NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

GOLD IN WELLINGTON

B.G. McFadgen

INTRODUCTION:

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, gold was found in and about Wellington as in many other parts of New Zealand. Its existence had been known in the area since the early eighteen forties when it was found at Karori, and again later in 1862 when gold was discovered behind a chemist's shop in Lambton Quay. Until 1869 it was only small finds such as these which indicated the presence of the metal; but, in this year gold first made itself felt. During the following three years the rise and fall of gold mining companies and the presence of prospectors were common features around Wellington, both having an intense interest in the supposedly gold-bearing quartz outcrops scattered about the surrounding countryside.

The following deals with the history and present-day remains of the search for gold in the Pauatahanui-Horokiwi area, to the north of the inner Paremata harbour. This search was said often to be carried out at night in the interests of secrecy.

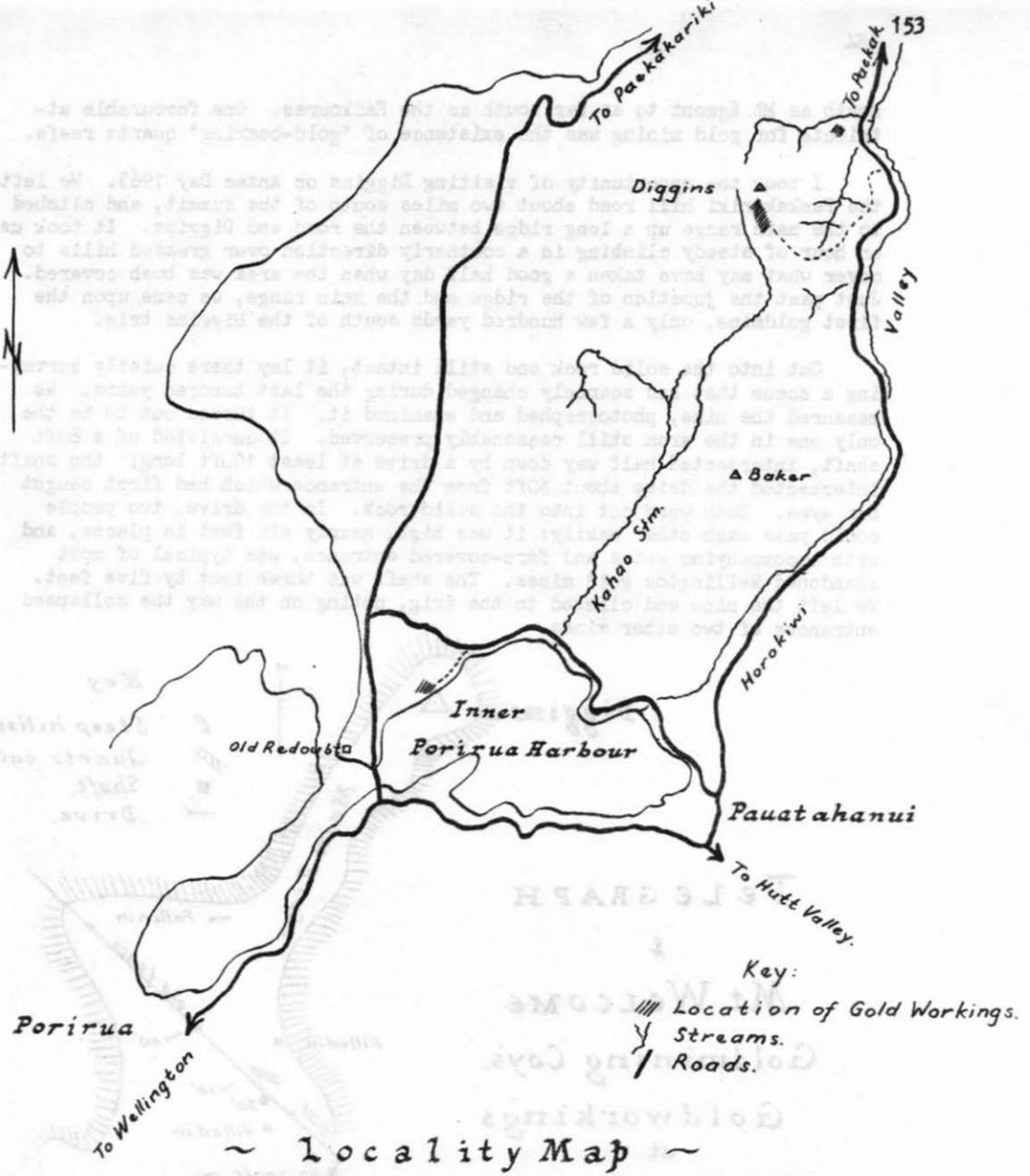
THE GOLD MINING COMPANIES:

