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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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PUKAKI PA II: A BRIEF SURVEY

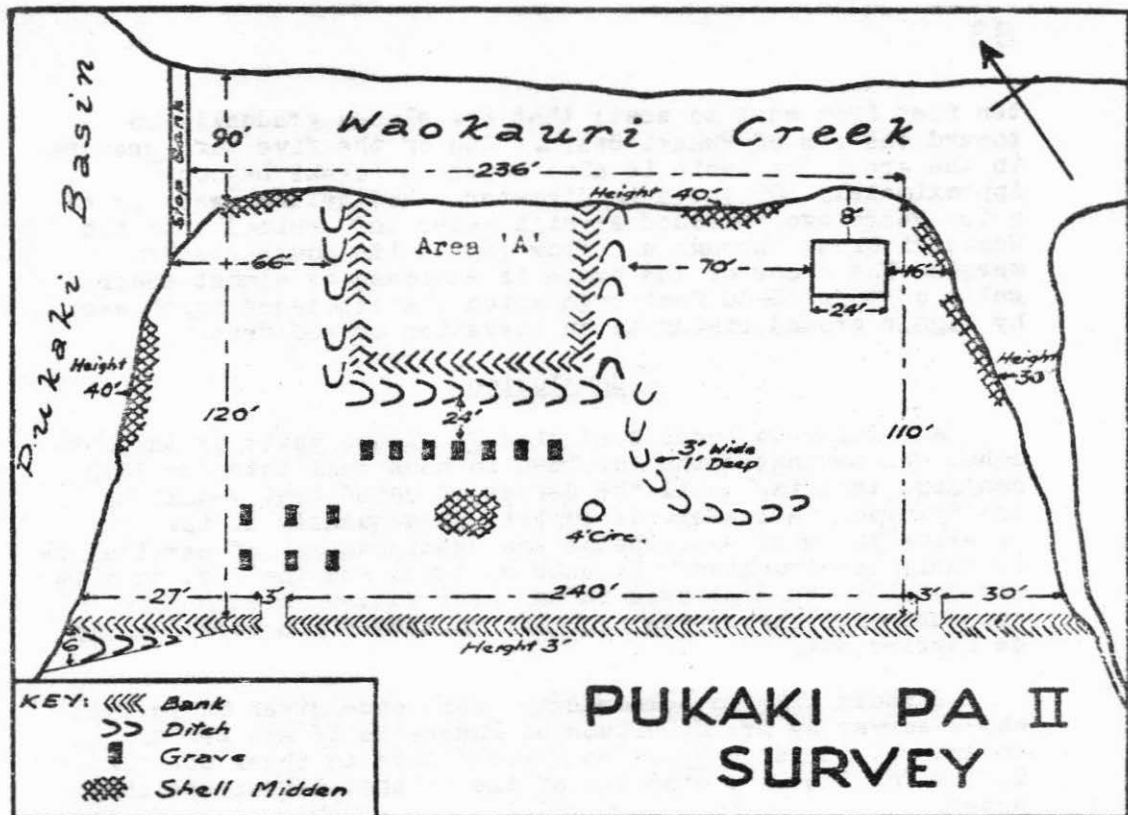
By A. Taylor

Situated at the head of the Waokauri Creek and at an elevation of 40 feet above the outlet of Pukaki Basin, Pukaki Pa II (NZMS 1: Sheet N42(Auckland) 331443 N26) was the last of three early fortified positions built in the area: the other two having been completely destroyed. Pa I, on the other hand, is of recent origin (NZMS 1: Sheet N42 (Auckland) 328435) and technically a kainga or open village. However, as is usual, the settlement is locally described as a "Pa" and so, for the purposes of identification, I retain this description here.

