5. Historical archaeology

5.1 Themes

The landscape of Taranaki-Wanganui region has been completely transformed over the last 150 years, but this is little reflected in the work of historical archaeologists nor in inventories of sites. Batley (1971) briefly noted the range of historical archaeological sites found in the Upper Rangitikei Valley. This section is not a review of this topic and merely serves to both illustrate the range of sites involved and the limited scope of research that has been done to date. Many historical archaeological sites are well-known locally and some have been the focus of conservation or restoration efforts, but most are not recorded in New Zealand Archaeological Association Site Recording Scheme. Historical archaeological sites make up less than 10% of all recorded sites in the region.

Historical archaeological sites may be placed in a number of broad categories (Prickett 1999):

- Domestic
- Agricultural
- Industrial
- Commercial
- Transport
- Military

Interest is not confined to sites of the 19th century. Prickett (1990) has pointed out that economic change over recent decades has already closed the many small creameries that once dotted the countryside, and is continuing to change the local infrastructure of many rural areas. General stores, garages and schools have closed or are closing and district halls are falling into disrepair. This is only the latest set of changes to re-shape life in the Taranaki-Wanganui region.

Outside the category of military sites, little research with a focus on historical archaeology has been done. Domestic sites have attracted little attention. Agricultural sites have had some limited interest, but generally the archaeology of early farms and farming has been neglected, in spite of Smart’s (1966) important early work on the ditch-and-bank fence. Cassels & Walton (1992) discuss historical agricultural features found in one field near Waverley.

Some work has been done on the early colonial settlements of Wanganui and New Plymouth, especially the former. There were two sets of excavations at R22/248 in a part of old Wanganui in 1995.

Major industries in some areas in the past remain little investigated. Arnold (1976) discusses the timber industry in 1870s and 1880s with particular reference to Rangitikei, but it is uncertain what, if anything, remains. Edson (1986) has recorded coal mines along the Mokau River, but remains associated with the mining industry are not a prominent feature of the archaeology of the region. Henson’s brickworks near Wanganui operated from 1867 to 1877 and...
the remains of a kiln survive and have been roofed (1981) for protection against the weather.

Oliver (1978, 1979) investigated the remains of mid 19th century flour mills in New Plymouth, and three Maori mills in the vicinity of Puniho and Pungarehu are briefly discussed by Day (1995). The re-built Kawana flour mill (1854) on the Whanganui River has been open as a heritage place since 1980.

Homesteads, roads, and landings have been recorded in the Whanganui River Valley (Hellen & Olsen 1984). The Mangapurua farm settlement was opened up to returned servicemen after World War I, but the area was difficult of access and was abandoned in 1942. A large concrete bridge (the Mangapurua bridge or Bridge to Nowhere) was completed in 1936 and has become a major attraction for tourists on the Whanganui River.

Up to 1975 over 100 shipwrecks had occurred in the Taranaki-Whanganui region (Ingram 1977). Some wrecks were salvaged or otherwise broken up and so have left no remains in situ, but only 13 shipwreck sites (about 12%) have been recorded in the New Zealand Archaeological Association Site Recording Scheme. Shipwreck occurred most frequently around Wanganui (28), New Plymouth (25), and Patea (15) (Ingram 1977).

Military sites have long attracted attention from archaeologists (Smith 1990) and this has been the major area of historical archaeological research undertaken in Taranaki-Whanganui to date. Military sites make up nearly 45% of recorded historical archaeological sites in the region. An example of a common form of earthwork fortification is Woodall’s redoubt near Kai Iwi (Fig. 12).

5.2 NEW ZEALAND WARS

A useful narrative of the New Zealand Wars is Cowan (1983, first published in 1922). Belich (1986) provides a more analytical narrative. In the early 1960s, Maxwell and Colin Smart compiled historical information about redoubts near Wanganui, took oblique aerial photographs and visited selected sites, and entered records in the New Zealand Archaeological Site Recording Scheme. Their analysis of 43 sites in the Wanganui-South Taranaki area showed that by 1963 only 40% of known sites still retained good surface form. Buist (1968) described the remains of Thacker’s Redoubt (Q21/153) at the mouth of the Manawapou River in South Taranaki, and photographed sites from the air (Buist 1976: plate 6). Coverage of fortifications in the Rangitikei area in particular remains incomplete: only two of the ten redoubts recorded by Lundy (1995) in the Rangitikei area, for example, have been recorded in the Site Recording Scheme.

aspects of the campaign. Walton & Jones (1996) discuss the history and archaeology of Te Arei battlefield of the First and Second Taranaki Wars in their review of the history and archaeology of Pukerangiora.

