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A STUDY OF THE TYPES AND DISTRIBUTION  
OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES ON BANKS PENINSULA, CANTERBURY

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In this paper, I propose to describe the types of archaeological sites and their distribution on Banks Peninsula; however, before dealing with these topics, I feel that it is necessary to make brief mention of the topography, natural resources and traditional history relating to the stages of settlement on the Peninsula.

TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL RESOURCES:

Banks Peninsula consists of a land mass comprising a pair of extinct volcanoes standing apart and distinct from the rest of Canterbury, and forming an area of approximately 450 square miles. To the south, an isthmus encloses Lake Ellesmere, and to the north the Sumner Estuary, the resulting central area having been built up by alluvial deposits to form the low-lying land on which Christchurch is situated today. Due to water erosion, the central areas of the volcanoes were hollowed out to form the harbours of Akaroa and Lyttelton, and water erosion also resulted in the formation of the numerous steep-sided bays and valleys of the peninsula.

When first settled, the peninsula was clothed with a considerable amount of native bush in which grew such podocarp trees as totara, kahikatea, and matai, although by 1900 most of the forest had been cleared, and today only isolated pockets of bush remain.

An examination of the midden contents at various archaeological sites indicates a variety of food was available, and it may be assumed much of the food was obtained locally from the sea, bush, and such localities as Lake Ellesmere from where both water-fowl and eels could be taken. It is not known whether kumara was definitely grown on the peninsula, although this may have been possible in the sandy soil of the warmer sheltered coastal bays.

TRADITIONAL HISTORY

According to the traditional history associated with this region, the first settlers were the Waitaha who are thought to have arrived in New Zealand about the 10th Century. About 1577, the Ngati-Mamoe, then well established in the northernmost parts of the South Island, moved southwards, and brought about the destruction of the Waitaha living on Banks Peninsula. Between 50 to 100 years later, the Ngaitahu, who then held most of the territory about Wellington, began to move south, destroying the Ngati-Mamoe villages on their way and eventually landing in some of the eastern bays of the peninsula, taking the Ngati-Mamoe Pa

at Parakakariki (S.85/9). The Ngaitahu then settled over most of the peninsula, and at about the same time formed their stronghold at Kaiapohia.

