



NEW ZEALAND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



This document is made available by The New Zealand Archaeological Association under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

To view a copy of this license, visit  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

to Ocean Beach area could very well provide such a site.

There is considerable evidence to prove the existence of several species of Anomalopteryx, Pachyornis and Dinornis moas living in the Hawkes Bay after the Taupo pumice shower of A.D.150 and as no major climatic or volcanic upsets followed, these moas must have been present when the first Polynesians arrived in the area.

The greater part of the Maori occupation sites are coastal; the most outstanding areas being the Mahia Peninsula, Wairoa, Ahuriri, Waimarama, Ocean Beach, with further small settlements in every little sandy bay and river-mouth along the coastline. Inland, most of the sites are by lakes and rivers where ducks, eels and pipis were plentiful. There were also many small fortified sites, often in forested country, such as those at Te Pohue, Te Haroto, Taravera, etc.

We are fortunate in that Hawkes Bay has had a considerable amount of its history, both traditional and documental, recorded by such explorers, missionaries and authors as Capt. Cook, W.Colenso, Bishop Selwyn, Samuel Williams, Guthrie-Smith, T.Lambert, W.T.Prentice, Elsdon Best (whose 'Tuhoe' touches on the fringe of Hawkes Bay) and many others. The "History of Hawkes Bay" by J.G.Wilson and others contains an excellent bibliography relating to this region. Despite all the above, considerable Maori history has been lost and many occupational sites have not been recorded or have no known history.

There are several problems of Hawkes Bay prehistory (similar to those in other parts of New Zealand) which active field archaeology may be expected to solve, such as the relationship of durable cultural stone, bone and wood of the earliest occupants to that of the Maoris that Cook and other discoverers found here; and the past population patterns in the district. A study of the midden material could give evidence of the birds and animals living in the Hawkes Bay at an early date. In the northern areas of the Hawkes Bay the Taupo pumice shower of A.D.150 is a widespread and easily recognised marker band: so far no occupational layer has been found under it. The 'black pumice' of Wellman may be still more valuable as a marker. Research could also show what effects the Polynesian settlers had upon the forests of this region and upon the now extinct birds which inhabited them.

As a primary line of research, an inspection of Museum and private collections of Maori artefacts may give evidence of a distinct early cultural pattern and may even point to areas where field archaeology might be safely expected to produce interesting results.

-- oo0oo --

#### INLAND PATEA - by R.A.L.Batley, Taihape.

The term "Inland Patea" refers to the region surrounding the upper reaches of the Rangitikei River and its main tributaries, the Hautapu and Moawhango Rivers. In an archaeological sense it embraces the entire upper catchment of the Rangitikei River and the surrounding high country. The region lies within Grid Square no. N.33 of the National Grid System and includes the highest peaks of the North Island.

The greatest proportion of the area lies between the 2000ft. and 5000ft.

contours, with a wide range of environment. Remote from large expanses of water which, from time immemorial, have been an essential part of Polynesian environment, the area has provided the neolithic Maori with special problems regarding settlement and food supply. This territorial environment has resulted in a scarcity of the complex settlement sites which are found in milder coastal or lake-side regions where cultivated or sea foods, as well as canoe transport, were readily available. The absence of notable field monuments is, however, compensated for by an abundance of traditional information concerning settlement, place names, overland routes and events dating back to the maritime period of the 14th. century. The latter are substantiated by a large number of genealogical tables from which it has been possible to form a 'geneachronology' (or table of events based on genealogical evidence) covering the traditional period. An important feature of future archaeological work in Inland Patea will be the testing of this traditional evidence.