Two companies were prominent in the area. The Mount Welcome Goldmining Company, Robert Cocker, manager, registered on 6 August 1869 with a capital of £290, and the Telegraph Goldmining Company, James Gilligan, manager, registered on 18 August 1869, with a capital of £600. Although registration of the Mount Welcome Company preceded that of its rival by only twelve days, this company had in fact prospected a considerable area. The Telegraph Company had difficulty in getting a licence for its claim as it was situated on severally-owned Maori land, the then Pukerua Native Reserve. Both companies eventually worked adjoining claims on the Diggins summit, and became involved in litigation over their common boundary. A total of four drives and five shafts were sunk into the hillside, leading both companies into bankruptcy before a year was out, and no gold to speak of.

FIELD REMAINS:

Diggins (Mount Welcome):

Diggins, previously called Mount Welcome, is an exposed hillside some 1442 ft in height, situated immediately to the east of the Pukerua peninsula. Typical of most Wellington hilltops, it lies amid deeply dissected hill country, and, totally unprotected from the northwest, it receives the full force of the strong nor'westerly gales which often blow for days on end. It is also sufficiently unprotected from the south, to receive unabated the full force of southerly storms. However, it does command a magnificent panoramic view of the surrounding country from as far



~ Locality Map ~

Showing

Old Goldworkings

0 1 2 3 4 Miles

Scale

-BMcf-

north as Mt Egmont to as far south as the Kaikouras. One favourable attribute for gold mining was the existence of "gold-bearing" quartz reefs.

I took the opportunity of visiting Diggins on Anzac Day 1963. We left the Paekakariki hill road about two miles south of the summit, and climbed to the main range up a long ridge between the road and Diggins. It took us an hour of steady climbing in a southerly direction over grassed hills to cover what may have taken a good half day when the area was bush covered. Just past the junction of the ridge and the main range, we came upon the first goldmine, only a few hundred yards south of the Diggins trig.

Cut into the solid rock and still intact, it lay there quietly surveying a scene that had scarcely changed during the last hundred years. We measured the mine, photographed and examined it. It turned out to be the only one in the area still reasonably preserved. It consisted of a 60ft shaft, intersected half way down by a drive at least 100ft long; the shaft intersected the drive about 50ft from the entrance which had first caught our eyes. Both were cut into the solid rock. In the drive, two people could pass each other easily; it was high, nearly six feet in places, and with accompanying wetas and fern-covered entrance, was typical of most abandoned Wellington gold mines. The shaft was three feet by five feet. We left the mine and climbed to the trig, noting on the way the collapsed entrances of two other mines.

Later we noted a short 40ft drive into the side of a spur just off the road to the west, about two miles south of the Paekakariki summit. Why a drive was put there is hard to imagine; there are no quartz outcrops within the immediate vicinity, and the drive itself passes through a very wet, weathered greywacke. Perhaps one reason for such an unlikely spot is the same for which a drive at Cape Terawhiti was dug in the 1880's. There, the find of an isolated gold nugget or piece of gold-bearing quartz, resulted in a drive in the hopes of a bigger find. Whatever the reason, the drive remains today, half full of water, with a partially collapsed entrance but otherwise reasonably intact.