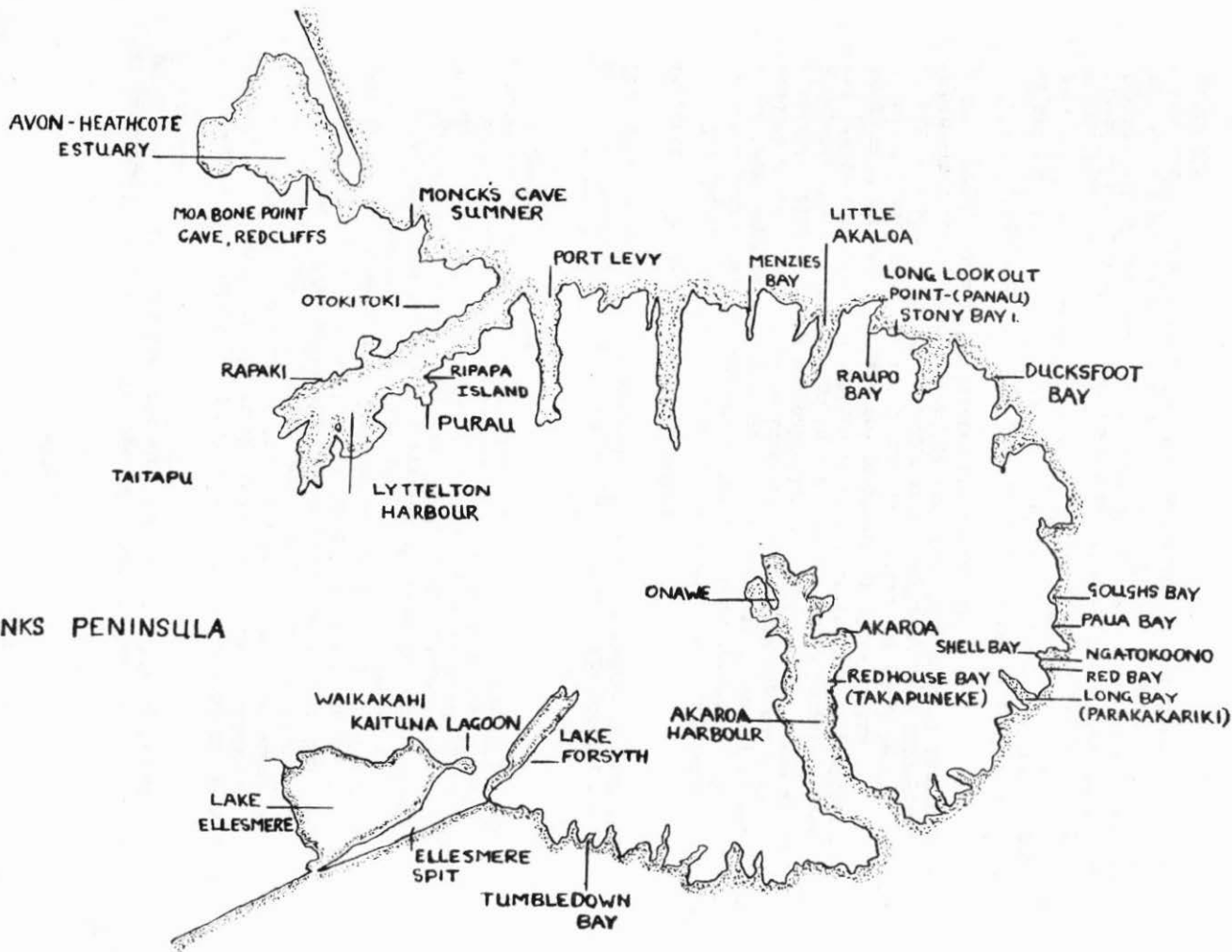
Between 1810 and 1815, an inter-tribal feud (Kai-huanga) developed at Waikakihi (S.94/4) on the southernmost end of the peninsula. This feud eventually involved all of the Ngaitahu living on or about the peninsula, those suffering defeat taking refuge in the north-eastern bays. Meanwhile, those affected by the feud and now living in refuge, were in due course attacked by Te Maiharanui (Ngaitahu) and these incidents paved the way for the conquests of Te Rauparaha (Ngati-toa) in 1830 and 1832. In 1827, Te Rauparaha moved southwards destroying three pa at Kaikoura and Omihi and, with his eventual arrival at Banks Peninsula, destroyed the Ngaitahu village at Taka-puneke (Red House Bay) (S.94/29). Te Rauparaha returned to Kapiti and, in 1832, moved south again to take the Ngaitahu stronghold, Kaiapohia, and destroy other settlements on the peninsula, including the pa at Onawe (S.94/23), constructed in 1830-31 by the Ngaitahu of Akaroa.

Eventually, a number of the Ngaitahu returned to settle at Port Levy, where there were in 1842 approximately 150 people, and by 1850, 200, making this the largest settlement of Maoris in this region.

#### PA SITES AND OTHER AREAS OF HABITATION:

That Banks Peninsula was at various periods well populated is evident in the number of habitation areas that have been recorded. These sites range from large pa with extensive earthworks, as at Onawe, to small beach middens which are to be found in practically every bay about the peninsula, with a marked concentration of sites in such areas as the Redcliffs-Summer estuary, and in the Lake Forsyth-Ellesmere region. It was possible to obtain a pattern of site distribution by plotting from known grid reference numbers the positions of sites on the 1 inch = 1 mile maps for the peninsula. Also, by adopting this method, it was possible to decide on other areas requiring site surveying. Other sites referred to in publications for which no site record is at present held, can also be located and recorded.