Few Maori sites of this period have been investigated, but Jonas lists the type of artefacts ploughed up from a village of late the 1860s near Urenui and Walton (1987) has detailed the history of Maraekowhai on the upper Whanganui River.
6. Conclusions

6.1 SUMMARY

Knowledge of the prehistory of the Wanganui-Taranaki region is limited. Few sites have been investigated scientifically or systematically.

Evidence of ‘moa-hunter’ occupation has been investigated since last century but the information recovered has been limited by the techniques available at the time, and by the focus on particular aspects of the occupation. The concentration on the often-abundant faunal remains of ‘moa-hunter’ sites has been to the exclusion of other aspects of early subsistence and settlement patterns. The evidence from these sites suggests a relatively small population exploiting a wide range of wild foods in a relatively untouched environment. The presence of a horticultural component to the local economy at this time is probable, but not proven.

Remains identifiable belonging to the early period of prehistory are sparse and largely confined to the ‘moa-hunter’ site type. Unless moa bone is present, a site will not be recognised as early and so it is uncertain what other types of sites are characteristic of this early period.

Archaeological remains from the later period of prehistory are more easily observed. Pa are often highly visible features of the landscape and can be mapped and measured to provide some basic information but there are a number of issues relating to form, function, and chronology of pa which need to be explored. The promising work undertaken in Taranaki in the early 1960s with excavations at Kumara-kaiamo and Tarata has not been followed up. Most work on pa subsequently has been rescue work and has involved investigating relatively small areas, with valuable but correspondingly restricted gains in information. For the most part, only large-scale excavation of pa and other settlement sites will ensure progress. Large-scale excavation alone can provide the range and depth of evidence required.

To understand the significance of archaeological remains within Wanganui-Taranaki region requires the use of models developed from evidence across the country. Application of these models in a regional context must, of necessity, use a broad-brush approach. It is important to avoid over-rigid periodisation. The probable sustained population growth during the 15th and 16th centuries would have had as its concomitants:

- The widespread clearance of bush in lowland areas
- Increased reliance on local resources
- Increasing numbers of settlements more closely spaced across the landscape
- Expansion into less favourable areas
- Increased levels of warfare
- The emergence of a different social order
Even in this later period, however, the relatively small size of communities and the low population density meant that the landscape was still relatively empty and that ‘wild places’ were almost always close at hand.

6.2 TOWARDS A RESEARCH AGENDA

The first steps towards site protection were taken nearly 100 years ago with the passing of the Scenery Preservation Act of 1903 (Leach 1991). Numbers of Taranaki sites were recommended for reservation and numbers of sites were purchased. Overall, very few sites had any formal protection until the passing of the Historic Places Amendment Act of 1975. Since the late 1950s and early 1960s there had been growing concern at the rate of destruction and loss of sites, particularly pa. A Taranaki study used Best’s work earlier in the century as a baseline to highlight deterioration in the condition of sites (Robinson 1961). A more systematic approach, using condition as shown on early aerial photographs as a baseline, is Prickett (1985). This study indicated that in a rural landscape 28 out of 95 pa sites were substantially damaged in the period from 1950 to 1981. Common causes of damage included bulldozing for access and fencing, exotic forest plantations, cultivation, stock trampling, roading, and quarrying. Pa sites in other settings have fared even less well. Many pa close to New Plymouth were swallowed up in the urban sprawl from the 1960s onwards. Examples include P19/154 that was destroyed in a subdivision in about 1970, P19/158 that was destroyed in a subdivision in 1976; and P19/1 that was destroyed in a subdivision in about 1978. Studies of the vegetation cover of historic reserves and management options (Jones & Simpson 1995) and the historical significance of cabbage trees on archaeological sites (Simpson 1994) have been published.

Other types of site have suffered as well. Many pit sites have been ploughed flat and are now only known from early aerial photographs. The redoubt on Sentry Hill, a historic reserve, has been entirely quarried away (Prickett 1977). A particularly notable loss amongst New Zealand Wars sites is the Bell Block Stockade (Q19/159) destroyed in 1970, without having been mapped or excavated.

Where it is not possible to physically protect remains in situ, preservation by record is an appropriate response. This involves recording and excavation those archaeological sites that can not be preserved.

