

A Search for Maori Rock Art Sites within the Macraes Mining Co. Ltd. Lease, inland North Otago.

B.J. Allingham. Feb. 1992.

Following a visit to the Macraes Mining Co. Ltd. with representatives of Kati Huirapa Runanga Ki Puketeraki, the writer was invited to examine rock outcrops within the mining lease for any cultural markings of Maori origin. This was carried out on 31-1-1992.

Examination of the accessible outcrops within the lease failed to reveal any signs of Maori rock art. Most of the outcrops examined line the valley of Deep Dell Creek, the remainder lay south of Macraes Road between Red Bank Road and Golden Bar Road.

The apparent absence of Maori rock art in the area examined can be accounted for through several reasons. As was expected, the majority of surfaces examined were not suited for rock art. Most of the vertical surfaces were too striated by weathering, although a few cleavage planes would be quite suitable for drawing on. The best surfaces for rock art were the sheltered undersides of clefts. Most of these, however, appeared subject to weathering judging by the litter of fallen flakes below, and this could have destroyed any rock art that may have once been there.

As pointed out in Jill Hamel's report, the area possessed natural attributes likely to have been exploited in a transitory way, and it is therefore likely that Maoris camped here briefly during inland expeditions. There are many natural shelters within the mining lease that could have been briefly occupied, but short of test-pitting likely shelters, no archaeological deposits were seen to prove this beyond speculation.

Some of the more inaccessible outcrops in Deep Dell Creek were not examined, and as there is no intention to mine this area, these were left in the meantime. If at some stage in the future it is intended to mine the part of Deep Dell Creek west of the historic mining reserve, a closer archaeological scrutiny is recommended.

Acknowledgments:

The writer is indebted to Kati Huirapa Runanga Ki Puketeraki for the invitation to visit the Macraes Mine with runanga representatives, and to the management and staff of the Macraes Mining Company Limited for their hospitality, and the opportunity to examine the lease from the writer's perspective.

Reference:

Hamel, Jill 1987. Historic and archaeological sites at Round Hill, Macraes, North Otago : a preliminary assessment.