauri, the Ngati Tuharetoa chief who introduced christianity to the Wanganui district in 1838. Evidence of this pa could be traced some years ago but sand erosion has now obliterated all signs of earthworks. Being on the coastal route much used by Maori tribes when travelling up and down the coast, this pa was fortified. The information on this site came from Mr. Wiremu te Tauri, a grandson of Wiremu te Tauri I, of Putiki.

TE WAHI PUNA: Perhaps the smallest of the fishing villages, this site was situated adjacent to a spring of fresh water flowing from the lower slopes of the cliff of Landguard Bluff. It had been occupied for a considerable time prior to the advent of European settlers. It was the site of the murder of a trading party from Kapiti Island on the 14th. January 1831.

NGONGOHAU: Situated about 20yds. from the river bank on a small flat, the locality was sheltered from the prevailing wind on the seaward side by the high cliffs of Landguard Bluff. This was the fishing village of Topia(II) and Tahana Turoa, brothers of Pehi Turoa who was a paramount chief of the Wanganui River from 1815-1845. The meeting house of this pa, although large(app. 40ft. by 20ft.), was unadorned with carving. The name of the pa was derived from its sheltered position, Ngongohau meaning "a gasping for air" or "lack of wind". This information was given by the late Mr. Wiremu te Tauri.

OTAANE: This fishing village was situated on the southern bank of the Wanganui River where the Awarua Creek discharges. Due to a heavy deposit of silt in this area no actual surface evidence of this site is now visible.

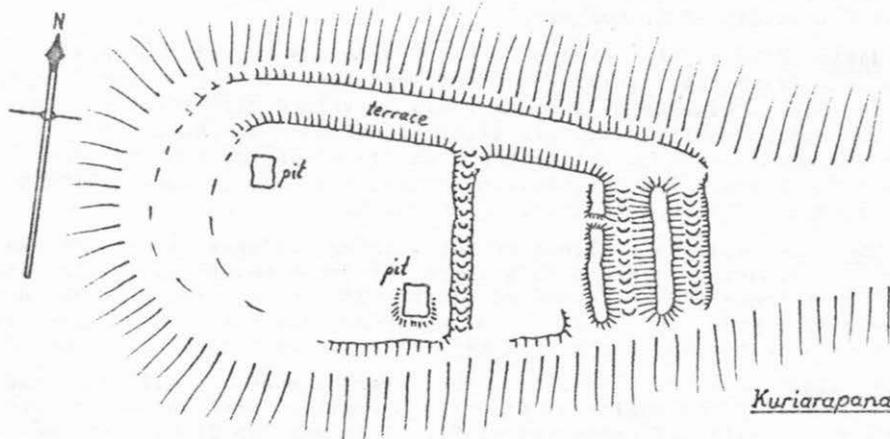
AWARUA: Situated on the creek of the same name, this village was one of some importance and one of the places visited by the Governor George Grey during his stay at Wanganui in 1846.

TOPI TOPI: This small pa is marked in an early map by Wyld. The actual site was approximately 5 chains to the north of Putikiwharanui pa. No further records exist of this site other than in the records of the late Mr. Wiremu te Tauri.

WHAKAMARU: This site was situated on a low terrace to the left of the main south road out of Wanganui, adjacent to the Topi Topi pa. A meeting house of the same name existed on this site until the early 1880's.

TE PAKU: This was the pa of the Mete Kingi family of Putiki where their meeting house, of the same name, stands today. It is situated on the right-hand side of Kemp Street which gives access to the present Putikiwharanui pa.

KURIARAPANA: This pa was situated on the high ridge of land at the southern end of Durie Hill and overlooking the extensive river flats of Putikiwharanui. The accompanying sketch is reconstructed from an 1865 photograph which clearly shows the earthworks of the pa. The Rev. Henry Williams mentions this pa in his diary of the 14th. December, 1839.



WHAREKAKAHO: The actual site of this pa was established during excavation work on a low sandy ridge running parallel to the river, near to the present Imaly Freezing Works. An examination revealed a large quantity of cooking stones and three small sections of (unidentified) worked bone. Also scattered over the higher area of the ridge were several small heaps of 'pipi' shells (*Amphigoesma australe*). The proximity of this site to the large area of swamp known to the Maoris as Kokohuia provided a permanent supply of thatch-material in the form of toitoi leaves and stems (kakaho), raupo, etc.

**TE AHITUATINI:** This, the most important of the fishing pas on the right bank of the river estuary, occupied a considerable area of a high sandy hill within 100 yards of the riverbank. Te Ahituatini was a populous pa when the first European missionaries arrived in the district. It was here that christianity was preached to the Wanganui River Maoris by Wiremu te Tauri I in the year 1838. In the burial register of Putikiwharanui Church, frequent mention is made by the Rev. Richard Taylor of burials conducted on this site. During the levelling of this area in 1910 a number of Maori artefacts were uncovered and later presented to the Wanganui Museum. Two human skulls were recovered at the same time. No evidence is now visible of any earthworks but the situation is a commanding one.

**TE ONE HEKE:** The existence of this pa has long been known to many members of the local tribes but its exact location had not previously been exactly defined. Some years ago an umu about 3 feet below ground surface, together with shell fragment, charcoal and oven stones, was uncovered. It was at this pa that an attempt was made in 1838, by two visiting Ngati Ruanui christian Maoris, to introduce the gospel to the Wanganui tribes.

**PAKOTORE:** This riverside pa occupied a large portion of the sandy shore of the river, opposite the high cliff face of Taumataaute. This pa was often referred to by the Rev. Richard Taylor in his writings and he was to see it grow, with the advent of the European settlers to the district, to be a village of considerable size supporting a summertime population of some 200-300 Maoris. Produce of the orchards and gardens of the up-river pas was traded here to the inhabitants of Wanganui.

