



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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variation of $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours, twice a day, between both harbours with a result that there were nearly always beds of shellfish exposed on one or other side of the isthmus. Not only were Polynesians attracted to the isthmus, but also large numbers of kuaka (godwit), which rapidly grew fat on the abundant shellfish.

On the Tamaki Isthmus every promontory, whether hill or headland, was occupied by Polynesians at some time. When the population reached its peak in the 18th century only about 40% of all the sites seem to have been occupied. (2) Like all defensive sites the pa had to contain sufficient people to defend its circumference. The number of people on defended sites varies with the type of warfare, but 45 persons per chain of defended circumference has been taken as the approximate number needed for pa on the isthmus. This results in a total population of over 33,500 if all sites were inhabited at once. If Fenton is correct, the real population was probably between 13,400 and 14,000, or an average population density of approximately 250 persons per square mile.

Land capable of such a high population density was thus greatly sought after. Warfare was common. The portages to the east and west of the isthmus were of strategic value, especially to northern tribes, hill pa became extremely complex bastions, which were enlarged according to the nature and form of the volcanic cones.

- 1) Fenton, F.D., Important Judgements, 1866-1879, Auckland, 1879, p. 57.
- 2) Ibid, p. 62.

FIELD RECORDING by Michael Rowell.

Field recording has been continued in the Auckland area. Work has been started on Mt. Wellington, Mt. Albert, Mt. Roskill, Mangere Mountain, and at the South Kaipara Head. recording is still in progress. Excavation is under way on Mt. Wellington, on an area of the mountain which is to be destroyed by the building of a reservoir. This excavation is to be mentioned in another article in this issue.

Mt. Roskill recording was the first to begin and posed certain problems of technique. The mountain covers an area of twenty acres and as it is a volcanic cone, has a circular shape. The method used here was one of cross sectioning, starting the cross-section from an easily identifiable point near the top of the mountain. This gave a pattern of cross-section radiating from a central point rather like the hub and spokes of a wheel. Its terraces were transverse to the cross-section, with this method a compass bearing was taken along the line of the terrace. All features on the terrace were related, both to the cross-section and to the compass bearing along the terrace. The cross-section was done with the aid of an Abney level, two five foot staves, compass, plumb and string. The method is described in Archaeology in the Field, by Atkinson.

Mt. Wellington has posed further problems since it is a large site just over 60 acres in extent, with a great number of features. For this site then, a system of record cards was devised. Each main feature was represented with a card, e.g., Pit Complex, Terrace, Platform, Midden. Certain features had to be defined for this particular site and details of this will be mentioned by Mr. Grube in his contribution to this issue. Recording of the slopes of the mountain has been completed, but there are certain areas on the land surrounding the mountain still remaining to be done.

Kaipara recording was continued last August and about 20 new sites were covered. In preparation for this work a study group was held for six weeks, entailing one lecture a week. The subjects covered were: map recording, and use of stereoscopic pairs of aerial photographs. This group then comprised the group leaders for the one-day trip that was organised. More work is still to be done in this area and will be continued this year. Reports have come in from interested farmers of new sites appearing through bush-clearing activities.

The above is a general report on the field-recording activities of the Auckland group. Work is continuing on Mt. Albert and Mangere Mountain and by our next issue there should be more to report.