The following are some suggestions for research directions arising from this review. They only deal with prehistoric archaeology and are not exhaustive. Specific programmes of site recording are required that are focused on historical and industrial sites.

- Priority should be given to re-assessing the present condition of known early sites and their potential to provide further, and better information, on the more remote past of some 600 years ago.
- Systematic field surveys need to continue, including survey of selected, less well researched, areas in the interior.
• Models need to be developed of environment which will predict the nature of the archaeological sites which are likely to be encountered in any particular area.

• Representative sites need to be excavated to develop a better understanding of the range of activities undertaken at them. Sites should be selected across a range of different environments and locations.

• A programme of excavation of fortified sites is required, including excavation of a ring ditch pa and large scale excavation of interiors of pa to establish the date and character of the occupation and the defences.

• A tighter control of chronology is required and more radiocarbon, or other, dates need to be obtained.

• Faunal assemblages from all periods need to be located, excavated, and analysed to provide a more secure knowledge of subsistence patterns.

• Basic descriptive studies of the various types of artefacts held in museum collections are needed.

Current arrangements for managing archaeological resources are a maze of different interests and responsibilities and it is not suggested that any one agency can independently pursue these research objectives. Overseas, the development of research agendas has been intended to help the various agencies involved to work co-operatively to assign priorities and so avoid piecemeal responses to development threats (Newman 1996). In an area plagued by a lack of resources, there is little doubt of the pressing need for a co-operative approach by the various players: public and private, professional and amateur, government and iwi. The suggestions above offer a starting point for developing an agenda.

7. Acknowledgements

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8. References


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# Appendix 1

## SITE SURVEYS

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<th>SURVEYOR</th>
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<td>Adds</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Mimi R. Mouth (Q19)</td>
<td>Adds 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best</td>
<td>c.1914</td>
<td>Ureui (Q19)</td>
<td>Best 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristow</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Waverley-Whenuakura (Q21–22, R22)</td>
<td>Bristow 1988b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buist</td>
<td>1961–3</td>
<td>Ureui (Q18–19)</td>
<td>Buist 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butts</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Upper Retuuke R. (S19)</td>
<td>Butts 1981</td>
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<td>Colless et al.</td>
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<td>Day</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Petroglyph sites, Taranaki</td>
<td>Day 1982b</td>
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<td>Donovan</td>
<td>1975/76</td>
<td>Mangaweka (T22)</td>
<td>Donovan 1976</td>
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<td>1968</td>
<td>Pipeline Survey (various)</td>
<td>Gorbey 1969, McFadgen 1970b</td>
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<td>Nevin &amp; Nevin 1979</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1975</td>
<td>Pipeline Survey (Q18–19)</td>
<td>Prickett, K 1975</td>
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<td>1979</td>
<td>Omata &amp; Oakura (P19)</td>
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<td>Tataraikaka (P19)</td>
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<td>1981</td>
<td>Okato (P19)</td>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>Wanganui River (various)</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>Motunui</td>
<td>Walton 1988</td>
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<td>1986</td>
<td>Tikorangi</td>
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## Appendix 2

### EXCAVATIONS

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<td>Ngaturi</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Prickett 1978a, 1994b</td>
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<td>P19/151</td>
<td>Bell Block midden</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>site record form (Buist)</td>
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<td>P20/112</td>
<td>Mt Egmont oven site</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Topping 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P20/120</td>
<td>Hingaimotu</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Smith 1985:492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P21/5</td>
<td>Waimate pa</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Buist 1962</td>
</tr>
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<td>Q18/16</td>
<td>Puakaruhe pa</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Lawrence &amp; Prickett 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q19/68</td>
<td>Waitara swamp site</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Duff 1961</td>
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<td>Q19/71</td>
<td>Kumara-kaiamo pa</td>
<td>1961/2</td>
<td>Parker &amp; Buist 1961; Parker 1962; Buist 1964: 91–101; Groube 1964</td>
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<td>Q19/79</td>
<td>Houses/rua</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>site record form (Jonas)</td>
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<td>Q21/44</td>
<td>Puketara pa</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Walton 1982</td>
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<td>Q21/75</td>
<td>Waingongoro (Ohae) moa hunter site</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Buist &amp; Yaldwyn 1960; Buist 1960a, 1960b</td>
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<td>Q21/76</td>
<td>Te Rangaia moa hunter site</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Canavan 1960, 1962</td>
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<td>Q21/99</td>
<td>Lake Whitianga moa hunter site</td>
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<td>Robinson 1961</td>
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<td>Q21/254</td>
<td>Dickie borrow pit</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Walton &amp; Cassels 1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q22/11</td>
<td></td>
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<td>R22/42</td>
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<td>T21/</td>
<td>Te Manukairakau pit site</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Batley 1961</td>
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Appendix 3