Before describing the scope of archaeological research in the area, it is worth mentioning the factors that have contributed to the abundance of traditional material. These are, firstly, the lateness of European settlement, for the Rangitikei valley was unexplored until 1845 and European settlement did not take place until 1867. Secondly, there has been no break in tradition as the present Maori residents are the descendants of pre-European tribes that have occupied the area for the last 450 years. Thirdly, the absence of inter-racial conflict and the determination of land ownership by the Maori Land Court in the latter portion of last century has resulted in a vast accumulation of traditional material. For these reasons the inland archaeologist is closer to the neolithic Maori than his fellow workers in coastal regions. Detailed maps for Maori Land Court purposes have preserved the names of traditional sites, as well as the existing forest edge, prior to European settlement.

For this reason, environmental archaeology with a detailed reconstruction of the prehistoric surroundings has been an important feature of archaeological work. The study of a 1000 acre block, with an altitudinal range of 1000 feet, in the so-called 'natural clearing', has revealed evidence of Maori cultivation, extension of the forest and climatic change in prehistoric times. Avian remains from occupational levels in rock shelters have confirmed traditional evidence of species no longer found in the area. The plotting of wood fragments and natural moa remains, in relationship to the historic forest edge, is supplying further evidence of prehistoric forest margins. Living totara, mutilated by bark removal in Maori times, are providing evidence of cultural activities.

The geological aspects of archaeological research are of particular interest. The absence of high quality stone material for adze manufacture, or flake artefacts, within the area has resulted in the importation of greenstone and metamorphosed argillite artefacts as well as obsidian. The distribution of these imported materials within the district is providing evidence of trade routes and communications and their occurrence is of greater significance on inland sites where canoe transport is not available. The plotting of North Taupo and Mayor Island obsidian finds in the high country of the Kaimanawa, Kaweka and Ruahine mountain ranges has provided confirmation of traditional routes described in Maori Land Court records.

A large portion of the Inland Patea lies within the area covered by the volcanic ash showers of the central North Island. While there is no evidence as yet of human occupation beneath these showers they provide a valuable horizon for dating purposes and their effect on vegetation and moa populations has to be taken into consideration in the reconstruction of the prehistoric environment. Float pumice carried by a prehistoric flood in the Rangitikei River has been found in a silt layer on the floor of a habitation site at Tarare. Located at a higher level than the recorded historic flood of 1897, this float pumice is valuable evidence of prehistoric flooding.

To date there has been no official site recording carried out in the area although private records covering fieldwork over a number of years are in existence. Steps are being taken regarding the formation of a local field group to carry out field recording and environmental studies. A series of historic gunfighter's pa, at altitudes in excess of 3000ft. above seal level, are probably the most interesting field monuments in the region, as well as the highest defensive earthworks in New Zealand.

The most important feature of archaeological work during the present season has been the discovery of a fragment of moa bone in a human occupation level on a river terrace beside the Rangitikei River. A preliminary investigation has revealed a considerable amount of obsidian, as well as the first occurrence of flake artefacts of flint on an Inland Patea site. Flint does not normally occur within the region, except as a pebbly conglomerate in the Waitotaran limestone which abuts against the Ruahine Range. As this is probably the first inland North Island site to produce moa material from an occupation level, it is hoped that future excavations will provide further evidence of moa hunting in the region. (Author's note: At this stage it would be unwise to speculate on the age of the moa remains or the cultural phase associated with them. It is of interest to recall that Mr.G.L.Adkin discovered an imported flint knife with a group of moa gizzard-stones at an altitude of 2680ft. above sea level on the Tararua foothills. See Horowhenua, 1948, pp.80-83).

- - ---oo0oo--- - -

TAUPO - by T.Hosking, Taupo

The Taupo region is particularly rich in archaeological sites. Here, as in the Inland Patea region, the Maori population has not moved away to any great extent. Many owners have moved only to the surrounding areas and in some cases still employ sites as tribal burial grounds. It is possible, by gaining the goodwill of the Maoris concerned, to carry out field investigation of many sites but excavation is, of course, precluded. The preservation of most sites is good but the opening of new farming areas has effected a certain number.

(Pressure of work has prevented Mr.Hosking from compiling a fuller account of this interesting region in time for this issue of the Newsletter - Ed.)

- - ---oo0oo--- - -