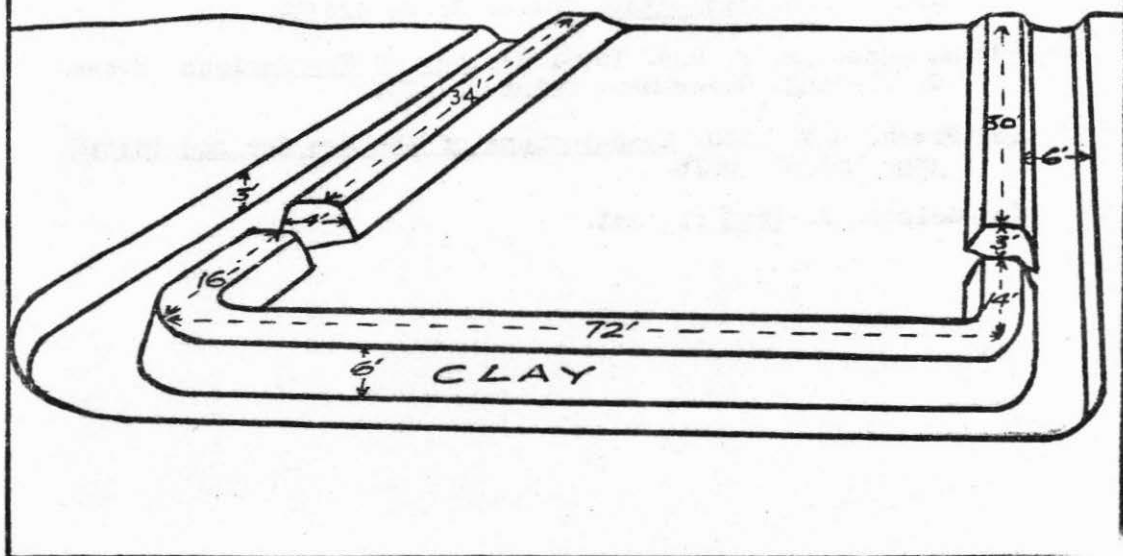
Pa II is comparatively small yet has a strong position, comprising an outer defence line in the form of a three-foot high clay embankment which, in association with three creek and lagoon banks, defines the perimeter of the pa. The inner defence system consists of a continuous ditch, three embankments and the forty-foot south bank of Waokauri Creek. Like the outer, the inner series of embankments is broken by wide entrance-ways; one in the centre of the eastern line and the other in the middle of the western. On the average the top of the well-preserved inner embankment is six feet above the bottom of the outer three-foot deep fosse. There is no direct surface evidence of occupation within the complex; neither has any artefactual material been recovered in clearing the site. Within 70 feet of the inner defences (east) is a level-rimmed, semi-subterranean pit (24 feet by 15 feet by 4 feet) which was possibly used for food storage purposes. It is the only excavation, other than the pa fosse, of any size on the site. An interesting feature of the site that warrants further investigation is a shallow three-foot wide trench that appears to be the remains of an earlier complex. Circular in form, it suggests the remains of a small ring ditch pa.¹

Within the defences of Pa II there are several closely packed shell middens containing pipi (Amphidesma australe), Auckland rock oyster (Saxostrea glomerata), Queen scallop (Pecten novaezelandiae) and Cat's-eye (Lunella smaragda) in addition to charcoal and bird and fish bones. Further, close to the circular trench (above) and a short distance from a number of recent burials (the site is at present a Maori urutapu), is a small pit three feet in circumference containing shells and other refuse.

The terrain within the defences of Pa II rises about



Perspective view of Area 'A'



ten feet from east to west; that is, slopes gradually up toward the rim of Pukaki Basin. One of the five tuff craters in the area, the basin is also known as Pukaki Lagoon.² Approximately 600 yards in diameter, this caldera was, up to a few years ago, flooded at high water and drained into the Waokauri Creek through a narrow gap in its south-eastern margin. The floor of the basin is enclosed by almost sheer walls of tuff 30-40 feet high which are succeeded north-west by higher ground rising to an elevation of 100 feet.³

Conclusion

According to local tradition Pa II was built by the Wai-o-hua who dominated the Auckland Isthmus well into the 18th century; that is, until the defeat of chief Kiwi Tamaki by the Ngatiwhatua leader, Te Tupiri. Consequently it is, in relation to later Ngatiwhatua and Ngatipaoa pa, of particularly early construction.⁴ Because of this, and the fact that it may possibly be destroyed in the near future, a much more comprehensive survey, in addition to excavation work, should be carried out.

I would like to acknowledge assistance given me in the above survey by Mr. J. Wilson of Pukaki Pa II and Mr. R. Roberts of Ihumatao Pa. Also I would like to thank Mr. W.A. Taylor for the line drawings of the pa that illustrate this paper.

References

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- (3) Firth, C.W. 1930. Transactions of the New Zealand Institute. Vol.61. p116.
- (4) Golson, J. Ibid (1) p41.