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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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were set in contact, with long axes vertical. Occasional postholes occur, but appear to form no significant pattern.

As excavation proceeded it was very noticeable that the site was strongly differentiated areally. Most of the ovens occur within a few squares - some squares had 5 oven hollows, oven stones had accumulated in other areas, the shell and bone midden was very restricted and stone flakes tended to be concentrated in definite areas, notably around and on the pavement.

Reference:

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| Wellman H.W. | 1962 | NZ Journ.Geology and Geophysics Vol 5 : 55-75 |

PRELIMINARY NOTE ON TWO WAITAKI RIVER SITES - MacKENZIE COUNTRY

G.M. Mason

INTRODUCTION:

On the left bank of the Waitaki River at the southern end of the MacKenzie Country and at the top end of the Waitaki "Gorge" two camp sites have recently been discovered. The northern-most ("Waitaki I") is about half a mile west of the old Black Forest Station homestead and on a tussock, matagouri and briar covered terrace remnant which is bounded to the west by a stream flowing in the bed of the Waitaki 25 ft. below. The eastern boundary is a gravel terrace rising 20 ft. at a 30° angle. The site is exposed to the south and west.

The southern site ("Waitaki II") is approximately one mile north of "the Gooseneck" and is at the foot of a greywacke face 15 ft. high and running roughly NE - SW for about 2 chains and is about 1 chain back from a long and very deep back water which runs into the main river. On the completion of the Benmore Dam these sites will be drowned by about 50 and 100 ft. of water respectively, thus there is some urgency about getting them excavated and for a general reconnaissance to locate other sites which will be drowned. Lack of time and transport will prevent the Author from doing all this work. It is apposite to mention here the good work done by Ambrose and Davis (1955, 1959, 1960) who recorded rock shelter art from this area.

Waitaki I Excavations:

At the Waitaki I site about 20 square yards have been excavated, not leaving baulk to a depth of 6 ins. Two hangi were found, one exposed in the terrace edge and the other some 2 ft. away. The portion left in the terrace edge was 41 ins. in diameter and 27 ins. deep with steep sides rounding to a flat bottom. The other was 51 ins. diameter and 19 ins. deep with an overhanging

lip which projected 1 - 1½ in. then passing downwards 8 ins. vertically before sloping down gently to the centre. Similar pits with overhanging lips have been found by O.R. Wilkes at the Heaphy River, N.W. Nelson, and are described by him elsewhere. The only artifacts so far found are a few silite ("quartzite") flakes very similar microscopically to the cemented quartzose sandstone of the Greys Hills quarries. A moa bone tab could indicate moa-hunter age for the site. The artifacts were found 2 ins. below present ground surface in silty brown soil 5 ins. thick which passes downwards imperceptibly into yellow river silt, locally 5 ft. thick and superimposed on well-rounded greywacke river gravels that extend downwards an indefinite distance.

The only midden elements found were a number of burnt overstones, occasional charcoal fragments and one very weathered piece of freshwater mussel (*Hyridella* Sp.).

The above data would be consistent with a camp - possibly moa hunter - of very brief duration.

Waitaki II Excavation:

The Waitaki II site has yielded from 3 square yards dug to a depth of 8 ins. a large number of small (2 in. long) valves of fresh water mussel (*Hyridella* Sp.), a number of moa eggshell fragments (possibly a chance association). Stone materials comprised some half dozen silite flakes and a few flakes of a baked pale yellow argillaceous material. The silite flakes are very similar in the hand specimen to material from the local Greys Hills quarries. Part of this site has previously been dug by persons unknown.

The material, associated with small fragments of charcoal, occurs 2 in. deep in black soil approximately 6 in. deep passing downwards imperceptibly into yellow silt containing, as does the soil, occasional angular fragments of greywacke from the shelter walls.

There is no distinct occupation layer, nor is there any trace of drawings on the shelter wall, and if there were, natural weathering would be quick to complete their destruction.

Although work is proceeding as rapidly as time will allow, much digging remains to be done as well as examination of the area which will be all too soon inundated. It is the Author's earnest hope that additional man power, funds and equipment will become available before it is too late.

References:

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| Ambrose W. & J., | Davis F. | 1959 | Nat. Hist. Places Trust Annual Report |
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| McCully | | | Greys Hills Quarry |