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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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SITES ON THE NORTH-EAST COAST OF BANKS PENINSULA.

by Annette Jones

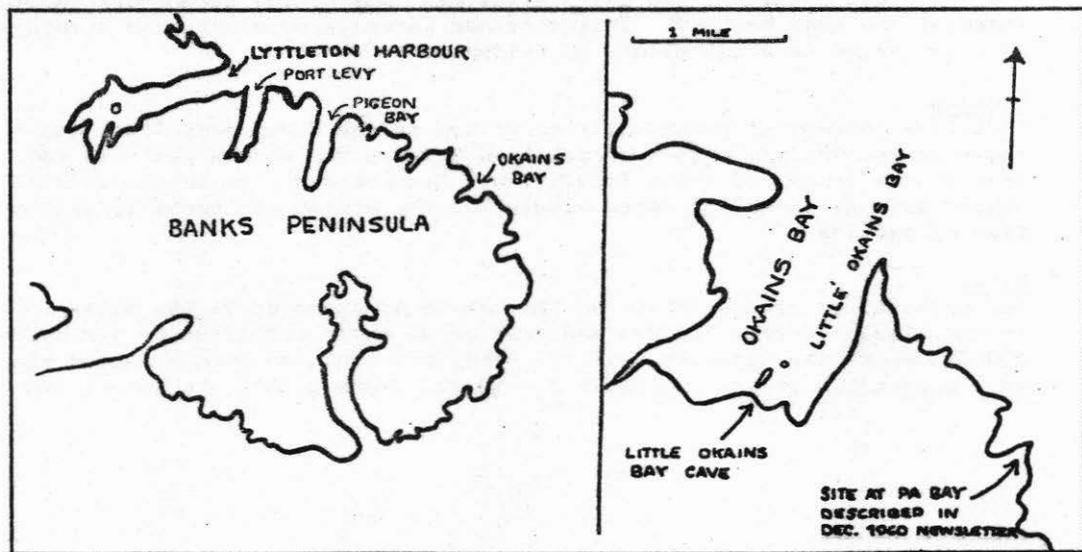
During 1959-62 a site survey of the North-east coast of Banks Peninsula was carried out. The area covered extends from Adderley Head to the Long Lookout and for a distance of up to two and a half miles inland, and includes the part of the Peninsula for which traditionally documented sites are in the smallest concentration.

Banks Peninsula is part of an area which Le'haite describes as being "less favoured environmentally, its population distributed in scattered pockets, and its economic base narrowed by reduction of crop plants, so that forest, lake and sea became more significant." It is built of two submaturely dissected basalt domes, originally covered in Podocarp - Broadleaved hardwood forest, except for the ends of the spurs, which (especially on the North-east coast) were covered in short tussock grassland. Now the bush has been cleared and the spurs have, where possible, been ploughed. The rocky headlands abound in sea birds, bones of which frequently appear in the middens, and fish of all kinds are plentiful. Karaka and kumara will grow in the eastern portion of the region.

Traditional History:

The principal source of traditional information regarding the history of Banks Peninsula is J.W. Stack. He records the destruction of the Waitaha c.1577 by the Ngati Mamoe, who were (c.100 years later) conquered by the Ngai Tahu, who landed in some of the Eastern Bays and took the stronghold of Parakakariki, the whole Peninsula later being divided up amongst them.

About 150 years later, an intra-tribal feud, the Kai Huangā, broke out at Waikakahi, on the south coast, and it eventually involved all of the Canterbury Ngai Tahu, the defeated taking refuge in the north-east bays of the Peninsula. "Those places were so difficult of access by land, that refugees hoped to be secure from pursuit." The settlements which arose in these bays were subsequently attacked by Te Maiharanui (Ngai Tahu) and then by Te Rauparaha (Ngati Toa) in 1831.



Sites:Port Levy (Koukourarata)

On the western side of the harbour are one pit and terrace site (Kaitara), two middens, and a small promontory pa site. On a spur at the head of the harbour is a single pit and on the eastern side of the harbour are two middens in the Ngai Tahu reserve (Native Reserve No. 874.) The pa here was called Puari and the original plan (1849) shows 14 buildings scattered along the foreshore of the bay enclosed by Horomanga Island. The earliest population estimate of c.150 was made by Captain Smith in 1842.