From a study of the site records held for this region at the time of writing, over 80 habitation areas had been recorded. This figure does not include such sites as caves and shelters, pits, and other sites which are described separately. Less than 25% of these sites may be classified as pa, whilst the remaining 75% comprise midden areas, e.g., Rapaki (S.84/4) and such beach sites which were at one time fairly large villages, e.g., Purau (S.84/8), distinct from pa because of the non-existence of such surface features as earthworks and their situation generally.



MAP SHOWING LOCALITIES  
REFERRED TO IN TEXT

### Pa Sites

The location of most pa is mainly confined to headlands or promontories, although other pa were situated on areas of flat land. The promontory pa in each instance, utilize the natural topography for defence, with a minimum quantity of earthworks being required. A typical example of such a site may be seen at the Ngati-Mamoe pa, Nga-toko-ono (S.85/5) where a transverse earthwork is utilized, this being a bank and ditch unit which continues around two sides, the fourth being a sheer cliff edge. The interior of the pa contains lateral rows of terracing facing in a north-east direction.

Although not classified as a pa of the promontory type, the Ngaitahu site of Onawe, which is situated on a pear-shaped peninsula jutting into Akaroa harbour, is perhaps the finest example of a classic Maori pa on Banks Peninsula. Here the pa, which rises to the highest point of 348 feet near the south end, is separated into four areas by three transverse earthworks. Other notable features connected with this site were covered waterways leading to springs outside the pa area.

With reference to pa situated on flat land, these are predominately rectangular in outline with a simple bank and ditch unit, and with an entrance in one side, e.g., O-toki-toki (S.84/2) near Evans Pass above Sumner, Christchurch. One of the best examples of a flat land pa on the peninsula is the Classic Maori beach site, O-karuru, at Goughs Bay (S.85/115), situated on the eastern side of the peninsula. Here the pa, which is almost rectangular in outline, is surrounded by a bank and ditch unit, whilst a further bank subdivides the site, forming two separate areas. The larger and most northern side of the two has an opening halfway along the seaward side, with the remains of a short outer rampart screening this opening. At the northern end of this outer rampart is a rectangular area, 20 feet x 15 feet, of beach stones, with a circle of stones in the centre.

### Middens

These sites, which are mainly beach sites comprising approximately 75% of habitation areas on the peninsula, are in many cases marked only by a midden deposit which may be a thin lens of shell, bones, and charcoal with artifacts, or wide areas of deposits of varying thickness associated with ovens, artifacts, burials, etc. A number of these sites have Maori names and many are known to have been large kaianga, this being determined by the extent of deposits and other remains.

From an examination of midden material, it is possible to determine the culture of the inhabitants of the site. Whilst many of the sites may be assigned to the Classic Maori period either by evidence found on

them or by known traditional history, or both, there is a proportion of sites which may be classified as Moa-hunter. The Redcliffs-Summer estuary region has a marked concentration of such sites, with a further site at Tumbledown Bay (S.94/30) situated on the southern coast of the peninsula. Here, as with sites in the Redcliffs-Summer region (notably Moa-bone Point Cave, S.84/77, and Monck's Cave), material found suggests typical Moa-hunter culture, being quite distinct from material relating to the Classic Maori period.

Special features are connected with a number of pa and midden sites. These include walls of piled earth and stones and karaka trees, the presence of which have been recorded at three sites, notably Panau (S.85-95/1) near Long Lookout Point, where there is a grove of twelve karaka trees. The ripe berries of the karaka tree are known to have been used for food, and suggestions have been made that the tree was introduced from Polynesia.

#### Stone Walls

These are of particular interest, although to what purpose they were constructed is at present uncertain. Three sites where these walls are to be found are situated within close proximity to one another, these sites being at Menzies Bay, Stony Bay (I), and Long Lookout on the north-eastern coast of the peninsula. Other sites are at Goughs and Ducksfoot Bays further south.

