



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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Pit 1.

The second pit to be excavated by the Waikato Group was Pit 1 (fig. 6). This pit showed as a big depression in the ground, surrounded on three sides by an earth wall. This pit has also been dug out of the sandstone. It is of smaller dimensions being, 10'10" x 8' and 5'6" deep. There is a single buttress or step on both East and West sides. A small drain runs along the four walls, with a four inch fall into a small soak hole in the S.E. corner. The drainage system in this pit was not made to handle a great volume of water. It can be assumed that the roof probably overhung the surrounding earthwalls so that practically no water could enter into the pit. Only three square postholes were found, and these were dug slightly off centre.

The most interesting feature of this pit is the storage room in the N.W. corner. It had been dug out at floor level and a small wall had been left to protect the inside against water. There is no indication of its use. There is no evidence for a fire place, and no charcoal was found, nor were any artefacts found in the fill, which had accumulated over the years in this pit.

Conclusion

The excavation of Kotare Pa is a big undertaking for a small group, but in view of the work done so far, it appears that the plans of many interesting pits will find their way into the "Newsletter".

MAORI GUNFIGHTERS PA

by
Alan Taylor.

Shortly before the Waikato War broke out, following General Cameron's crossing of the Mangatawhiri Stream on July 12th, 1863, a Government agent visited Ihumatao Pa and several other Maori settlements in the Mangere area. And the natives were asked to take an oath of allegiance to the Queen. But they refused; one chief (Tamati Ngapora) saying that 'they could not forget that they were part of Waikato' and so would have to 'go and die with their fathers and friends' (Gorst 1959:245). Which they did: many losing their lives either at Rangiriri or in the Hunua Ranges where they employed guerrilla tactics against British and Colonial troops (Sinclair 1959 : 136). Operating from large bush villages (Cowan 1933 : 55) the Mangere Maoris also built a number of small fortified positions close to the European lines of communication; one of which was recently discovered close to the Hunua Falls.

Situated about two miles from the falls (NZMS N48:592-342), the position is perfectly preserved and is a good example of a gunfighters pa; similar in form to those of Rangiriri and Orakau. (*) Excavated on a bush covered spur (now a reserve) the fortification consists of a central redoubt and trenches (see sketch). In addition to the Pa, two outlying gun-pits were observed situated just above a freshwater creek, that flows round the base of the eastern slopes of the spur, averaging 3 feet in depth and 10 feet in width.

Finally, no artefactual material was recovered and only three small shell-middens, without associated "whare pits" or other evidence of occupation, were located close to a freshwater spring on the lower, western slopes of the site.

(Mr. W.A. Taylor prepared the line drawings illustrating this paper.)

Cowan J. 1933 "The Maori War".

N.Z. Herald, Anniversary Edition.
Nov. 13. p.55.

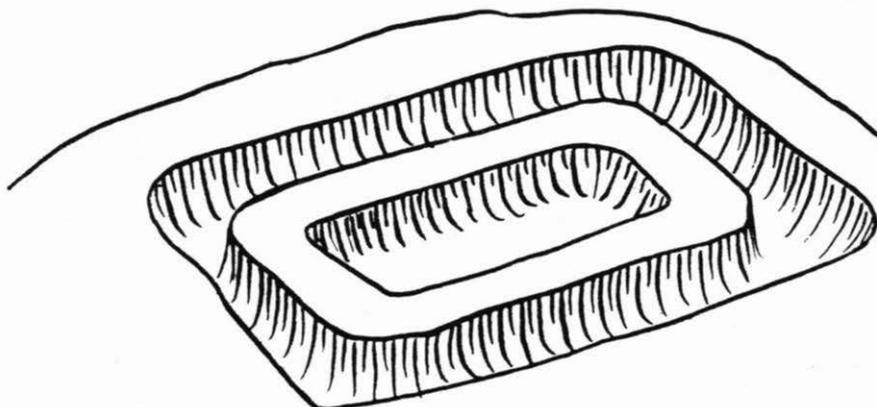
Gorst J. 1959 "The Maori King"

Oxford University Press.

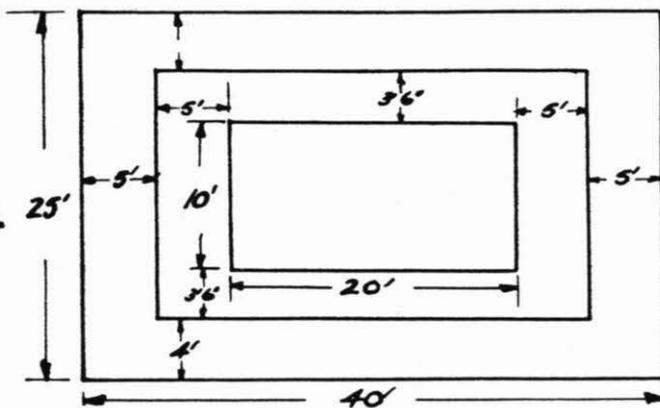
Sinclair K. 1959. "A History of New Zealand" Penguin Books. Harmondsworth.

* The reader may care to compare Mr. Taylor's drawings with those illustrating Rangiriri on p. 297 of Best's "Pa Maori". Ed.

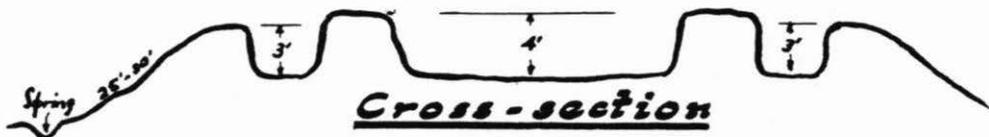
GUNFIGHTERS' PA: HUNUA RANGES.



Sketch 25'



Plan



Cross-section