Pigeon Bay (Wakaroa).

Apart from midden in Pigeon Bay Valley and isolated pits on spurs on the west side and at the head of the harbour, there is little occupation evidence. About 1840 there is supposed to have been a flourishing pa situated on the east side of the bay but this area is now badly slumped and eroded. There were also Maori cultivations in Pigeon Bay Valley. In December 1849 the population was estimated at 30 (Ngai Tahu).

Menzies Bay (Kirikiriwairua).

There are isolated pits on spurs in the western and eastern sides of the bay, and a pa, probably originally a promontory pa, has now (except for two pits) been destroyed by levelling operations. Adjacent to it is a midden, and behind it are rows of stone heaps, probably part of a former kumara garden.

Decanter Bay (Te Kakaho).

An extensive midden and three karaka trees are the remains of a settlement which provided Maori guides to the early settlers.

Little Akaloa (Akaroa).

The bay was originally very heavily bushed and a midden in the valley is post-European contact. The chief settlement was at the promontory pa of Panau at the Long Lookout. This also had karaka groves and kumara gardens of which there is still plenty of evidence.

Middens:

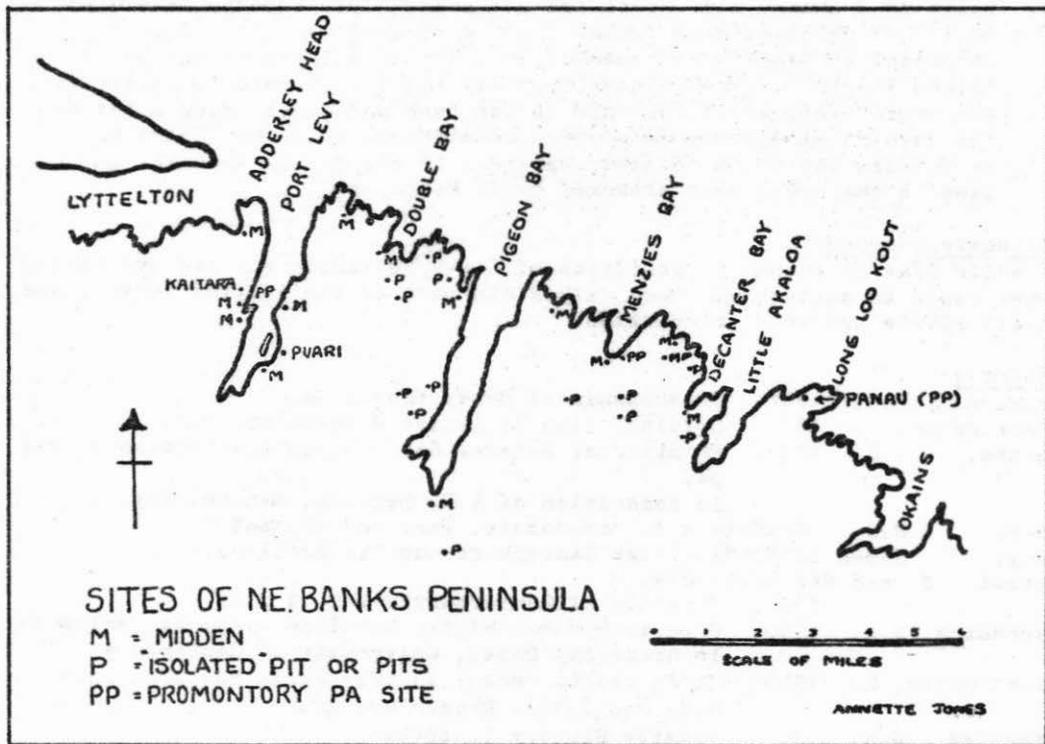
These are present in practically every bay of the North-east Coast and there is generally a direct correlation between the midden contents and present day faunas of those localities. Many of the bays which contain middens have no permanent water supply and the midden was probably left by fishing parties.