#### Menzie's Bay, Kirikiriwairea (S.84/18)

Here rows of stone walls associated with midden and pits are on a slope, and, although these features and traditional history indicate that a promontory pa once existed here, this has not been verified.

#### Long Lookout Point, Panau (S.85-95/3)

At this site three rows of stone walls consisting of low heaps of volcanic rock and earth possibly gathered from outcrops on the ridge above, enclose a number of sheltered rectangular areas. This site is probably connected with the promontory pa (S.85-95/2) nearby.

#### Stony Bay (I) (S.85-95/12)

Here a ridge of stones and earth similar in construction to those at Menzies Bay is associated with an extensive area of midden, ovens and burials. Numerous artifacts have been found here, including part of a large basalt patu.

#### Goughs Bay, O-karuru (S.85-95/15)

At this site a line of piled earth and stones 88 yards long and 12-24 inches high, runs in a straight line up the gentle slope of the hill behind the pa.

### Ducksfoot Bay

At Ducksfoot Bay, situated on the north-eastern coast of the peninsula, Dr Duff has recorded the existence of a series of vertical banks composed of heaped stones and earth, whilst at Paua Bay adjoining Goughs Bay a series of parallel "drain" impressions running vertically down slope were also recorded.

### Caves and Shelters

At the time of writing twenty habitation areas classified as being either caves or shelters had been recorded. These sites range from large caves, such as Moa-bone Point Cave at Redcliffs (S.84/77) to smaller shelters such as Ahuriri Cave at Taitapu (S.84/84), which is only 10 feet long back from the opening. Most of these sites are situated either on or close to the coast. Moa-bone Point Cave, for example, is thought to have originally been an air bubble in a lava flow and broken open as a result from pounding due to wave action

Numerous artifacts, especially those of wood and fibre, have been found often in a remarkable state of preservation. These include from Moa-bone Point Cave, the head of a god-stick, suggesting an early stage of Classic Maori culture, sandals, a fragment of a fishing net with pumice float, and a wooden comb with hair fibres in the teeth. Artifacts from Monck's Cave include a stylised dog and an outrigger float.

### Pits

Although at present little is known about pits, it is important to note that they can be divided into two categories, namely, those which are isolated and apparently not connected with habitation areas, and those which are connected with pa, etc. Of the 27 pit sites on the peninsula, 19 do not appear to have been connected with pa or kaianga. These sites have been listed as follows:

11	sites	with	1	pit(s)	each
2	"	"	2	"	"
1	"	"	3	"	"
1	"	"	4	"	"
1	"	"	6	"	"
1	"	"	8	"	"
2	"	"	number	unrecorded.	

The remaining eight pit sites are associated with pa or beach sites, the pits in most instances being on terraces, one terrace having 12 pits on it.

Of the pit sites recorded, 44% are situated between the eastern side of Port Levy and the western side of Little Akaloa Bay, 30% between the south-east corner of the Kaituna Lagoon and the outlet of Lake Forsyth, whilst the remaining 26% comprises seven sites, these being widely spread over the rest of the peninsula. Sixty-seven per cent of all pits are situated from 250 feet to as high as 1,000 feet (S.84/20-8 pits) a.s.l., the remainder being found below 250 feet. Most of the pits are to be found on spurs or headlands, the majority of these having a raised rim as shown in the following summary:

<u>Shape</u>	<u>With raised Rim</u>	<u>Without raised Rim</u>	<u>Total</u>
Round	30	3	33
Oval	1	-	1
Square	2	1	3
Rectangular	7	3	10

The diameter of the round pits is generally between 5 and 7 feet, with an average depth of 10-18 inches, although several have diameters of up to 10 feet with a depth of 2 feet.

