



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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Archaeological Association during the course of the fieldwork it describes. Mr. R. G. W. Jolly of Papakura gave the benefit of his local contacts and field experience in the work on the Waikato west coast. Mr. W. A. Pullar and Mr. Jack London of Whakatane did the same for their area and Mr. P. Crichton of Tauranga for his. Mr. D. M. Stafford and Mr. C. A. Watt of Rotorua organised the search at Maketu and eastwards. The value of an Association such as ours is well-illustrated in the success of organised effort of the type that has been described.

This is a logical point to give general acknowledgements: to Dave Simmons of the Auckland Society, who helped materially in the choice of site, to Mr. C.A. Moore of Athenree, and Messrs. I. Blakeman, A. H. Honeyfield, R. Larsen, E. Noble, D. Noble and I. Noble of Kauri Point; and to all who gave of their time to dig at the site.

References

1. Golson in Anthropology in the South Seas, 1959, pp. 68-69
2. Golson in Journal of the Polynesian Society, March, 1957, Vol. 66 No.1, pp. 78-81.

(2) Tauranga : an Historical Outline up to 1826

by L. W. Melvin

Reference to the existence of pre-Fleet people in the Bay of Plenty occurs persistently amongst the early writers such as Grey, Wilson, Gudgeon, Best and Graham; and in the recent writers Kelly and Grace. Of these, Judge J. A. Wilson was the only one with any particular interest in Tauranga, and he alone has made any effort to detail some of our pre-European history.¹ But our indebtedness to Wilson should be tempered by the fact that at times he was careless with facts in his European history. Inevitably this raises a doubt about his writings on the Maori.

Wilson came to the conclusion that a considerable population inhabited the country in pre-Fleet times, their tribal nomenclature being influenced frequently by the kind of food notable in their particular localities. Thus, at Maketu where streams and swamps yielded fish and eels plentifully, were to be found the Waiohua (waters of abundance); and at Tauranga where the sea teemed with fish, lived the Purupekenga (full net). He also mentions another pre-Fleet tribe at Tauranga, the Ngamarama, whom he located about the middle and western portions of the district.

Captain Gilbert Mair² also mentions the Ngamarama as being a prehistoric tribe, and he too located them to the westward, at or near Bowentown. As his authority for the identification, Mair gave Tupaea who, at the time, was the principal chief of Tauranga. Mair's account related to a find of artefacts some of which, it is understood, have since been identified as belonging to the Archaic phase of New Zealand prehistory. The artefacts in question are adzes and are in the Auckland Museum.

The vagueness of tradition is to be seen in the varying accounts of the coastal voyaging of the Tainui and Arawa canoes. Some accounts tell of these canoes calling at Tauranga, and some do not. The former associate Tamatekapua, captain of the Arawa, with Katikati (at the western end of the harbour) - indeed, they say the name springs from some of the Tamatekapua's actions at that place. Incidentally, until a thorough investigation is made, there is little reason for accepting the European town of that name as being the Katikati of the ancient Maori. The latter place was probably more to the north, that is, nearer Bowentown.

As to the Tainui canoe, tradition from a Ngatiranginui source links it with a rock in the harbour approaching the Bowentown entrance.

Over the centuries subsequent to the arrival of the Fleet, Tauranga was the dwelling place of two principal tribes, one displacing the other as the dominant force. The first of these was the Ngatiranginui who claim descent from Ranginui, whose father, Tamateapokaiwhenua, they recognise as captain of the Takitimu canoe. So we find such prominent places as Maunganui, Mangatawa, Papamoa, Otumoetai, Matua-iwi and Pukewharake being claimed as having been settlements of the Ngatiranginui. The majority of these places are at the eastern end of the harbour.

To revert to Wilson, he states that first by peaceful penetration and later in open conflict, the tribes which developed out of the Fleet immigrants gradually gained ascendancy over the aboriginals until the latter were destroyed or driven off. In this way the Ngatiranginui became the dominant people at Tauranga about 1630, although it is not easy to follow Wilson on the point.

While these events were being played out in and around Tauranga, further to the east beyond Opotiki, a tribe of aboriginal extraction named the Rangihouhiri were making their presence felt. Having arisen from serfdom, they were a tribe without lands. They began to battle their way along the Bay of Plenty, coming to a halt at Maketu, where they defeated the Arawa elements holding that place. Rangihouhiri, the leader from whom the tribe took its name, was killed at Maketu and thereafter, says Wilson, the tribe was known as the Ngaiterangi. Subsequent events caused them to campaign against their neighbours, the Ngatiranginui of Tauranga, whose strongholds at Maunganui and elsewhere they overcame in a series of engagements which ended with the subjugation of Ngatiranginui about the year 1750.

This, then, was the position of the tribes at the time of the first authenticated visit by Europeans to Tauranga. That occurred late in June 1826, when the Church Missionary Society's schooner Herald came down from the Bay of Islands in search of foodstuffs.

References:

1. J.A.Wilson, The Story of Te Waharoa; 1906
2. Transactions New Zealand Institute, XXIV:240.
3. L.W.Melvin, Journal No. 4 Tauranga Hist.Society.

(3) The Excavations

by J. Golsen

The site is small but impressive. It stands on an old sand dune covered by volcanic ash : there are wave cut cliffs above the Tauranga Harbour east and south, a steep slope down to a small swampy creek to the north and westwards a gentle swale between the pa and the next dune. Round the western and northern slopes sweep two well preserved ditches excavated to about the same level. The outer ditch is fronted by a small bank and backed by a large one : its outer scarp where best preserved measures on the surface 4 ft., its inner one 7 ft. The inner ditch is much more impressive with an outer scarp of 7 ft. and an inner one of 11 ft. There are traces of a bank above the inner scarp along the western edge of the pa. The interior area is a triangle with apex to the east, 40 yards across the base and with a length of 100 yards. This area is flattened but apart from one platform at a lower level midway along the southern side there are no distinguishable earthworks. On the northern side of the pa, from the outer ditch down to the creek, large shell middens swell the natural contour of the hill.

To the west the next dune is higher but smaller in extent. The northern and eastern slopes of this hill have been terraced. No features are visible on the terraces or on the hilltop, but midden material outcrops on the slope falling northward to the creek.

Enquiries have failed to discover the Maori name for the site and even to confirm Ngaiterangi possession of it except in the most general way. These considerations have assumed some importance in the light of the excavated evidence.