Pits:

The majority of pits seen are on the crests of spurs up to two miles inland, isolated from the sea and from fresh water supply (some are up to 500 ft. above the adjacent valley). They are circular with a raised rim, or a suggestion of one, diameter 5 - 10 ft. depth c.18". In one or two

cases there are two of these pits, and in one case there are eight, but the majority occur singly. In the varying localities they have several things in common:-

1. Their dimensions and form are similar and in some cases the same.
2. If a rim is present and slightly worn, large blackened stones resembling hangi stones project through the rim.
3. They occupy similar or equivalent topographic positions and command a good view of the surrounding area. In practically every case the site of such a pit or pits can be seen from the next pit East or West of it on an adjacent spur, and from any neighbouring permanent settlement.
4. When their positions were plotted on a map and compared with the bushline as in 1860 (the earliest accurate data available) it was found that they were situated at, very close to, or below the lower limit of the bush.



Conclusions:

From traditional and early European evidence it is inferred that settlements at Port Levy and probably Pigeon Bay were established by the Ngai Tahu, immediately after their conquest of Banks Peninsula. Later, as a result of the Kai Huangā feud, settlements arose in the North-east bays, and it is suggested that this is the period in which the pa and cultivations at Menzies Bay, and the settlement at Docanter Bay became established. The North-east bays were then attacked successively by Te Maiharanui and by Te Rauparaha, Port Levy being repopulated after this, but Menzies Bay pa remained unoccupied.

There is plenty of scope for speculation on the origin and function of the "isolated" pits. Due to the size, form, presence of probable hangi stones in the rims, and the association in one case of a midden, it is suggested tentatively that they functioned as ovens. But built by whom? There are three possibilities:-

1. Built by food gathering expeditions while traversing the edge of the bush.
2. Built as a chain of lookouts for the settlements already mentioned
3. Built by fugitives from tribal and intertribal warfare. This is borne out by Stack's statement that "during the raid of the North Island MaorisMacris came from all the bays around to Little Akaloa for shelter....They hid in the bush and on the ridges between the bays." Also there is a group of eight pits on the "Maori Rocks" at Menzies Bay which possibly were dug by the Maoris from the pa who fled to the Rocks when attacked by Te Rauparaha.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank the residents of Banks Peninsula who did everything they could to assist me. Owen Wilkes did part of the initial survey, and Lyell Petrie provided information.

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AN EXPLORATORY SURVEY OF MAORI ROCK-SHELTER ART
 IN SOUTH CANTERBURY

by Tony Fomison

The survey encompassed the open downlands of South Canterbury, which lie sandwiched between inland ranges and a thin strip of coastal plain. Here limestone outcrops as rows of bluffs which line the sides of narrow valleys dissecting the downland, and the shelters in which the drawings were recorded, occur along the foot of the bluffs - normally as shallow, earth-floored undercuts, occasionally as rock-floored ledges, but seldom as proper caves.

Previous Fieldwork:

From the days of such versatile men as Von Haast, leading New Zealand scientists have been attracted to the rock drawings in Canterbury. Their usual procedure was a conducted tour of the few drawings then known, followed by a description of the visit in some report or article ①, ②, ③;

④ a spiritualist from Kansas U.S.A. arrived on the scene in 1916 and typified an overseas prejudice that we have no regard for our rock drawings, by commencing to chisel them out for removal to "Safety." His activities were eventually curtailed and export of the cut blocks prevented - they are now in the Otago Museum. By carrying out a week's fieldwork for the South Canterbury Historical Society in 1945, Dr. R. Puff has continued the association of the Canterbury Museum with local rock drawings which was begun by Haast and Speight. In his cyclostyled report he reiterated Speight's pleas for protection and suggested that the drawings be copied. This was commenced the following year when the dutch artist Theo Schoon was engaged by the Internal Affairs Department to make copies, which in accordance with existent methods were based on outline tracings, and painted in oils on cardboard. Although Schoon considerably increased the number of known shelters, he is to be held responsible for widespread retouching and restoration in greasy crayon. Local enthusiasts have been, and still are, numerous: Frank Huddleston ⑤, W.W. Smith ⑥, G.A. Hornsey; Gordon Griffiths; J. Irvine; and R.A. Evans. But the best known of these workers is undoubtedly Mr. Hugh McCully of Timaru.