RADIOCARBON DATES

There are 54 radiocarbon dates for archaeological sites in the Wanganui Conservancy. Ten of these dates are from Foxton (S24/3) and these are listed but are not discussed further here (see McFadgen 1997).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SITE</th>
<th>LAB NO.</th>
<th>CRA</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P19/24 Te Awahahae Pa, Okura</td>
<td>NZ6181</td>
<td>640±11</td>
<td>Shell, mostly <em>Protobaca crassicosta</em>, from midden on ring-ditch pa</td>
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<tr>
<td>P19/26 Pa, Okura</td>
<td>NZ6563</td>
<td>263±28</td>
<td>Identified charcoal from infilling of ditch on pa</td>
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<tr>
<td>P19/56 Pukkiekie Pa, Omata</td>
<td>NZ6184</td>
<td>95±60</td>
<td>Shell, <em>Protobaca crassicosta</em>, from midden on pa</td>
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<td>P19/79 Pa, Okato</td>
<td>NZ6185</td>
<td>851±55</td>
<td>Shell, <em>Haliotis iris</em>, from midden on pa</td>
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<tr>
<td>P19/151 Pa, Tataraimaka</td>
<td>NZ6187</td>
<td>796±55</td>
<td>Shell, <em>Haliotis iris</em>, from midden palisade footing on pa</td>
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<tr>
<td>P19/191 Pa, Manawaro Pa, Tataraimaka</td>
<td>NZ6182</td>
<td>593±52</td>
<td>Shell, <em>Protobaca crassicosta</em>, from midden on pa</td>
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<tr>
<td>P19/194 Pukewaranga Pa, Tataraimaka</td>
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<td>731±66</td>
<td>Shell, <em>Megalaphia aetiops</em>, from midden from palisade footing on pa</td>
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<td>P19/197 Pa, Tataraimaka</td>
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<td>Shell, <em>Turbo smaragdus</em>, from midden on pa</td>
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<td>NZ6552</td>
<td>480±35</td>
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<td>P20/111 Mt Egmont</td>
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<td>Moa bone, from L4 the moa-hunting occupation</td>
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<td>Dog coprolite from immediately above moa-hunting level</td>
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<td>Q18/6 Pukaruhe Pa</td>
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<td>Unidentified charcoal, oven associated with moa bones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q21/75 Waingongoro</td>
<td>NZ0718</td>
<td>699±61</td>
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<td>Q21/76 Te Rangatapu</td>
<td>NZ0545</td>
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<td>Q22/15 Waitore</td>
<td>NZ4035</td>
<td>52±40</td>
<td>Peat and soil associated with wooden artefacts (Cassels 1979)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q22/77 Johnston</td>
<td>NZ7778</td>
<td>475±46</td>
<td>Charcoal (punga) from fill of pit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q22/77 Johnston</td>
<td>NZ7779</td>
<td>126±46</td>
<td>Charcoal (bracken fern) from fire scoop in pit fill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q22/77 Johnston</td>
<td>NZ7780</td>
<td>481±46</td>
<td>Charcoal from fire-scoop</td>
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<td>NZ7781</td>
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<td>NZ7810</td>
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<td>Charcoal/wood from firescoop</td>
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<td>NZ7811</td>
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<td>Charcoal from scoop in fill of bin pit</td>
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<td>Q22/77 Johnston</td>
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<td>1297±33</td>
<td>bracken fern from layer of wood, charcoal, and oven stones</td>
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<td>Q22/77 Johnston</td>
<td>NZ7813</td>
<td>538±54</td>
<td>Identified wood from lake edge layer</td>
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<td>S23/7 Parewanui</td>
<td>NZ7354</td>
<td>781±55</td>
<td>Shell, <em>Paphies subtriangularata</em>, from midden (Cassels et al. 1988)</td>
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<td>S24/3 Foxton</td>
<td>NZ0682</td>
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<td>NZ0683</td>
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<td>CRA</td>
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