Pauatahanui:

A further mine is situated on the north shore of the inner Porirua harbour. Here is a shaft full of water and rubbish near a prominent quartz outcrop, and intersected by a short forty to fifty feet drive. Just who was responsible for this mine is not known. It could be attributed to the Telegraph or Mount Welcome companies, or to the West Coast Gold Prospecting Company, also active in this area about the same time.

The final gold find at Pauatahanui was caused by a drake in 1870, and no doubt added incentive to the local prospectors for a day or two. Early that year a Mr Thomas Gilbert wondered why his drake had died, and upon examining its gizzard, found there enclosed ..... one gold nugget!

SOURCES:

Lands and Survey Dept. Plan W.D.1168
National Archives. Letter IA 1/294 69/2114
Wellington Independent (newspaper). 4 April 1862; 15 July 1869; 28 Oct. 1869; 12 Feb. 1870.
Wellington Provincial Gazette, 1869 pp.154, 157, 167.

SHELL DUMP SAMPLING

W. Ambrose

Recently an article appeared in this Newsletter which set out the procedure a group had adopted to deal with the problem of midden analysis. (Smart 1962:160). Work on a series of samples from the Kauri Point site (N53/5) has prompted the following short note which, it is hoped, will outline another possible approach to this vitally important question of midden sampling. At the outset it will be as well to point out that the midden sampling carried out at Kauri Point, though dealing with deposits differing in nature and extent, was no more or less systematic than Smart's work at Waikanae. At Kauri Point, simple species collections and the more important quantitative samples were gathered. It is with the

question of processing these quantitative samples that this note is mainly concerned.

The primary objective of the Waikanae survey was to "devise a method for carrying out midden sampling ... which could be applied by the New Zealand archaeologist who is still predominantly a non-professional and 'spare-time' worker". The second objective was to validate the first by giving it some aim through attempting to investigate "the change in dietary preference, or dietary change due to other factors". (Smart 1962:161). Had this sceond validating aim been pursued as the primary one, so that sampling techniques were adapted and subservient to it, a different procedure may well have been adopted at all stages of sampling and analysis.

It is difficult to conceive of one random sampling technique which would be applicable to all shell middens when these assume so many different sizes, shapes, positions, functions and mechanical sortings. It is often difficult to be sure what number of smaller coalesced dumps the midden has, or what period of time these represent, and whether it is wholly intact or not. Ideally, any of these problems will only be answered when the midden heaps themselves are looked at as composite units. The range of information which middens might yield about their structure and constitution must be partly limited by the method employed to gather this information. For example, an analysis could be very misleading if only two localised samples were gathered from a composite midden built of several parts over time, if the aim of the analysis was to describe the structure of the midden itself. Looked at another way, it might also be asked if any samples themselves can have much validity as representative bits of the whole, unless they are related in some way to the rest of the structure from which they derive. So far, the analysis of middens as formal entities, capable of structural analysis in their own right, is a problem which has not received attention in New Zealand archaeological work. It could be claimed that methods are lacking for this sort of approach, but there is no doubt that the methods will be formulated when the problem is confronted.

The other, more informative aspect of the midden, which has received attention in the Waikanae survey and elsewhere, revolves about the analysis of variations between samples forcorrelations of ecological and cultural significance. Since this involves constant evaluation and comparison between samples, the twc basic requirements would appear to be firstly, a means for showing this variation within samples, and secondly, a rigorously assembled control sample or series of samples. This has been clearly pointed out by Riddick (1962:5) who shows the absolute necessity for control samples when differences and similarities between samples are given cultural and environmental evaluations. At the level of superficial recording this is of course unnecessary, but at Waikanae it is surprising that the aim of investigating change due to dietary preference or other factors has not been accompanied by any mention of the collection or desirability of control samples.

The many ways in which a shell sample may be described indicates the need for careful selection of both the factors which are to be quantified, and the means for expressing these quantities. At any time, the choice of

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