Some pits recorded are of particular interest. One isolated round pit with a raised rim (S.84/43) was found, during the excavation of post holes, to contain traces of midden. Site number S.84/19 has an isolated oval pit. Here the rim has been worn away, exposing a number of angular stones sunken into the perimeter of the pit.

#### Gun-fighter's Pa

Two sites, one of which is thought to have been constructed about 1832 (period of the northern invasion), and identified as probably being musket redoubts, have been recorded on the peninsula.

The first site (S.84/3) is situated on the summit above Gollans Bay near the entrance to Lyttelton Harbour, and consists primarily of a pit 11' x 9' x 15' deep dug into the gentle slope of the hill. Parapets about 6" high and 1 yard from the pit edge, run around three sides.

The second site (S.84/9) occupied Ripapa Island, a small headland jutting into Lyttelton Harbour at the entrance to Purau Bay. This site was destroyed in 1888 during the construction of Fort Jervois. However, from a plan made by Captain F. Strouts in 1872, the layout shows that an earthen parapet, surmounted by palisading, ran around the steep edge of the "island" to enclose an L-shaped area. The parapet projected in the form of bastions at the corners, ends, and at intervals along the longer sides. The pa was subdivided by a transverse earthwork, on one side of which were the stumps of several posts associated with an L-shaped low



earth wall containing, within the angle, the remains of several fire-places. Artifacts, including a large hei-matau in nephrite, have been found here.

#### MISCELLANEOUS SITES

##### Ovens

Ovens have been recorded at many habitation sites, with a number of isolated finds having also been made. An important site first excavated in 1957 and since re-excavated, has been radio-carbon dated indicating occupation in the 13th Century. Here bones of Euryapteryx moa, kuri, and seal were found associated with artifacts typical of moa-hunter culture, these including flakes of ortho-quartzite.

Numerous ovens in groups of three or four have been recorded along the Lake Ellesmere Spit (S.94/17). However, few artifact finds or middens have been recorded here.

##### Burials

Occasionally, burials have been recorded on Banks Peninsula sites. In 1873, Von Haast recorded the discovery of a number of burials during excavations being carried out in the cutting near Moa-bone Point Cave. Road workmen discovered the remains of six to eight individuals apparently placed in a crouching position, each accompanied with generally three adzes. A more recent discovery of a burial accompanied with artifacts of moa-hunter type was found at the base of a volcanic outcrop in McCormicks Bay Road, Redcliffs, in 1958 (S.84/69). At this site, the remains of at least two individuals were found, with a concentration of dentalium necklace units about the neck vertebrae of one individual, whilst around the foot bones there was a concentration of smaller dentalium units suggesting an anklet.

The barbed point leg of a two-piece fish-hook was also found at this site. It appeared the burials had been made in a crevice between the rock outcrop and the soil base, and were sealed by rock falls from subsequent midden deposit.

Perhaps the most noteworthy find made on the peninsula connected with a burial was at Raupo Bay in 1935. Here a finely carved skull box, thought to be of Ngaitahu origin, was discovered in a small opening in a cliff and concealed by placed boulders. Contents of the casket were a complete skull wrapped in matting, two ear pendants of nephrite, and a curved piece of wood painted with kokowai and bearing a resemblance to a rib.

### Artifacts

Many important finds of artifacts have been made on Banks Peninsula, e.g., a cache of adzes found at Motukarara. However, because this is a wide field, I do not propose to describe the subject here.

### CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, I have endeavoured to give a brief outline of the types and distribution of archaeological sites on Banks Peninsula. Most sites are in a reasonable state of preservation. However, with some of these, immediate field-work is necessary. Curio hunters have been active for many years with recent activity being mainly confined to a Classic Maori beach site in Lyttelton Harbour.

Finally, I would like to thank the property owners and residents of Banks Peninsula for the co-operation and assistance shown during the course of site surveys, and I would especially like to thank Michael Trotter, Archaeologist at the Canterbury Museum, for his assistance and making available the site records for Banks Peninsula.

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